



Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

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Richard R. Lewis, Chairperson
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

January 24, 2019

Hon. Mitchell J. Silver
Commissioner of NYC Department of Parks & Recreation
830 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10065

Re: Resolution supporting the Schematic Renovation Plan for Ft. Tryon Park's Anne Loftus Playground.

Dear Commissioner Silver:

Please be advised that Community Board 12, Manhattan, passed a resolution with 36 votes in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstentions, 1 not voting, at its Tuesday, January 22, 2019 General Meeting, supporting the proposed design presented by the NYC Parks Department and Recreation with some modifications; and requesting that NYC Parks modify its schematic plan to incorporate such modifications and present it and a computer simulation of the water feature to the Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee for final review; requesting that the NYC Parks include an accessible playground in the redesign of the Monsignor Kett Playground; and recommending that the Landmarks Preservation & Public Design Commission not approve a proposed plan or schematic design that does not include the recommended changes.

Whereas: The Anne Loftus Playground, named after a former Community Board 12 District Manager, and located at the northern end of the landmarked Fort Tryon Park near the confluence of Broadway, Riverside Drive, and Dyckman Street, in the center of which is a former sunken wading pool which now contains a large water feature that doesn't use the entire available space, has serious drainage issues, and is both uninteresting and inaccessible; and

Whereas: Councilmember Ydanis Rodriguez has committed \$4.1 million for the renovation of this playground's plumbing and water feature, as well as some of the adjacent recreational and exercise equipment; and

Whereas: the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation (NYC Parks) held scoping meetings on 6/27/18 & 10/25/18; and

Whereas: There are only five full basketball courts (1 at Javits Playground currently under renovation, 2 in Inwood Hill Park, 2 in Monsignor Kett Playground soon to be renovated), and one half-court (at Javits Playground) within a half-mile radius of the Anne Loftus Playground, and members of the community advocated for the addition of basketball to the proposed design of Anne Loftus Playground and submitted a petition with more than 200 signatures to this effect; and

Whereas: Many of Community District 12's (CD12) playgrounds have ADA accessible features but there are no special-needs playgrounds within CD12, and the closest such playground is 5 miles away, on 96th Street in Manhattan and the only such playground in the Bronx is almost 10 miles away, in Pelham Bay; and

Whereas: NYC Parks made a presentation at the January 8, 2019 meeting of the Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee (PCA) of Community Board 12, Manhattan (CB12M); and

Whereas: The proposed ADA-compliant design re-grades the current floor of the former wading pool which currently houses a spray water feature; adds multiple drains as well as a new and dynamic spray feature with three concentric rings of iterative features, all of which are tall and relatively forceful; makes major repairs to the underlying plumbing and drainage; adds multiple shallow grade ADA-compliant ramps to access the central water feature; adds new, code-compliant exercise equipment; adds a half-court basketball court in a currently unused area west of the central water feature; preserves existing trees; adds new trees; preserves the current seating throughout the playground; and contains a concentric circle design in the water feature floor using muted colors of concrete; and

Whereas: The PCA, other CB12M members and members of the public approved the overall concepts and many aspects of the proposed schematic design, but had a number of suggested changes and improvements; and

Whereas: NYC Parks will have a scoping meeting on January 29th for the upcoming \$14 million renovation of the Monsignor Kett Playground; now, therefore, be it

Resolved: Community Board 12, Manhattan is supports the proposed design presented by the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation with the following modifications:

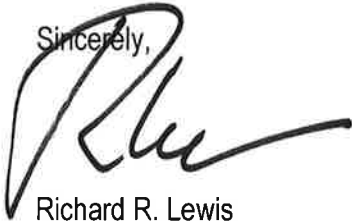
- Add a low fence (3.5') around the half-court to protect from errant chest passes;
- Add a 5th iteration spray feature that is lower, gentler, and closer to the perimeter;
- Add decorative lighting to the water feature, and perhaps additional lighting within the playground to enable evening use;
- Add more drinking fountains, and include bottle-filler feature in all drinking fountains;
- Use more "soft scape" surfaces to maximize natural water recapture;
- Consider a Lenape-inspired turtle in the decorative concrete, rather than concentric circles; and be it further

Resolved: CB12M is request that NYC Parks modify its schematic plan to incorporate these suggestions and present it and a computer simulation of the water feature to the Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee for final review; and be it further

Resolved: CB12M is request that NYC Parks include an accessible playground in the redesign of the Monsignor Kett Playground; and be it further

Resolved: Community Board 12, Manhattan recommends that the Landmarks Preservation & Public Design Commissions not approve a proposed plan or schematic design that does not include the recommended changes suggested herein.

Sincerely,



Richard R. Lewis
Chairperson

cc: Hon. William Castro, Borough Commissioner NYC Parks Hon. Robert Jackson, State Senator
Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor Hon. Al Taylor, Assembly Member
Hon. Public Advocate Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Assembly Member
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Comptroller Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member
Hon. Sarah Caroll, Commissioner NYC LPC Hon. Signe Nielsen, Commissioner NYC PDC
Ms. Jennifer Hoppa, Northern Manhattan Parks Mr. Steve Simon, Chief of Staff Manhattan
Administrator Borough Commissioner