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## COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

3 WASHINGTON SQUARE VILLAGE

NEW YORK, NY 10012-1899

[www.cb2manhattan.org](http://www.cb2manhattan.org)

P: 212-979-2272 F: 212-254-5102 E: [info@cb2manhattan.org](mailto:info@cb2manhattan.org)

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### ARTS & INSTITUTIONS AND PARKS & WATERFRONT JOINT COMMITTEE

Feb 3, 2020

The Parks & Waterfront and the Arts & Institution Committees of Community Board #2, Manhattan, held a joint monthly meeting on Wednesday, Feb 3, 2021 at 5:00 P.M. via Zoom.

The meeting covered two topics:

1. Representatives of Little Island (Pier 55) presented an update on the overall vision of their artistic and educational programming for the summer (they plan to open in May) and their current Intern program and upcoming Fellows program.
2. A representative of Friends of the High Line presented an overview of the High Line's 2021 art program and engagement initiatives.

**There were no resolutions created from this meeting**

#### Arts & Institutions Committee:

**Board Members Present:** Robin Rothstein, Chair; Amy Brenna; Coral Dawson; Susan Gammie; Patricia Laraia; Rocio Sanz; Georgia Silvera Seamans

**Board Members Absent with Notification:**

**Board Members Absent without Notification:** Wayne Kawadler; Scott Sartiano

**Public Members Present:** Kristin Marting; Jonathan Slaff

**Public Members Absent with Notification:**

#### Parks & Waterfront Committee:

**Board Members Present:** Rich Caccappolo, Chair; Susanna Aaron, Vice-Chair; Coral Dawson; Jeannine Kiely; Matt Metzger; Shirley Secunda; Georgia Silvera Seamans; Kristin Shea

**Board Members Absent with Notification:**

**Board Members Absent without Notification:**

**Public Members Present:** Nancy Brous; Elizabeth Gilmore; Sharon Woolums

**Public Members Absent with Notification:**

**Elected Officials or Representatives Present:** Charlie Anderson (Assemblymember Deborah Glick); Patrice Comeford (Councilmember Corey Johnson)

**Minutes:**

## **1. Update by the Little Island team**

Trish Santini, Executive Director, presented slides and images showing the status of the project. Two colleagues, Michael Wiggins, Director of Engagement and Education, and Erik Rogers, Manager, Executive Office joined her. The slides included recent photographs of the park, which is in the final stages of construction. They are now in the phase that's about finishes and detail work and all the last kind of minutiae to get to the point where the operating team can take over. Over the next few months, their construction team and operations team will both be working in the space to get it ready for visitors later this spring.

Santini then moved into programming and described Little Island's philosophy, which is focused on making sure that they are delivering "depth and the breadth." This means programming that reflects various disciplines and ranges of artists, from community-based artists and emerging artists all the way through "World Class" artists. That mix will be on Little Island throughout the summer. They intend to start programming mid June, and it will continue through September.

Their Amphitheater will accommodate up to 700 guests and will be like wooden bench seating. The space will also include a leaning rail at the back of the house. The Amphitheater will serve as both a public space and a performance space. There will be times when it is open for people to enjoy and hang out, while at other times there will be open, casual events. For instance, you will be able to sit and listen to music for a little while and leave when you want to move on to something else. The amphitheater will also be used for ticketed events on certain weekends throughout the summer. The other space where they will host performances in is a more modest space called "The Glade." It has a small stage and lawn and is very casual. Their main plaza that they call "The Play Ground" will sometimes have simple programming and perhaps some live music, but it's primarily a space to enjoy food and beverage.

Little Island recently announced the park's artists-in-residence. These three individual artists will be with Little Island for three years. They will be creating work and reacting to the "learnings" on every season. Some will direct and some will perform. Two of them will be doing some curating of weeklong events over the course of the summer. One of the resident artists, acclaimed theater director, Tina Landau wants to do some workshops, both with professional artists and community members. One of Santini's goals is working on, not only potential concerts, but also curating a singer-songwriter series. So, all of the resident artists are involved in different ideas. Some of them will be in the first season and some will be in subsequent seasons.

In addition, Little Island is launching a program called "Perform in the Park." It launched last August and was an open submissions process. Any performing artist in New York City was welcome to apply. Little Island received over 250 applications from a very broad range of disciplines. The review process was done with Little Island staff, Little Island artists, local community members and local artists. They narrowed the field down to 71 applicants that are either individual artists or arts organizations, and all of them will perform a minimum of two times over the course of the summer.

Little Island is also in the midst of establishing "habitual programming." Their intention is to have a set schedule so that people can start to figure out what regular kinds of events they can count on. All of those events will be free. These will be in different spaces throughout the park, depending on what is the right match for the artist and the space. These times will happen every week beginning in mid-June.

Lastly, Santini discussed Little Island's commitment to a minimum of 51% of the tickets for events in the

amphitheater being free or low cost. She anticipates that it will ultimately be more like 60%. All of the other programming is always free. The ticket income is minimal, and so it's not impactful to the operating budget. And for all ticketed patrons, you will be able to identify if you need ADA seating when you reserve your ticket. There are eight of those seats in the amphitheater, as well as companion seats. Little Island is in the final plans with two different organizations that will help facilitate the distribution of the free and low cost tickets. Little Island has also been working with some neighborhood partners and there will also be some modest allocations of free tickets that will be available to those in the neighborhood. They will be following guidelines with regard to COVID and social distancing and project that, for now, they will allow a maximum capacity of 250 to 275 in the 700-seat theater.

Their staffing plan is in service to health protocols, as well as physical safety, which includes making sure that the overlooks are monitored regularly.

Michael Wiggins, Director of Engagement and Education spoke next and focused on what he and his education team have been working on for the summer.

They plan to have regular opportunities for people to come and learn, no matter their age or their family unit to come up and experience, art form, to engage with art in nature in a beautiful public park. All of these spaces that they call "creative breaks" will amplify and enhance the work that's going to be on the stages and the themes that will also be amplified in those workshop spaces.

Little Island will also have an "art cart." It will be interactive piece of furniture, which will be a hub for art making. It's something that a child could touch and interact with. There will be supplies and work surfaces.

They also have a "Teen Night/Open Mic" in partnership with The Door. Little Island will host these on Friday nights in The Glade.

Saturday workshops will be facilitated by one of Little Island's partners, such as New Victory Theater, as they are centered on teaching artists.

Field trips are expected to be less possible for some of our local partners due to COVID. But, at least once a month, they plan to intentionally invite those communities into the park, making sure that they have a full experience.

Season One creative collaborators also include: The Free Black Woman's Library, which will help support something like a free library space where people be invited to come in and take a book and sit under a tree and read a book, and then bring it back; the Children's Museum of the Arts. Wiggins said can expect to see something they are calling right now "Museum Mondays," in which there will be some sort of art making experience happening, that is interactive, and featuring a museum partner. He reiterated that diversity is really important to Little Island and that they are looking citywide to museums to partner with CMA.

Lastly, Wiggins spoke about Little Island's internship and fellowship programs.

Little Island has had 11 interns during Wiggins' tenure began in 2018, and they just on-boarded two more, who will be doing their internship remotely for the first time. Interns get paid, and all Little Island staff members have some commitment to interacting with the interns and enriching their experience by sharing their expertise, listening to them, and giving them their perspective.

The fellowship program launched this year, and is more of a work program. Fellows can be any age, any background, as long as they are right for the position. They will be working in a department, have real accountability, and have a real job. They will get paid for up to 30 hours a week for the course of over 10 weeks.

The 2021 program will run from **May 24<sup>th</sup>** – **August 1<sup>st</sup>**. Fellows will spend **30 hours/week** working on in-park and in-office projects. All Fellows are paid a rate of **\$16.50/hour**. Those applications will be open soon.

Wiggins described Little Island as having an intentional and very well articulated Workforce Development Strategy. These opportunities are upcoming and he has already been encouraging people by email, by phone and through conversation, to send him names of people who want to apply. His department has already been providing hands on support to individuals, one on one or groups of five, with resume workshops, that support confidence, building conversations, and interview prep. Because one of the ways we want to be successful is not by running a job fair.

*Note: The Family Foundation has committed to operating and programming Little Island for the duration of the 20-year lease.*

For more information about Little Island, visit: <https://littleisland.org/>

For more information on employment opportunities visit [www.littleisland.org/employment](http://www.littleisland.org/employment)

## **2. Update by Friends of the High Line**

Maritza Carmona, Associate Director of Government Affairs for Friends of the High Line, provided an update on the High Line's operations and programs. The High Line is currently open via time entry reservation systems on the weekends, but they have now done away with time ticket reservations on weekdays and have opened the park a bit earlier starting at 7am. This was in reaction to the community's feedback. So, the park is open from 7am to through 7pm on the weekdays, and during the weekends, beginning at 10am with reservations.

During all opening hours, you're welcome to arrive at any Entry location and move north or south. That is something that has changed, the directionality of your visit. And now you're also welcome to enter at 23rd or 30<sup>th</sup> Streets. She was also excited to share that the High Line's first planned commission, Simon Leigh's "Brick House," which is located at 30th Street and 10th Avenue on the spur will be on view until through May. They are also planning a wonderful celebration for its closing. So stay tuned for more information.

She hopes that the High Line's Art and Programming team will have the opportunity to share more about the second, third and fourth commissions during the Arts and Institutions committee meeting or during a Parks and Waterfront meeting in March who can go through the proposals in more detail. Right now you can view the 12 shortlisted proposals that are on view at the Coach Passage, which is located on 30th Street in 10th Avenue. This is a list that you can view online and is an impressive list of artists and works of art.

And, although we are in the heart of winter, the High Line docent-led public tours continue. And they are offering them at Noon on Saturdays. You can also book those online through their reservation system.

These are free public tours that they continue to offer to the public following all regulations and protocols to COVID.

They also continue to have their school residencies in school and at after-school programs with PS 41. Through these types of partnerships, they explore infrastructure, reuse projects and engineering or redesign public art with public school students. It's a highlight of their community engagement initiative. They are very proud to be able to continue those partnerships virtually and to have been able to adjust very quickly through quarantine and the pandemic to continue to offer these partnerships with students.

Their youth employment program will be starting soon. It's a paid youth employment program for local youth between the ages of 15 and 19 that focuses on skill building leadership development, through civic engagement, arts and culture, horticulture, public programs and strategic initiatives and teams gain professional skills hands on experience in these fields horticulture, arts and culture. With regard to their professional development program, they hire teams once a year. It is about a six to eight month paid program and they will be starting this program very soon.

They also work very closely with local partners such as Little Island, Hudson Guilds and the Whitney to share those opportunities. She also shared that they are working with Speaker Corey Johnson's office to make wellness phone calls to seniors, specifically in the West Village. They have been able to partner with Johnson on this initiative to provide opportunities to the High Line's volunteers where they can do some local community work right now, which they are very much interested in.

For information on Simone Leigh's "Brick House" visit:

<https://www.thehighline.org/art/projects/simoneleigh/>

For information on their short-listed artists proposals visit:

<https://www.thehighline.org/art/projects/plinth-shortlist-cycle-two/>

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Rothstein  
Chair, Arts & Institution Committee  
Community Board 2, Manhattan

Richard A. Caccappolo  
Chair, Parks & Waterfront Committee  
Community Board 2, Manhattan