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COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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November 10, 2022

Anthony Perez
Manhattan Borough Commissioner
Arsenal West 24 West 61st Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10023

Dear Manhattan Borough Commissioner Perez:

At its Full Board meeting October 20, 2022, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

A Resolution Regarding Active Recreation Uses at Seravalli Playground, Including Pickleball in Unpermitted Spaces

Whereas:

1. Our Committee held a public hearing at which attendees were encouraged to share their opinions about the growing use of the paved open space at Corporal John A. Seravalli Playground, located at Hudson St. between Gansevoort St. and Horatio St., by players of pickleball; and
2. Seravalli Playground was opened in the early 1960s, a tall fence surrounding the space was added in 1986 to prevent stray balls from hurting pedestrians or damaging windows, and the playground was renovated in 1992; and
3. Seravalli Playground is 1.14 acres in total, portions of which are a fenced-off basketball court, a public bathroom building and a play equipment area, all on the eastern side of the space, with the majority of the park left as open concrete (not covered with turf) space; and
4. The park is “unpermitted”, meaning usage is not reserved for specific organizations or purposes, rather it is to be used on a first-come-first-served basis for active or passive unstructured recreation; and
5. The NYC Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) installed (painted lines), at some point in the last year, two pickleball courts on the eastern edge of the pavement as a “test” of whether they would be used and whether the sport could be safely integrated into the space and some community members have expressed resentment that this was done without consultation with the community; and
6. At our Committee meeting on October 17, 2022, many residents expressed their fondness for the space and the importance of it as a place for children, especially younger children, to undertake various play, exercise and recreational activities and, in the process, develop independence in a protected area within sight of parents; and
7. Groups of organized sports leagues (e.g., Greenwich Village Little League, Downtown United Soccer Club) shared signed petitions stating that they want this open play space to remain unpermitted and dedicated to use by children, not adults; and

8. Many commenters shared their opinions that pickleball is a great sport for players of all ages, that is quickly growing in popularity, and more space should be found in our City to enable and encourage it, (e.g., roof of Pier 40, Hudson River Park, JJ Walker handball courts, open streets, etc.); and
9. Most participants agree with the guiding principle that increased utilization of the limited open space in our neighborhood is a desirable goal; however, the actions of pickleball players and organized leagues who periodically and increasingly bring portable nets and set-up temporary courts in Seravalli Playground thereby taking over the majority of the paved space was deemed inappropriate by many who provided comments; and
10. Several attendees requested that rules about if, when and where pickleball players can play and, more broadly, guidance on what activities are allowed in the playground, should be more clearly defined and posted by the DPR.

Therefore, be it Resolved that CB 2, Manhattan:

1. Values our role of assisting in addressing community needs and concerns by acting as a conduit and advocates for community residents to City agencies; and
2. Sees the Parks & Waterfront Committee meeting of October 17, 2022, as a successful, beneficial step in a continuing process of finding solutions that will balance the objectives and goals of both pickleball players who want space to play and residents who adamantly want to protect the open, unpermitted space at Seravalli Playground from this use that they believe to be inappropriate and potentially dangerous; and
3. Hopes to be included in the next steps of the process including presentation of proposals to the community; and
4. Encourages the DPR to suggest viable options for more pickleball courts in the future while concurrently reviewing and posting guidelines for use of Seravalli Playground, so understanding is clearly communicated, and rules can be enforced when necessary.

**Vote: Passed, with 39 Board Members in favor.
with 1 Board Member opposed (S. Smith)**

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to this resolution.

Sincerely,



Jeannine Kiely, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Richard Caccappolo, Chair
Parks/Waterfront Committee
Community Board #2, Manhattan

JK/EM

c: Hon. Jerrold Nadler, Congressman
Hon. Brad Hoylman, State Senator
Hon. Deborah Glick, Assembly Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Man. Borough President
Hon. Christopher Marte, City Council Member