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## COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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### PARKS & WATERFRONT COMMITTEE MEETING

February 7, 2024

The Parks & Waterfront Committee of Community Board #2, Manhattan held its monthly meeting on Wednesday, February 7, 2024, at 6:30 in person and via Zoom.

The meeting covered two subjects - Updates from the Hudson River Park about Pier 40 and from Updates from the Department of Parks and Recreation concerning in-process projects in our District, including those at Grand Canal Court, Duarte Square, and Hudson-Houston Plaza (388 Hudson St. water tunnel site)  
Hudson River Park – Pier 40 Marine Operator Update – Presentation by New York Water Tours

**Board Members Present:** Rich Caccappolo (Chair); Susanna Aaron (Vice Chair); Chris Dignes; Anne Hager; Daniel Miller; Frederica Sigel; Shirley Secunda;

**Board Members Remote:** Matthew Metzger; Kristin Shea

**Board Members Absent with Notice:** Ritu Chattree

**Board Members Absent without Notice:** Julian Horky

**Public Members Present:** Coral Dawson;

**Public Members Absent with Notice:** Elizabeth Gilmore; Sharon Woolums

**Other Board Members Present:** Carter Booth; Jeannine Kiely; Katy Bordonaro; Donna Raftery; Valerie de la Rosa; Susan Kent, CB2 Board Chair

In total, approximately 26 people attended the meeting.

**There were no resolutions resulting from this meeting.**

#### **1. Updates from the Department of Parks & Recreation about in process projects**

Ms. Terese Flores, Regional Manager for the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), provided updates on three topics.

Grand Canal Courts – MTA substation project below the popular basketball court located at Thompson St., Canal St., and Avenue of the Americas project is in process and is expected to be completed by Summer / Fall 2025 though, work will continue underground for a while afterwards (Fall 2026). Restoration drawings depicting the space that will be delivered upon completion of the surface work will be delivered in late 2024 or early 2025 so that we can review them.

Juan Pablo Duarte Square – the space located where Sullivan St., Grand St., and Avenue of the Americas intersects with Canal St. is being used for staging for the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) pump station project taking place (expected to be starting soon) under the de-mapped Sullivan Street section of this lot. DPR has no updates on the project and needs to speak to DEP as well as the team that will be then developing the space, i.e., Trinity Real Estate, Taconic Partners.

Our committee reminded of the complexity of having several projects going on concurrently, including one that requires closure of the Holland Tunnel. Ms. Flores noted that DPR will get updates through the inter-agency department. It was suggested we schedule another walk-through visit / meeting in coming months.

Hudson-Houston Plaza – two events were held recently, one an in-person meeting (which was well attended) and the other a remote meeting held over zoom. Roughly 500 surveys have been submitted, too. Several committee members attended the in-person meeting and described the facilitated charette process. The space can only be used for passive recreation, i.e., not playing fields, but potentially some activities such as bocce, ping pong and half-court basketball. Seating areas and educational programs were suggested. The planned affordable housing building on the northern section of the lot (388 Hudson) was not discussed. Ms. Flores said the DPR and the Hudson Square BID are also working with City As School – many attendees would like to preserve the mural on their wall.

Ms. Flores mentioned that DPR is looking to make improvements on the other ex-DEP water tunnel sites, specifically the one at Grand St and Lafayette St. which was opened in 2022. (Rapkin-Gayle Plaza was named after two important figures in SoHo history: Chester Rapkin and Margot Gayle. The former wrote a study about the neighborhood "that was instrumental to preservation activists" while the latter "led efforts to designate the SoHo Cast Iron Historic District.").

Tony Dapolito Recreation Center – DPR is still doing assessments. There are no updates on potential re-opening of the building or the pool. Ms. Flores reminded attendees of the Chelsea Rec Center, which is on 24<sup>th</sup> St.

Ms. Flores also told attendees about the "Lets Green NYC" initiative / program (<https://www.nycgovparks.org/news/press-releases?id=22081> ) the goal of which is to improve communication and build relationships with current and potential volunteers and increase community engagement and a sense of community.

## **2. Updates on Hudson River Park Trust**

Robert Atterbury, Executive Vice President, Park Relationships and Programs for the Hudson River Park Trust (HRPT) returned for the second time in two months. He announced:

The opening of the Pier 26 Science Playground within Pier 26 is for ages 3-12. The goal is to introduce visitors to the Hudson River environment. The pier features places to play, relax and enjoy views and now also has this area for children.

Kids Week at the Intrepid - February 17-24 – their annual program to educate and inspire.

Marine Operator at Pier 40: The contract for the Pier 40 Marine Operator has been granted after HRPT published their RFP, they received proposals and they completed their selection process. The winner is New York Water Tours. The previous operator, Hornblower (and their subcontractor, Cornucopia), is out – their permit expired at the end of 2023.

New York Water Tours' Founder/ President, Head of Operations, CFO and General Counsel all attended and gave a presentation. They told attendees of their history (they have been operating in the harbor for 10 years). They ran 2000 cruises in 2023. They described their solid safety and environment records and told of their "good neighbor" operating processes including a reservation system and bookings system for their nearly 50 products (whale watching, sunset, fall foliage, etc.) – most tickets sold online – and they smooth out large peaks. They operate 95% of cruises from 10 AM–10 PM. All vessels operated by their personnel. No music played dockside. They don't play music when they are close to the pier leaving or arriving back. They have a phone line for complaints. They stated that they look forward to adjusting their practices to make the situation better for all involved. They have 6 vessels of varying sizes ranging from those that can handle 120-150 passengers, others that handle closer to 300 capacity and the largest which have capacity of 600, but those ships typically book 220 for brunch and dinner though they can handle more. Question posed: "will there be enough personnel to facilitate loading?" – they answered they do and will work so there are not large crowds. This relationship will constitute a substantial portion of revenue in HRPT's budget. For this reason and because there had been complaints from neighbors in previous years, HRPT spent a great deal of time and effort on the selection process. Our committee members and members of the community conveyed our appreciation for the efforts and celebrated the success of the HRPT team. Compliments such as "we are thoroughly impressed" were conveyed. They will next come to the SLA committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Caccappolo,  
Chair, Parks & Waterfront Committee  
Community Board 2, Manhattan