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## COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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### PARKS & WATERFRONT COMMITTEE MEETING

January 7, 2026

The Parks & Waterfront Committee of Community Board 2, Manhattan, held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, January 7, 2026, at 6:30 in person at the CB2 District Office Conference Room, 3 Washington Square Village and via Zoom.

The meeting covered two topics:

- Update on in-process projects in our district, primarily Bleecker Playground renovation, and introduction to Partnership for Parks
- Discussion of committee volunteer point persons to each open space in our district

**Board Members Present:** Rich Caccappolo (Chair); Susanna Aaron (Vice Chair); Chris Dignes; Benjamin Listman; Shirley Secunda; Edward Siegel; Frederica Sigel

**Board Members Remote:** Ritu Chattree

**Board Members Absent with Notice:**

**Board Members Absent without Notice:**

**Public Members Present:**

**Public Members Remote:** Coral Dawson

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

In total, 7 people attended the meeting in person with approximately 10 on zoom.

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

#### **1. Update on in-process projects in our district, particularly Bleecker Playground renovation**

Terese Flores, Regional Manager for the NYC Parks Department, attended the meeting in person and participated to provide updates, context, and guidance related to in-process parks operations and planning priorities within the district.

Her main topic was the status of the renovation of Bleecker Playground (Bleecker St at Hudson St).

The multi-section playground is currently under construction. The project is intended to address playground infrastructure needs, which include Equipment upgrades, Surface improvements, Safety enhancements and General usability and durability updates. A new drinking fountain will be installed; the bathroom is not being updated. The team on the project is bringing the playground up to current standards, rather than doing a complete redesign or expansion. The work was referred to as “a renovation” That said, the scope is pretty full scale.

Work is being phased; the northern portion, which contains a jungle gym and sand area is open while the southern portion is being repaired and improved. The team is waiting to receive new play equipment and safety surface for the southern sections which have long lead time items, but that is acceptable because it is hard to install such items during winter. Once those arrive and are installed, that portion will be completed, and the northern section will then go under construction. The estimated completion date of the project is still August 2026.

Ms. Flores introduced us to Anthony Deng, Special Project Coordinator at NYC Department of Park and Recreation (DPR) working with Partnership for Parks, the public-private partnership between City Parks Foundation and DPR (started in 1989, partnered with DPR since 1995) that through various programs and initiatives they invigorate parks into dynamic spaces and to that end “supports and champions neighborhood volunteers by providing the tools needed, in some cases including funding, to advocate and care for neighborhood parks and green spaces”.

Mr. Deng is working with Ms. Flores' division to provide support to community members and groups as a community engagement wing of the Parks Department. They can help recruit volunteers and nurture community groups – which was a goal recommendation that Commissioner Shimamura made to our committee when we were working on our District Needs Assessment planning submission.

## **2. Discussion of committee volunteer point persons for each open space in our district**

During that planning process last year, we discussed the idea of getting each of our committee members (including public members) positioned as the point persons within our group of a few (each) of the parks and open spaces in our district. We identified 30+ locations – some of which have projects underway or soon will have work done, some of which have recently been improved, others which have not been updated in a long time, some of which have one or more great, dedicated, generous volunteers, others which could use the recruiting of local supporters. To this end, we reviewed a list of the spaces and each was assigned an attendee to become point person for the next year.

**New business: discussion of Police Presence in Washington Square Park.** Following a joint Federal and City initiative in late October that led to the indictment of 19 individuals for drug sales, an initial enforcement detail of 60 officers was assigned to Washington Square Park to prevent new sellers from establishing operations. This presence, originally consisting of two shifts of 30 officers, was later reduced to 38 officers (2 x 19) in December and then fully eliminated around New Year's Day. Future security plans were not disclosed during the recent committee meeting.

After the meeting, members shared reports of what appeared to be a resurgence of drug sales specifically in the Northwest Corner of the park.

On January 12th, Detective Safatle of the local 6th Precinct informed the CB2 office that the elimination of these patrols had been reversed. Effective immediately, a new detail of 16 officers (two shifts of 8) has been assigned to the park. Additionally, the Command Post has been relocated to the intersection of MacDougal and WSNorth, positioning it effectively outside of the Northwest Corner.

Respectfully submitted,

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