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## COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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February 22, 2019

William T. Castro  
Manhattan Borough Commissioner  
Arsenal West 24 West 61<sup>st</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10023

Dear Manhattan Borough Commissioner Castro:

At its Full Board meeting on February 21, 2019, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

### A RESOLUTION REGARDING A PUBLIC ART PROJECT CALLED “NEW YORK ARTIST MEMORIAL GARDEN” IN JACKSON SQUARE

#### **WHEREAS:**

- 1) New York City Parks Department’s “Adopt-a-Bench program”, which was started in 2005, enables individuals, groups, and families to purchase a plaque that resides on a bench in honor of a loved one or to celebrate a special occasion; and
- 2) The program raises over \$100,000 a year for general park maintenance and operations; and
- 3) Art Production Fund a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to commissioning and producing ambitious public art projects ([www.artproductionfund.org](http://www.artproductionfund.org)) and White Columns ([www.whitecolumns.org](http://www.whitecolumns.org)) a not-for-profit art gallery founded in 1970 that is open to the public and free of charge that has been active in Manhattan CB2 neighborhood since 1979 are partnering with NYC Parks on this project; and
- 4) This program, a curatorial initiative by White Columns’ director Matthew Higgs, invited and signed up 34 New York-based artists to each dedicate a plaque to a person - or an entity - significant to them; and

5) The sponsors initially proposed Jackson Square for the project, then decided to move to Father Demo Square because Jackson Square was to close for years for renovation, but the local community around Father Demo Square was not in favor of the project; and

6) Jackson Square is now scheduled to reopen by spring/summer 2019 and the sponsors have requested to return to create the Artist Memorial Garden in the renovated park; and

7) Jackson Square is more appealing a location for this project than Father Demo Square because there will still be benches available for members of the public to adopt beyond those already sold for the Memorial Garden, because Father Demo has fewer benches and all would have been claimed. Jackson Square will have 27 benches which can take up to 54 plaques; 34 plaques have been sold as part of the program; and

8) The Jackson Square Alliance supports the placement of this installation in the park and will receive a one-time ear-marked donation of \$57,000 for maintenance of the park; and

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT COMMUNITY BOARD 2, MANHATTAN** approves the proposal for this art project in Jackson Square done in conjunction with the NYC Parks Department's Adopt a Bench program, but

- Requests that the identifying signage at the entrance of the park that will explain the art project, list the participants, and list the sponsors be retained for longer than the proposed one-year duration.
- Specifies that our support is a one-time approval that should not be considered a blanket endorsement of using the Adopt a Bench program in this manner moving forward, because we see the Adopt a Bench program as a way to memorialize loved ones and/or honor local achievers and do not want it to be used as a vehicle for arts installations or commercial projects that purchase most of the benches in small neighborhood parks, because such initiatives would undercut both the spirit and intent of the program.

**VOTE: Passed, with 29 Board Members in favor.**

**5 Board Members in opposition.**

**(S. Russo, K. Bordonaro, S. Gammie, D. Gruber, F. Sigel)**

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

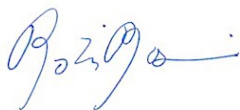
Sincerely,



Carter Booth, Chair  
Community Board #2, Manhattan



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



Robin Rothstein, Chair  
Arts & Institutions Committee  
Community Board #2, Manhattan

TB/EM

c: Hon. Jerrold L. Nadler, Congressman  
Hon. Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator  
Hon. Deborah J. Glick, Assembly Member  
Hon. Gale Brewer, Man. Borough President  
Hon. Corey Johnson, City Council Speaker