



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**CHRISTINE BERTHET**  
Chair

**ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.**  
District Manager

March 7, 2014

Mr. William T. Castro  
Manhattan Borough Commissioner  
City of New York Parks & Recreation  
Arsenal West  
24 West 61<sup>st</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10023

**Re: Appointment of Full Time Gardener for District 4**

Dear Commissioner Castro,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) would like to thank Park Manager Elliott Sykes for attending our Committee meeting and informing us of the appointment of Javier Tavares as a full-time gardener for our district. MCB4 is pleased to have additional staff dedicated to the parks of our area. While we welcome the additional staff to attend to the beautification of our green spaces, we have some concerns on behalf of the volunteer corps in place for many of our parks.

In the absence of a full-time gardener for parks within the boundaries of MCB4 many residents have dedicated their time and resources to ensure that these parks in their neighborhoods provide a pleasant experience for all visitors. Their activities have included plantings, upkeep and management of the flora, organizing events and providing additional waste management for their neighborhood parks. With respect to the flora, this is a source of pride for the many volunteers and it is our hope that Mr. Javier Tavares will consult and coordinate with these volunteers on the plantings.

By establishing a partnership between Parks and the Community we can more easily achieve ideal green spaces within our district and in order to accomplish a good working relationship we need to have clear and consistent communication between Parks and the Community. We invite you and Park Manager, Mr. Elliott Sykes to regularly attend Community Board and Block Association meetings and/or to set up a liaison for the purpose of providing updates and receiving feedback on park happenings.

The request for improving communication with Parks & Recreation stems from some incidents in recent years including:

- Minimal updates on capital improvement projects resulting in designs which do not match the community's desires and expectations.
- Permits being issued for amplified music without community consultation.


- Permits granted to religious groups allowing distribution of food and paraphernalia without community input and notification.
- Events planned by Parks that are not well communicated to the community.

MCB4 appreciates the additional staffing for our area and we look forward improving the overall relationship between Parks and MCB4 with increased and better communication going forward. The future partnership with the newly appointed full-time gardener and the many hard working volunteers in District 4 will help to achieve wonderful open spaces in our part of the City and improve the overall quality of the outdoor experience for all park users.

Sincerely,



Christine Berthet  
Chair



Maarten de Kadt  
Co-Chair, Waterfront, Parks  
& Environment Committee



Delores Rubin  
Co-Chair, Waterfront, Parks  
& Environment Committee

CC: Elliott Sykes, City of New York Parks & Recreation  
Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator  
Richard Gottfried, NY State Assemblymember  
Jerrold Nadler, Congressman  
Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Corey Johnson, NYC Councilmember