



Robert Rodriguez
Chair

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Joint Meeting
Parks & Recreation Committee/
Randall's Island Taskforce
May 8, 2008 – 6:00 PM
Community Board 11 Office
1664 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10035

Present: Frank Brija, John Brown, Monica Brown, Frances Mastrota, Daniel Perez, Cora Shelton, Debbie Quinones, Russel Shuler

Excused: N/A

Absent: Edward Franco, Cesar Ortiz

Guests: Yekaterina Gluzberg

New/Old Business

Contaminated Community Gardens

Concerns' regarding contamination in Community Gardens was brought up at a workshop at Hostos College in which Frances Mastrota attended. Frances presented these concerns to the committee and stated that some gardens were now testing their soils to make sure that they were not contaminated. She also stated that Community Gardens are also increasingly growing food for consumption. Daniel Perez stated that he has been concerned about the contamination in Community Gardens for years as he believes many of these spaces are actually brownfields.

The committee agreed that testing needed to be done on all gardens but were concerned about who would pay for the cost of the testing and if needed the remediation. A motion was made by Cora Shelton to contact Greenthumb regarding soil contamination so that they can investigate the cost of getting testing done on all of their gardens. The motion was seconded by Daniel Perez and passed unanimously.

The committee felt that this was a very important issue and wanted to continue to investigate what options were available when it came to not only the testing of the soils but also the potential remediation costs.

Abraham Lincoln Playground

Following up on a conversation that was had at a previous meeting, Russel Shuler stated that no repairs had been done at the Lincoln Playground. The pavement near one of the basketball courts has a crack that has the potential to cause injury. This issue was brought to the attention of the Parks Manager via a telephone conversation. In order to properly follow-up on the issue Daniel Perez made a motion that a letter be drafted and sent to the Parks Department in regards to the condition of the Lincoln Playground. The motion was seconded by John Brown and passed unanimously.

Parks Permitting

The issue regarding the use of a *grandfather clause* when dealing with parks permits was brought up once again. There was some confusion on whether this was an actual policy of the Parks department or just a standard practice. Russel Shuler was concerned about how this clause was being used and felt that it was being administered inequitably. Daniel Perez raised concerns about this policy as he felt that if not properly administered it has the potential to benefit organizations from outside the community.

Concerns regarding the Parks Permitting in general were brought up by committee members Frank Brija and John Brown. Both members felt that there was a lot of questions with no answers and the Parks Department seems to be functioning by using standard practices rather than codified policy. A motion was made to ask the NYC Parks Department to attend a committee meeting in order to explain the Parks Permitting process with a special focus on clarifying the issue of a grandfather clause. The motion was seconded by Frank Brija and passed unanimously.

Randall's Island Tour

The committee recognized that there were a lot of changes occurring on Randall's Island and that they were happening very quickly. On various occasions representatives of the Randall's Island Sports Foundation (RISF) have come before the board to present their plans and they have often used language in reference to locations on the island that were unfamiliar to the taskforce (i.e No longer using the name Ward's Island). In order to see what changes were occurring and to familiarize themselves with the new names that are being used, John Brown made a motion that a tour of Randall's Island be arranged for the next taskforce meeting in June. The motion was seconded by Frank Brija and passed unanimously

Announcements

Partnership for Parks

On May 17th the Partnership for Parks will be hosting Parks Day activities in Marcus Garvey Park, the Harlem Art Park as well as Cherry Tree Playground. For more information Yekaterina Gluzberg can be reached at (212) 408-0283 or yekaterina.gluzberg@parks.nyc.gov.

Adjournment

Frank Brija made a motion to adjourn, the motion was seconded by Cora Shelton and passed unanimously.

Action Items

1. A motion was made by Cora Shelton to contact Greenthumb regarding soil contamination so that they can investigate the cost of getting testing done on all of their gardens. The motion was seconded by Daniel Perez and passed unanimously.
2. In order to properly follow-up on the issue Daniel Perez made a motion that a letter be drafted and sent to the Parks Department in regards to the condition of the Lincoln Playground. The motion was seconded by John Brown and passed unanimously.
3. A motion was made to ask the NYC Parks Department to attend a committee meeting in order to explain the Parks Permitting process with a special focus on clarifying the issue of a grandfather clause. The motion was seconded by Frank Brija and passed unanimously.
4. In order to see what changes were occurring and to familiarize themselves with the new names that are being used, John Brown made a motion that a tour of Randall's Island be arranged for the next taskforce meeting in June. The motion was seconded by Frank Brija and passed unanimously.