



# COMMUNITY BOARD ELEVEN

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN  
1664 PARK AVENUE  
NEW YORK, NY 10035  
TEL: 212-831-8929  
FAX: 212-369-3571  
www.cb11m.org

Nilsa Orama  
Chair

Angel D. Mescain  
District Manager

## Environment, Open Space, & Parks Committee Thursday, March 8, 2018, 6:00 p.m. Board Office

### \*\*\* Minutes \*\*\*

- Present: Tabatha Lozano, Frances Mastrota, Jeffrey Monteiro, Russel Shuler
- Excused: David Giordano, Ryan Sheffield
- Guests: Jennifer Lantaz, NYC Parks; Javier Garcia; Harum Ori; Lane Addonizio; Sarah Neilson; Alda Chan; Peter Feigenbaum; Mahfuzur Rahman; Eric Peterson

#### 1. Call to Order– Adoption of the Agenda

*Meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM by the Chair, F. Mastrota. Quorum was established at 6:04 PM, at which time the Agenda was adopted moved by Russel Shuler and seconded by Tabatha Lozano. All in favor.*

#### 2. Announcements

- a. Making Brooklyn Bloom Gardeners Conference - 03-10-2018. Bklyn. Botanic Garden - 10 AM- 4PM 1000 Washington Ave.
- b. GreenThumb GrowTogether - 03-31-2018 Manhattan Community College - 9 AM to 4 PM.
- c. Community Park Initiative (CPI) - James Weldon Johnson - Ribbon Cutting TBA contact Patricia.Marte@ parksny.gov
- d. Assemblymember Robert Rodriguez - NY State Budget Town Hall, 03-17-2018 @ 10:00 At Dream Charter School, 1991 Second Ave @ 104th St.

#### 3. Presentations & Discussions

- a. NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation to make a presentation on a temporary, public exhibition at Thomas Jefferson Park (15 mins)

Jennifer Lantzas, Deputy Director of Public Art, NYC Dept. of Parks & Recreation and Artist-Harumi Ori made a presentation for information only, on

the temporary ( June 2018-June 2019) artwork entitled " I am Here", will be installed in Thomas Jefferson Park (111th -114th Streets. on First Ave.). The sculpture made of outdoor construction mesh in orange, a holy color in the artist's native country of Japan, will be attached to a chain link fence. The sculpture reproduces the space & time of a single moment of a visitors experience in the park. There will be a ribbon cutting in June.

- b. NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation to present of the East Harlem Resiliency Study (15 mins)

Alda Chan, Project Administrator, NYC Dept. of Parks & Recreation presented, for informational purposes only, the start of the East Harlem Resiliency Study (92nd St. to 154th St.). East Harlem was identified as a city priority post Hurricane Sandy as part of OneNYC. The study process for: i. Integrated Flood Protection: solving for coastal and inland flooding. ii. Social Resiliency: understanding social cohesion & community facilities. iii. Open Space Planning: design opportunities in parks & open spaces. The social resiliency study interviews are ongoing. A Project Advisory Committee (PAC) will be formed in April 2018. Followed by Community Forum 1 in late Spring/ early Summer 2018. The results of which will produce a Vision Plan to help secure funding and affirmative action.

- c. Central Park Conservancy to present on East 96th Street Playground Project

Lisa Kudo, Central Park Conservancy, requesting a " Letter of Support" for the reconstruction of the East 96th St. Playground, located near the northeastern corner of the Reservoir, in a land scape bounded by the East Drive, 5th Ave. and the 96th St. Transverse Road. As part of the Central Park Conservancy's Plan for Play, it is one of the largest playgrounds in Central Park. Originally designed in 1936, the playground has areas for children 2-5 as well as 5-12 years of age. Reconstruction will bring more intergenerational use of the playground. Caregivers, seniors, visitors, and ADA persons, will experience new ideas in playground development. i.e. Landscape fencing, user activated water sprays, strap swings, sand & wood carpets, a picnic area , and the removal of a 7 ft. fence to be replaced a 4 ft. one & landscaping, & ramp access to the playground area. A motion was made by Jeffery Monteiro to grant a letter of support for the redevelopment of the East 96th Street Playground in Central Park as proposed by the Central Park Conservancy. The motion was seconded by Tabatha Lozano and passed unanimously.

#### 4. New Business

- a. Community Garden Development by HPD chosen developers tabled awaiting a Community Gardeners report.

#### 5. Old Business

- a. Capital Expense Request - Tracking
  - i. 107th St. Pier - East River Esplanade
  - ii. East River Esplanade Repairs - 111th St. & 117th St.
  - iii. Richard Toussaint Way & Richard Toussaint Park (125<sup>th</sup>- 135<sup>th</sup> Streets along the Harlem River Esplanade)
  
- b. Expense Budget Requests
  - i. Support of Green Thumb Program
  - ii. Additional horticultural staffing, in CB11 NYC parks - Jefferson, White, Marcus Garvey, 103 ST.
  - iii. Additional recreation assistants for summer programs in all CB11 NYC parks
  - iv. Policy Effort: To advocate for 1% of the NYC Budget for the NYC Dept. of Parks & Recreation.  
(Currently @ .6%)

## 6. Adjournment

*A motion was made AT 7:28 PM by Russel Shuler to adjourn, Seconded by Jeffery Monteiro*

## **RECONSTRUCTION OF THE EAST 96TH STREET PLAYGROUND**

### **Project Description**

#### **Plan for Play**

This project is part of the Conservancy's effort to work in the sixteen playgrounds that have not been comprehensively rebuilt in the last decade, in order to raise all of Central Park's playgrounds to the same standard of excellence at the same time, as outlined in *Plan for Play: A Framework for Rebuilding and Managing Central Park's Playgrounds*. Grounded in the Conservancy's experience renovating and rebuilding the Park's playgrounds over the last several decades, the *Plan for Play* identifies seven overarching design goals:

- Improve the relationship between the playgrounds and the Park
- Enhance the quality and variety of play experiences
- Maximize user accessibility
- Ensure compliance with current safety standards
- Preserve unique and successful aspects of existing designs
- Practice sustainable design and construction
- Design innovative solutions

#### **Background**

East 96th Street Playground is located east of the Reservoir and south of the 96th Street Transverse. The original playground was built in 1936, as part of the system of playgrounds constructed under Parks Commissioner Robert Moses in the marginal landscapes along the Park perimeter. The original playground was oval in shape and included equipment and activities typical of the era, including swings, slides, see saws, kinder (sand) tables, and a water spray feature. The edge of the playground was delineated by wood and concrete benches and a low pipe-rail fence. The existing seven-foot tall steel picket fence was installed in the 1940s.

At the time the playground was built, the entrance to the Park at East 96th Street was one of the original vehicular entrances to the Drive. In 1941, the Drive entrance was eliminated and replaced by an exit lane from the 97th Street Transverse Road, which was necessary to connect with a new traffic pattern of one-way crosstown streets. The existing stairs and path leading from the East Drive to the entrance on the east side of the playground were added in 1948. In 1986, to address safety concerns, the Conservancy closed the pedestrian entrance into the Park from the transverse road, replacing it with a new pedestrian entrance off of the Fifth Avenue perimeter.

The playground has been renovated twice since it was built: once in 1980 by the Parks Department, and most recently in 1994 by the Conservancy. The 1980s work featured TimberForm play equipment, which replaced nearly all of the Moses era equipment. Treehouses, climbers, slides, bridges, tire swings, a sandbox, and picnic tables were added in the design vocabulary of the era. The renovation in 1994 by the Conservancy included the replacement of deteriorated pieces of wood equipment with modular play equipment. Rubber safety surface, and new bucket swings for smaller children were also added.

Of users surveyed as part of the planning and design effort, many cited the variety of play equipment, open space, and wide age range as important aspects of this playground.

### **Project Objectives**

The purpose of the project is to meet the design objectives outlined in the *Plan for Play* by specifically addressing the accessibility of the playground, the relationship between the playground and the Park, and the variety of play experiences for children ages 2-12.

### **Design Concept**

The playground is located east of the Reservoir and south of the 96th Street Transverse. The footprint is large, but constrained by current adjacent paths, existing topography, and mature trees.

The proposed design reorganizes and enhances the play spaces within the playground to allow for better separation of the age groups and better circulation between areas. The existing footprint will be modified and the playground regraded to better integrate it into the landscape. Additionally, an ADA-accessible route will be established for the first time, providing wheelchair access to the playground.

### **Scope of Work**

- Modify the existing footprint to create a wider landscape margin between playground and path, enhancing the connection between the playground and the Park landscape and working around existing mature trees; add a picnic area in the southern end of the playground that is both contained and part of the Park landscape.
- Regrade the playground, which currently slopes and steps down from west to east, leveling the ground plane to the lower elevation to remove barriers and improve the playground's relationship to the Park. In order to lower the west side of the playground, install concrete seat walls (18" high) that retain the grade outside the playground.
- Replace the 7-foot steel picket fence with a 4-foot steel picket fence. Around the picnic area, and behind the concrete retaining/seat walls (where there is sufficient opportunity for planting), install a lightweight mesh fence screened by the plantings (the same fence as developed for recently reconstructed playgrounds including East 110th, Wild West, East 72nd, and West 84th Street) to ensure that the play environment is contained.
- Regrade the entrance path from East 96th Street and create an ADA-accessible route to the playground, consisting of a ramp set into the landscape and screened by plantings.
- Install an ADA-accessible gate at the playground entrance.
- Reorganize the play spaces to better separate 2-5 and 5-12 age groups and allow for easy circulation between them.
- Construct an enhanced water spray feature at the center of the playground, activated by a user-operated bollard that makes the spray feature interactive and conserves water.
- Relocate sand area to the 2-5 play area; reconstruct to include a sand table for ADA access.
- Move existing swing area for 2-5 year-olds that currently includes six bucket swings to the northern end of the playground and replace them with three bucket swings, four strap swings, and one ADA-accessible swing.