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COMMUNITY BOARD ELEVEN

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Environment, Open Space, & Parks Committee Thursday, January 12, 2016, 6:00 p.m. Board Office, 1664 Park Avenue New York, NY 10035

MINUTES

Present: Frances Mastrota, David Giordano, Russell Shuler, Marie Winfield

Excused: James Garcia, Chandra Smith

Absent: Brodie Enoch

Guests: Connie Lee, Marcus Garvey Park Alliance (MGPA); Maura Smotrich, CIVITAS; Cinthia de la Rosa, NYC Department of Health (NYCDOHMH); Renee Keitt, Chenchita's Garden; Erik Linsalata, NYC Department of Parks and Recreation; Jeremy Vega, Hope Community; Susan Hick, MGPA; Christina Nieves, NYCDOHMH; Shakira Henderson; Eric Peterson, DPR/Randall's Island; Jeffrey Monteiro; Ankita Gupta, Starr Whitehouse; Jayne Binzer, Friends of the East River Esplanade; Jesús Pérez

1. Call to Order

The Chair, F. Mastrota, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm without quorum and gave an overview of several initiatives, including the restoration of the Esplanade and the African Burial Ground as mapped parkland. D. Giordano joined by phone at 6:07pm. (Committee achieved quorum at 6:42pm)

2. Announcements

- a. No announcements from the public

3. Presentations & Discussions

- a. Informational update on Pier 107 proposal at Public Design Commission, Erik Linsalata, NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (20).

Erik Linsalata presented the updated proposal for Pier 107, which includes a design for beautification and amenities on the topside of the pier within the project's budget limitations. The shading proposal is similar to a design used in Brooklyn Bridge Park, which has worked well. The modified proposal includes 4 clusters of seating on the pier. The full build out for pier is estimated at 18 million dollars, with a restroom and other uses besides passive recreation and fishing expected.

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There were questions about concessions on the Esplanade. Mr. Peterson explained that there are limitations on shaved iced concessions due to permitting criteria.

Community members also had questions about whether the reopened pier would close at dusk and if there is illumination planned. *DPR noted the difficulties with illumination on the Esplanade and can speak with NYPD and operation to follow up.* Both DPR and a member from Friends of the East River Esplanade agreed that removing the top structure would likely provide more light and safety than the current level of brightness at night on the Esplanade. Friends of the East River Esplanade commented that most lights north of the pier are out. 311 calls have not been effective.

Any member of the public can comment at the next public design commission meeting scheduled for Wed. Jan 18th at City Hall

- b. Informational presentation on the East Harlem Community Walking Trail, Cinthia De La Rosa, NYC Department of Health (20).

Cinthia De La Rosa presented an overview of the East Harlem Community Walking Trail. The Walking Trail Steering Committee meets monthly and is open to all. The Steering Committee has been doing an on-the-ground assessment and surveys in the community. Topics have included sidewalk conditions, crosswalks and exploring engaging with the right partners for solutions to identified problems. Ms. De La Rosa presented initial survey findings (see attached presentation).

Ms. De La Rosa asked committee and community members in attendance for feedback. F. Mastrotta explained several issues with new street trees; without proper water resources, the roots push concrete up and create uneven walkways. Homeowners in her area have redone the cement but not with great quality materials. The upkeep for arborists is expensive; large trucks often break the limbs of the trees.

Connie Lee noted that public sculptures marked on the trail map are temporary and will be removed by May 9, 2017. She is interested in organizing an artists' led walking tour as a part of this initiative before May 9th.

Suggestions about involving youth from members from F. Mastrotta, R. Shuler, M. Winfield: certification in tree pruning, involvement with schools, CB11 youth, leadership through teachers, school projects, creating long-term value for youth, annual or cyclical events to make walking trail visible to youth, community service hours, engaging PS/MS 57 at James Weldon Johnson playground where there is a current lack of recreation space due to rehabilitation of this space.

Jeremy Vega, Hope Community with 5000 residents, stated that he would love to connect with the Walking Trail and suggested that the Steering Committee should contact other organizations with large resident populations. He would like to connect the walking trail committee with teachers who are doing tours with their students in their neighborhood.

4. Adoption of the Agenda

Motion to adopt the agenda by D. Giordano, seconded by R. Shuler. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Continuing Business

- a. Report on community gardens, CPI parks sites, and ongoing capital projects

Renee Keitt from Chenchita's Garden reported to the committee that Daniel Hernandez, HPD – Neighborhood Strategies, said there would be more information about the East 111th Street community gardens in late December or January but there has been no word yet. M. Winfield received email from Bill LoSasso, Director of Green Thumb, that confirmed that the E 111th RFP, Pleasant Village Garden RFQ and Jackie Robinson RFQ are all still under review, without any specific timelines. He also stated via email that Pleasant Village and Jackie Robinson consolidations would not occur until Fall 2017.

M. Winfield presented an updated capital project tracker to the committee for an overview of the all of the projects over which the committee has oversight (see attached).

There were no reports on Community Parks Initiative sites.

- b. Budget: Preliminary budget responses for FY18 budget

M. Winfield briefly explained the current phase of the FY18 budget process and that the committee will need to be prepared for preliminary budget responses and the City Council budget hearing for the Department of Parks and Recreation, which will likely be in March 2017.

- c. Environmental reviews

M. Winfield reported back that, as encouraged at the last committee meeting, Solid Waste Advisory Board members submitted comments on Draft Scope of Work for the Environmental Impact Statement for the East Harlem rezoning. Individual committee members also confirmed submitting comments on their own behalf.

6. New Business

- a. Applying for Community Board 11 – M. Winfield asked the audience if there were any members of the public attending who intended to apply for CB11 membership. The committee answered the prospective applicants' questions and discussed the merits of public service on a Community Board.
- b. MTA staging area on 2nd Avenue and E. 96th Street/Co-op Tech – The Chair presented a proposal for an art labyrinth with Co-op Tech project schools' input and participation for the staging area, once the parcel is returned to the Parks Department from the MTA. Anyone with proposals can contact Elizabeth Ernish at Parks for community suggestions.
- c. NYC Council hearing Thurs Jan 19 at 1pm, Committee on Parks and Recreation, 250 Broadway, Committee Rm on 16 fl. The committee reviewed proposed Intros. 407 and 1340 which would require notice to City Council members upon changes to capital Parks projects (see attached). **Any member of the public can attend the Jan 19th City Council hearing.**

d. Accomplishments and goals for 2016, 2017 for Manhattan Borough President's office

M. Winfield stated that committee accomplishments for the 2015-2016 session were sent to our committee email list and committee members mid-2016. *The rest of the information with goals will be compiled from past minutes and sent to committee members via email to forward to the District Manager.*

The committee discussed and agreed on the following goals for 2017.

- Improving committee work, including better administrative organization and expanding the membership of the committee
- Implementing a street tree care initiative, possibly including community gardens adopting street trees or within our committee
- Mapping of African Burial ground memorial as parkland
- Continued community engagement on Esplanade

e. Randall's Island announcements

Eric Peterson (DPR/Randall's Island) reported that applications for spring and summer field permits are due Sunday, January 15, 2017. Randall's Island has also released information for seasonal jobs. *M. Winfield requested text/link to these job notices for the CB11 community bulletin.* Mr. Peterson also reported that while snowshoeing usually requires 9-12 inches of snow Randall's Island is hoping to be able to have snowshoeing available with 6 inches of snow this winter. He also suggested advocacy with DOT/Parks around Triboro Plaza at East 124th/126th Streets for walking routes and bicycle access to Randall's Island. *M. Winfield suggested following up with the Public Safety and Transportation Committee.*

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 7:58pm by R. Shuler, seconded by D. Giordano. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes prepared by M. Winfield.