



CB9M LANDMARKS PRESERVATION AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

Wednesday, January 3, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Hon. Heather Jason, called the regular meeting of the CB9M Landmarks Preservation and Parks Committee to attention at 6:40 PM EST, on Wednesday, January 3, 2024. The meeting was held in-person and via Zoom conferencing.

WELCOME

Co-Chair Hon. Heather Jason welcomed the committee members and guests and thanked them for attending.

COMMITTEE

Co-Chair Hon. Heather Jason; Co-Chair Hon. Annette Robinson; Hon. April Adams; Hon. Eddy Antoine; Hon. Patricia Caldwell; Hon. Daniel Cohen; Hon. Juaniros Ovalle; Hon. Carolina Ramirez; Hon. Hugo Torres-Fetsco; Hon. Elisa Yoo; and Hon. Liz Waytkus

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT AND IN-PERSON

Co-Chair Hon. Heather Jason; Co-Chair Hon. Annette Robinson; Hon. Liz Waytkus; and Hon. Elisa Yoo

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT/OR VIRTUAL

Hon. Patricia Caldwell (virtual); Hon. April Adams (virtual); Hon. Eddy Antoine (absent); Hon. Daniel Cohen (absent); Hon. Juaniros Ovalle (absent); Hon. Carolina Ramirez (absent); and Hon. Hugo Torres-Fetsco (absent)

GUESTS PRESENT AND IN-PERSON

Kevin McAllister (Uptown Inner City League, Inc.); Ira Gershenhorn (Super Stewards Program, NYC Parks)

GUESTS PRESENT AND IN-VIRTUAL

Chair CB9M Hon. Victor Edwards; Hon. Signe Mortensen, CB9M; Brad Taylor (Friends of Morningside Park); Kelli Jordan (NYC Parks, Riverside Park and West Harlem Piers Park); Leslie Wright (NYC Regional Director, New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation); Mallory Craig (Education Center Manager, The Horticultural Society of New York); Matt Genrich (NYC Parks); Nina Talley and Jennice Thompson (Edgecombe Avenue Garden Park); Shannon Richards (142nd Street Dog Run); Stephanie Caban (North Park Outreach Coordinator, Riverside Park Conservancy); Robert Stern (Morningside Heights Historic District Committee); and Terry Van Dyne



QUORUM

A quorum was not established with only four voting members present.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was not adopted because a quorum was not present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- The meeting minutes from Wednesday, December 6, 2023 were distributed but not adopted because a quorum was not present.
- Hon. Patricia Caldwell would like to amend the minutes to include a statement that the Parks Department and the Department of Education may have property boundary issues at Annunciation Park Playground, (P.S. 161 Don Pedro Albizu Campos School).

PARKS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES:

Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park (DFR BSP): Leslie Wright

- The ice-skating rink is nice, firm, and clean.
- Public ice-skating is offered every Friday and Saturday evenings. You may listen to music and watch people skate.
- During the holidays there was pop-up programming. Every day the gym was filled with activities including senior tennis, arts and crafts for kids and free nightly movies at the theater.
- The swimming locker room renovation continues and is on track for completion in the summer.
- The community garden is closed for the season. They wrapped up year 1 of the 2 year cycle. Gardeners who won plots for the February 2023 have all of 2024 to garden.
- Check the park's website to register for events.
- It was requested to consider changing the music's radio station in the temporary pool trailer bathrooms during construction at times.

Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park - Greenhouse & Education Center: Mallory Craig

- The learning garden is dormant but programming is continuing.
- Register for free programs that are available 5 to 6 days a week.
- Tonight, there was "Recipes and Ritual"; creating soaps, and shower steamers as an example.
- There is a line-up for the winter.
- Planning for Earth Day festival in the spring.
- Come this Saturday. There will be a lot of programming in the next two weeks around the New Year; vision boarding, deciding what the gardens will look like through gardening planning sessions and seed planting. Make seed suggestions as preparations are made to order seeds.
- This Saturday January 6th, calendars and field notebooks will be made to explore the seasons' chronology and how seasons change.
- Next Saturday, January 13th from 10:30 AM - noon, terrariums will be made.



- Leslie Wright made an announcement that the 2nd Saturday of every month is the Friends of Riverbank State Park meeting at the park from 10:30 AM – noon. The next meeting is on January 13th located upstairs in the main building rehearsal room. All are welcome.
- [Copy of Winter FY24 Postcards \(7 × 5 in\).pdf - Google Drive](#)
- [Public Events | The Horticultural Society of New York](#)

Riverside Park and West Harlem Piers Park: Kelli Jordan

- 142nd Street Dog Run update: Reviewing contractor specifications for the renovation. Expecting construction to start in the spring. The dog run will be closed for the construction duration or approximately a year. Notification of the closure will be announced.
- Riverside Park boundaries are between 59th Street – to 181st Street.
- Shannon Richards wants to collaborate with Heather, Annette, and the Health Sub-Committee.
- This will be the only dog run with ADA compliant capabilities to accommodate mobility concerns unique to CB9. The announcement includes the following: The entrance gateways will be moved and updated so there will be no or minimal slope. The gateways will be enlarged to 42 inches to accommodate power chairs and walkers. 6 feet benches will expand to 8 feet. There will be open landing platforms to accommodate power chairs and wheelchairs next to benches. M11 bus stop on Riverside Drive and 142nd and Access a Ride bus riders can come to the dog run.
- 142StDogRun@gmail.com Instagram: @dogrun142

Riverside Park Conservancy: Stephanie Caban

- There is a Mulch Fest this weekend Saturday, January 6, 2024 weather pending on 83rd St. Place Christmas trees on Riverside Drive park side in CB9 for pick up. Remove all ornaments.
- The Snow Corps Volunteer Team will help to shovel all staircases. The staff starts at 5 o'clock. Also, volunteer to help shovel after 5.
- Summer camp registration is open. Fort Washington is open now. The location on 103rd St will open on January 12th.
- Q - If people want to collect mulch, are bags provided?
- A – Pine mulch smells beautiful. Distributing big/small 1 -2 tote bags per person or bring your own. Come at 11 AM or 12 o'clock on 83rd and Riverside Dr. The remaining mulch is used for tree pits between 80th – 85th Streets. Mulch starts at 10 AM.
- Matt Genrich said there several locations to get mulch. Check website.
[Mulchfest : NYC Parks \(nycgovparks.org\)](#)
stephanie@riversideparknyc.org 646-899-5694
[NYC Parks MulchFest 2024 | Riverside Park Conservancy \(riversideparknyc.org\)](#)



Friends of Morningside Park: Brad Taylor

- Mulch Fest – There is currently no chipping site in CB9 or Harlem, but there used to be one in this park. Brad would love to see a chipper in Morningside or other location.
- Matt Genrich reported there's a chipping site in Inwood Hill Park at Isham Street and Seaman Avenue, and 81st and Central Park West. It takes big trucks and space for trees to be in there for things to be safely chipped. A chipper can be discussed with Brad.
- Great tree lighting at Morningside. Lights will be up until Jan. 12th. Event pictures link provided. [2023 Tree Lighting | Flickr](#). It was reported this site is the tallest living holiday tree in NYC parks.
- Regular Friday volunteer session from 9 AM -11 AM. Info can be found on morningsidepark.org.
- Harlem Parks will get a new admin soon. Matt was also asked about a New Manhattan Borough Commissioner, but there is no update.
- Communication on placing the plaque at the pond is continuing. Parks gave pushback and said they are no longer putting plaques in parks, but would consider. They are waiting to hear back from the monuments department. Annette will meet with Brad to plan. They have a generous donor for the master plan.

NYC Parks and Historic Harlem Parks: Matt Genrich

- Mulch Fest - Location at W 123rd St. and Morningside Ave. and St. Nicholas Park just south of 133rd and St. Nicholas Ave. Drop trees off at these locations through Sunday or leave trees out on the curb. January 5th – 13th, DSNY will pick trees up to turn into compost. Remove all ornaments, tree stands, and tree bags.
- [Mulchfest : NYC Parks \(nycgovparks.org\)](http://nycgovparks.org)
- It is hoped that the new park administrator will be introduced at the next meeting.
- St. Nicholas Park paths are open after repaving. Pipe railing to be installed needs a punch list.
- It was stated that wreaths are a pain to untangle from metal and proposed to dump trees in piers habitat shelter and aquatic critters.
- Only trees are taken in mulch fest, not wreaths. Matt does not oversee West Harlem Piers.
- Heather requested Manhattan Forestry present at a CB9 meeting during business hours such as the Seniors Action Committee that occurs on a Tuesday at 11 AM. Seniors expressed concern about sidewalk repair issues related to tree roots causing tripping hazards. Permits are required for tree guards and spring pruning is approaching. Matt will put Heather on an email chain with forestry.
- Shannon Richards suggested that CB9 can ask forestry for clarity. Forestry manages clear cutting when trees come down due to storm damage, and they trim branches. A lot of the work is sub-contracted.
- Chippers have to be aligned to the trees so bugs don't jump from garden to garden.
- Matt replied chipper decisions are determined if there is space and the need. It is a park by park basis. They have done it at Morningside Park before.



NEW BUSINESS, PRESENTATIONS, AND DISCUSSIONS

Uptown Inner City League, Inc – Kelvin McAllister

- Kelvin provided a PowerPoint handout for in-person guests.
- The organization started in 1990 and has remained in the community. They receive funding from the West Harlem Development Corporation. Their mission is to provide a safe haven through sports, education, health, and wellness program.
- They give away free books, backpacks, and supplies.
- 3333 Community Computer Learning Center / Broadway Residents Association, Inc provides computer education. They match computer skills according to ability. Certificates are given to students and adults.
- The organization took students and parents to the Jackie Robinson Museum.
- Highlighted a local need at Annunciation Playground Park. There are no comfort stations/restrooms for the community and wheelchair accessibility.
- Jungle gym rubber pads are protruding up at the corner and is a tripping hazard.
- Request to repair the playground and basketball court be a top priority on Levine's budget.
- Sign up for sports at Annunciation playground on W. 134th and Amsterdam Ave. It starts March 2nd from 2 – 4PM. 646-457-1481. uptowninnercityleague@gmail.com

“City of Yes Zoning for Economic Opportunity Text Amendments” - Annette Robinson

- Mayor Adams tasked CBs to review a nearly 1200 page zoning text amendment – “City of Yes Zoning for Economic Opportunity Text Amendments.”
[Annotation Proposed Zoning Text Economic Opportunity \(nyc.gov\)](https://www.nyc.gov/announcements/announcements-proposed-zoning-text-economic-opportunity)
- There are serious impacts on CB issues: (1) commercial business in all residual areas, (2) small business in apartment and homes, (3) eliminating restrictive businesses in residential buildings, (4) allowing manufacturing businesses to exist in commercial and residential zones floors, (5) allowing all businesses to exist in commercial zones, (6) allowing businesses to exist on resident floors and rooftops, (7) and possibly allowing cabaret dancing to exist in all commercial zones.
- The CB9 will holding a public hearing on the January 18th General Board meeting.
- Liz Waytkus commented she is the Co-Chair of the Housing Committee. She wants us to review the proposal if there are any impacts on parks.
- Proposal 1 mentions historic districts to reactivate storefronts. If a storefront is vacant for more than 2 years, they have to go through an arduous process to have the storefront reactivated. The proposal is to eliminate that exclusion. It may impact the work of this committee.
- Proposal 17 has to do with rooftops, building size and shape due to light and air. If there is a movie set, they don't want their movie to be the shape of what NYC requires. This would give them approval to a building of a different shape in a historic district but still have to go through landmarks. Any proposals in the historic district will still go to LPC review to change building structure.



OLD BUSINESS UPDATES

Morningside Heights Historic District Committee (MHHDC)– Robert Stern

- In terms of historic designations, there are five different districts that have been filed with LPC for expansion and extension.
- He wants to bring awareness about McGiffert Hall adjacent to Riverside Church that they purchased from Union Theological Seminary. They hired the same consultants that Jewish Theological and Union Theological hired when they did their big real estate deals.
- MHHDC have been advocating that McGiffert be repurposed for affordable or supportive housing. They filed for historic district and LPC evaluation. Riverside Church purchased McGiffert Hall for \$45 million. They want to hasten historic designation of McGiffert Hall.
- Riverside Church has plans to sell McGiffert to a real estate developer. There are also real estate development plans for other campus sites that also are not landmarked. Much of Riverside Church is not landmarked including the gym and the MLK building.
- Reach out to him if you have any information about McGiffert Hall or Riverside Church development plans. robert@mhccnyc.org
[mhdc-special-newsletter-preserve-mcgiffert-hall.pdf \(wordpress.com\)](https://www.mhdc.org/special-newsletter-preserve-mcgiffert-hall.pdf)

Columbia University and WHLDC Community Benefits Agreement – Heather Jason

- The committee needs to explore how this agreement will benefit the community, especially the preservation of the historic structures. She would like to create a sub-committee to look at this. [community-benefits-agreement-CBA.pdf \(columbia.edu\)](https://www.columbia.edu/~whldc/community-benefits-agreement-CBA.pdf)

Edgecombe Community Garden Park Sanctuary

- Shannon Richards said it appears there is no progress made with Greenthumb community garden group with concerns of lack of sponsorship award, infrastructure, and equity of investments. He would like to see that group ready for the spring.
- Annette Robinson has been in contact with Nora. Heather and Annette will speak with Ijendu Obasi and Alex Munoz with Edgecombe, then schedule Nora to address those issues.
- Nina and Nora came to them with issues that need to be addressed.
- Nina Talley said they will address these issues. They have ascertained who has been stealing from their garden and had to put in another report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next meeting will be held on February 7, 2024 at 6:30 PM EST.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM EST.