

CB9M Landmarks Preservation & Parks Committee Minutes

Wednesday, September 6, 2023

Location: 3295 Broadway at the corner of West 133rd Street In Person for Committee Members and Virtual for Guests, Called to Attention at 6:39pm.

Co-Chairs: Hon. Heather Jason and Hon. Annette Robinson

Committee Members Present and In Person: Hon. Heather Jason, Hon. Annette Robinson, Hon. Elisa Yoo, and Hon. April Adams.

Absent and Virtual Committee Members: Hon. Eddy Antoine (Absent), Hon. Patricia Caldwell (Absent Excused), Hon. Dan Cohen (Virtual), Hon. Juaniros Ovalle (Absent), Hon. Carolina Ramirez (Virtual), Hon. Hugo Torres-Fetsco (Virtual), and Hon. Liz Waytkus (Virtual).

Community Members, Stakeholders, Affiliates and Park Representatives Present:

Leslie Wright, Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park (DFRBSP), Nicolas Grefenstette, Senior Landscape Architect, Citywide Services, Steve Simon and Wesley Hamilton (NYC Parks), Stephanie Caban (Riverside Park Outreach Coordinator), Karen Asner (Friends of St. Nicholas Park), Mallory Craig (The Greenhouse & Community Gardens (DFRBSP)), Shannon Richards (142nd Dog Run), Savona Bailey-McClain and Juan Sanchez (West Harlem Art Fund), Nora Cole and Nina Talley (Sugar Hill Garden Park & Edgecombe Ave Garden Park Sanctuary), Kim Johnson (snpba) and Judith Desire (Uptown Good Food Farmers Market).

MCB9 Members and Staff Present: Clayton Sanford (Virtual) and Hakeel Elliston

New Business: Parks Updates, Announcements and Presentations

- **Leslie Wright, Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park (DFRSP):**
 - [Riverbank State Park \(Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park\)](#)
 - [Riverbank State Park | New York NY | Facebook](#)
 - The track and field renovation project is complete and opened Saturday.
 - The aquatics locker room project is ongoing, but the facility is open with temporary bathrooms and showers.
 - The aquatics Annual two week shutdown is in progress and will re-open September 21st.
 - Fall and Winter Program classes schedule starting in October is available online. Priority registration will be provided for seniors. Please refer to the link below for details: [Riverbank2023-24FallWinterProgramGuide.pdf \(ny.gov\)](#)
 - The June 17th celebration of the park turning 30 was a huge success with many members of the community in attendance.

- **Friends of Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park** meets every second Saturday of the month in the Robert F. Smith Theater Rehearsal Room. (Reminder)

- **Reconstruction of the Sheltering Arms Pool Deck**, Nicolas Grefenstette, Senior Landscape Architect, Citywide Services
 - Located at the corner of Amsterdam Ave and W 129th Street.
 - \$1.8 million budget. State of Good Repair.
 - Construction timeline is spring or next fall, but the facility will not close.
 - Reconstruct pool deck and drainage system.
 - Maintain ADA accessibility.
 - Facilitate active and passive recreation opportunities for the community.
 - Enhance and add permanent improvements to the user experience.
 - Various surrounding land use structures, but not in a designated Landmarks area.
 - Existing conditions include a bath house, wading pool and main pool.
 - Existing entry steps are in fair condition, but in need of patching.
 - Range fence is deteriorated around plant beds and existing backless benches.
 - Existing concrete pavement is in disrepair, to be replaced throughout.
 - One park entrance is not currently inaccessible from the pool deck.
 - No at-grade connection (ADA) at the Wading Pool area.
 - Proposed Scope of Work Improvements:
 - New colored or pigmented concrete pavement.
 - New built in companion seating.
 - *Request was made for additional seats.*
 - Existing trellis benches to remain.
 - New 1964 World's Fair Benches with armrests and new movable seating.
 - Enlarged planting bed and freestanding fiberglass planter.
 - Relocate and paint chain link fence.
 - New tree pit with shade trees.
 - Planted screen for additional privacy.
 - Continuous 6" trench drain.
 - Fixed ADA picnic tables and shade structure.
 - In-ground spray showers and hydraulic activator.
 - Existing lounge chairs to be replaced in kind.
 - ADA chair lift and lifeguard chairs to be replaced.
 - Clear all existing drains, replace drain lines.
 - Seasonal Interest flower, fruit and foliage plantings.
 - *Information below on Azaleas and proposed Rhododendrons from community member*
 - <https://www.poison.org/articles/azaleas-and-rhododendrons#:~:text=The%20Bottom%20Line,can%20cause%20life%2Dthreatening%20symptoms>

- **Karen Asner, Friends of St. Nicholas Park**
 - [Friends of St. Nicholas Park | New York NY | Facebook](#)
 - Park Clean Up Saturday September 9th between 11am to 1pm at W 135th Street Plaza which is the same as the meet-up location.
 - Carpet Series by Gabriela Lamb on the James Baldwin Lawn. It's a free dance program between 6pm to 7pm and is also on September 9th.
 - <https://www.pigeonwingdance.com/carpetseries>

- Yoga Series on Tuesdays from 6:30pm to 7:30pm on the James Baldwin Lawn in conjunction with partner organization, The Harlem Wellness Center.
 - Uptown Good Food Farmers Market is adjacent to the park on Thursdays between 4pm to 7pm and Saturdays between 9am and 3pm until the end of October or early November. The location is Saint Nicholas Avenue and West 137th Street.
 - The July 22nd event in conjunction with NYC Parks and Project Backboard installed a new basketball court and Nari Ward mural with a powerful message. This was a tremendous turnout.
 - [\(71\) Nari Ward, St. Nicholas Park, Harlem, NY \(2023\) - YouTube](#)
- **Judith Desire, Uptown Good Food Farmers Market**
 - Two farm programs, one is on Thursdays between 4pm to 7pm in front of Saint Nicholas Miracle Garden located at Saint Nicholas Avenue and West 127th Street. It's a farm stand and community supported agriculture structure at a community garden. The end date is October 26th.
 - The Uptown Good Food Farmers Market at Saint Nicholas Avenue and West 137th Street in front of St. Nicholas Park on Saturdays between 9am and 3pm ends on November 11th. Received DOT reserved permit for farmers and vendors to park between West 137th and West 138th Streets from 8am to 4pm.
 - www.uptowngoodfood.com
 - [Saint Nicholas Miracle Garden \(stnicholasmiraclegarden.org\)](http://stnicholasmiraclegarden.org)
 - Accept SNAP, EBT, farmers' market nutritional benefit program, WIC voucher and senior discount voucher.
- **Mallory Craig, The Greenhouse & Community Gardens at DFRBSP**
 - Community based organizations did rotations with their summer camps.
 - Hosted the DFRBSP summer camp.
 - Public programs start again on September 21st.
 - There is public programming six days a week at The Greenhouse Education Center at Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park which is open 7 days a week.
 - Learning garden is very abundant and ready to be harvested.
 - Cooking classes will be on Tuesdays between 11am and 12pm.
 - Wednesday evenings recipes and rituals for community care, wellness including holistic wellness, herbal healing and yoga with community facilitators.
 - Thursday will be Art day with two classes. One starting at 5pm and the other at 6:30pm. Think about art in the garden and the abundance of fall.
 - Saturdays will be family gardening. Educators lead "how to gardening" for kids in the morning from 10:30am to noon.
 - Open 10am to 5pm seven days a week.
 - "Day in the Garden" is a new program that launched this summer.
 - Pride garden events occur the first and third Sundays.
 - Offer free field trips to educators for schools. Spread the word.
 - A youth program for high school students will be launched in the near future.
 - Open call for facilitators. Please contact mcraig@thehort.org.

- **NYC Parks and Historic Harlem Parks: Wesley Hamilton**
 - Jacob Schiff Playground capital project seating area is complete. New benches, lighting, and drinking fountains installed in the area.
 - Two basketball courts sport coatings were restored at Saint Nicholas and West 129th and West 134th Streets in conjunction with Project Backboard.
 - Annunciation track and field is still under construction, but it's expected to be completed by the end of the fall.
 - *"Movies under the Stars"* at Jackie Robinson Park and family fun day at Frederick Douglas Park.
 - 9/11 Ceremonies will occur on Monday just outside MCB9 at Riverside Park. Traffic from West 105th down to 96th Street will be highly congested.
 - *Micro mobility pilot program to allow electric bikes and scooters on the greenway. A presentation was requested for the October meeting. There was no community outreach. However, currently accepting input from the public.*
 - <https://www.nycgovparks.org/things-to-do/e-bikes>

- **Nora Cole and Nina Talley, Sugar Hill Garden Park & Edgecombe Ave Garden Park Sanctuary**
 - Community gardeners have been Stewards of these two gardens for over 25 years.
 - They were locked out of the Sugar Hill garden and have not received renewal license for Edgecombe from Green Thumb.
 - Appealed above Green Thumb to be heard, but have not received an appeal response.
 - Green Thumb Regional Coordinator has given garden to others to maintain. Contends that standards have not been met. Issues of concern involve inclusivity. Dirt, supplies and work program are provided to new stewards, but not to Cole and Talley.
 - Coordinator feels they no longer fit the dynamics of the community and need to be replaced. Has not received support for rat mitigation, construction, or a shed during and coming out of the coronavirus pandemic.
 - Advised that Bylaws of 2019 need to be revised, but missed a date by ten days. Must compete with the new steward.
 - This displacement action was not coordinated with MCB9.
 - Held to deadlines without support to maintain compliance.
 - Received violations that were addressed, but no one followed up for compliance.
 - The hours have been open less than 20 hours a week with the newly appointed steward. New steward is not following the regulations. Received a verbal assault from another steward and this issue has not been addressed.
 - MCB9 must work with NYC Parks and Green Thumb to assist these organizations. Annette Robinson will serve as the liaison and Shannon Richards will also assist.
 - The parties are seeking mediation assistance.
 - <https://www.nycgovparks.org/greenthumb/about>

- **Stephanie Caban - Riverside Park Outreach Coordinator**
 - Jenny’s Garden at West 138th Street is also protected under Green Thumb.
 - Offered to share information and provide support to Nora and Nina.
 - Team Corps Internship paid 17 MCB9 high school students interested in horticulture, gardening, parks, and environmental justice, successfully concluded after 8 weeks.
 - Students learned about environmental racism, Robert Moses, soil science and health.
 - Working on outreach and volunteer recruitment for Earth Park.
 - 7 Goats are on West 120th Street and Riverside Drive until September 21st.
 - Climate Ready Uptown Plan with We-Act regarding extreme heat and cooling centers.
 - Emergency Preparedness virtual workshop sponsored by We-Act is available.
 - Summer on the Hudson Yoga occurs on the West 145th Street entrance at Riverbank and down the stairs to Riverside Park lawn on Thursdays at 6:30pm.
 - September 16th is Clean Up day to collect bottle caps at the West 148th Street tunnel from 10am to noon.

- **The Hungarian Pastry Shop 1030 Amsterdam Ave. at W 111th Street, (Philip Binioris): DOCKET #LPC-23-10724, Storefront Design, Diamantopoulou Kolb Architecture D.P.C.**
 - Part of the commercial ground floor of a Renaissance Revival style apartment building designed by Neville and Bagge, and built in 1908-09.
 - Located within the Morningside Heights Historic District, and faces the West 111th Street People's Garden, adjacent to St. John the Divine Cathedral to the north.
 - The storefront occupies two adjacent spaces: one is located within the building's ground floor masonry facade, while the other occupies the one-story structure located within the building's central recessed courtyard.
 - These features, which date back to the 1980s are distinct and aesthetically significant, as identified at the time of the historic district designation in 2017.
 - From its renovation in 1978 to the present, the storefront has been adorned with artworks by Yanni Posnakoff, who co-owned the pastry shop from 1976 until 1992.
 - A cultural and community hub of the neighborhood and Columbia University.
 - Known for its pastries, free refillable coffee, atmosphere, book display, and no Wi-Fi.
 - It lacks energy efficiency and sealant will also prevent the incursion of pests.
 - Proposed new insulated glass units at kitchen door and storefront.
 - Neither entrance door meets ADA clearance and approach requirements. The new doors will be flush to the sidewalk, not set on an angle and will improve accessibility.
 - Change in distribution and material composition of artwork by Digital transformation of existing images into to vitreous mosaic glass tile attached to new insulated walls.
 - Increase fresh air circulation through operable windows and light.
 - New clear storefront display window glass, two roll-up/security gates, hidden LED lights, and aluminum storefront doors including opaque kitchen glass door.
 - It is preferred window mullions are not added and that the storefront glass is continuous. However, it’s necessary for the easy operability of the windows.
 - The red and white awning which displays the name of the business, will remain and continue to be visible while the gate is closed, and fully retracted.
 - Applicant is proposing a closed mesh and non-recessed storefront security gate rather than open mesh and recessed which is typically required by LPC and this committee.
 - Existing site conditions present a challenge for a recessed security gate.

- **Savona Bailey-McClain**, Executive Director & Chief Curator, West Harlem Art Fund
 - Former CB9 board member. westharlemartfund12@gmail.com
 - www.nycgovparks.org/art
 - **Harlem Sculpture Gardens** call to artist deadline is September 15th.
 - Next, recommendations will be submitted to NYC Parks, representatives Elizabeth Masella, Jonathan Kuhn and Jennifer Lanza for a two months review process.
 - Return to MCB9 in 2024 to review and approve the sculpture installations in Morningside and Saint Nicholas Parks in spring 2024, through late fall 2024.

- **Old Business Updates**
 - The update for the 142 development is that it is moving forward with demo expected in Oct. It is a long story that I will be reported at HLUZ on Tuesday evening. They have demo permits. The West Harlem Historic District continues to NOT be a priority for Landmarks, which could have avoided the loss of likely six historic townhouses on 142nd Street.
 - There is nothing new to report for the RKO Hamilton Theater.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:44pm. Respectfully submitted by Heather Jason.