

CB9M Landmarks Preservation & Parks Committee Minutes and Updates

Wednesday, November 2, 2022

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting, Called to Order at 6:38pm

Co-Chairs: Hon. Heather Jason and Hon. Jonathan Thomas

Committee Members Present: Hon. Patricia Caldwell, Hon. Dan Cohen, Hon. Heather Jason, Hon. Michael Palma, and Hon. Hugo Torres-Fetsco.

Absent Committee Members: Hon. Carolina Ramirez, and Hon. Jonathan Thomas.

Community Members and Park Representatives Present:

Hon. Jonatan Sinagub (CB9M member) Karen Asner (Friends of St. Nicholas Park), Matt Genrich (NYC Parks), Jana La Sorte (Harlem Historic Parks), Wesley Hamilton (Riverside Park), Stephanie Caban (Riverside Park Outreach Coordinator), Leslie Wright (Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park), Sara Sobel, Georgia Faulkner and Mallory Craig (The Hort, DFRSP Greenhouse), Shannon Richards (Dog Run 142), Yuien Chin (West Harlem Community Preservation Organization and Harlem One Stop), Gwendolyn Black (Arts and Jazz Festival).

New Business: NYC Parks and Historic Harlem Parks Updates & Announcements

- **Friends of St. Nicholas Park:**
 - Sunday 10/9/22 City College Jazz Studies Program presents free 2nd annual Jazz Festival with food vendors on James Baldwin Lawn between 12pm to 5pm was a huge turnout with approximately 500 attendees.
 - Dog Run at West 136th Street: Building wooden decking and staircase treads to the lower level. The platform decking, staircase, and railing repairs are an in house project currently in progress and will be completed soon.
 - The Small Dog Run is open for use.
 - Two Capital Budget Requests were made and submitted as follows:
 - The St. Nicholas Park Playground at 133rd and St. Nicholas Avenue is in desperate need of a full renovation. The entire playground area lacks any safe fencing and secure gates. Accordingly, there is no proper barrier between small children and the busy stretch of St. Nicholas Avenue located less than 20 feet away. The features of this large space are also woefully inadequate, containing only two small climbing/slide structures and one swing area for toddlers. The adjacent basketball and handball courts are in a similar state of serious disrepair. The entire area must be reimagined and

rebuilt to provide a much-needed, multi-functional play space for the community's many children and teens.

- The staircase that runs east to west at 134th Street has been closed for more than a decade. This staircase is an important route within the park, including from the playground and basketball courts at St. Nicholas Avenue to CCNY and the residential areas at St. Nicholas Terrace and beyond. This closed staircase was highlighted in the 2012 Report Card on Large Parks, an independent assessment of the maintenance conditions of parks in all five boroughs. That report noted “[m]ovement through the park is diminished by a closed staircase in the southern portion of the park. This closure resulted in a failing pathways score.” (p. 37, Emphasis added) No repair work has been done in the 10 years since that report was published. The closure also makes the northern pathway feel isolated and makes this area a popular location for illegal encampments within the park.

- **Jacob H. Schiff Playground** Amsterdam Ave. & W 136th- W 138th Streets, NY, NY 10031: Capital Project Update: Synthetic Turf Field is almost completed. New gates and lighting are needed and underway. Comfort station improvements will begin in 2023.
[Jacob Schiff Playground Sitting Area Reconstruction : NYC Parks \(nycgovparks.org\)](https://www.nycgovparks.org/projects/jacob-schiff-playground-sitting-area-reconstruction)

- **Dog Run 142nd Street:** Halloween Costume event for Dogs on Saturday 10/29/22 between 12pm and 2pm was a success. Please see the following: Instagram @dogrun142
 - **Canine Safe course.** Saturday 11/5/22 between 12pm-1pm.
 - What to do if your dog ingests poison or is choking. Learn dog cpr.

- **Riverside Park Conservancy:**
 - A survey will be distributed to determine what activities and events the community wants for ***Summer on the Hudson 2023***.
 - No capital projects currently. Crews are preparing for the winter and snow. Request permits 21 or more days in advance for spring barbecues, birthdays and graduations.
 - Bathrooms are still closed at the West 142nd Street location due to no lighting. The water main issue in January –February which caused flooding and damage was resolved. An email was requested to be sent to Con Edison for a status regarding the hiring of a contractor to restore the power in the comfort stations.
 - **Sakura Park at 122nd Street and 500 Riverside Drive: Leaf Lift Volunteer Day** to rake leaves in the park 11/19/22 between 10am-1pm. All leaves will be used for Composting and mulch.
 - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/leaf-lift-sakura-park-at-122nd-st-tickets-452152469207>
 - Holiday on the Hudson 12/3/22 at around 5pm.

- **Morningside Park Faces of Harlem** Photo Exhibition 8/6/22- 11/30/22 on south end of the park. Commemorating Harlem and its beauty. See [About — FACES OF HARLEM](#)
- **Morningside Park: Capital Project** Park Path Reconstruction along ball fields on the south side between West 110th and 114th Streets has been delayed due to Fort Tryon work. The construction will start this November.
- **Friends of Morningside Park and Friends of Saint Nicholas Park:**
 - Holiday Lights will occur 12/3/2022 around 5pm. Flyers will be emailed.
- **Historic Parks: Morningside Park and Saint Nicholas Park:**
 - Volunteering is encouraged and welcomed.
 - In communication with the college community including Columbia, Barnard and City College for participation with the parks.
 - There is a working group at Columbia University Climate Institute in reference to providing solutions for the algae in the pond.
 - Save Harlem Now sponsored a Historic Preservation event on “**Saving This Place! A Call to Action for Preserving Harlem**” was held at the Ford Foundation on 11/3/22. This day will bring together preservationists, architects, developers, scholars, community leaders, and elected officials **to raise awareness, to advocate, to collaborate, and to educate** our community and other stakeholders, in an effort to **unite** around our goal to preserve Harlem's rich cultural and historical legacy. [Saving This Place! A Call to Action for Preserving Harlem \(splashthat.com\)](#)
 - **Harlem Swing Dance with possibly a live band** event on Sunday 10/23/22 between 12pm to 2pm was cancelled due to rain.
- **West Harlem Piers Park**
 - Concerned raised that NYC Parks met with Columbia University/Loftin without community representatives at the table.
 - We need to address Columbia University accountability regarding the Community Benefits Agreement issues directly without intermediaries.
 - Christmas tree lighting is scheduled for 12/3/22.
- **Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park:** Open between 6am -11pm
 - Event page: [DF Riverbank State Park \(@dennyfarrellriverbankstatepark\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)
 - Dogs are not permitted inside the park.
 - Roller skating ended in mid- October.

- Ice Skating season including figure skating and ice hockey is 11/11/22-3/12/23.
 - **HBCU 35th Annual Fair is Saturday 11/12/22 between 11am to 3:30pm** and is sponsored by the New York Urban League.
 - **Movie Night** on 11/5/22 and will occur next on 12/16/22 and **Open mic** are ongoing.
 - Holiday tree lighting will occur in December.
 - The **Community Garden Lottery** for 65 plots will occur **Saturday 2/25/23 at 11am**. It is rare to have a community garden in a public park. Save the Date! You may plant your own seeds except for perennials and trees. The lottery is for a two year period commitment to plant vegetables and flowers. Occasionally The Hort provides starter plants and seed giveaways.
 - Signs have been placed in the lobby showing the Aquatics and Athletic locker room renderings of renovations to start in the spring of 2023. This will be a yearlong project. Temporary bathrooms and showers will be tight, but the facility will not close in its entirety. Email address for comments and concerns is posted.
 - **Capital Project:** Renovations at the Gym Athletics building. Renovate the full set of the aquatic men's and women's locker rooms. Fitness rooms with the equipment will remain open. Temporary trailer showers and bathrooms will be available.
 - **Capital Project:** The renovation of the track and field will occur between 2/2023 and 6/2023. This will be the third renovation in the life of the park. The 70 feet Light Tower around the track and field will also be renovated.
 - Beginning the design process of the south end improvements including the kids' playground, comfort stations, handball, softball fields and basketball courts near the 138th Street entrance. Designs are anticipated by next spring. **A survey has been distributed for your input and is due by 11/11/22.**
 - Tower lighting around the soccer field has improved and is more energy efficient.
 - **Capital Project:** Replacing HVAC in the theater Winter/Spring 2023. If there are any delays, the contractor must provide temporary service.
 - **Carnegie Hall** entertainment event will occur in January.
 - **Park turns 30 years old next spring!** There will be many community celebrations.
- **Friends of Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park** meets every second Saturday of the month in the Theater Rehearsal Room.
 - **Greenhouse at Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park:**
 - [The Greenhouse Education Center](#)
 - **Introduction to new faces:** Georgia Faulkner and Mallory Craig, the Education Manager who will attend meetings on a monthly basis.
 - Harvest Festival: Thank you to all those who came through for our harvest festival, we welcomed 445 community members for a day at our pumpkin patch, fresh produce giveaways, fall tastings led by community members, and artmaking.

- Family Gardening Saturdays at 10am, Fall Tours Saturdays at 12pm, (Our community of family gardeners have been harvesting, supporting our last plantings, and getting our gardens beds ready for the winter).
- Intentional Herbal Healing (Participants in our public programs have continued their studies with intentional healing by creating herbal bath soaks and herbal face and hair washes with Miriam Aristy-Farer who continues to offer bilingual workshops each Wednesday evening at 5pm. Join us!)
- Botanical Drawing (Participants in our Botanical Arts class have been learning the art of mindful and observational studies to create both botanical prints and detailed observational drawings from Harlem Arts Fund artist, Kraig Blue. Join us for these workshops each Thursday evening at 5pm).
- Positive reviews regarding the Botanical Drawing that occur Thursdays at 5pm. It has been reported that people find this paint/drawing program to be very therapeutic.
[Botanical Drawing — The Greenhouse Education Center](#)
- Festive Fall Cooking (Participants in our festive fall cooking have learned plant-based and nutritional eating from Harlem-based chefs every Tuesday morning at 11am), Open Hours Tuesdays at 12pm.
- New programming has not yet been solidified due to starting the new garden. They want to engage new gardeners whether you win a lottery plot or not. The registration link is as follows:
[Schedule Appointment with The Greenhouse Education Center \(as.me\)](#)
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FJ4q1Pd63XUAgIjoWt8UG6ChDw6kguQT/view?usp=share_link
- It was requested that all programming brochures/flyers be bilingual. Currently creating the winter program and schedule. There is a Spanish language educator on staff.
- We have begun our Harlem Farm High School apprenticeship, but still are open for registration! Young gardeners are learning farming skills, cooking with fresh produce, and stewardship skills needed to be active and engage Harlem-community members.
- This Urban Farm Justice cohort is approximately 25 people. Fridays between 3:30pm-5:30pm with 10 additional high school students as a cohort are available.
- School field trips have commenced! We are still welcoming schools and booking field trips. This week elementary aged students visited us to learn about seed anatomy, the power of herbs, and learned the art of cooking a nutritious colorful meal. We'd love to work with teachers and family liaisons to book a trip to your school—reach out with your questions and bookings!
- **See school programs brochure in the link below:**
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hCQdHxqGo9JkUaLGMisXRqePTqCh2h0R/view?usp=share_link
- It was suggested that DFRBSP advertise these programs on the apartment building apps by building managers such as Tonya Jenkins at Riverview Towers. She can be contacted at tjenkins@prestigemgt.com. People are finding out about programming after the fact.

- **Donnellan Square between West 149th and 150th Streets at Saint Nicholas Avenue Christmas Decorations inquiry from Hon. Patricia Caldwell.**
 - Dimitri Kaufman handles Christmas tree decorations.
 - Tree lighting is supported by Friends groups, and is not funded by the Parks Department.
 - Pruning has been completed at the park which will address some safety concerns.

Presentations:

Arts and Jazz Festival NYC, Gwen Black

- 2nd Annual Community Christmas Caroling, Arts and Crafts on 12/18/22 and 12/20/22.
 - Live Music, Tree Lighting in coordination with Friends of Montefiore Park and more located at Montefiore Park Plaza located at West 137th Street and Broadway on 12/18/22 at 5pm-7:30pm.
 - Holiday Arts & Crafts at the Manhattanville Community Center located at 530 West 133rd on 12/20/22 between 3pm-7pm.
- A park permit is required with assistance to be provided by Dimitri Kaufman.
- www.artsandjazzny.com or gwenblackarts@yahoo.com

Old Business:

Proposed West Harlem Historic District and Conference - Yuien Chin, West Harlem Community Preservation Organization and Harlem One Stop

- In the process of securing a location for the event at either City College or Columbia University and hoping to confirm a date in possibly February 2023.
- Working with an intern to provide mapping to protect the neighborhood character.
- A formal request to LPC is necessary to prioritize the West Harlem Historic District and the extension of the Morningside Heights Historic district extensions.
- The WCPO and Harlem One Stop portal has serviced Harlem and Washington Heights for over 10 years. The sites have been a resource that has informed the communities of cultural events in a concise manner. Please send your event announcements to info@harlemonestop.com.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:29pm: Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 7, 2022

Respectfully submitted by Heather Jason