

CB9M Landmarks Preservation & Parks Committee Minutes and Updates

Wednesday, October 5, 2022

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting, Called to Attention at 6:43pm

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

Committee Members Present: Hon. Patricia Caldwell and Hon. Heather Jason.

Absent Committee Members: Hon. Victoria Benitez, Hon. Kelsy Bettis, Hon. Michael Palma, Hon. Carolina Ramirez, and Hon. Jonathan Thomas. Hon. Hugo Torres-Fetsco is excused.

Community Members and Park Representatives Present: Elena Hardy and Erica Lee (Columbia Spectator), Rodrigo (HarlemView journalist), Karen Asner and Mr. Taurant (Friends of St. Nicholas Park), Brad Taylor (Friends of Morningside Park), Matt Genrich (NYC Parks), Wesley Hamilton (Riverside Park), Stephanie Caban (Riverside Park Outreach Coordinator), Leslie Wright (Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park and The Greenhouse), Shannon Richards (Dog Run 142), Yuien Chin (West Harlem Community Preservation Organization and Harlem One Stop)

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

- **It's My Park Weekend:** Harlem Parks 10/15/22 – 10/16/22. Volunteer days.
- **Manhattan Borough Parks Commissioner** William Castro retired 9/15/22. He is replaced by **Anthony Perez**, the former Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Speaker, New York City Council. **Perez began his leadership position on 9/19/22.**
- **Jacob H. Schiff Playground** Amsterdam Ave. & W 136th Street, NY, NY 10031: Capital Project Update: Turf rolled out on field and comfort station improvements. [Jacob Schiff Playground Sitting Area Reconstruction : NYC Parks \(nycgovparks.org\)](https://www.nycgovparks.org/jacob-schiff-playground-sitting-area-reconstruction)
- **Saint Nicholas Dog Run:** Building wooden decking and staircase treads to the lower level.
- **Dog Run 142nd Street:** Halloween Costume event for Dogs to dress up in cute outfits: Saturday 10/29/22 between 12pm and 2pm. Flyer has been submitted.
- **Riverside Park:**
 - A survey will be distributed to determine what activities and events the community wants for ***Summer on the Hudson 2023***.

- Bathrooms are still closed at the West 142nd Street location. The Park is waiting on Con Edison to hire a contractor to restore the power in the comfort stations.
- **The Little Red Lighthouse** located in Fort Washington Park along the Hudson River under the George Washington Bridge. Families and Children will explore The Lighthouse. On hand will be fishing clinics, readings of “*The Little Red Lighthouse*” children’s book, live entertainment, food, and art vendors. NYC Urban Park Rangers will be there with activities for all. Saturday 10/8/22 between 12pm to 4pm.
- Preparing the park for winter storms. Received backfill for staffing in the northern section of the park.
- **Fireman’s Memorial:** The annual ceremony to mourn the loss of firefighters in the line of duty. Located at West 100th Street and Riverside Drive. This year 18 brave NYC firemen were lost including 4 in the line of duty. Wednesday 10/12/22 between 10am to 12pm.
- **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. They received a Green Arts Live Grant to hold the event. One of five grant recipients. There will be a total of 22 performers including vocalists and ensembles.
 - Join the Garden on Fridays and Saturdays mornings between 9am to 11am in front of the Dog Run at West 136th Street and upper path. Benches for Ada. Wear comfortable clothes and closed toe shoes.
 - **Harlem Swing Dance** event on Sunday 10/23/22. Bring coolers, blankets and chairs. 12pm to 2pm and possibly a live band.
- **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 Tron work. There is no exact construction start date.
- **Friends of Morningside Park:**
 - Harlem Youth Gardeners ages 14 to 19 were paid an hourly rate and received education about the history and ecology of the parks. Developed skills in gardening, landscaping, leadership, environmental science, ecosystems and sustainability.

Brought \$200,000 and received \$50,000 in funds from the West Harlem Development Corporation.

- Approximately 2,500 were in attendance at Morningside Lights on 9/24/22.
- Annual Common Ground Festival on Saturday 9/24/22 was attended by approximately 500 people.
- Will participate in Its *My Park Day*.
- **Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park:**
 - Gospel Festival in the Theater on Sunday 10/9/22.
 - Roller skating is extended until 10/16/22. The evenings of 10/6/22 and 10/13/22 between 6pm and 9pm will be sponsored by Al Taylor.
 - 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.
 - Renovations at the Gym Athletics building. Renovate the full set of the men's and women's locker rooms. Fitness rooms with the equipment will remain open. Temporary small locker rooms will be available.
 - Renovating the track and field which will last between 2/2023 and 6/2023. This will be the third time in the life of the park. The 70 feet Light Tower around the track and field will be renovated.
 - Beginning the design process of the south end improvements including the playground, comfort stations, handball, and basketball courts near the 138th Street entrance.
 - Community Garden renovations are complete.
 - Always hiring at the park with good jobs available, mentorship and career paths.
- **Friends of Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park** will meet this Saturday October 8, 2022 and every second Saturday of the month in the Theater Rehearsal Room.

- **Greenhouse at Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park:**
 - **Harvest Festival Saturday October 22, 2022 at 11am to 1pm.**
 - Family Gardening Saturdays at 10am, Fall Tours Saturdays at 12pm, Intentional Herbal Healing Wednesdays at 5pm with Miriam, Botanical Drawing Thursdays at 5pm, Festive Fall Cooking Tuesdays at 11am, Open Hours Tuesdays at 12pm.

- **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.
 - This Park was renovated approximately 20 years ago in conjunction with West Harlem Community Preservation and Friends group of homeowners who maintained the park for many years.
 - The park has become very dangerous and is in need of pruning. This may deter the cover of illegal activity if it is not overgrown.
 - A maintenance issue has occurred as many citizens do not want to enter this park due to shootings, vagrancy and other illegal activities.
 - Pruning by the Parks Department is necessary in order for volunteers to enter.
 - The last time there was a tree lighting was 15 to 20 years ago. There should be a specific pruning schedule. It must become a safe space for families and children.
 - The Parks Department is planning low level pruning to open the visibility up in the park. Yuien Chin offered to donate bulbs for planting
 - Late fall and early winter before the ground is frozen is a good time to prune.
 - The community has been asking about pruning and safety.
 - The community must raise the \$500 funds for a 12 foot Christmas Tree Lights can be ordered from the Parks Department at \$11 per 8 feet string of lights.

Presentations:

142nd Street Dog Run- Proposal to Change Trash Receptacles, Shannon Richards

- Fundraising initiative is required to replace existing open receptacles that tend to overflow and is contributing to the rodent issue in the community.
- The Dog Run has committed to donating one trash receptacle with an approximate \$1,000 budget. Revised goal is now \$5,000 for 5 new trash receptacles to be placed on the east side at 135th, 137th, 139th and 149th Streets.
- It is requested that wire bins be replaced with more rodent resistant bins in the district.
- Councilman Shaun Abreu in July and September made notice of a Rat Action Plan.

- This is a health, safety and aesthetics issue in the community.
- Pet illnesses and deaths have been traced to diseases spread by rodents. This can be dangerous and lethal to pets and spread to humans.
- Submit a budget request to Parks and Sanitation. Request Participatory Budgeting from City Council member Shaun Abreu.

- **Notes:**

- **Please email all activities to Eutha.**
- **MCB9 Public Hearing 10/24/2022 on the Capital Needs and Expense Budgets.**

Old Business:

Proposed West Harlem Historic Districts 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 Saturday 12/3/22 and Sunday 12/4/22 as dates.
- This will be the second conference which is expected to be attended by 150 to 200 people.
- Panel discussions the development threats facing West Harlem and the importance of preserving and stabilizing the community. Topics will include the Built Environment, Cultural Identity, Harlem Churches and access to resources and tax credit information for property improvements will also be provided.
- Sunday December 4th will be a walking tour.
- We will address what makes a community vibrant and healthy.
- There is an intern looking at programs with council member Shaun Abreu and Anita Cheng regarding HDFCs to get agencies and programs to work with the state to administer programs and funds to stabilize property owners and HDFCs.
- 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 8:30pm: Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 2, 2022

Respectfully submitted by Heather Jason