



CB9M LANDMARKS PRESERVATION AND PARKS COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Wednesday, September 4, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Heather Jason, called the regular meeting of the CB9M Landmarks Preservation and Parks Committee to Order at 6:35 PM EDT, on Wednesday, September 4, 2024. The meeting was held in-person and via Zoom conferencing. All new and existing committee members were welcomed.

COMMITTEE

Co-Chair Hon. Heather Jason; Co-Chair Hon. Annette Robinson; Hon. April Adams; Hon. Patricia Caldwell; Hon. Vanessa Caughman; Hon. Joshua Christopher; Hon. Chris Johnson; Veronica Savage; and Hon. Liz Waytkus

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT AND IN-PERSON

Co-Chair Hon. Heather Jason; Co-Chair Hon. Annette Robinson; Hon. April Adams; Hon. Patricia Caldwell; Hon. Vanessa Caughman; Hon. Joshua Christopher; Hon. Chris Johnson; Veronica Savage; and Hon. Liz Waytkus

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT/OR VIRTUAL

All members were present and in person.

GUESTS PRESENT IN-PERSON

Kathryn Mercier (NYC Parks); Ira Gershenhorn (Super Stewards Program, NYC Parks); Yaotunde Obiora (KOTA Alliance); Martin Griggs (Walter B. Melvin Architects for Columbia University)

COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF PRESENT

Hon. Felipe Castillo (virtual) and Board Chair Hon. Victor Edwards (virtual)

GUESTS PRESENT VIRTUAL

Dr. Yusef Salaam (NYC Council District 9); Tricia Shimamura (NYC Parks Manhattan Borough Commissioner); Mallory Craig (Education Center Manager, The Horticultural Society of New York, (Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park (DFRSP)); Wes Hamilton (NYC Parks, Riverside Park); Stephanie Caban (North Park Outreach Coordinator, Riverside Park Conservancy); Shannon Richards (142nd Street Dog Run); Tapashi Narine (NYC Parks, Historic Harlem Parks Administrator); Brad Taylor and Brigham Keehner (Friends of Morningside Park); Steve Simon (NYC Parks); Rachel Kramer (NYC Parks); Laura Drawbaugh, (NYC Parks Landscape Architect) and Ricardo Hinkle (NYC Parks); Krista Bentson, (kbla) Landscape Architect) and Benjamin Fallows (Walter B. Melvin Architects); Alex Ray and Elizabeth Ramsey (Columbia University); Yuien Chin (Executive Director, Harlem One Stop); Claudette Brady (Executive Director, Save Harlem Now); Jaana Rehnstrom (Founder and President, The Kota Alliance)

QUORUM

A quorum was established with all nine committee members present.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND MINUTES

The agenda was adopted and the minutes from June 5, 2024 were distributed electronically and held over.



PARKS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES:

Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park (DFRBSP): Read into the record for Leslie Wright by Heather Jason

- Hispanic Heritage Month events in September and October – concerts 9/14, 9/19, 10/5, 10/6, 10/20.
- Tomorrow's Artist Workshops for little kids 6 and under (9/26, 10/31, 11/21, 12/19).
- Art in the Park for kids ages 4-12 on (9/29, 10/27, 11/24, 12/15).
- **FALL REGISTRATION** for classes will occur on 9/14/24 between 9am – 1pm.
- All events are **FREE!**
- Saturday, September 14th from 10:30am to noon is the monthly friends meeting in the park's main building cultural center on the second floor. Please join us.
- The outdoor pool is now closed after a wonderful summer season.
- The indoor pool season has been extended one week through Sunday, September 8th.
- The indoor pool will close on September 9th for the full renovation of the Aquatics Center Filter Plant and Pool Bulkhead. The pool will reopen in early 2025. The projects' progress will be posted to everyone.
- The park's North Stair Tower and Elevator will close on September 9th for full rehabilitation. During this project, the park will provide a shuttle service for patrons to and from the lower level parking lot. Shuttle details will be posted at the park and on the park's webpage.
- [Riverbank State Park \(Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park\)](#)

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

- Email programs@thehort.org or mcraig@thehort.org
- Save the Date: Saturday, October 26th: Harvest Festival. Details to come.
- Free public programs listings can be viewed at www.thehort.org/events. Check back after September 17th for individual listings with each class session shared. Some programs to get excited about: Ethiopian coffee ceremony, natural dye with plants, Kenyan cooking, fall garden vision boards, eco poetry, cyanotypes, fall family harvesting, birding, and more!

NYC Parks Manhattan Borough Commissioner: Tricia Shimamura

- Introduction to the committee and new role with NYC Parks. Formerly worked as the Director of Community Affairs in the Manhattan Borough President, Mark Levine's Office where she regularly interfaced with Community Boards. She would like to engage with us during our monthly meetings.
- It was requested that the Mayor's initiative to increase restrooms in parks be prioritized in MCB9.
- Neighborhoods which need access to parks, need more trees, access to bathrooms and other resources.
- Areas with the greatest need and are at most risk will be targeted for resources.
- Thanks to Veronica Savage for volunteering at Montefiore Square Park during the summer!
- Matt Genrich is transitioning to a new position that will be announced soon.

GreenThumb and Community Garden Announcements

- Ira Gershenhorn- **Jenny's Garden AKA Riverside Valley Community Garden** at 699 West 138th Street (12th Avenue corner), some meeting announcements were received via email prior to the meeting. ira@gershenhorn.com or jennysgarden138@gmail.com, <https://www.instagram.com/jennysgarden138/> Jenny's Garden on Instagram.



- Add the tunnel on West 138th near Jenny's Garden aka Riverside Valley Community Garden to a mural project. There is already lighting. Create a soundscape similar to the tunnel south of Grand Central.
- Raise the fence in a few places where items exist to make the fence easy to step over, or make the fence non-existent. The plan is to research and plant thorny trees or shrubs.
- Historically 12th Avenue was once all park, and only assumed its current status after Robert Moses created some highways. While it is preferred by some to return this area to park space, it probably will not be reverted soon to all green space because pushback from people is expected from car owners who park there. However, there is no need for it to be two lanes. Perhaps the lower flatter portion can become pickle ball courts. DOT has already marked it such that parking and driving is not allowed in the area.
- Hosted Team Corps members, a summer youth program where interns participated in the harvest.

Riverside Park and West Harlem Piers: Wes Hamilton

- The stairs at West 148th Street are completed and are open due to the help of DOT.
- 142nd Street Dog Run renovation is on schedule according to the capital team.
- The concession area in the upper area of the park may have experienced an electrical issue. There are not many details, but improvements are required.
- The West Harlem Piers used to have a kayak and canoe launch. It's been out of commission for 4 or 5 years. Is there a replacement planned? Answer: It may have been damaged by a storm and would require a complete replacement and funding. The project is being handled by the New York City Economic Development Corporation on behalf of NYC Parks.

Riverside Park Conservancy: Stephanie Caban

- After transferring to another park location, Stephanie has returned from a two month Sabbatical.
- Yoga every Thursday on the 145th Street lawn at 6:30pm. Use the newly opened 140th Street stairs to access or Riverbank. These are the Riverbank Stairs to the Billion Oyster Project Presentation on the Baylander's boat at West Harlem Piers, led by Ira on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month, at 12pm.
- There is Bingo Thursdays at 5:30pm and Dance Fitness Class Saturdays at 11am at West Harlem Piers.
- Jenny's Garden at West 138th Street is amazing due in part to Veronica and Ira. It's the only vegetable garden in Riverside Park. There are beautiful vegetable beds and that resulted in a few harvests and were sent to a soup kitchen on 114th Street, Broadway Community, Inc.
- Collaborated with Team Corps this past summer that included 17 teenage paid interns; 14 of them were from CB9M who worked in Jenny's Garden and all over the northern section of the park.
- There are several ways to be involved in Jenny's Garden: drop-off compost on weekend mornings; community members, Matt and Alison, are leading cleanups on Sundays at 10am; Stephanie will lead trash cleanups and light weeding projects on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month from 1pm to 3pm.
- Cleanups and gardening at Ralph Ellison Memorial at West 150th Street on the 4th Saturday monthly.
- Every Wednesday from 9am to 12pm, there are volunteer opportunities at Sakura Park.
- International Coastal Cleanup Day is September 28th at Fort Washington Park and Ten Mile River Playground. The person who picks up the most bottle caps wins a special prize.
- There are 4 remaining goats this summer at Riverside Park on West 143rd Street. Initially there were 7, and 3 graduated. There were more plants than goats. The 4 beautiful, wonderful goats, are sadly leaving to go back home to Rhinebeck, New York. A trash pickup and cleanup opportunity inside the goat



enclosure will be on September 13th. The final celebration or graduation ceremony for the goats will be held on September 21st at 1pm. It is 90% likely they will return next summer at West 143rd Street.

- A newsletter is distributed every month about events between 120th Street to 181st Street from West Harlem to Washington Heights.
- Please share any special events from your organizations and parks to email address:
stephanie@riversideparknyc.org
- [North Park Initiative | Riverside Park Conservancy \(riversideparknyc.org\)](#)
- [Events | Riverside Park Conservancy \(riversideparknyc.org\)](#)
- <https://riversideparknyc.org/summer-on-the-hudson/> Free summer programs

Friends of Morningside Park: Brad Taylor

- Acknowledgement was made about the contributions to this community by longtime member of CB9M and this committee, Carol Singleton and her recent passing when Brad was the chair.
- Ricardo and Laura (NYC Parks) have been very responsive and willing to listen to suggestions about the stair improvements.
- Brigham Keehner, chair of our parks liaison committee, led a walkthrough of Morningside with the Parks Department a couple of weeks ago. It was very productive, and a follow up meeting is hopeful.
- The annual festival is on September 14th. <https://www.morningsidepark.org/commonground>
- The waterfall in Morningside Park is now operational, but not yet at full force.
- A letter of support was provided for the renovation of the stairs in the park.

NYC Parks and Historic Harlem Parks: Tapashi Narine, tapashi.narine@parks.nyc.gov

- Alexander Hamilton playground basketball court project is due to begin on or about September 30th and it will run for most likely one year. It also includes repairs to the retaining wall on West 141st Street.
- **St. Nicholas Park:** Friends of Saint Nicholas cleanup event is September 14th from 11am to 1pm. Alexander Hamilton's house gate is closed every Monday and Tuesday. According to the National Park Service, the Hamilton Grange House is open Wednesday to Sunday, 10am to 4 pm. A concern was raised that the public is noticing more mosquitoes in this park. Mosquito spraying occurred Monday August 26th that covered all of Harlem and is also scheduled for Thursday, September 5th in the evening, between 8:30pm and 6am the following morning.
- <https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/west-nile-virus-spray.page>
- Harlem Sculpture Gardens in Morningside, St. Nicholas, and Jackie Robinson Parks are displayed until October. <https://harlemsculpturegardens.com/>
- The West 130th Street and Saint Nicholas Terrace Court is the only court in St. Nicholas that doesn't have a creative design. It is being repainted with artwork by Jeff Sonhouse. The reopening celebration of the courts paired with community affairs will occur on September 21st from 9am to 12 pm. CB9m is invited to table, but please RSVP by September 6th.
- Yoga is a regular reoccurring event by Harlem Wellness Center on Mondays at 6:30pm until September 30th on the James Baldwin Lawn.
- **Morningside Park:** The waterfall is on, and it's been flowing. A celebration event is planned at the end of September, or maybe early October with details still to come.
- Morningside Lights is September 21st at 8pm. *In Retrospect: 100 Years of New York Art*, a shared celebration of a century of the New York art and artists that have shaped our vision of the city, or inspired



us to evolve, learn, and move forward. The 50+ community-built lanterns will illuminate retrospective New York's rich and radical visual culture. Workshops to build a lantern are September 14th to 20th.

<https://www.morningside-lights.com/>

- Regarding the 112th Street bathrooms and concession stand, the contractor schedule has been significantly delayed. The restrooms are unable to open. Alternative solutions are pending.
- The concession stand will be open in March of 2025.

NEW BUSINESS, PRESENTATIONS, AND DISCUSSIONS

Morningside Park: (Scenic Landmark) Reconstruction of 114th, 116th and 122nd Street staircases at Morningside Drive, **Docket LPC-25-01988**, NYC Parks, Landscape Architect, Laura Drawbaugh and Ricardo Hinkle

- ricardo.hinkle@parks.nyc.gov and laura.drawbaugh@parks.nyc.gov
- The project goals are to make the stairs safer and ADA compliant, and manage stormwater to prevent flooding.
- The nearly 100 feet elevation change began as an Olmsted design and is designated as a scenic landmark.
- There is heavy flooding on the eastern edge of the parkland.
- It is dense residential to the east, mainly institutional to the west and serves a very large population, and it's a relatively large park.
- The unsafe stairs and storm water runoff will be addressed, and new, structural work on the plaza at 116th Street has been added.
- **114th Street:** The gently shaped stairs are very dilapidated. There are misaligned bluestone treads, the asphalt landings are in poor condition, there are no handrails, and irregular carved boulders on the sides. The existing poor condition of the treads and pavement are visible. The proposed reconstruction, previously shown is the same. The existing treads and boulders will be removed, stockpiled, and then a new concrete foundation will be constructed. The treads and boulders will be reset. Sturdy landmarks grey concrete landings will be provided. The treads in good enough condition will be reused and others will be replaced to match as closely as possible. Handrails will be provided on both sides.
- **116th Street:** These stairs are also very different in character. Due to the constant flow of water from a protruding pipe, and from the slopes above the treads, these stairs have been displaced. The water is flowing, not into the park's internal drainage system, but instead it runs on the surface down to the street. The non ADA compliant handrail and boulder cheek walls are apparent. As previously stated, the existing treads and boulders from these stairs have an existing concrete foundation. The treads and boulders will be removed, stockpiled, and reset in the same position with some drainage materials to improve the storm water runoff situation, and the landmarks grey color will be used on the concrete landings. Again, the treads that aren't in good enough condition to reuse, will be replaced.
- Changes were made based on suggestions by the Friends of Morningside Park. A trench drain that was previously planned was eliminated, and a granite block swale was added on the uphill side of this path to direct the surface water from above into an existing catch basin. The little bird bath area was going to be removed, but the Friends group pointed out that it is a very fond feature. Therefore, the drainage will be reconstructed with dome grate to prevent overflow. Additionally, some of the materials on the upper Plaza area will be reset. The grand steps and plaza at 116th Street are well traveled and used for public events. Security and lighting are a great concern. Therefore, 5 new lights and handrails on the center and sides of these stairs will be added.



- After consultation with the structural engineer, the leaning pedestal and light pole will be addressed on the northern edge of the upper plaza. Remove and reset pedestal and light pole; re-attach railing to removed and reset granite posts; remove and reset schist coping dislodged by roots, remove and reset granite curb. The vegetation that's damaging the retaining wall coping at this location will be removed. Mortared materials will be used this time to keep its unique character. Some coping stones will be reset and the handrail will be fixed.
- **122nd Street:** These stairs which are built later are very different from the other sets of stairs. They have granite block cheek walls and treads, which both are in poor condition. The steps are misaligned, and there's a tiny little run of handrail. The photos show the poor condition of the treads and cheek walls. The existing treads and boulders will be removed, stockpiled, and then a new concrete foundation will be constructed. The bluestone treads and boulders will be reset. Again, sturdy landmarks grey concrete landings will be provided. If the treads aren't in good enough condition, they will be replaced, and matched as best possible. Handrails will be installed on both sides. This time the slope of the landscape will be followed instead of having those step downs, rustic granite coping will be added on top to protect the masonry joints. Swales will be reconstructed in its existing condition and locations with granite block.
- Considerable lighting, but not cameras will be added. There are an extensive number of cameras in the park between Columbia University and NYPD.
- The Landmarks (LPC) submission which is still in progress resulted in a request for more historic information, rather than questions about the handrails which are the same as installed on 113th Street and extensively in Central Park. Three pipe handrails are included, on each side, and then down the middle because of the width of the stairs. Additionally, there is precedent at Jackie Robinson, the Central Park Arsenal, and in Morningside. This will make ADA accessibility robust. LPC is most curious about the 122nd Street stairs evolution. There is an odd condition that this wall was built pre 1964, more granite block was placed on top, and the steps were narrowed. LPC wants to ensure the stair widths and materials are maintained which this proposal has addressed and is compliant.
- NYC Parks has requested a Letter of Support by the end of the month addressed jointly to LPC and to the Public Design Commission. Support for this project passed this committee with unanimous support due to the previous requested design changes were implemented, and the receipt of a Letter of Support from the Friends of Morningside Park.

1160 Amsterdam Avenue - Columbia University Saint Paul's Chapel, ramp and walkways, LPC- 25-00279,

Walter B. Melvin Architects, Martin Griggs, RA | Principal and Krista Bentson, ((kbla) Landscape Architect))

- This is an architecture firm in the city, specializing in storm restoration, and all exterior preservation.
- Restored the chapel of this individual landmark a number of years ago. The purpose of this project is to develop a permanent ADA accessible entrance into the chapel because there is currently a makeshift ramp in place and restore the stair and portico paving to solve the water infiltration issue.
- The LPC Hearing is scheduled for September 24th.
- Reviewed the McKim, Mead & White Master Plan for the 1890s who designed the campus plan.
- Elevating everything to a 150 foot plateau. Therefore, a lot of grading was done on the site to create that plateau and then allow for the south view drop off, and in the original master plan is very symmetrical.
- It's been a hierarchy of domes across, and this building is in a little courtyard to the east.
- The location is a very important part of the campus and is a primary secondary entrance.
- Inside Columbia, it's a special area that maintains a historic configuration as the only original courtyard.



- The project goals are as follows:
 - Provide for similar entry experience regardless of mobility. (Graduation and wedding events.)
 - Honor original Master Plan in context of modern requirements and development history.
 - Align with campus materials and details while maintaining differentiation between new and old.
 - Restore damaged historic elements.
 - Improve long-term maintenance, drainage, and sustainability.
- The applicant conducted a survey of the Portico and Step issues and determined the following:
 - Mosaic and Landing Stone badly heaved/damaged. Salvaging the material is questionable. The Redstone changes color over time and fades. There will be an attempt to use the original stone. Other existing stone materials include marble, limestone and granite.
 - Intact Waterproofing vault, Water Buildup at Subsurface Slopes, Freeze-Thaw Cracking of Stone and Mosaic. (Water trapped under paving. Uneven brickwork makes wheelchair access difficult.)
- Proposed: Minimal Ramp With Raised Plaza Benefits (Elevated Plaza Paving and Raise Historic “Dutch Gates” from an early church which were from the original campus downtown and moved uptown)
 - Similar entry approach by all
 - Shortest ramp possible
 - Minimal handrails for those requiring support
 - Raising the grade of the herringbone paving to get more pitch to drain into the planting area. A significant amount of the area will be repaved to achieve the necessary grade and slope. Many existing drains on site will be reused.
 - Reducing the stairs by two treads or 12-14 inches, and lose a pedestal. Adding a simple handrail.
- The applicant presented many ramp alternatives, a materials list including limitations and matching challenges due to weathering. It is requested that enough existing stone material be saved to replicate at least one of the mosaics for preservation. The applicant’s proposal is appropriate by unanimous consent.

OLD BUSINESS UPDATES/ Landmarks Preservation Property Improvement Concerns

- **FORUM: FINANCIAL BENEFITS FOR HOMEOWNERS IN HISTORIC DISTRICTS:** Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill, Manhattan Avenue North and West Harlem, **Saturday September 21st, 10am – 4pm EDT**, The Bernard and Anne Spitzer School of Architecture **141 Convent Avenue, New York, NY**. Learn about Tax Credits, Grants, Loans, and other Financial Benefits available to property owners. Claudette Brady, Save Harlem Now
- **Review the LPC MCB9 monthly permit list during the next committee meeting: Claremont Theater**, West 135th and Broadway. Permit request to alter the façade front window area is denied. Individual landmark and totally gutted inside. There are no NYC DOB permits pulled. Request that the owners present their goals to the MCB9 Housing, Land Use and Zoning Committee.

ANNOUNCEMENTS The next meeting will be held on Wednesday October 2, 2024 at 6:30 PM EDT.

ADJOURNMENT The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 PM EDT.

Minutes respectfully submitted by, Heather Jason.