

Waterfront/Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday April 4 , 2012 at Broadway Housing 583 Riverside Drive 7th floor
Meeting called to order at 6:40 pm

CB9 Members in attendance: Arnold Boatner (Co-Chair), Brad Taylor (Co-Chair), Carole Singleton, Vicky Gholson, La Quita Henry

CB9 Public member in attendance: Jen Silverman

Public attendees: Basia Nikonorow-Montefiorre Park Assn., John Herrold-Parks Department, July Merino-Columbia University, Victoria Mason-Ailey-Columbia University, Michael Palma-Montefiorre Park Assn.

Presentations and discussions:

John Herrold administrator of Riverside Park gave an update on the following projects:

St. Clair Stairs-normally about 3 or 4 bids are submitted for construction projects. However, in this case 27 bids were submitted. The lowest qualified bid will be accepted. Project projected to start this summer.

Cherry Walk-capital project is approved. Solar powered reflector lights found by Brad Taylor that are self-charging will be installed in the street to aid motorists and bicyclists.

Grants Tomb- shrubs obscuring views will be removed and have grass replace them. CB9 member Vicky Gholson requested that shrubs be trimmed and not removed. Gholson also requested that the shrubs be relocated to another location. Brad Taylor suggested Cherry Walk be explored as a possible site for relocation of shrubs to aid motorists from glare of headlights.

Skate board site- Brad Taylor requested exploration of possible site for skate boarding in Riverside Park.

Sakura Festival-being held next Saturday at Sakura Park with 24 different musical acts-ceremony at 11am to plant cherry trees. Sakura Park is east of Grants Tomb.

Dog run- Herrold gave historical update on plans to build dog run in Riverside Park which date back 13 years ago when he began working initially in the park. Brad Taylor pointed out that proposed site is too small near 143rd Street. Do run location being proposed by parks department near 153rd Street is not supported by dog run proponents led by Brooks Nicholson. John Herrold indicated that Riverside Park is difficult to construct a dog run in due to the very steep slopes in park. Carole Singleton and Brad Taylor pointed out that dog run in St. Nicholas Park is on a very steep slope. John Herrold said there is presently no water available at the 153rd Street site. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding expansion of the 143rd Street site and reconfiguring site to better accommodate dog run. Brad Taylor suggested community organization write letters to Councilman Jackson in support of proposed dog run referencing other successful dog runs.

Brad Taylor announced that Joe Russiello is no longer the regional parks director. The new head of area parks is Kieisha Garnes.

Old Business: Vicky Gholson raised the issue of the DEC fund (North River Fund) and the money not being allocated and disbursed after about 15 years.

Carole Singleton raised the issue of the St. Nicholas Park stairs on 141st Street being in very bad disrepair. Singleton said rodents are also an issue in the area. These stairs aren't currently in the budget request. A request to repair would have to be directed to the new director Ms. Garnes. Carole Singleton also mentioned the need for a new fence inside of park.

La Quita Henry gave an update on the Montefiorre Park expansion and closure of Hamilton Place between 135th and 137th Streets. DOT will be presented with a proposal for a feasibility study to increase parking space on 135th Street between Broadway and Riverside Drive to compensate for the loss of parking on Hamilton Place. Discussion ensued regarding other possible parking alternatives. Henry also mentioned that community forums on design of the expansion are being planned. And she will have an update ready by June.

Brad Taylor mentioned tentative plans for a Waterfront forum at the May parks department meeting involving all stakeholders including Columbia University, MTA, Regional Planning Association, City Planning.

Vicky Gholson proposed establishment of a series of 10 sculptures in St. Nicholas Park extending from 129th Street up to the Hamilton Grange Memorial. Arnold Boatner asked what role the Public Arts Commission would play in selection of the sculptures and artists who would create the sculptures. Brad Taylor also indicated that the proposal would have to start with the parks department.

Brad Taylor mentioned that the Morningside Park barbecue issue is still under discussion.

Basia Nikonorow-Montefiorre Park Assn. mentioned that April 21st is It's My Park Day.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00pm

Submitted by Arnold Boatner