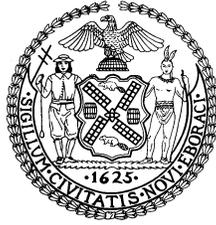


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**The City of New York**  
**Manhattan Community Board 8**

**Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting**  
**Brick Presbyterian Church**  
**62 East 92<sup>nd</sup> Street (Park-Madison)**  
**Carnegie Room**  
**Thursday, October 1, 2015**  
**6:30 PM**

CB8M members in attendance: Michele Birnbaum, Daniel Dornbaum, Susan Evans, Sharon Pope, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder

Public members in attendance: Judy Schneider, Trisha Shimamura

Excused: Scott Falk, Sophia James

**1. Review of Conditions at Ruppert Park**

The committee weighed in on a number of on-going issues and concerns at Ruppert Park, among them, rodents, garbage, irrigation, and plantings, and prospects for creating a dog run.

In an email message, Nancy Ploeger, of the Friends of Ruppert Park, spelled out the group's improvement projects and expected City funding for the park. She said the City is allocating \$12,000 for rodent extermination and about 6 big belly garbage cans and has earmarked \$100,000 for a new irrigation system. She also "heard" that another \$60,000 might be allocated to assess the need for (and initial design of) a dog run in Ruppert Park.

At the meeting, the Parks Dept.'s Mark Vaccaro provided an update on these issues.

Concerning irrigation, he reported that the DPR is now seeking a contractor for systems, City-wide, and he hopes this will include irrigation in Ruppert Park. He said that the system planned for Ruppert Park--its third such watering system to date--would involve all-underground piping.

He said that new plantings that accompany the new irrigation would involve "simple horticulture," such as shrubs and lawn. And he agreed with committee members' suggestions that this sloped-shape park should be terraced to avoid soil erosion.

To committee members, rodents remain the park's leading problem. As causes, Mr. Vaccaro pointed to garbage disposal practices at Ruppert Towers, people who feed birds and Second Ave. Subway construction. Although the park will be getting rodent-proof big belly garbage cans, Mr. Vaccaro didn't know exactly when. However, he said that after Second Ave. Subway construction is completed in the area, the park may be able to obtain additional big belly garbage cans.

On the dog run issue, Mr. Vaccaro said that, while the DPR has no overall position, it would disallow a dog run in the park's upper areas near the playground. That would leave only the park's lower area near Second Ave. for the run. But before the DPR makes any decision on this issue, the Community Board will have to weigh in, he said. However, the committee opted to postpone action on the dog run until Nancy Ploeger, and/or other members of the Friends of Ruppert Park, could attend a Parks Committee meeting.

## **2. Update on Efforts to End Privatization of the Queensboro Oval Park**

A Parks Committee member reported on his discussions with Council Member Ben Kallos and his staff about ending the privatization of the Queensboro Oval Park. The moves were a follow-up on CB8M's July resolution, which called for the Parks Dept. to stop leasing the Oval to private entities once the department's current contract with Sutton East Tennis Club ends in 2017. CB8M is urging the Parks Dept. to allow the Oval to be publicly accessible year-round.

As reported to the Parks Committee, Council Member Kallos supports CB8M's position about the Oval. In addition, he believes that Council Member Daniel Garodnick's office must be involved in this effort to ensure that Mr. Garodnick's constituents will be heard. The offices of both council members—Kallos and Garodnick—have received public complaints about the unsightly, unusable conditions at the Oval each summer after the tennis bubble is temporarily removed. More such complaints would help make the Oval a high priority issue or the council members, the committee heard.

At the Parks Committee meeting, Parks Dept. official Mark Vaccaro recommended reaching out to the Parks Dept. Commissioner's office--which the committee plans to do. The committee also will be seeking additional public support for its efforts to end privatization of the Oval.

## **3. Status of the Plan to Create a Park at 1190 Second Avenue**

The committee's co-chairs reported on their meeting with State Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright about CB8M's plan to create a park at 1190 Second Ave. at 63<sup>rd</sup> St.

In July, Ms. Seawright and Borough President Gale Brewer jointly wrote a letter to the MTA (which owns the 1190 Second Ave. lot) seeking a meeting about this park project. But they've received no reply.

As a result, the Parks Committee met with the Assembly Member and her staff on October 1 to find ways to pursue the matter.

At the meeting Ms. Seawright and her staff decided on the following steps: writing a letter to the editor of a local publication describing the need for such a new park; contacting various other state and local elected officials to bolster support for the park plan; again contacting MTA officials; and, at some point, possibly holding a press event to further publicize the park plan.

For its part, the committee will be keeping in touch with the Assembly Member and her staff about these efforts. And it will continue its public outreach to spur support for the plan for a park at 1190 Second Ave.

**Susan Evans and Margaret Price  
Co-Chairs, Parks Committee**