

(Pending Committee Approvals)

Minutes of Joint Parks & Recreation and Environment & Sanitation Committee Meeting
June 22, 2022, 7pm via Zoom

ATTENDEES:

Parks & Recreation Committee: Ramdat Singh (Chair), Deb Travis, David Gellman, Bob Bender, Robert Jacklosky

Environment & Sanitation Committee: Robert Fanuzzi (Chair), Deb Travis, Karen Argenti (CCM), Rob Spalter (CCM)

CB8: Laura Spalter (CB8 Chair), Dan Padernacht, Rosemary Ginty, Sylvia Alexander

City Agencies and Consultants: Joseph Magneri (DPR), Michael Ortiz (DPR), Stephanie Ehrlich (DPR), Samir (DPR), Doug Nash (DPR), Renata Sokolowski (DPR)

Guests: Ira Charles Levenberg, Jenny Baum, Sachi Mc, Renee Ruhl, Leslie, Jodie Barbash, Danielle Monopoli, Lia, Chauncy Young, Alex Rosenblum

AGENDA

1. Introduction of Committee Members and Guests
2. Approval of Minutes of May 25 Joint Meeting of the Environment and Sanitation and Parks and Recreation Committees
3. Chairperson's Report
 - A. Parks and Recreation Committee
 - B. Environment and Sanitation Committee
4. Joint Agenda
 - A. Discussion of Joint Committee Resolution on NYC Department of Environmental and Protection and Department of Parks and Recreation submission of its design for Putnam Greenway and Daylighting of Tibbetts Brook to the Public Design Commission (Committee's vote will be taken)

After discussion on NYC Department of Environmental and Protection and Department of Parks and Recreation submission of its design for Putnam Greenway and Daylighting

of Tibbetts Brook, the joint committee worked on the resolution to send to the Public Design Commission.

Joint Resolution of the Parks and Recreation and Environment and Sanitation Committees

Whereas, the joint New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) are submitting their design, "Daylighting of Tibbetts Brook and Construction of a Greenway, between Hester and Piero's Mill Pond, Van Cortlandt Park, and West 230th Street, Bronx" to the New York City Public Design Commission (PDC) for a Conceptual Level review on July 11, 2022; and,

Whereas, the DEP and DPR presented the DEP and DPR presented their design for the Daylighting of Tibbetts Brook and Putnam South Greenway to a joint meeting of Bronx Community Board 8 (Bronx CB 8) Environment & Sanitation (E & S) and Parks & Recreation (P & R) Committees on December 17, 2021, and presented "Daylighting of Tibbetts Brook and Construction of a Greenway, between Hester and Piero's Mill Pond, Van Cortlandt Park, and West 230th Street, Bronx", which will be submitted to the PDC for Conceptual Review, to a joint meeting of Bronx CB 8 E & S and P & R committees on May 25, 2022; and,

Whereas, Bronx CB 8's 197-a Plan, adopted by the City Planning Commission and the City Council in 2003, proposed including reuse of the abandoned Old Putnam Line railroad Right of Way (ROW) south of Van Cortlandt Park as an opportunity for the creation of a new multi-purpose linear open space in Kingsbridge, and,

Whereas, on October 12, 2010 Bronx CB8 voted to approve a ULURP application by DPR to amend the City Map in order establish 1). "a park running generally alongside the Major Deegan Expressway, between 230th and Van Cortlandt Park South" and 2).a park addition to Van Cortlandt Park, between Van Cortlandt Park South and The Bronx-Westchester County Line" and to authorize acquisition of real property (CSX ROW); and

Whereas, on May 13, 2014 Bronx CB 8 passed a resolution adopting the Van Cortlandt Park Master Plan, which presented conceptual plans to construct a mixed-use greenway, utilize green infrastructure, and daylight Tibbetts Brook inside Van Cortlandt Park and along the proposed Putnam South Greenway;

Whereas, Bronx CB 8 unanimously passed Resolutions on April 12, 2016, April 19, 2017, and February 13, 2018 in strong support of the Putnam Greenway and Daylighting of Tibbetts Brook citing their unique recreational, economic, and environmental benefits; and,

Whereas, representatives of Bronx CB 8 attended meetings of the newly formed Tibbett's Advisory Group (TAG) on March 10 and April 19, 2022 and the TAG site visit on April 21; and,

Therefore, Be It Resolved, Bronx Community Board 8 supports the concept and goals of the DEP and DPR submission, "Daylighting of Tibbetts Brook and Construction of a Greenway, between Hester and Piero's Mill Pond, Van Cortlandt Park, and West 230th Street, Bronx" that is the subject of a Conceptual Review of the New York City Public Design Commission on July 11; and,

Be It Further Resolved that Bronx Community Board 8 receive regular updates from DPR and DEP on design changes to the joint Daylighting Tibbetts Brook and Putnam Greenway project for

the purpose of review and the consideration of new and separate resolutions pursuant to Preliminary and Final PDC review, as well as any other agency from which they seek approval.

Be It Further Resolved that Bronx Community Board 8 attaches a statement of design priorities and recommendations to this resolution, which may be updated by the consent of the Board, for consultation by DEP, DPR, and DOT in the ongoing design processes and future design modifications.

I. Environmental, Water and Watershed Management

A. DESIGN PRIORITIES

1. Design Putnam Greenway for as close to possible “zero-discharge” within VCP and alongside the CSX ROW by utilizing green infrastructure, native plants, and an effective Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and Erosion and Sediment Controls (E&SC). All designs must meet all requirements for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) and New York State Pollutant and Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit, pre-and post-construction SWPPP.
2. Maintain an adequate level to size the water feature as needed to meet the Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) goals. Mitigate areas that are not wide enough for the greenway with cantilevering over the water feature, which also provides some shaded areas as found in nature.
3. Use the DEP’s Long Term Control Plan just for the City strategy to reduce the amount of storm water causing combined overflow into the Harlem, Hudson, and East Rivers. Climate change requires separate funding and continually updated reports on the changes we are seeing -- more rain, more often, for more hours, with greater speeds, pollutants, and erosion than ever before.
4. Prepare a maintenance manual for management guidance.
5. Create environmental educational signage to highlight ecological function of new wetlands restoration within VCP and historic trail of Tibbetts Brook along Putnam Greenway South, in consultation with local stakeholders
6. Provide maximum vegetative screen and historically appropriate facing for above ground manhole access to DEP Jerome Park Reservoir “blow off” valve within VCP wetlands area
7. Include and/or advise of permits concerning any of the above issues.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Expand the CSO reduction impact of Daylighting Tibbetts Brook, the largest Green Infrastructure project in NYC, supplement "end of pipe" practices, and design for resilience by seeking ways to clean and capture water at its source. As the first water pollution treatment that is aesthetically beautiful, ecologically productive, and a new addition to our natural resources, Daylighting is the first step toward upstream, watershed-based stormwater management.
2. Maximize impact of CSO reduction at WI 056 by adopting and designing the Daylighting of Tibbetts Brook within the Tibbetts Brook/Harlem River Watershed, one of the largest subwatershed areas producing the highest outfall in the city.
3. Use the largest Green infrastructure and its flood mitigation impacts on the Broadway commercial corridor to drive Broadway economic development and engage local merchants

4. Use the largest Green Infrastructure to enhance and leverage citywide flood mitigation in and around Van Cortlandt Park and along the Major Deegan (Hurricane Ida), in consultation with DEP and Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice (MOCEJ).
5. Put funding for Green Infrastructure, in citywide sustainability and resiliency programs, including existing underfunded MS4 permitting. Said program requires select city agencies to maintain good housekeeping and pollution prevention activities. Sustainability goals include carbon sequestration, lowering greenhouse gas and the urban heat island effect as well as noise mitigation from I-87 and human powered, non motorized transportation methods.
6. Enhance the impact of the largest Green Infrastructure project in NYC by planning GI projects throughout the WI056 watershed, including ROW and public retrofits and incentivized private property, and discharges from surrounding DTB watershed (i.e., SMRP, etc.) Climate Change requires the use of new federal funding extended to every agency in order to shore up the high cost of flooding and its harms to life and property.
7. Consult with NYS DOT on GI and flood mitigation to regulate stormwater runoff from I-87 into VC Park and along the I-87 corridor adjacent to the Putnam Greenway.

II. Park & Greenway

A. DESIGN PRIORITIES

1. Continue S-curve design of the Putnam Greenway within VCP for the continuation of the Putnam Greenway in the Van Cortlandt Park and along the CSX ROW to the extent possible.
2. Implement all appropriate and available traffic calming measures on Greenway and access points to ensure pedestrian safety along the shared use Putnam Greenway
3. Incorporate lockable gates for Putnam Greenway within VCP and south along CSX ROW for possible closure, working with community stakeholders to determine appropriate hours.
4. List Rules for Park at every access point, working community stakeholders to prepare.
5. Maintain consistent DPR design idiom for lighting fixtures, preferably solar and with dark sky feature, along Putnam Greenway in VCP and south of VCP..
6. Minimize impact on sight line of proposed fencing on the VCP dam and specify materials.
7. Use planks on viewing platforms to match existing boardwalks over tree roots in the Putnam Greenway South inside VCP.
8. Utilize permeable asphalt on the Putnam Greenway wherever feasible and where required to maximize infiltration and greenway width.
9. Utilize special lighting and cameras pursuant to recommendations from NYPD for Putnam Greenway route beneath Van Cortlandt Park South underpass and other locations to ensure safety.
10. Incorporate 1% for public art opportunities into design with provisions for Bronx-based artists.
11. Incorporate waste/recycling cans and maintenance access into design of Putnam Greenway.
12. Include water fountains and DPR-approved bicycle repair stations in design of Putnam Greenway
13. Shared use throughout the Putnam Greenway, maintaining minimum required width for greenways, including a rain garden on the buffer area for water infiltration

14. Design baffle wall separating the Putnam Greenway from I-87 with vegetative cover and sound buffering
15. Clarify access from Van Cortlandt Park South.
16. Remove all chain link fencing between VCP, replacing chain link fence in VCP parking lot with attractive wooden barriers as much as possible

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Select and design access points along the CSX ROW to maintain where feasible or as much as possible, equitable upland access for communities living in neighborhoods east and west of I-87
2. Incorporate access to existing playgrounds and parks along the route of the Putnam Greenway south of VCP to maximize and improve recreational opportunities within existing parks and playgrounds.
3. With DOT, design Putnam Greenway along CSX ROW to incorporate access to DOT existing and planned bikeways for connection to parkland and city streets under consideration for the Harlem River Greenway.
4. Design access and exit from Putnam Greenway at its southern terminus to allow connection to parkland and city streets under consideration for the Harlem River Greenway.
5. Study alternative bicycle routes parallel to and south of Greenway on streets for use when the Putnam Greenway is closed.
6. Study the use of access to the existing cantilevered plaza the Major Deegan Expressway at Albany Crescent opposite Verveelen Place as a Bailey Avenue east side access point.
7. Study the Tibbetts Brook/Putnam Greenway as a transportation spine, including the extension of the Empire State Trail from Van Cortlandt Park to 230th Street and southbound connections to the Harlem River Greenway.
8. Make public the best practices for maintenance of the plant pallet, both planned and after the project is completed, to assist in the development of community stewardship.

Committee Votes

E and S Committee members in favor: Karen Argenti, Robert Fanuzzi, Rob Spalter, Deb Travis

Parks and Recreation Committee members in favor: Bob Bender, Robert Jacklosky, Ramdat Singh, Deb Travis

Abstention: David Gellman

5. Environment and Sanitation Committee Agenda
 - A. Old Business - NONE

B. New Business - NONE

6. Parks & Recreation Committee Agenda

A. New Business - Van Cortlandt Park Wrought Iron Fence

The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) presented their plans to restore the Van Cortlandt Park Wrought Iron Fencing. DPR mentioned that 2.7million was allocated by Council Member Eric Dinowitz's office. The project will restore the wrought iron fence around the VCP Museum. Currently, the fence is rusted and was previously painted with lead paint. The project will occur in two phases, the first is the restoration of the fence and the second is painting the fence with 3 coats of paint. DPR assured us that both the pathway and the House Museum will remain open while this restoration project takes place. The committee voiced their approval of the project and passed the following resolution below.

Resolution on the Van Cortlandt Park Wrought Iron Fence

Whereas representatives from the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) appeared before the Parks & Recreation Committee of Community Board 8 at its meeting of June 22, 2022, to present a proposed design for the renovation of the wrought iron fence around the Van Cortlandt House Museum (VCHM); and

Whereas the renovation of the badly deteriorated fence, which contains lead paint, has been a priority of the committee and of the Van Cortlandt Park Alliance (VCPA) for several years; and

Whereas the DPR representatives answered questions from committee members and other attendees regarding the project and assured those in attendance that no lead exposure would take place in the park and neither would the heavily used pathway adjacent to the fence on the north be closed during the project; and

Whereas DPR asked the committee for its support for the project;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the committee supports this project as presented, on the condition that DPR return to the committee if there is any substantive alteration to the design as presented to the community.

In favor: Singh, Bender, Gellman, Jacklosky, Travis

Opposed: none

Abstain: none

B. Old Business- Pickleball courts at Seton Park.

Ramdat and the Committee will work with DPR to schedule a walkthrough of Seton park for the feasibility of pickleball courts. Mike Ortiz will work on the scheduling of this walkthrough.

7. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned.

Robert Fanuzzi- Chair of Environment & Sanitation

Ramdat Singh- Chair of Parks & Recreation