



Donovan Richards  
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# Community Board No. 2

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Danielle Brecker  
Chairperson

Debra Markell Kleinert  
District Manager

October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## Environment, Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes

*this was a teleconference zoom meeting*

### Attendees

Laura Shepard, Chair  
Danielle Brecker  
Nellie Afshar  
Carlos Castell Croke  
Lauren Springer  
Benjamin Lucas  
Pearl Brady, Public Member

### Absentee

Chhemang Lama

Mariana Mogilevich, Public Member

### Community Board 2 Staff

Debra Markell Kleinert, CB2 District Manager

### Guests

Peter Witke  
Jacqui Harris, NYC Parks  
Eric Mattes, NYC Parks  
Monet Davis, NYC Parks  
Eric Goetz, NYC Parks  
Alexander Sokol, NYC Parks

Laura Shepard, Chair of the CB2 Environment, Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Laura Shepard opened the meeting for public comment. No public comment.

Laura Shepard introduced Peter Witke to discuss Murray Playground Dog Run Reconstruction.

- Peter Witke, the project manager of this project, showed a power point presentation of the Reconstruction of the Dog Run and Synthetic Turf Field at John F. Murray Playground.

*“Serving the Communities of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Maspeth”*

- The goal is to reconstruct the dog run using synthetic turf for dogs; the dog run shall be a single space and not subdivided into two.
- The dog run will be located at John F. Murray Playground.
- There is no stormwater flooding in this area.
- The playground itself was constructed in 2011.
- The dog run is situated at 45<sup>th</sup> Road and 21<sup>st</sup> Street.
- The surface is presently dirt, mulch is piled to the side and 3 dead trees need to be removed.
- Peter Witke showed a new schematic design of the dog run.
- The sidewalk and the ramps will be redone.
- Security lighting will be added to the dog run.
- The new plantings will be for shade.
- The existing fields are well used and need to be resurfaced.
- The design took into consideration a community group that would like to meet in one section.
- The main concern was the playing field being so close to the existing fence for safety.
- The field is generally used for soccer.
- A committee member asked how hot the turf will get in the summertime for the dog run?
  - It was pointed out that there will be more shade trees and there will be spray misters if the dogs get hot.
  - Eric Mattes, NYC Parks stated that Synthetic Turf can be hotter, however, there has been good success with the synthetic turfs and no complaints from the community concerning their dogs.
- A question was asked about water drainage on the synthetic turf.
  - There will be water drainage underneath the turf.
  - The turf should not flood.
- Comments were made that the trees should be native.
- It was suggested to add bike racks.
- Laura Shepard, Chair of the Environment Committee asked if NYC Parks communicated with NYC DOT regarding pedestrian safety on the sidewalks surrounding the playground.
  - There will be construction done to the pedestrian ramps on the corners.
- A suggestion was made to remove the city bike dock from the sidewalk onto the street for a safety reason.
- A suggestion was made to add a solid rat-proof container for trash.
- Discussion took place on the drainage of water on the synthetic turf.
- This project is slated to go to the Public Design Commission next month.
- Peter Witke is looking for a letter from the committee stating that this project is approved contingent upon Environment Committee's comments addressed.

Jacqui Harris, NYC Parks spoke about Lawrence Virgilio Playground Reconstruction.

- Jacqui Harris presented the schematic design for Lawrence Virgilio Playground located at 39<sup>th</sup> Drive and 54<sup>th</sup> Street in Windmueller Park.
- The funding for this project is \$10.5 million
- The project size is one acre.
- The project will focus on the playground, the fitness area, the amenities and will provide an in ground mini pool 3 feet deep.
- No coastal flooding in this area.
- The existing play equipment is aging and in need of upgrade, more trees are needed as it gets very hot, there is erosion in the seating area.
- No new sewer connection is needed.
- Community priorities were shade, new benches and play equipment, engaging spray shower.
- The major move in the new design was to place the play area in the existing shade area and the spray shower is the sunny area.
- Jacqui Harris explained the new design to the committee.
- Eric Goetz, NYC Parks stated that there will be a lifeguard on duty. The pool will be closed when there is no lifeguard.
- Natives trees and plants was suggested for the area.
- The bathroom will not be getting renovated on this project.
- It was suggested to add a water fountain and bottle filler near the bathroom.
- The hours for the restroom go by the seasons.
- A curb cut was suggested in the park for wheelchair accessibility.
- This project will take three years to complete.
- A bike rack was suggested outside of the park.

A short discussion was held on the enforcement of dogs being off the leash in the parks. Eric Goetz stated that during the summer there was a pilot seasonal enforcement program for this reason and NYC Parks will bring this enforcement back next year.

Laura Shepard continued the meeting with the discussion of storm impacts / flooding.

- A lot of locations had combined sewage backflow especially in Blissville and other low-level neighborhoods.
- This means the sewers were so overwhelmed that sewer water backed up into the basements of their homes.
- Many storms are happening now due to climate change, we presently have outdated infra structure and the lack of permeable surfaces to absorb the water.
- It was suggested for NYC Parks to increase the number of permeable surfaces in parks.
- Discussion on locations where streets are flooded.

- Discussion on green infrastructure for new construction.
- Laura Shephard mentioned expanding the use of rain gardens and bioswales to offset the flooding issues.

Laura Shephard, Chair of the Environment, Parks & Recreation Committee proposed to table the discussion of the CB2Q Climate Action Plan.

- Danielle Brecker mentioned that in addition to extreme heat and flooding affecting the climate there is also wind.

Benjamin Lucas gave a QSWAB report:

- Composting project on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
- Pumpkin pledge discussion and where pumpkin waste should go.
- Education committee discussed outreach and how to get funding.
- A mini plastic audit is being organized which will consist of a community cleanup recording data of the plastic that is picked up.

#### Old Business:

- None

#### New Business:

- Laura Shepard made a recommendation to approve the design of both parks but ask that they evaluate additional stormwater retention, the inclusion of native plants, additional bike racks, compost collection in the parks and ratproof garbage containers and other elements of community feedback. The recommendation was seconded by Benjamin Lucas, all were in favor.
- Laura Shepard made a recommendation to several city agencies to increase the use of street space for storm water retention, rain gardens and bioswales. Lauren Springer seconded the recommendation; all were in favor.
- A short discussion on the how the money is figured out as to what gets renovated in the parks.

Every meeting the committee records the levels of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. Today's reading was 418.92 ppm which has increased from last year's reading of 415.67 ppm. Benjamin Lucas shared a link to a global report with the committee:

<https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/monitoring/monthly-report/global/202309>

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kim Waber