



Chairperson, Martha Taylor

*The City of New York
Borough of Queens*

Community Board 8

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District Manager, Marie Adam-Ovide

Parks Committee Meeting: The Hoover Manton Playground Reconstruction Design
Date: Monday, May 10, 2021
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: [Via Zoom Webinar](#)

Bhithara Martha Fulton, Parks Committee Chair

Board Members: Robert Block, Carolyn Brown, Susan Cleary, Bhithara Martha-Fulton, Marc A. Haken, James Gallagher Jr., Wendy Gennaro and Douglas Sherman.

Also, in attendance: Diane Drier, Director of the Queens Capital Team, Bryan Cantwell, Deputy Director of the Queens Capital Team, Anthony Buscaino, Project Manager, NYC Parks, Gabe Echevarria, CB8-9 Regional Manager, CB8 Staff Member Izabela Szczepanska,

Chairperson Fulton called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

Chairperson Fulton asked Mr. Buscaino to begin the presentation to the Committee.

Anthony Buscaino, Project Manager, NYC Parks – Mr. Buscaino stated that the budget for this project is \$4,195,000. The project size is about one acre. The playground is located at Manton Street and Main Street. The main goal is to correct drainage issues, create a cohesive play experience, and increase the green space.

These are some of the main highlights of the presentation on the Hoover Playground Re-construction:

- The playground is in the Hoover-Manton Playgrounds on Manton Street, Main Street, and Queens Boulevard.
- The context of surrounding land use was shown with land use categories: One-two family residential, multi-family residential, mixed use, commercial etc. (slide #4).
- Existing conditions of the playground were also shown (slide #9).
- Site photos with seating areas adjacent to play areas, play areas, equipment, and swings for 2 to 5-year-old and 5 to 12-year old, spray shows, adult fitness equipment, and the overall view of the playground was shown (slides # 12-20).
- At the Community Input Meeting there were three main things that were shared: active use, passive use, and green space. (Slide #21)
 - Active use: Update existing play equipment. Separation between 2-5-year-old and 5-12-year-old play areas. Advanced equipment for teens. Space for bicycle and scooter riding. Separation between play areas and adult areas.
 - Passive use: Seating area with a variety of options. Separation between seating area and play areas.
 - Green space: Increase the amount of planting areas. Provide more shade in seating and play areas.

- Playground equipment for the 2 to 5-year-old and 5 to 12-year-old were shown. There will be new equipment with a variety of free-standing equipment and climbers. The playground will be wheelchair accessible (slides # 27-30).
- The adult-teen fitness equipment will be updated. There will be new pull-up bars, etc. (slide #31).
- Site furnishing slide was shown with the different types of finishing the playground will have: 1964 World's Fair Bench, game table with type 'e' chairs, steel picket fence, fixed picnic table, hoop bicycle rack, trash receptacle, FMCP luminaire & pole, type 'f' hi-lo drinking fountain, and bottle filler. (slide #33).
- The plant pallet was shown. A mixture of trees and shrubs will be planted. Types of ferns will include mahonia japonica, hydrangea quercifolia cultivars, etc. (slide #34).
- The final schematic plan was shown with the full proposal of the re-construction (slide #36).

Wendy Gennaro – The work that is being done is only being done in the area that is on Queens Boulevard and Main Street, but nothing is being done with the hard surface that is on 83rd Avenue and Manton?

Answer: [Mr. Buscaino] – No, Manton is not in the scope of this project. Just Hoover Playground.

Marc A. Haken – What renovations and upgrades are being done on the laboratories?

Answer: [Mr. Buscaino] – There is no work in the comfort stations in this contract, in this project.

Marc A. Haken – It would have to be an entirely different contract?

Susan Cleary – Yes, yes it would.

Answer: [Mr. Buscaino] – Yes. The only thing that we are doing, we are re-grading the area, so it is totally accessible. Right now, it is not accessible. That is the only thing that we would be doing is providing ADA accessibility to the comfort stations other than that nothing else is included with that.

Susan Cleary – When do you plan on working on Manton Playground?

Diane Drier – When funding becomes available. We need funding from your Borough President and Councilman.

Susan Cleary – Okay, I am curious about your 1964 World's Fair Bench. Is that a replica? Or is it from the 64-world fair?

Marc A. Haken – Those are replicas. I have a few at Cunningham Park.

Diane Drier – It is an overall look that we try to do. We have different types of palettes. One is a 39 fair palette that is an older palette. This is the more modern palette.

Wendy Gennaro – So was Manton ever addressed at all to the committee here?

Bhitihara Martha Fulton – That is a very good question.

Wendy Gennaro – Yes, I don't know why I thought it was all being addressed together.

Bhitihara Martha Fulton – They come in separate packages. Is that correct?

Diane Drier – Yes, I mean we were directed from the funding from the Borough President and the Councilman. This was all going to just be done for the playground.

Bhitihara Martha Fulton – Can you review the plants for me?

Answer: [Mr. Buscaino] – (Slide # 34 was screenshared) These are just a couple options of potential plant palettes that we would use. Do you want me to go through some of the specific trees?

Bhitihara Martha Fulton – Yes, I would like to know which of them are and what are you planning.

Answer: [Mr. Buscaino] – This is a Kentucky coffee tree; it is a canopy tree they grow fast so you will have some good shade in a short amount of time (*pointing to the gymnocladus dioicus*). Serviceberry tree, this is a more of an understory flowering tree, this will look very nice in the spring (*pointing to the Amelanchier x grandiflora cultivars*). Sumac is just a nice foliage tree it is more understory as well (*pointing to the rhus typhina 'bailtiger'*). This is another understory tree, it is a redbud, that is also very nice flowers during the springtime (*pointing to the cercis canadensis cultivars*). In the bottom row, is a variety of shrubs. The mahonia is an evergreen shrub that is all year round. Oakleaf hydrangea woody shrub but we have flowers all summer.

Bhitihara Martha Fulton – Beautiful. The hydrangea is very popular in the south.

Susan Cleary – So are the red buds.

Answer: [Mr. Buscaino] – This is sumac, this is more of a woody ground covering it helps us cover a lot of the ground in terms of it spreading, it is a useful plant.

Bhitihara Martha Fulton – What was the name of it?

Answer: [Mr. Buscaino] – Sumac. It is a certain variety that is low and spreads as a ground covering.

Diane Drier – So it produces a beautiful fall color.

Answer: [Mr. Buscaino] – Yes, it will be very similar to the sumac. Last is the fothergilla, that is another flower shrub that smells very nice. There will also be some evergreen shrubs and flowering at different times of the year.

Susan Cleary – Are you going to have all of these at Hoover or are you going to be picking and choosing?

Answer: [Mr. Buscaino] – What we typically do is we will come up with the planting design and pass it. We have a separate landscape unit that reviews everything. Pass it by them and then they kind of help make the final call. This is just something that we will work with.

Diane Drier – There are a lot of planting beds around. I would assume most of these plants will be used and even some additional ones too. The entire playground is surrounded by a planting bed. We are separating adult use and children use with another planting bed. You can see that between the swings and adult-teen fitness and the children's area.

Susan Cleary – Would it be possible for your landscaping group to check out the red buds that have been planted here in Queens because some are not doing very well and are happier in the south.

Diane Drier - Okay.

Susan Cleary – I love that tree. I think it is gorgeous.

Bhitihara Martha Fulton – Maybe the snow was a little intense this year. That happened in my yard. Anthony was there a basketball court at this park?

Answer: [Mr. Buscaino] – No, there are only basketball courts in Manton. The handball court, basketball court, and the multipurpose play area.

Chairperson Fulton asked the Board Members if anyone had any other questions, comments, or concerns.

Susan Cleary – I wish Manton was being addressed because it is in bad shape.

Wendy Gennaro – It is a hazard; I am surprised, but this is gorgeous. It is beautiful I have no problems with Hoover. I am just very disappointed. I really thought it was all being addressed together. At the outset I was very excited to hear about the plans. Living in Briarwood and having to put up with that horrible park on the corner. Very disappointing and I hope we can address it soon and do something with it because it is a mess, but this is beautiful. I think it looks great.

Bhitihara Martha Fulton – I think it is beautiful. What about you Marc?

Marc A. Haken – You need to lobby your Councilman to get additional funds. There is a third part that is a baseball field. I don't think it is part of the park I think it is part of the high school. In the past, I have sponsored children shows in that playground. It certainly can use the upgrade and the availability to provide various activities for disabled children. I like it.

Bhitihara Martha Fulton – I like it too. I like the various activities.

Chairperson Fulton announced that Robert Block wrote in the chat that he thinks it is beautiful.

Bhitihara Martha Fulton – I like it, the division of the age grouping and the plantings. I think it is very pretty. Do we need to vote on this?

Marc A. Haken – I believe we need a recommendation vote.

Bhitihara Martha Fulton – Yes, so we can write a letter.

Diane Drier – We need a support letter.

Marc A. Haken made a motion to provide a letter of support for the proposed plans for the Hoover Playground, seconded by Wendy Gennaro.

Susan Cleary – When is the project going to start?

Answer: [Mr. Buscaino] – Right now we are in the design phase.

Diane Drier – Yes, we are in the design phase right now. We are about 35% done. We will be transmitting it to the procurement phase in September. This phase is when all the lawyers look at everything, including all the documents and they set it up to go out to contractors to bid. Sometimes that takes anywhere from 6-9 months. After that, it will be under construction. All things well in hand we hope to start construction next summer. The construction goes on for a year.

Bhitihara Martha Fulton – I think we are all in favor. I think it is lovely. I thank you for your hard work on it. I visited the park by mistake one time, and I am happy that I did.

Count in favor: 8 Opposed: 0 Abstained: 0

Board Members in Favor: Robert Block, Carolyn Brown, Susan Cleary, Bhitihara Martha-Fulton, Marc A. Haken, James Gallagher Jr., Wendy Gennaro and Douglas Sherman.

Board Members in Against: None.

James Gallagher Jr. – I was just hoping that Manton Playground would be discussed. There is a big flooding problem over there, but we will get to that another time.

Marc A. Haken – Jim, find a couple million dollars then we can discuss.

James Gallagher Jr. – All I need is one mega ticket.

Bhitihara Martha Fulton announced that Douglas Sherman was at the meeting under a different participant name. He voted in favor.

Marc Haken made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 8:00 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Izabela Szczepanska, CB8 Staff
May 19, 2021*