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March 13, 2013 Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: Joanne Russo-Rubino, Chair; Eliezer Rodriguez; Dominick Schiano; Andrea Siegel.

EXCUSED: Edith Blitzer, Co-Chair.

STAFF: Chris Kirka.

GUEST(S): Brian Adams; Annie Boller; Raphael Schweizer; Violet Valentino.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by Chairperson Joanne Russo-Rubino.

- I. The Committee reviewed Mr. Schweizer's resolution. (See attachment.)
The Committee stated that Community Board 11 wants to receive our fair share of PEP officers and other Parks staff. The FY2014 budget calls for 23 million in new funding for increased staff, including 81 additional PEP officers city-wide.
A Motion was made by Dominick Schiano, seconded by Eliezer Rodriguez -
That the Committee recommends the Full Board supports Mr. Schweizer's resolution as stated and that if passed by the Full Board the resolution be brought to the attention of the Borough President, the City Council and the other Bronx community boards. **UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.**
- II. Green Street naming for Carlos Pacheco
The Committee contends that this does not meet the criteria for renaming of a street, but as this is a green street, this decision might have to be made by the Parks Department and might have different criteria. The street in question is the intersection of Neill & Bogart Avenues. The Committee will contact the Parks Department and find out if this is within our purview.
- III. Request by Jason Rivera to have a basketball tournament for four days on the weekend of July 4, 2013

The event would take place on the basketball court on Pelham Parkway North & Waring Avenue. It was stated that Mr. Rivera met with Detective Vic DiPierro who informed him that this was not a possibility. The Committee stated that generally no permits are given for holidays.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Minutes taken by Andrea Siegel.

RESOLUTION REGARDING THE FY2014 NYC PARKS DEPARTMENT BUDGET

Whereas the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) of the City of New York has experienced drastic budget cuts as a result of City budgets during the last 5 years, leading to a 40% reduction in DPR Staff since 2008, we the Community Board of Bronx Community District 11 urge the City Council and the Mayor to adopt in full the Mayor's Preliminary FP 2014 Budget in relation to DPR, which allocates \$23 million in new funding for the hiring of 414 additional full-time DPR staffers citywide, including 81 Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) Officers, 207 Parks Maintenance and Operations workers, 96 trades workers and analysts, as well as 30 tree climbers and pruners.

We also urge that the Mayor and City Council do the following in the coming months before the full adoption of the FP 2014 City Budget:

1 – Provide and base-line \$2 million for the on-going expense budget for stump removal, of which there is currently no funding.

2 – Restore \$26.5 Million in DPR funding for Summer programs that are not currently funded, including monies for Pools, Playground Associates and JTP workers (seasonal and maintenance workers) and base-line this \$26.5 million for DPR in all future City Budgets starting in 2014-2015. This money needs to be base-lined as part of the City budget so it does not have to constantly be restored, as it does this year, as well as it did in the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 budget negotiations.

If this money is not restored for FY 2014, four pools will be closed, and the remainder of the City's pools will have to have their season reduced by two weeks.

3 – While the borough of the Bronx has the highest percentage, as well as highest acreage, of Parkland, we currently have the lowest amount of PEP officers, with 13, as opposed to Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island, who currently have 20, 14, 18 and 14, respectively. Thus, the number of PEP officers assigned to the Bronx starting July 1st needs to be equivalent in ratio with amount of parkland that this Borough contains.

Thus, the FP 2014 City Budget needs to ensure that the Bronx receives a sufficient portion of the newly-hired PEP officers, and that those new officers are all assigned to Patrol positions, as opposed to communication and clerical positions.

Our borough has the most Parkland, and should thus, have a proportionate PEP officers assigned, to counteract the dangerous conditions that often arise.

Therefore, this year's FP 2014 Preliminary Budget is a big step forward for more adequately addressing the dire needs of our City's, and the Bronx's, Parks and Green spaces. But there is much more that this budget needs.

We urge the Mayor and the City Council to heed our suggestions and adopt them, in order to ensure the health and vitality of the Parkland that contributes so much to this City's value in the years and decades ahead.