



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:** Albert Mauro Playground Reconstruction  
**Date:** Monday, December 4, 2017  
**Time:** 7:30 p.m.  
**Place:** Community Board 8 Office  
 197-15 Hillside Avenue  
 Hollis, NY 11423

**Bhitihara Martha Fulton, Parks Committee Chair**

**Board Members:** Susan Cleary, Marc A. Haken, Fakrul “Delwar” Islam and Rachel Van Arsdale.

**Also in attendance:** James Mituzas, Design Director and Landscape Architect for Queens, Kusalee Vachananda, Project Manager, Meira Berkower, Borough Planner, Queens Parks, Masis Sarkissian representing Council Member Rory Lancman, Marie Adam-Ovide, CB8 District Manager and Jatna Reyes, CB8 Staff Member.

*Chairperson Fulton called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.*

**Purpose:**

**Meira Berkower** – Ms. Berkower stated that the purpose of this presentation is to have the Community Board review and approve their schematic plans for the Albert Mauro Playground located in Flushing Meadow Corona Park along Park Drive East. Upon receipt of an approval letter they will submit a draft to the Public Design Commission. It will review and grant approval for this project. She explains that design is supposed to be completed by May 2018. After procurement is completed, they are looking to start construction by spring 2019.

**James Mituzas** – Mr. Mituzas reiterated what Ms. Berkower said about obtaining a letter of support from the Community Board. The sooner they get the letter the better, so that the project gets approved right away and does not encounter any delays.

*Chairperson Fulton asked Ms. Vachananda to begin the presentation to the Committee.*

**Kusalee Vachananda, Project Manager, NYC Parks** – Ms. Vachananda stated that the main reason for this reconstruction is to create enhanced, accessible entrances to Albert Mauro Playground and the Pat Dolan Trail to Willow Lake; install new play equipment and spray showers; install new adult fitness equipment and reconstruct basketball courts.

These are some of the main highlights of the presentation on the Albert Mauro Playground Reconstruction:

- Total Budget is \$5M. Funds were granted by Borough President Melinda Katz [\$4.2M in FY 2016] and Honorable City Council Member Rory Lancman, District 24 [\$800,000 in FY 2017].

- Albert Mauro Playground is part of the Flushing Meadows Corona Park separated by the Van Wyck Expressway.
- The comfort station is partially blocking the entrance of the play area and they will try to improve that.
- An inventory of the existing trees at the playground was conducted. Some of the trees will be removed due to poor condition and others will be removed due to design considerations.
- She showed the “Panorama of main entrance” slides (#11-18) – showing the current condition of the park.
- Schematic plan was shown depicting how the playground would look after the re-design is completed.
  - The basketball courts will be re-constructed in the same place.
  - Benches will be added to the basketball courts.
  - Handball court will stay the same.
  - Fitness area will be bigger and geared with better equipment.
- The entry way is going to be less steep and accessible with hand rails, landings and seating around it.
- There will be a seating area near the comfort station as well.
- Currently there are 8 swings in the play area (one being ADA compliant). Two more swings will be installed for a total of 10 swings.
- There will be a musical instrument area including (babel drums and cajon drum).
- Proposed spray showers include: wall spray, wave (in wall), geyser and fountain spray etc.).
- The adult fitness area will have a combination unit of multi net, overhead ladder, vertical ladder, 7’6” height pull up bar, incline press and push up bars.
- A fence diagram showing the different heights of fences that are being proposed to be installed around the playground.
- Site furnishings include: concrete game table, picnic table, bottle filler, bike rack and public space receptacles.

***During the presentation, several concerns were raised by the Board Members. The following is a re-cap of the questions and the responses received:***

**Susan Cleary** – Ms. Cleary stated that they had asked or recommended for the stairs to the basketball courts to be turned around. Instead of being vertical to be horizontal and take up less space (refer to page 17).

**Answer:** [Ms. Berkower] - At the scope meeting, what they heard from the families was that they are very well used and if there could be ideas that more space can be added to it.

**Rachel Van Arsdale** – Ms. Van Arsdale asked if there are any safety surface for the spray shower area.

**Answer:** [Ms. Vachananda] – No, we do not put safety surface on water spray showers.

**Rachel Van Arsdale** - In Electchester we have a park right behind my building and we have one of those mushroom sprays and the whole floor is safety surface.

**Answer:** [Mr. Mituzas] – Rubber tiles are more slippery than the colored concrete. They usually use the rubber tiles in certain areas.

**Susan Cleary** – Ms. Cleary stated that she is more concerned about the lighting in the park. She feels that there is not enough lighting at this park at night time.

**Answer:** [Mr. Mituzas] – One of the slides (page 20) shows each light in the playground and its location. Each light has a 65 foot spread of lighting at night.

**Susan Cleary** – Ms. Cleary does not believe that the lights will be bright enough. She feels that more lighting is needed at this playground.

**Marc A. Haken** – How many basketball courts are there? Do you intend on keeping all three of them or creating an additional one?

**Answer:** [Mr. Mituzas] – There are three basketball courts.

**Answer:** [Ms. Berkower] – No. We will not add additional basketball courts. We will maintain the ones that are currently there.

**Rachel Van Arsdale** – There is only going to be a 4 foot fence on Park Drive East?

**Answer:** [Ms. Berkower] – Yes. She referred to fence diagram (page 30) which shows where each fence will be and what height will it have.

**Susan Cleary** – Ms. Cleary believes that another ADA swing would be ideal for this playground.

**Answer:** [Mr. Mituzas] – Mr. Mituzas stated that they can be installed upon request but is not necessarily a requirement.

**Rachel Van Arsdale** – Are there any EMS or panic buttons in the park anywhere, in case of an emergency.

**Answer:** [Ms. Berkower] – We haven't had much of a success with these buttons. It is really a recommendation of the Police Department and the Parks Department if there is a request for it.

Ms. Van Arsdale also mentioned that she would like to also see a location in the park where there is an AED machine; in the comfort station for example.

*Marc A. Haken made a motion to approve the proposal for the Albert Mauro Playground Reconstruction by the Parks Department and a letter of support be sent on their behalf seconded by Bhitihara Martha Fulton.*

**Mr. Haken asked if there was any discussion on the motion.**

**Susan Cleary** – Ms. Cleary stated that the reason why she is opposing the motion is because of the lighting. She feels more lighting will be needed. She wants to make sure there is adequate lighting within the playground. She also mentioned that she feels that the Community Board should send notice to the community letting them know how long this playground will not be in use.

**Meira Berkower** – Ms. Berkower stated that signs will be posted as construction begins and the Community Board and Elected Officials will also be notified to keep the community informed.

**Rachel Van Arsdale** – Ms. Van Arsdale stated that if the caveat was only going to include adequate lighting, she suggests that the letter be sent in support of the re-design of the playground without it which can be addressed at a later time.

A vote was taken to approve that a letter be drafted in support of the plans of the re-construction of the Albert Mauro Playground.

**Count in favor** 4      **Opposed:** 1      **Abstained:** 0

**Board Members in Favor:**

Bhitihara Martha Fulton, Marc A. Haken, Fakrul “Delwar” Islam and Rachel Van Arsdale.

**Board Members Against:**

Susan Cleary.

The motion passed.

**Adjournment:**

Marc A. Haken made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 8:37 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Jatnna Reyes, CB8 Staff  
December 6, 2017*