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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Parks and Waterfront Committee
Thursday, September 10, 2026 - 6:30PM
Conducted remotely on Zoom

Please note: The resolutions contained in the committee minutes are recommendations submitted by the committee co-chairs to the Community Board. At the monthly full board meeting, the resolution is discussed and voted upon by all members of Community Board 8 Manhattan.

Resolutions to be voted on:
Item 1: (T330/R141) Approval of the Central Park Conservancy's plan to renovate the Pinebank Arch Landscaping
Item 2: (T331/R142) Request naming a part of Ruppert Park in honor of Rita Popper

MINUTES

Present: Gayle Baron, Michele Birnbaum, David Helpern, Bradley Hershenson, Sahar Husain, Jane Parshall, Barbara Rudder, Judy Schneider, Nancy Sipp**, Elaine Wrightman*.

** Public Member*
*** Landmarks Committee Public Member*

Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 36

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

Item 1: Central Park Conservancy's renovation of the Rudin Family Playground at West 96th Street, presented by Vice President for Design Nick Koster, and President for Program Management Diane Jackier

The Central Park Conservancy presented its proposed renovation of the Rudin Family Playground. The project includes new play equipment, improved accessibility, landscaping, a new shade structure, water features, and improvements to the playground's entrances and surfaces.

Board Members discussed the proposed design and expressed a desire for the playground to incorporate more distinctive, and imaginative features, while maintaining the Central Park Conservancy's overall design standards. The Committees requested that the Central Park Conservancy return with additional information and a more detailed presentation at our October meeting. Hopefully, the features will be consistent and unique, whimsical one might say. Some of the items to be looked at more carefully might be the pergola, water feature and the sand box, then a resolution could be passed at next month's Parks and Waterfront Meeting.

Item 2: Central Park Conservancy's renovation of Pinebank Arch Landscaping at the southwest part of Central Park, presented by Vice President for Design Nick Koster, and President for Program Management Diane Jackier

The Central Park Conservancy presented proposed landscaping and circulation improvements surrounding the Pinebank Arch. The project includes a new pedestrian path, improvements to the bridle path connection, new seating, plantings, and lighting beneath the arch.

Members discussed the proposed lighting fixture and requested that the lighting be warm, soft, and more contextual to the underside of the bridge. The committee requested an update on the lighting fixture at next month's Parks and Waterfront Meeting.

David made a motion to approve the joint renovation item and the Parks and Waterfront and Landmarks Committee's voted in favor of Resolution R141.

> **WHEREAS** the Central Park Conservancy is coming to the October Parks meeting and they will also present a more contextual lighting fixture for the underside of the bridge with warm soft lighting;
>
> **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** the Parks and Waterfront and Landmarks Committees approve the Central Park Conservancy's plan for the renovation of the Pinebank Arch Landscaping.

Yes (10): Baron, Birnbaum, Helpern, Hershenson, Husain, Parshall, Rudder, Schneider, Sipp, Wrightman**

No (0): None

Abstain (0): None

Item 3: Central Park Conservancy gives an update and photos of the completed Grand Army Plaza, presented by President for Program Management Diane Jackier

Ms. Jackier provided an update and photographs of the completed Grand Army Plaza restoration, including improvements to the fountain, paving, landscaping, lighting, seating, and accessibility.

Item 4: Update on the Design and Reconstruction of Ruppert Park by Deputy Commissioner for Capital Projects, Eric Boorstyn

Mr. Boorstyn provided an update on the reconstruction of Ruppert Park. Construction will break ground on September 14th, with the first phase anticipated to take approximately one year and be completed in the summer of 2027.

The project will include improvements to the playground, landscaping, turf lawn, dog run, and other park features. A new approximately 2,000-square-foot multipurpose area will provide space for exercise classes, yoga, performances, and other community activities such as movies that will seat up to 200 chairs. This will be a part of phase 2 of the park project.

The Committee also discussed the naming of a portion of the park in honor of Rita Popper, who was a longtime advocate for the renovation of Ruppert Park. The Committee approved a resolution recommending that a portion of the park be named in her honor, with the specific location to be determined by Commissioner Shimamura.

Judy made a motion requesting the renaming of an area within Ruppert Park for Rita Popper and the Parks and Waterfront Committee voted in favor of Resolution R142.

> **WHEREAS** the Parks and Waterfront Committee of Community Board 8 is very sorry to learn of the passing of Rita Popper, a long-standing member of this committee, who worked very hard in getting Ruppert Park renovated; and
>
> **WHEREAS** the Parks and Waterfront Committee realizes that it takes three years to have something named for a person after they have passed away; and
>
> **WHEREAS** the Parks and Waterfront Committee would like to have a portion of the park named after Rita, such as: Rita's Playground, Rita's Lawn or Rita's Multi-purpose Area;
>
> **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** the Parks and Waterfront Committee requests that part of Ruppert Park be named for Rita Popper with the understanding the final choice will be made by Commissioner Shimamura.

*Yes (5): Hershenson, Husain, Rudder, Schneider, Wrightman**

No (0): None

Abstain (0): None

Item 5: Report by Robert McLean, NYC Parks, Regional Manager

Mr. McLean reported on volunteer efforts and ongoing maintenance along the Esplanade, including weeding, planting, and restoration activities. He also provided an update on a water line issue affecting a drinking fountain at East 54th Street at the beginning of the East Midtown Greenway and reported that plantings south of East 60th Street have experienced little mortality and that the irrigation system is functioning properly.

Item 6: Report by Shena Kaufman, NYC Parks, District Manager 8 & 15

Ms. Kaufman provided an update on Ruppert Park and confirmed that construction is scheduled to begin on September 14th.

Item 7: Old Business

No items of Old Business were discussed.

Item 8: New Business

No items of New Business were discussed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:02 PM.

By Felice Farber, Bradley Hershenson, and Judy Schneider,
Co-Chairs, Parks and Waterfront Committee