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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Parks and Waterfront Committee
Thursday, November 12, 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 (Motion M406/T422): Support CPC's revised renovation plans for the Rudin Family Playground at West 96th Street

MINUTES

Present: Lindsey Cormack, Felice Farber, Bradley Hershenson, Sahar Husain, Jane Parshall, Sharon Pope-Marshall, Judy Schneider

Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 33

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

1. **Present a renovation of the Rudin playground at West 96th Street by Nick Koster of the Central Park Conservancy (30 Minutes)**
   **Joint item with Landmarks Committee*

Nick Koster from the Central Park Conservancy presented revised plans for the West 96th Street playground. Improvements include an accessible entrance, play equipment for ages 2–5 and 5–12, a relocated water feature and pergola, additional seating and picnic tables, new plantings and shade trees, and retention of the sandbox. The pergola will provide shade through its wood structure; wisteria will not be replanted because it damaged the existing structure.

Construction is tentatively planned to begin in midsummer of the following year and take 12–18 months, subject to approvals and bidding. In response to Bright Horizons' concerns about closure impacts, the Conservancy committed to updating its website and posting notices with specific dates.

A motion to support the revised plans for the West 96th Street playground was introduced.

WHEREAS, the Central Park Conservancy presented revised plans to restore the Rudin Family Playground at West 96th Street, addressing safety, accessibility, durability and environmental stewardship; and

WHEREAS, the proposed restoration includes an accessible entrance, updated play equipment for children ages 2–5 and 5–12, a relocated water feature and pergola, additional seating and picnic tables, new landscaping and shade trees, and retention of the sandbox; and

WHEREAS, some of the board members would like to have seen more whimsy incorporated into the design of the equipment, and

WHEREAS, the revised design incorporates community feedback regarding play opportunities, seating and shade while maintaining the playground's relationship to Central Park's landscape;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan supports the Central Park Conservancy's proposed restoration of the Rudin Family Playground as presented to the Parks and Waterfront and Landmarks Committees.

Motion M406/T422: Support CPC's revised restoration plans for the Rudin Family Playground at West 96th Street
Motion Passed (5-0-1-0)
Yes (5): Farber, Hershenson, Husain, Pope-Marshall, Schneider
Abstained (1): Parshall

2. **Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) Presentation on Kellen Tower and the Esplanade by Amy Nunziata of Hospital or Special Surgery (30 Minutes)**

HSS representatives Jack Wong and Nidhi Nanjappa provided an update on construction activities along the East River Esplanade from East 70th to East 78th Streets. The remaining section is scheduled to reopen November 18, following a November 13 inspection. Emergency sinkhole repairs delayed the earlier October 31 target. Improvements to the Esplanade include landscaping, irrigation, lighting, an outdoor fitness area and a crash rated barrier near the Con Edison building. Additional protective fencing and panels at the East 71st Street ramp will be handled separately and are not expected to delay the reopening.

Jennifer Ratner requested clearer entrance signage and coordination on landscape maintenance. HSS agreed to review signage, while clarifying that its existing maintenance agreement covers East 70th–72nd Streets. Parks was identified as responsible for the remaining plantings. Irrigation was installed as part of HSS's scope of work. HSS was asked to maintain the plantings from 70th to 78th Streets and not just the small section from 70th to 72nd Streets.

3. **Activities an Advocacies of the Friends of the East River Esplanade by Philip Braverman (20 Minutes)**

Philip Braverman described the organization's events, volunteer planting and stewardship, community art, and year-round advocacy. Priorities include construction updates, signage and restoring funding for Esplanade repairs from East 90th to East 125th Streets. Additional volunteers were encouraged to participate.

4. **Report by Shena Kaufman, NYC Parks, District Manager 8 & 15.**

Ms. Kaufman reported that continuous access on the Esplanade from East 53rd to East 114th Streets is expected soon. Ms. Kaufman said she will speak with Steve Simon about landscaping maintenance responsibilities for the newly completed section of the Esplanade. She also reported that a "do not feed the pigeons" sign will be installed at St. Catherine's Park.

5. **Report by Robert McLean, NYC Parks, Regional Manager**

Mr. McLean reported that repairs to the small dog run gate targeted should be completed next week or the following week and that replacement small dog run signs will be installed. Judy Schneider requested Parks Enforcement Patrol attention to reports of large dogs excluding small dogs from the run.

Mr. McLean as reported on volunteer weeding and pruning with 99 garbage bags full of weeks and overgrown plants were removed. Since March 6, a total of 845 bags of weeds have been removed.

6. **Old Business**

No items of Old Business were discussed.

7. **New Business – Friends of the East River Esplanade**

Lo van der Valk of Carnegie Hill Neighbors raised concerns about the Kaiser food truck parked nearly continuously at Engineers' Gate (90th Street entrance to Central Park), obstructing views and creating potential safety hazards. The committee requested Parks follow up with leadership and encouraged residents to report concerns to 311 and the police.

Judy Schneider reported that no December meeting is planned unless an emergency arises. Meetings will resume in January. With no further business, Judy Schneider moved to adjourn, and the meeting concluded.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:39 PM.

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