

**Hearing before the New York City Council
Committee on Parks and Recreation
Oversight: Examining the Parks Department's Maintenance Practices
September 26, 2019**

Testimony By: Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver & Deputy Commissioner/Chief Operating Officer Mark Focht

Good afternoon Chair Koo, members of the Parks Committee, and other members of the Council. I am Mitchell J. Silver, Commissioner of NYC Parks. Joining me today is the agency's First Deputy Commissioner, Liam Kavanagh, as well as Mark Focht, our Deputy Commissioner/Chief Operating Officer, and our Director of Government Relations, Matt Drury. Firstly, we would like to express our congratulations to Council Member Koo, for presiding over his first meeting as Parks Committee Chair, and to Council Member Adams and Council Member Rivera, on their nomination to the Parks Committee. We have had the pleasure of working closely together for the past few years on issues important to your districts, and look forward to working with you more specifically on the issues and policies being examined by the Committee. Thank you all for allowing us the opportunity today to discuss the agency's maintenance and operational practices.

With a portfolio of over 30,000 acres, NYC Parks is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of nearly 4,500 individual properties, ranging from parks and playgrounds to ballfields and Greenstreets. Keeping these parks in good condition requires the focused attention of thousands of employees, who consistently labor on the ground and behind the scenes, to make sure New Yorkers can fully enjoy our portfolio of picturesque spaces, which are envied across the country, if not the world.

The Administration recently released the Mayor's Management Report, or MMR, for Fiscal Year 2019, which tracks progress in our agency's primary services and goals, including our focus on ensuring that all parks and playgrounds are clean and in good condition. We are pleased to highlight that for the second year in a row, our ratings for overall park condition and cleanliness either increased or held steady across all park categories. We are pleased to be here today to offer the Council an overview of our maintenance approach, so you can better understand the successes we have achieved, as well as the challenges we face.

Over the course of this Administration, NYC Parks has evolved into a more modern, data-driven, innovation-focused organization, and improving our operational practices has been a primary focus of my time as Agency Commissioner. I am proud to have created a new agency leadership role now held by Deputy Commissioner Mark Focht – Chief Operating Officer - who works in close coordination with First Deputy Commissioner Kavanagh to standardize our maintenance efforts across the City and improve our management practices, providing a more enjoyable park experience for all New Yorkers. Under their supervision, the agency is able to execute its maintenance strategy in a thoughtful and targeted manner. We have invested in technology to help us be more effective, using detailed data metrics to improve the efficiency of our mobile cleaning routes, providing handheld devices to our operations staff on the ground to report and track their efforts in real-time, improving our process for work-order implementation and reorganizing our borough storehouses for Parks equipment and supplies. We have also changed our approach to maintenance staff deployment. For example, we all know that many of our parks and playgrounds are heavily used seven days a week, but in previous years, many of these "hot spot" parks were only being cleaned *five* days per week, resulting in overflowing garbage bins and litter strewn throughout parks come Monday morning. In this administration, we have reconfigured our staffing patterns to provide additional maintenance on the weekends, focusing on the 100 most intensely used park "hot spots."

Another traditional challenge we faced was managing the redeployment of Parks employees that "step up" during the peak summer season to take on seasonal positions at beaches and pools to address the various operational and maintenance needs of those very busy summer destinations. This redeployment had been something of a strain on agency resources, in light of longer daylight hours and increased

usage at other park properties outside of our beaches and pools. So the Mayor provided \$12 million dollars in baseline expense funding in the Fiscal Year 2017 budget, for Parks to increase our seasonal district staffing levels throughout the summer peak season to offer one-for-one “step-in” replacement of these temporarily vacated maintenance and operations positions, and we could continue to maintain our parks and playgrounds on busy summer days, to the standard we have all come to expect.

I would now like to introduce Deputy Commissioner Mark Focht, to outline in more detail how our daily maintenance efforts are structured and managed.

Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Mark Focht, the Deputy Commissioner/Chief Operating Officer for NYC Parks.

The Maintenance and Operations, or M&O, staff for NYC Parks varies in size throughout the year, expanding with seasonal hires during peak park usage in the warmer months. Depending on the time of year, the agency employs between 3,000 to 5,300 M&O staffers, with an FY20 operational budget of \$230 million dollars. Full-time year-round staff constitute a large portion of our workforce, but we also benefit from partnerships with fellow city agencies, to create employment opportunities. Our signature program, the Parks Opportunity Program, or POP, hires applicants referred by the Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services to clean and green our parks, playgrounds, and other facilities citywide. These POP Workers receive on-the-job training, career coaching and specialized training opportunities during six months with NYC Parks, which helps them to succeed while at our agency, and also helps them in their search for their next job. Our seasonal hires are vital members of our team, helping address conditions brought about by the seasons— cutting grass, raking leaves, shoveling snow—as well as preparing for the season-specific park uses enjoyed by the public, such as our ballfields, beaches and pools. Both POP and seasonal workers are a critical pipeline to the entry-level City Park Worker (CPW) position.

In terms of organizational structure, individual parks and other properties are organized into 75 Park Districts largely corresponding to Community Board District boundaries, and overseen by Park Supervisors, who manage Crew Chiefs, CPWs and other employees. These Park Districts are organized into 45 Park Sectors, overseen by Park Managers, and these Sectors are further clustered into 14 Park Regions, overseen by our Regional Managers. These regional operational efforts are then organized into individual Boroughs, led by our Chiefs of Operations and Borough Commissioners, who report to myself and First Deputy Commissioner Kavanagh.

Borough Operations staff care for our parks every day, and serve as our eyes and ears on the ground, observing any problematic conditions and tackling them head-on. Work completed by staff is tracked in real time using a ‘Daily Tasks’ app on mobile devices supplied by Parks to employees. This includes fixed-post staff that are stationed at a single park location as well as mobile crews that clean multiple parks in pre-determined routes. Their work is monitored by supervisors who are also equipped with the mobile devices. The frequency of park cleaning varies, depending on the location, nature and intensity of usage for each property. The frequency of maintenance is defined as Service Level Agreements, or SLAs. Parks which are highly used in well-trafficked areas receive 5 to 7 visits a week, those with moderate use are cleaned 3 to 5 times a week, while lesser-used sites are maintained weekly, or as needed on a regular basis.

Beyond the daily maintenance efforts performed by district personnel, certain tasks require additional resources or technical expertise. This is managed through Work Orders, which are routed to skilled tradespeople at our Borough Shops or Borough specialized crews. This could include targeted repairs and improvements involving plumbing, electrical work, masonry, metalwork and painting, as well as fence repair, pressure washing and ballfield grooming. These teams do not just reactively address concerns, they perform ongoing preventative maintenance and play a key role in our exciting strategic initiatives. As part of the Community Parks Initiative, this administration’s signature effort dedicated to park equity, our specialized staff implemented transformative targeted improvements, such as basketball court sports-coating, at nearly 100 parks and playgrounds throughout the City. They also were the linchpin in making our “Cool Pools” initiative a reality. Over the past two years, we gave a vibrant new look and feel to

eleven outdoor pools in under-served neighborhoods throughout the City, which had seen few improvements since they were built in the 1970s. We utilized a creative approach to reactivating the pools by providing playful wall art and cabana-style shade structures to help keep swimmers cool. This could not have been possible without the hard work of our specialized staff. Cool Pools has been a tremendous success, improving the outdoor pool experience so much that attendance increased by 22% at these eleven pools, which people in these neighborhoods began calling “resort pools.”

These Borough-specific efforts are further bolstered by our Citywide Services division, which provides broader repair and maintenance services for our properties and facilities across the City, installing green roofs, addressing concerns at pool filter plants and replacing inefficient boilers. Additionally, our Borough Forestry teams are specifically dedicated to keeping our urban tree canopy in good condition, maximizing all of the environmental and social benefits of trees, both inside parks and along our City streets. I also have to recognize our dedicated staff that manages our fleet of vehicles, which ranges from small-but-durable 4-wheel utility vehicles, also known as Gators, to heavy-duty pickup trucks, vans, and large packer trucks which transport park trash to DSNY waste management facilities. Without these vehicles, transporting our staff between our parks, and within our larger parks, would not be possible.

This organizational structure allows the agency to have the ability to address maintenance and cleanliness concerns as they arise, but also ensures that we’re marshaling our resources in a consistent and efficient manner across the five boroughs. Behind the scenes, the talented individuals of our Innovation and Performance Management (or IMP) team work with the data created by our Operations staff to help us assess current practices and apply new approaches, so we can optimize our finite resources. Through their efforts, alongside ongoing internal review and analysis of our maintenance practices, we have been able to implement innovative maintenance approaches like assessing the efficiency of the routes being used by our mobile crews, and our Zone Management maintenance approach, which has had successful pilots in Crotona Park in the Bronx, as well as Fort Greene Park and McCarren Park in Brooklyn.

In addition to the on-the-ground observation and monitoring performed by our staff that happens every day, we also receive feedback directly from the public via 311, and these complaints are routed directly to our staff to address. Further, Park Supervisors inspect each site in their Park District on a monthly basis. In addition to all this, NYC Parks has a separate division dedicated to performing independent inspections and reviews of our Parks property, to make sure they are in the best condition possible. The Park Inspection Program (or PIP), is a comprehensive, outcome-based performance measurement system that generates detailed inspections of our parks and playgrounds, managed by our Operations and Management Planning (or OMP) division, independent from our Operations staff. PIP inspectors conduct approximately 6,000 inspections per year, using rigorous review of sixteen different park features to develop park ratings, and each site is judged on both cleanliness and overall condition. Alongside local staff observations and 311 reports, these PIP ratings guide the agency’s efforts to target areas of concern, and to efficiently utilize resources. PIP data for each park is fully available to the public via NYC Parks’ website, and the ratings are ultimately compiled and reported for each Fiscal Year in the Mayor’s Management Report.

As Commissioner Silver referenced earlier, in the most recent MMR for Fiscal Year 2019, the Overall Condition rating for Parks was **90%**, a substantial increase from the rating of 85% in Fiscal Year 2013, and our Park Cleanliness rating increased to **95%**, a significant improvement over the 90% rating in FY13. More specifically, our inspection ratings focusing on park litter during the past three summers have shown a 6-percentage point improvement since 2017. These positive outcomes are a reflection of our strategic efforts to more effectively allocate resources and monitor maintenance staff. We are very proud of the progress we have made. Regardless, we constantly seek to find new ways to improve our practices and procedures, and give devoted employees the tools they need to care for our parks. To this end, we would like to thank the Council and the Play Fair Coalition, led by New Yorkers for Parks, for their incredible support and advocacy for the agency, which led to increased baseline funding for City Park Workers and Gardeners, and additional “one-time” expense funding for the agency to provide more maintenance staff. This funding will help us to continue to deliver valuable services efficiently in a challenging economic environment.

As hard as we work to maintain our parks, the agency cannot do it alone—our staff are dedicated public servants, but cannot be everywhere at every time, and cannot always control how some members of the public treat their public spaces. With thousands of properties serving millions of visitors, we rely on New Yorkers to treat these spaces as they would their own backyards, and we hope the Council will join us in reminding their constituents that they also have a responsibility to our parks, and a role to play in keeping our City clean.

On a similar note, I also want to recognize the many volunteers and community organizations that take time out of their busy schedules to help beautify the green and open spaces dear to their hearts. We rely on the generous support from these volunteer stewards, to create a positive environment in which people can interact with their parks and help make them even better spaces. Volunteers, such as those participating in the "It's My Park" program spearheaded by our Partnerships for Parks division, which is co-administered by the City Parks Foundation, participated in volunteer events and programming at roughly 336 parks locations last year, bringing New Yorkers closer to their parks and getting them even more engaged and invested.

To conclude, we always welcome feedback from the Council, and we invite you to continue alerting us about incidents or maintenance concerns regarding the condition of local parks. We hope that the next time you visit a park, you will be able to smell the fresh air and enjoy the scenery with a more comprehensive understanding of everything it takes to keep our parks in the best condition possible. Thank you for allowing us to testify before you today. We look forward to continuing to work with you to create and care for an incredible park system for New Yorkers. We value your partnership and thank you for your support of our agency. We would now be happy to answer any questions that you may have.



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Comments to
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND
RECREATION

Regarding
Oversight - Examining the Parks Department's Maintenance Practices

Molly Adams
Advocacy and Outreach Manager, New York City Audubon
September 26, 2019

Thank you for the opportunity to express the importance of adequate funding for maintenance of New York City's public parks.

My name is Molly Adams, and I am the Advocacy and Outreach Manager for New York City Audubon. We are a science-based conservation organization whose mission is to protect the 350-plus bird species—almost a third of all the species in North America—amounting to millions of individual birds that live in or pass through New York City each year. Protecting these birds and their habitats improves the quality of life for all New Yorkers.

You may have read the shocking study published in *Science*¹ last week stating that the breeding population of birds in the United States and Canada has dropped nearly 30% since 1970, resulting in a loss of 2.9 billion birds. There are several causes for the decline, one of the major issues being habitat loss. You all have the power to help this.

According to the study, grassland birds and eastern forest birds are some of the hardest hit. New York City Parks, such as Freshkills Park, Central Park, Forest Park, Clove Lakes Park, and more, all provide an urban solution to this problem. Freshkills Park, a capped landfill that now provides acres of grassland habitat, is home to breeding birds such as Grasshopper Sparrows, Blue Grosbeaks, and other threatened migratory birds. Many other vulnerable species

¹ Rosenberg, Kenneth V., et al. "Decline of the North American Avifauna." *Science*, 2019, d

migrate through or to New York City's forested parks; including several species of conservation concern, such as the Canada Warbler, Wood Thrush, and American Woodcock.

A part of habitat loss that is especially harmful to birds is the loss of native plants. Most bird's diets primarily consist of insects, and without native plants, there are fewer insects for them to eat. New York City Parks have an impressive collection of native plants, but in order for these plants to thrive, there must be ample paid workers to properly maintain them. With more funding, these types of habitats will flourish, providing refuge and sustenance to local bird populations at a time where in North America, 1 out of every 4 birds have perished in the last 50 years.

We stand with New Yorkers for Parks and are asking the city to provide more funding for more parks to have full-time, dedicated staff working in sustainable jobs that help maintain safe, healthy habitats for people and birds.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to present our opinion.

Sincerely,

Molly Adams

Advocacy and Outreach Manager

New York City Audubon

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FOR THE RECORD

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Hon. Peter Koo, Chair

NYC Council Committee on Parks and Recreation

Councilmembers: Rivera, Cohen, King, Gjonaj, Moya, Van Bramer, Adams, Ulrich, Brannan, Borelli

September 20, 2019

Dear Chairperson and Council Members of the Committee on Parks and Recreation

Re: Testimony for the Oversight - Examining the Parks Department's Maintenance Practices

Thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony on behalf of Friends of Corlears Hook Park. Founded in October of 2014, Friends of Corlears Hook Park is a 501c3 volunteer group that works to maintain and revitalize Corlears Hook Park for the benefit of the general public and residents of the Lower East Side. We accomplish our work by planning and organizing park clean-up and planting events, providing community programming in the park, raising funds to support park programs and initiatives, and collaborating with other government agencies, non-profit organizations and community groups for the betterment of the park.

We would like to thank our Councilmember Carlina Rivera for supporting Parks, such as Corlears Hook Park, in her district.

We strongly believe that the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation is underfunded, specifically in the area of maintenance and has been for many years. Friends of Corlears Hook Park happily joins the Play Fair Coalition in their efforts to correct this matter and we'd like to share with you the following examples of how poor and improper maintenance of our park directly effects the community in and around our neighborhood:

- Lack of maintenance staffing and proper mowing equipment leave our lawns un-mowed for weeks during the warmer weather months. During these months we run free health programs (yoga and Tai Chi classes) for the community but the tall grass makes it all but impossible for the community to enjoy the classes since mosquitos and other insects use the tall grass as a breeding ground. The tall grass also makes it hard for class participants to keep proper steady balance as it creates an uneven surface when an exercise mat is laid on top of it. When our lawns do finally get mowed it is often with a small push mower more suitable for a 500 square foot front lawn of a suburban house than a 4.3-acre park that is at least over 2 acres of lawns.
- Our spray shower area has not worked in over a decade and the drainage is clogged making it yet another breeding ground for mosquitos as every time it rains water pools in the area and sits there for days slowly draining.
- In 2016, Corlears Hook Park was awarded an \$8,000 award through the Mayor's Community Parks Initiative (CPI). This project brought all new plantings and shrubs into the park. These new items were designed and planted by the Parks horticultural team. The limited scope of this award did not include a maintenance plan for after everything was planted so within

Friends of Corlears Hook Park is a non-profit, volunteer group that works to maintain and revitalize Corlears Hook Park for the benefit of Lower East Side residents and visitors. Tax ID #47-3832182

months all the new plants and shrubs withered away and died due to lack of water and proper maintenance.

- Currently, there is a large section of a Linden tree that fell over two months ago still laying across one of the lawns and in the batting cage area of the park since the Parks Department does not have enough staff or equipment to remove it. These areas have been unusable and continue to be until the tree can be removed.

To address these issues, plus issues in other parks throughout NYC, we strongly feel that each park over 3 acres in size should have a dedicated parks maintenance staff whose sole responsibility is the care and maintenance of that park. Currently parks maintenance staff are spread thin covering multiple parks throughout the city. They also lack the proper tools and equipment to effectively care for parks in an appropriate way.

Friends of Corlears Hook Park fully support the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and its efforts to maintain and improve all parks in NYC and believes that it is important to the future of our borough that we fund our Parks properly.

Michael T. Marino
President

To: the City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
From: Kathryn Cervino, President, Coastal Preservation Network in College Point, Queens.

Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding parks maintenance.

Coastal Preservation Network (CPN) is an all-volunteer 501c3 organization in College Point that is dedicated to restoring and protecting the coastal environment in Northeast Queens, improving local waterfront parks through hands-on action and advocacy, increasing public access to local waters, providing environmental education to residents and local schools, pursuing environmental research with promising high school and college students, and empowering residents to be greener in their daily lives. We focus on MacNeil and Powells Cove parks, two magnificent East River parks in College Point that are havens of active recreation and peaceful enjoyment. We routinely organize environmental workshops, shoreline cleanups, seagrass and oyster plantings, parks advocacy initiatives, educational presentations and partnerships. Through these initiatives, CPN is creating more vibrant waterfronts and parks, reconnecting the public to the coastal ecosystem, building environmental knowledge, protecting our natural resources, and strengthening community service and pride.

In these College Point parks, illegal dumping is the biggest problem. Every day of the week, you'll find trash bags, construction debris (bricks/wood/paint), tvs, mattresses, shopping carts, aquarium tanks, you name it-- all of this is routinely dumped along the edges of our two biggest College Point parks, MacNeil and Powell's Cove parks. Dumping is rampant. We used last year's city council discretionary funding from Councilman Paul Vallone to buy 10 new trash cans for our local parks to help alleviate the problem. They look great and are being used; however, dumpers are still just piling their large debris right next to the cans. We reached out to our councilman and parks management, and they are trying to increase collection frequency. But no one can keep up with these dumpers. We sorely need a solution. Some of our volunteers are clamoring for cameras. We could also use more monitoring by the Sanitation, Police and Parks Enforcement to catch some of these people in the act and impose fines.

Another issue is lighting. MacNeil has multiple lights that are out; Powell's Cove Park has NO lighting. This makes it easy for more illicit activity. There's a lot of drinking and drug use in the park, as evidenced by the beer bottles and trash they leave behind. We need lighting at least at the waterfront overlooks where people congregate after dark on the benches that CPN purchased for the park two years ago. Finally, path maintenance is a constant battle. Weedy overgrowth too often blocks parts of the pathways in PC Park; grass grows too tall in summer without being cut regularly enough, and leaves flood the lawns without being collected regularly. We need more frequent schedule for routine maintenance like this.

Finally, while a lot of paths in MacNeil have been upgraded and repaved beautifully in recent years, we have several long-standing problems. A brick-paver path near the water is extremely bumpy with bricks popping up in many spots due to tree roots, and is a bad tripping hazard sorely in need of repair. Also, a very long stretch of pavement in the playground that was ripped up to make electrical or plumbing repairs about 6-7 years ago has never been repaired. It was covered in asphalt as a slap-dash temporary approach, and the preexisting pavers have never been restored. It's an eyesore.

Thank you for your attention and commitment to improving NYC Parks.

-Kathryn Cervino

Re: Testimony for the City Council Parks Committee Oversight Hearing: Examining the Parks Department's Maintenance Practices
September 24, 2019

Dear Chairperson and Council Members of the Committee on Parks and Recreation,

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on behalf of Gowanus Canal Conservancy (GCC). GCC is dedicated to facilitating the development of a resilient, vibrant, open space network centered on the Gowanus Canal through activating and empowering community stewardship of the Gowanus Watershed. Since 2006, we have served as the environmental steward for the neighborhood through leading grassroots volunteer projects; educating students on environmental issues; and working with agencies, elected officials, and the community to advocate for, build, and maintain innovative green infrastructure around the Gowanus Canal.

Through a proposed neighborhood rezoning and the Gowanus Canal Superfund clean-up, Gowanus will receive a new park, upwards of 800 new street trees, publicly-accessible open space along the canal, new public space managed by Parks on top of two sewage tanks, and remediation and renovations to Thomas Greene Park. These new green spaces are much needed in Gowanus, a topographical bowl—surrounded by Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill, and Park Slope up hill—and has a significantly lower tree canopy density than surrounding neighborhoods, which contributes to urban heat island risks and regular flooding.

With new park spaces and street trees to come online in the near future, it is important to consider the maintenance of the existing parks and green infrastructure currently managed by the Parks Department in Gowanus:

1. **St. Mary's Playground** – St. Mary's Playground is one of the few public open spaces currently in Gowanus serving the community on the west side of the mid-Canal area. The first phase of this play space was completed in April 2018 with new play equipment, benches, and pavements. A second phase including a skate park was recently completed. The hundreds that enjoy this new amenity deserve a commitment to maintenance and programming of their new playground.
2. **Ennis Playground** – Ennis Playground is newly renovated and sits between a scrap yard and sanitation depot in the heart of mixed-use Gowanus. The playground was reopened in July 2019 following extensive renovations including new play equipment, sidewalks, benches, picnic tables, water fountains, lighting, and basketball courts, in addition to a stormwater detention system to capture stormwater before it enters the combined sewer system and continues to contaminate the Gowanus Canal. These new hardscape and plantings need maintenance, so that the green and grey infrastructure performs to the best of its ability and serves the community into the future. In addition, hypodermic needles have been found on multiple early mornings—parents bring their children and toddlers to the playground to find hypodermic needles hidden in the bushes and discarded near the slides. Ennis Playground deserves daily maintenance in the morning to safely dispose of sharps and in addition to regular maintenance focused on infrastructure and landscape.
3. **Thomas Greene Playground** – This park had once been considered as the site of a future sewage tank, but was saved thanks to strong community advocacy. The park currently floods during rainstorms so the basketball court is deemed unusable even after rain has passed. Thomas Green Park also sits on top of contaminated parcel of land, so a large portion of the park will be remediated in the future through the Gowanus Canal Superfund clean-up. As the only public greenspace and public pool near the north end of the Gowanus Canal we want to see a commitment to maintaining this park now and following remediation.
4. **Carroll and Bond Bioswale** – A Dept. of Transportation-owned site, managed by the Parks Department, the bioswale at the corner of Carroll and Bond Streets has seen maintenance by both by

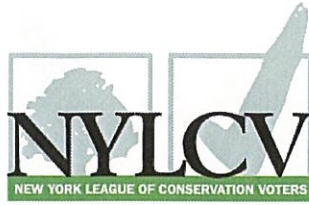
GCC and the Parks Department. Recently, a change in staffing at Parks led to the native grasses and plantings to be clear-cut. We are working through a maintenance strategy now with the Parks Department for a clear division of maintenance between Parks and GCC to ensure that the bioswale is able to perform to its highest level, collect and manage stormwater flowing down Carroll Street, and contributes to the local ecosystem.

We applaud the increased funding for Parks Department maintenance and hope that the Parks Committee members advocate for even greater funding next fiscal year as the City continues to add green spaces to our city map, plant new street trees, and as continue to combat climate change.

Gowanus Canal Conservancy fully supports the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation and its efforts to build, maintain, and improve parks across the City. It is important to the future of Gowanus and NYC that our parks maintenance is carefully considered.

Sincerely,

Cait LaMorte
Development Director



**Testimony of Adriana Espinoza
New York City Program Director
New York League of Conservation Voters**

**City Council Hearing of the Committee on Parks
September 26th, 2019**

Good afternoon. My name is Adriana Espinoza, and I'm the Director of the New York City Program at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV represents over 31,000 members in New York City and we are committed to advancing a sustainability agenda that will make our people, our neighborhoods, and our economy healthier and more resilient. I would like to thank Chair Koo for the opportunity to testify before the Committee on Parks and Recreation regarding maintenance of New York City Parks.

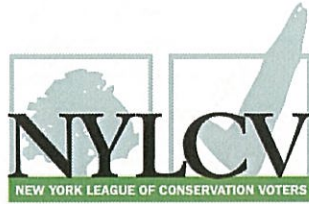
Our city is staring down a crisis of existential importance, and it is incumbent upon our elected leaders to invest our tax dollars in climate action and solutions. New York City's Department of Parks and Recreation plays a critical role in that fight. That's why NYLCV was proud to join New Yorkers for Parks and DC 37 as a founding member of the Play Fair for Parks campaign.

Earlier this year, our coalition helped secure a landmark \$43.5 million increase in funding for NYC parks and green spaces. That funding included baselining 150 parks maintenance workers and gardeners that NYLCV and others here today advocated for for many years, and 150 more that are not permanent staff lines. Among other victories, the FY20 parks budget also included critical funding for community gardens and forestry.

This budget will begin to provide New York City's parks with the care they need to remain healthy in our changing climate. Maintenance workers will have the resources they need to manage and protect parks, gardens, playgrounds, and 7,300 acres of forests citywide. We thank Speaker Johnson for his support of the campaign, as well as the City Council and Mayor de Blasio. It is critical that we continue to support our city's environment by fighting for green spaces citywide.

Well-maintained parks are a vital part of New York's urban environment. NYC Parks has done a commendable job maintaining our parks for years with a historically underfunded budget, and we're looking forward to highlighting improvements that come out of the Play Fair victory in the FY20 budget.

Parks and other green spaces are one of the city's most valuable environmental assets. Preserving these spaces is a top priority for NYLCV. Parks are a major source of the City's urban canopy. In fact, the Parks Department is responsible for over 2.6 million street and park trees. This canopy



**Testimony of Adriana Espinoza
New York City Program Director
New York League of Conservation Voters**

mitigates climate change, provides clean air and habitats for native wildlife, and contributes to the well-being of our residents and our economy.

These trees remove 1,300 tons of pollutants from the atmosphere and store one million tons of carbon per year. Trees are vital for mitigating urban heat island effect and can lower temperatures by up to nine degrees, cut air conditioning use by 30%, and reduce heating energy use by a further 20-50%. NYC's parks contribute to our resiliency by capturing almost 2 billion gallons of stormwater runoff.

Based on these benefits, we must all agree that parks are critical city infrastructure. However, these green benefits can not be realized without the Parks employees, particularly gardeners, horticulturalists, and maintenance workers, who work tirelessly to ensure the health of these spaces. Our trees cannot achieve a fraction of those climate change fighting benefits mentioned above until they reach maturity. That's why parks maintenance workers, gardeners, pruners, horticulturalists, and forresters, are all critical green jobs.

Despite the laudable budget increase in FY20, NYLCV knows there are still needs to be met overall for maintenance and operations of NYC Parks. Every staff line is critical and we are concerned about the long term security of some of the new green jobs implemented this fiscal year. In order to make a long-term impact on our parks, those new positions should be baselined.

Additionally, there were several critical Play Fair asks that were ultimately not included in the FY 20 budget. Funding for the implementation of the zone management strategy of maintenance across some of our largest parks, and resources to allow NYC Parks to expand fixed-post permanent staff at all eligible City parks would both go a long way to ensuring well-maintained parks. There was also a capital ask for implementing the forest management framework that was unmet. In FY21 it's critical that the city do more to ensure the 25 year roadmap for maintaining forests is fully funded.

I'd like to thank Chair Koo for holding a hearing on this important issue. We look forward to working with the Parks Committee on Play Fair in the future. We will need continued leadership from the Council to realize a more resilient and sustainable parks system in New York City.



**New York City Council Committee on Parks & Recreation
Oversight - Examining the Parks Department's Maintenance Practices
September 26, 2019
Lynn Kelly, Executive Director**

Good afternoon. My name is Lynn Kelly, and I am the Executive Director of New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P). I want to take a moment to welcome our new Committee Chair, Council Member Peter Koo, and our two new committee members, Council Members Adrienne Adams and Carlina Rivera.

NY4P is a founding member of the Play Fair Coalition, which includes over 150 organizations citywide, and has the support of a super majority of the City Council. Our Coalition worked tirelessly last spring to ensure that NYC Parks received a more significant amount of expense funding for critical maintenance, operations, and programming work. We were thrilled at the news of the City Council and Administration committing over \$43 million in additional expense funding, but we also know it is just a start.

While the physical infrastructure of our parks is of vital importance, it is often the day-to-day maintenance needs of our parks that make the biggest impact on park use and perceptions of safety. We also know that without routine, quality maintenance work done in our parks and green spaces, the physical infrastructure of our parks will more quickly degrade. Since the fiscal crisis of the 1970s, NYC Parks has lost over 4,000 full-time equivalent staff lines, and has for decades had to rely on a more seasonal and temporary workforce. This means that for over 40 years, the City agency tasked with caring for 14% of New York City's land has had to do more with less. It is incredible that our parks are in the overall condition they are given this tremendous mandate.

The \$43 million Expense Budget addition the FY20 City budget included some important wins for NYC Parks, namely the baselining of 100 City Park Workers and 50 Gardeners that work throughout the five boroughs. At a cost of a little less than \$10 million, the administration finally made these positions permanent for the hard-working New Yorkers who do some of the most necessary ongoing maintenance and clean-up of our parks. We want to note that in an overall City budget that exceeds \$92 billion in total, the investment of nearly \$10 million represents a literal rounding error. It's about time these positions were made permanent.

We are grateful that the City Council recognized the importance of park maintenance and operations, and made such meaningful additions to the FY20 Expense Budget for NYC Parks. The 100 additional City Park Workers, 50 additional Gardeners, 50 new Urban Park Rangers, and 80 new Parks Enforcement Patrol officers will help ensure that between now and June 30th, our parks, gardens, and natural areas will see a higher standard of care, beautification, and safety. We are also pleased to know that new specialized staff will also be hired to help implement the funding for our natural forests and GreenThumb community gardens. We remain concerned, however, that these vitally needed staff lines, and the hard-working New Yorkers who

will be filling them, will lack the stability and permanence needed to make a long-term impact in our parks. If we want to move the needle on better conditions in parks, we must make this funding permanently baselined. Additionally, we expect NYC Parks to allocate any new staff lines in an equitable way among the boroughs, and we expect the placement of these positions to be made transparent to the public through some reporting mechanism. We suggest that perhaps reporting to the City Council would be an effective means of relaying this information.

This past spring, the Play Fair Coalition asked the City to make an investment of \$65 million to allow parks of all sizes to have fixed-post, permanent staff. Over \$47 million of this funding would have allowed NYC Parks to implement the zone management strategy of maintenance across its 48 largest parks. The zone management strategy, developed by the Central Park Conservancy, has been piloted by the agency in a select number of parks to great success. Expanding this management strategy, and making permanent the staffing it would require, would have an incredible impact on the conditions in some of the City's most loved and heavily-used destination parks. The remaining \$18 million we asked for would allow NYC Parks to expand fixed-post, permanent staff at all City parks that would be eligible to do so. This would mean small neighborhood parks and playgrounds with comfort stations could have a dedicated parkie whose one job is to help keep these parks clean, well-supplied, and safe year-round. The community advocates and stewards you will hear from today can speak to the importance of having parks staff that they can get to know on a one-on-one basis. While we didn't receive this funding in the FY20 budget, we still believe this should be a funding priority for the City, as it would have an incredible impact on park conditions citywide.

I want to conclude by stating that in a city that champions equity, we have to start treating our parks, gardens and open space as critical city infrastructure, which also means investing in the infrastructure of the thousands of people who care for them day-in and day-out. We believe that the funding NYC Parks received in the FY20 budget was an incredible win, but one that will require expansion and baselining in order to be most effective in the long-term. We look forward to continuing to work with the Council to fight for the funding and structural changes that will be needed to ensure that all parks can be safe, clean, and beautiful for the millions of New Yorkers who consider their parks to be their backyards. Thank you for inviting me to speak today. I'm happy to answer any questions the Council might have.

###

For over 100 years, New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P) has built, protected, and promoted parks and open spaces in New York City. Today, NY4P is the citywide independent organization championing quality parks and open spaces for all New Yorkers in all neighborhoods. www.ny4p.org



**New York City Council Committee on Parks & Recreation Oversight Hearing On Examining
the Parks Department's Maintenance Practices
September 26, 2019**

**Testimony By: Hunter Armstrong, Natural Areas Conservancy, Deputy Director of
Development and Communications**

My name is Hunter Armstrong and I am the Deputy Director of Development and Communications at the Natural Areas Conservancy. Thank you, Chair Koo and members of the Parks Committee, for giving us the opportunity to testify about this important topic. The Natural Areas Conservancy is a nonprofit organization that was formed in 2012 with the goal of increasing the capacity of NYC Parks and its partners to restore and manage the 10,000 acres of forests, grasslands and wetlands under the agency's jurisdiction. Following in the footsteps of other successful park conservancies including the Central Park Conservancy and the Prospect Park Alliance, the Natural Areas Conservancy does not exist to replicate or replace the work of NYC Parks, rather we raise private funds, hire expert staff and work to complement and amplify the work of NYC Parks.

To achieve our goal of bringing all 7,300 forests city forests under active management, we worked in partnership with NYC Parks to develop and release the "Forest Management Framework for New York City" in Spring 2018. This plan includes a comprehensive look at the condition of our city's natural forests (one quarter of the entire NYC Parks system), and it outlines the investment needed to manage them over the next 25 years and to improve public access through a citywide trail system. In Fiscal Year 2020, forest management received one year of additional \$4 million. We are grateful for this one year investment by New York City Council and for the advocacy efforts of the Playfair coalition led by New Yorkers for Parks, the New York League of Conservation Voters and DC37. I am here today to provide an update on this investment and to ask New York City Council to include increased funding for forest management in the Fiscal Year 2021 budget and in future years. While NYC Parks is making progress this year, you cannot change the condition of our publicly owned natural forests in one year, and we need additional funding in future years to see success. As we all know, nature works on a different time frame.

Over the past decade, tens of millions of capital dollars have been invested in our forests. In order to ensure that this investment and future investments live up to their potential to provide our city with high quality access to nature, cool our city, clean our water and support wildlife, they must be maintained. Sustained investment for ongoing management is important for the following reasons:

- NYC's natural forests are at a tipping point. They are surprisingly healthy right now, but they need sustained investment or they risk losing biodiversity that we can never regain.
- In the next 25 years, we will be living in a hotter and drier city with higher sea levels. NYC's forests



are critical to mitigating the effects of climate change: extreme heat, capturing stormwater to reduce flooding, and absorbing greenhouse gases, Extreme heat, for example, kills more people in the U.S. each year than hurricanes, flooding and storms combined. Our city forests should be part of the city's climate solution.

- Developing a citywide trail system will allow people -- many in low and moderate income neighborhoods--new forms of recreation and opportunities for physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

The \$4 million one shot, expense funding for NYC Parks this year by New York City Council is addressing these challenges. This is what NYC Parks and partners are working to achieve by June 2020:

- 2,000 acres of forest improved
- 15,000 trees and shrubs planted
- 40,000+ native grasses planted
- 50 acres seeded with native grasses and wildflowers
- 40 miles of trail improvements
- 3,500 volunteers engaged

With this funding, we will work to reduce ecological threats, promote healthy natural regeneration and biodiversity, provide green jobs and help New Yorkers find inspiration and reduce stress in city forests. But these cannot be one year, one shot investments. We urge the Parks Committee to support long term and appropriate funding for New York City's forests, an invaluable part of our city's infrastructure.

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Kristen Glass and I manage Environmental Leadership programs at the Girl Scouts of Greater New York, for the 32,000 girls from across the five boroughs who we serve.

Girl Scouts of Greater New York is a proud member of the Play Fair coalition, which we joined because outdoor learning and environmental stewardship are core, 100-year-old tenets of Girl Scouting. And because, when we survey today's Girl Scouts about the issues they care about most, the environment is their number one priority.

That's why we are here today calling for an increase in parks maintenance funding. For so many young people and youth-serving organizations like ours, New York City Parks are essential outdoor classrooms. They are unifying elements, where our young people play and make lasting friendships. They are where a young New Yorker's sense of place and sense of pride are developed.

Even more than infrastructure or other kinds of improvements—basic, equitable, and consistent day-to-day park maintenance can ensure these spaces are the incredible places for learning and discovery they are meant to be.

Too often, your zip code determines whether you have access to the incredible benefits of parks—and that is unacceptable. Young people in ALL New York City neighborhoods deserve access to clean and safe green spaces. Increased funding for parks, which are currently undermaintained, will help our city realize equity in this area.

I want to share a few words from Kayla, a 10-year-old from Girl Scout Troop 2054 in Brooklyn. Kayla spends a lot of time with her mom at Canarsie Park, which she says is well taken care of, but she sees differences in how parks across the city are cared for and maintained—often other parks are not as clean, with overfilled garbage cans or no garbage cans at all.

She says: "If the parks were cleaner, it would be so much nicer for my mom and me, and all the other people who use the city's spaces, to exercise and enjoy time outside."

On behalf of Kayla, and all other young people in New York who want clean and safe places to play and learn, I call on the city to increase funding for parks maintenance in the upcoming budget.

Lastly, I want to thank members of the parks committee for your advocacy in this area. The Play Fair coalition is grateful to have your support, as well as the support of a supermajority of the City Council, and we are excited about continuing to work with you all on this historic investment in our city's parks.

Thank you.



Prospect Park Alliance
95 Prospect Park West
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Tel (718) 965-8951
Fax (718) 965-6950
prospectpark.org

Greetings Chair Koo and other members of the Committee on Parks and Recreation,

My name is Cory Provost and I serve as the Director of Government and Community Affairs for the Prospect Park Alliance. It is my pleasure to submit this testimony today on behalf of Susan Donoghue, who serves as both the Administrator of Prospect Park and the President of the Prospect Park Alliance.

As you may know, the Prospect Park Alliance is a not-for-profit that partners with the NYC Parks Department and the community to foster stewardship of Prospect Park. Established in 1987, the Alliance helps to care for the natural environment, preserve the Park's historic design, provide facilities, oversee more than 25,000 permitted events (mainly consisting of small birthday parties and family picnics), and host programs and activities throughout the year for all New Yorkers.

Over the past 31 years, the Prospect Park Alliance has played a pivotal role in restoring the Park to its original glory. During this time, we have worked closely with local elected officials, the Parks Department, and the surrounding communities, to identify, prioritize, design, and complete approximately 50 restoration projects over close to 120 acres of the Park and 5,100 linear feet of our watercourse totaling over \$200 million dollars of capital investment. In particular, Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo, and Council members Lander, Eugene, and Levin have been instrumental in helping secure broad support for all of our efforts.

Brooklyn is booming. In almost every corner of our Borough we are seeing new housing, and the neighborhoods surrounding Prospect Park are bustling now more than ever. We now estimate that the Park receives some ten million visits each year, and weekly we see thousands of people engaging in our many public programs, participating in a number of recreational activities, or simply gathering with family and friends to enjoy a picnic. All these activities have an impact on the park. From increased wear and tear on our lawns and ball fields to trash and litter that must be removed from the park.

Keeping up with maintenance is paramount for Prospect Park Alliance and we know that feeling is the same at any other Park in this City. Parks are not only vital green infrastructure but critical to the quality of life of all New Yorkers. This is why we added our voice in calling for an increase to the expense budget for the Parks Department and we are thankful to the City Council for adding \$43M.

However, NYC and its millions of park users would be best served with a fully funded Parks Department that could:

- Secure stable green jobs
- Provide funding for NYC's forests and natural areas, key components in the battle we face from a changing climate
- Ensure that parks across the city have full-time dedicated staff
- Create a comprehensive zone management system
- Address aging infrastructure conditions that add to maintenance concerns and inhibit park use.

Prospect Park Alliance and the City of New York have enjoyed an extraordinarily fruitful partnership over three decades and we look forward to continuing this relationship for decades to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and thank you for the City Council's continued support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Donoghue".

Susan Donoghue
Park Administrator and President, Prospect Park Alliance

September 26, 2019

To: Members of New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation

Subject: Statement of City Council Parks Committee Oversight Hearing:
Examining the Parks Department's Maintenance Practices

From: Dorothy Woo, Secretary
Kissena Corridor Park Conservancy, Inc.
P.O. Box 520627, Flushing NY 11352

Tel: 718-762-6383

Email: dlwoo@msn.com

4 pages including this cover

Kissena Corridor Park Conservancy, Inc.

P.O. Box 520627, Flushing, NY 11352

Statement of City Council Parks Committee Oversight Hearing, September 26, 2019

The Kissena Corridor Park Conservancy is a non-profit parks advocacy group which has been serving the Flushing, Queens Community since 2006. We work with the Parks Department to maintain and develop the open spaces of Kissena Corridor Park for passive recreation. We engage with the neighborhood residents through park beautification projects and the It's My Park Day events program.

What we have been doing.

- We helped with the incorporation of the Evergreen Community Garden, the largest Community Garden in NYC.
- We planted more than 9,000 trees during the million-tree initiative under Mayor Bloomberg between 2009 and 2012.
- We succeeded in getting funding for the Meditation Garden after 9 years of efforts. Thanks to Councilman Koo and Borough President Katz for their appropriation of the funds. This garden will provide a peaceful and healing environment for hospital patients, seniors and the growing population of the neighborhood. This garden is anticipated to be completed next year.

We would also like to thank Councilman Koo for hiring three security officers servicing Kissena Park and the Corridor Park in 2018; and Mayor de Blasio for fully funding the lights installed throughout the park; and the new state of art Silent Springs Playground which opened in April.

In spite of these construction improvements, there are still long overdue undeveloped areas that need to be cared for and maintained. A list of proposals is as follows: Please refer to the attached map for location.

1. Pruning trees: Young trees planted during million tree initiative, many that survived now need pruning and space to grow into woods.
2. Building a park border and paving the missing sidewalks: Area of concern is along the Corridor Park between west of 146th Street Playground on 56 Road and the Meditation Garden on 56th Avenue at 141 Street. A study described the place as "a poor-quality landfill covering a depth of 10-20 feet". A high fence separates the parkland from the Streets for more than 40 years.
3. Making Kissena Way accessible for safe passage: This unpaved path connecting Kissena Blvd and Main Street will provide safe mobility options for children, elderly and cyclists.
4. Adding lights for pathway: The proposed path which would connect Colden Street and 56th Road would encourage greater frequency and participation in parks activities.
5. Providing map of paths and the nearest point of interests.

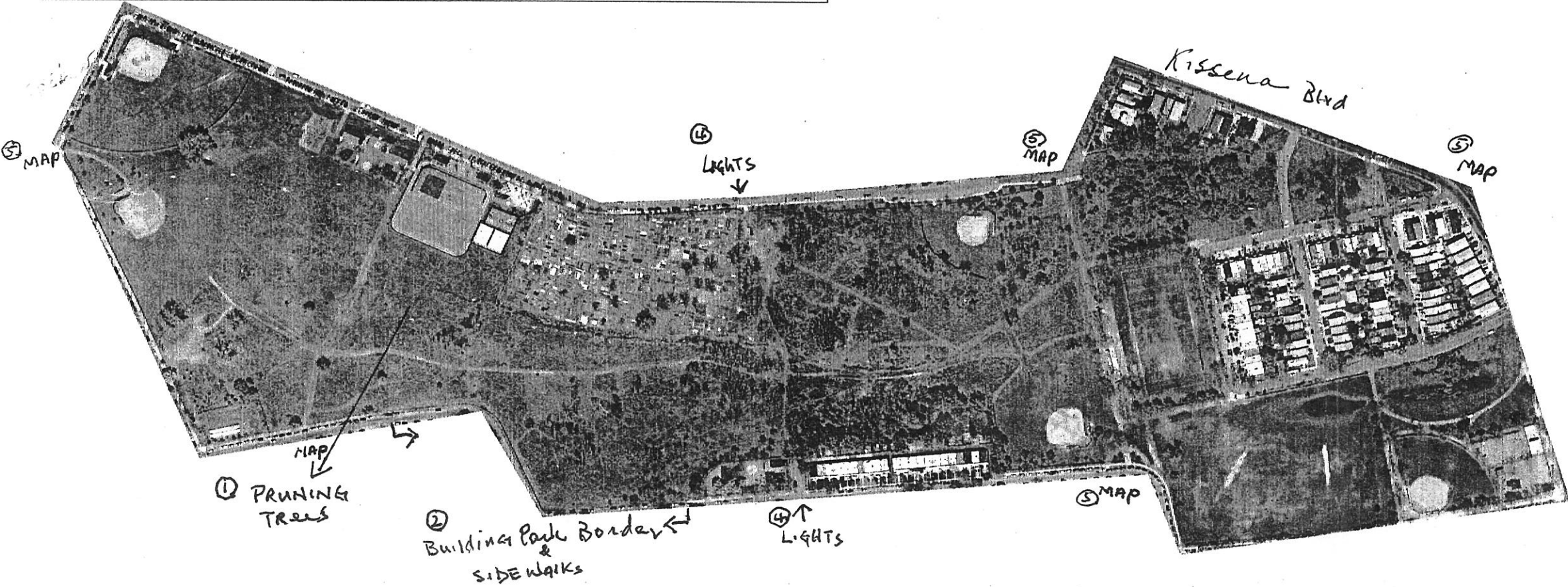
Thank you.

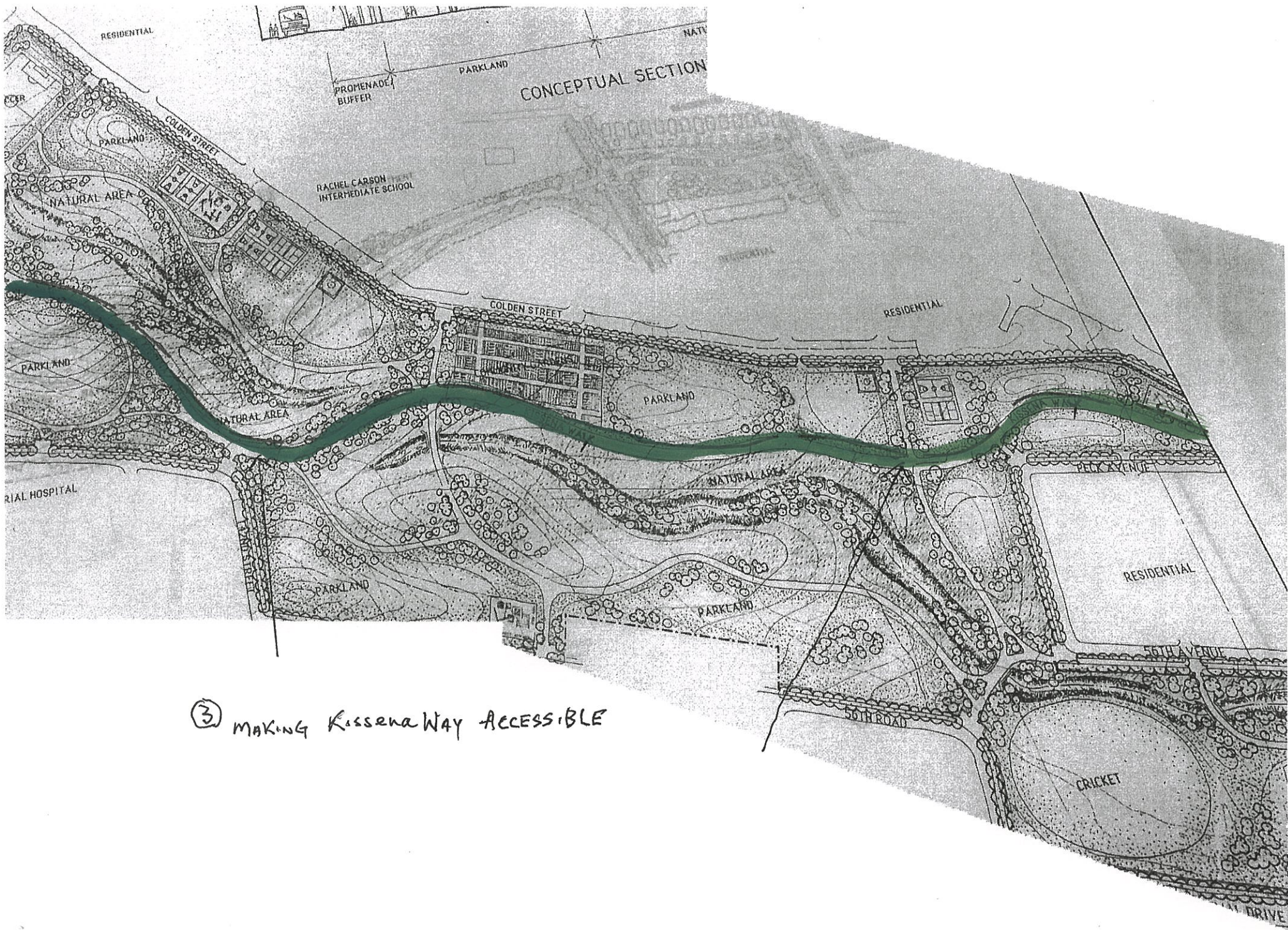
Roland G. Wade, President

The Kissena Corridor Park Aerial Map

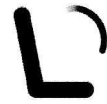
A List of Proposed Maintenance Projects effecting KCP

01. PRUNING TREES	06.
02. BUILDING PARK BORDER	07.
03. Please See the NEXT PAGE MAP	08.
04. ADDING LIGHTS	09.
05. MAP	10.





③ MAKING KISSENA WAY ACCESSIBLE



UP-STAND®
www.up-stand.com

October 1st, 2019

To: Kris Sartori, Committee Counsel to the Parks Committee

UP-STAND is an organization representing and advocating for families, and as such we solicit experiences and input from parenting and advocacy communities including MOMally Parenting and Hearts Across Queens, as well as from our allies at community organizations such as the Astoria Park Alliance.

Feedback provided by community members who consistently use our parks and playgrounds in Western Queens indicate that for years, there have been concerns about cleanliness and safety in the area. Frequent complaints include human feces and needles at playgrounds such as Sean's Place and Athens Playground, in addition to more general concerns about urine and trash throughout the neighborhood's parks and playground spaces.

UP-STAND was honored to be a member of the Play Fair Coalition, and thrilled that the New York City Council and Mayor Bill de Blasio included a historic \$44 million in funding for Parks in the city budget as a result of the coalition's efforts. In particular, we are thankful for the \$19.1 million allocated for park maintenance workers.

We have already begun to see more park maintenance workers in the area in both the morning and afternoon, and hope that this will lead to cleaner spaces for all of our neighborhood users, particularly our children.

Thank you for your attention to these issues, for working to make our neighborhood a safer place, and for working with New Yorkers for Parks to realize their call to action. We look forward to continuing this conversation.

Sincerely,

Christine Serdjenian Yearwood
Founder and CEO, UP-STAND
christine@up-stand.com

Written testimony to NY City Council Parks Committee regarding

Objectionable items in 2019 GreenThumb license and registration

Maggie Clarke, Ph.D. President, Founder Riverside-Inwood Neighborhood Garden

theringgarden@gmail.com

September 27, 2019

Impossible or onerous requirements

Despite a prior policy of encouraging as many community events as possible in its gardens, and verbal reassurances of no need for costly parks dept. event permits, GreenThumb now requires as much as 4 months advance notice of the nature and time of our community events as well as the ways we will publicize it. GT requires that they approve every event we have. We are responsible for obtaining all required permits and approvals in advance of the event. This will ensure that there are far fewer garden events at RING, most of which volunteers put together in the days leading up to the event. At RING such events this year have included poetry readings, potluck dinners, monarch butterfly releases, and composting teach-ins.

GT now requires we shall keep sidewalks and curbs adjacent to and within the garden clean and free from snow, ice, garbage, debris and obstructions. As RING is a triangle surrounded by sidewalks, the local Parks department has mobilized their snowplows and put down salt to address snow on the 3 blocks of sidewalks. They have also collected refuse outside the garden. RING has mobilized our volunteers to keep the garden itself free of litter. But shoveling inside the garden during winter? Nobody comes in. Why do this?

GT now requires no permanent structures or murals or other permanent works of art may be built in the garden w/o prior written permission from GT, Dept. of Buildings, and NYC Public Design Commission. We have been planning to replace a Parks Dept.-installed pea gravel path with ADA-compliant mosaic with funds from the Borough President for capital improvements. Why should all these agencies weigh this process down?

GT now allows animals other than dogs can reside at the garden if they follow their rules and regs. This is poorly written. Do our rats, butterflies, bees, other insects, worms, skunks, groundhogs and birds need to be read the rules?

GT now requires that we shall not cause nor permit use of garden for commercial purpose. The only permissions we have granted have been the occasional film crew to use the space for lights to shine on adjacent areas; we get an small honorarium. Why should Parks care about this?

GT now states that we may have no more than 2 fundraisers inside the garden per calendar year. Requests for approval must be submitted no less than 30 days before fundraiser. We may allow sale of other items or paid events pursuant to permit issued by Revenue Division of Parks in accordance w other laws / handbook. Parks has made it very hard to make enough money to purchase plants, tools and other necessities by this new rule, as well as adding obtrusive bureaucracy.

GT now can audit gardens' finances. Again, this is at the least, intrusive, and casts a pall on its partners, we the community gardeners. What are all of us suspected of?

GT now says we shall not plant new trees, damage or remove trees or prune large limbs from existing trees w/o their prior written approval. For 35 years the RING garden has educated itself, often using Parks' own pruning programs, and

have kept our botanical garden healthy. We have chosen our own trees and prune them. GT is suggesting all of its gardens, including us, winners of many citywide awards, have not done a good job? It is insulting.

GT now says failure to comply with restrictions constitutes default. We get six months to rectify default. Second notice 30 days to rectify. That includes not signing their current onerous license agreement. As of this writing, RING garden is in default. Parks really wants to erase the RING garden?

GT now has decided to terminate all prior oral or written agreements or understandings between licensee and the Parks Dept. are hereby expressly revoked and that their new license is the only agreement between licensee and Parks with respect to the garden. We hereby surrender any other right or interest in the garden which we have had. RING has a license agreement with the Parks Dept. negotiated for us by Trust for Public Land in 1991. We never even asked to become part of Green Thumb. This has been forced on us and it has provided very little to us. Our association with GT is more trouble than it is worth. Our 1991 license agreement has no sunset provision.

GT now says we waive all rights to trial by jury in any summary proceeding hereafter instituted by City against us or any counterclaim or cause of action arising out of this license. This is unconstitutional. How can they be allowed to get away with this?

GT says that their many conditions of hearings, penalties, for default which are described in painful detail, indicate we would not be able to be involved in a garden license for five years. Punative.

GT now says the onerous license is terminable at will by Commissioner w 60 days written notice. No recourse. Why such draconian language? Why would groups of volunteers commit thousands of hours of community service and spent money to create beautiful gardens just to have them eliminated for no reason without the ability to fight it? This is not fair.

GT now requires that twice each year, licensee shall instruct members that a community garden involves activities that pose risks of serious bodily injury and even death etc... We shall post a sign approved by GT explaining the risks, etc Posting such a sign is a good way to turn off volunteers and visitors from having the very good feelings that Parks should want visitors to have visiting and working in gardens. Does Parks post these signs in all of its parks? No. It's discrimination against community gardeners.

GT requires that we shall prominently post a copy of this license within the garden and shall provide all members with a copy upon request. Again, more bureaucracy. Gardeners volunteer to garden, not to satisfy meaningless bureaucratic policies. What is posting of pages of this terrible license meant to accomplish?

GT requires no construction activities, (excavation, paving,erecting permanent or temporary structures - sheds, storage facilities) requiring a valid construction permit from Parks / DOB, and posting of a payment bond. Does this include the Sukkot structure that is put up every fall?

GT requires a 3 foot fence must be erected around our pond. We have a 7 foot fence around the garden. Yet GT doesn't want new construction. They are supposedly concerned about dangers to individuals, and yet set up a tripping hazard for those volunteers who weekly maintain our pond.

GT changed our block and lot number. We used to be block 2246 lot 1. Our address is 1835 Riverside Drive.

GT refers to statutes and requires compliance with all laws and regs including Chapter 6 title 56, Parks rules. But these are not stated specifically in the agreement. GT expects all gardens to look up this statute? There is also a voluminous GT handbook that gardens are expected to search for restrictive requirements amongst all the gardening best practices, rather than putting those into the agreement to be signed.

GT now requires that we shall neither cause nor permit installation of any utilities w/o prior written approval of Parks. We have decided that the aforementioned Borough President's grant for capital improvements will be used in part for solar panels, batteries, and forced air to assist in composting. Another layer of bureaucracy.

GT now requires that we shall secure garden using a daisy chain lock system or provide GT with combo and 2 copies of locks used in the garden (shed) Why does GT want to poke around in everybody's shed? We have always provided the combination.

Annoying Bureaucracy which is at the time expense of gardening

We have to post a sign indicating up-to-date contact name with current contact info, days and hours during which garden is open to the public and that membership is open to any interested party (We already have a big colorful sign with our website and mention that ours is a volunteer garden).

We shall host at least 2 community events per year open to the public at no cost (we have many more, but that will now become hard thanks to the new rules).

We shall comply with all applicable laws, rules and regs of the US, NYS and NYC and Parks. Again, these are not written down, so it's easy for them to catch gardens. Is their interest to acquire new land for parks concessions or sale?

We shall contact parks central communications in case of emergency, contact GT and help write Parks department incident report

We have to send a rep to at least one educational workshop or other Greenthumb event

We shall comply with GT registration requirements, complete registration process as directed by GT, and comply with terms of registration and handbook.

We shall not cause or permit accumulation of garbage or debris or overgrowth of vegetation or plant material. (very subjective - in the past Parks has sprayed Roundup on the cobblestones outside of our gates surrounding the garden because of growth of weeds of 2 inches between the cobblestones. This is hazardous to the health of people and animals.

We need to keep garden open 20 hours per week, 10 posted (as before), including 5 hours on weekends. Parks may conduct spot checks, and if garden is not open at the designated time and/or minimum number of hours per week, may terminate the license. All of these requirements take time away from time to open the garden and do the actual work to keep it beautiful. Requiring that a garden put up many specific hours that Must be open every single week, without fail, from April through October is difficult without paid staff. Some gardens are very small. Others, like ours, have no plots to give away contingent on specific numbers of volunteer hours. Terminating the license after failing one spot check is counterproductive.

GT requires that we shall promptly notify GT of any administrative or operational matters constituting any loss, injury, damage or violation w/in the garden. Shall also notify GT no later than 3 days after receipt of notice of any loss, injury, damage or violation w/in the garden and notify Parks in writing.

We hope that the City Council will review the onerous new requirements that GreenThumb has put upon the hundreds of gardens and tens of thousands of gardeners and their visitors and have a hearing to hold GreenThumb accountable for its license agreement, and to help in the removal of onerous items. Prior agreements had few provisions. This agreement seems intent on acquiring land from gardens. Gardens that have been frightened by GT into signing the agreement should be given opportunity to unsign. GT also needs to consider gardens differently, based on their histories. Their tendency to lump all gardens together ignoring individual circumstances is damaging and unfair. This cannot continue if the City wants a vibrant, happy community gardening community.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARTITA LOPEZ GILPIN

Address: _____

I represent: ASTORIA PARK ALLIANCE

Address: 35-40 82nd ST. JACKSON HEIGHTS NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 9/26/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CHANTEL PHAIRE

Address: P.O. BOX 20773, NY 10225

I represent: COMMUNITY GARDENS RIVER GARDEN, VERNA JUDGE & GENESIS

Address: 1086 E. 180th ST. BRONX, NY 10460

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Roland Wade

Address: Keena Conner Park Community

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sam Biekerman

Address: NYC Parks

I represent: NYC Parks

Address: The Arsenal - 830 F.Fth Ave, NY, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rafael Wako

Address: 137-60 45 Ave. Flushing

I represent: Kissena Corridor Plk Council Incorp

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9.26.19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Adriana Espinoza

Address: 30 Broad St., NY, NY

I represent: NY League of Conservation Voters

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Hunter Armstrong

Address: 1234 Fifth Ave. NYC 10029

I represent: Natural Areas Conservancy

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9-26-19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cory Provost

Address: 95 PROSPECT PARK WEST

I represent: PROSPECT PARK ALLIANCE

Address: 95 PROSPECT PARK WEST

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Liam Kavanagh First Deputy Commissioner

Address: The Arsenal

I represent: NYC Parks

Address: _____

*The Deputy Commissioner
NYC Parks*

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Broxanne Delgado

Address: (Pictures)

I represent: _____

Address: Friends of Pelham Parkway

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Math Drury - Director, Govt Relations

Address: The Arsenal

I represent: NYC Parks

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Math Drury - Commissioner

Address: The Arsenal

I represent: NYC Parks

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mitchell Silver - Commissioner

Address: The Arsenal

I represent: NYC Parks

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/26/2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kristen Marks

Address: ~~40 Wall St, Ste 708~~ 40 Wall St, Ste 708

I represent: Privy Counts of Greater NY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Azz DeHkan

Address: 379 1st Ave #7

I represent: NYC Community Garden Coalition

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/26/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Daniel Clay

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: President, Local 1507, DC 37

Address: Gardens

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Al Morales - Yorkville Sparta

Address: _____

I represent: Yorkville Sparta

Address: NYC

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9.26.19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lynn Kelly

Address: 55 Broad St. 23rd Fl. NY NY 10004

I represent: New Yorkers for Parks

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/26/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joe Puleo

Address: 125 Broadway Street NY NY 10007

I represent: President, Local 983, DC37

Address: Urban Park Rangers + PEP officers

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms