



City of New York Parks & Recreation



New York City Council
Committee on Parks & Recreation

Oversight: Community Gardens

November 29, 2010

Testimony by
Larry Scott Blackmon
Deputy Commissioner for Community Outreach

INTRODUCTION

Good morning, Chair Mark-Viverito, and members of the Parks Committee. My name is Larry Scott Blackmon, Deputy Commissioner for Community Outreach with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss Community Gardens.

First, I would like to thank Speaker Christine Quinn and Committee Chair Melissa Mark-Viverito for their continued support and advocacy of New York City's Community Gardens. The Bloomberg administration and the Parks Department remain committed to protecting and supporting our community gardens, and we thank you for working with us to achieve those goals.

For decades, New York City's Community Gardens have served as spaces of community engagement, beauty and food production. They provide an environmental benefit to our urban landscape. In September of this year, the Parks Department promulgated a new set of Community Garden rules designed to better preserve and protect New York City's Community Gardens. These new rules were issued in advance of an expiring agreement between the New York State Attorney General's office and the City. The Bloomberg Administration is extremely proud of its record of working to protect this community resource.

Today I will provide an overview of our GreenThumb program, a review of the new rules, an exciting change to our licensing process, and speak to our continued engagement and partnership with the gardening community.

GREENTHUMB

The Department of Parks & Recreation, primarily through its GreenThumb program, is extremely proud of what has been accomplished since 2002 to benefit GreenThumb Gardens. In fact, earlier this year, GreenThumb received a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Environmental Quality Award for demonstrating an outstanding commitment to protecting and enhancing environmental quality and public health – the highest recognition presented to the public by the EPA.

Other notable examples of our achievements are:

- The creation of new rules which strengthen and codify the goals of the expired 2002 agreement between then Attorney General Eliot Spitzer and the City of New York;
- The elimination of the requirement that GreenThumb gardeners pay for private liability insurance
- The over 45 public workshops we have held for community gardeners, of which nearly 2,000 people have attended;
- Our stellar school garden collaboration, which currently has 49 schools participating; and
- Today's announcement - the extension of our license term from its current length of two years to a new length of four years!

GreenThumb was created in response to the City's fiscal crisis of the 1970's, when private owners stopped paying their property taxes and surrendered their land to the City, leaving the City with more land and yet fewer dollars with which to maintain it.

The majority of GreenThumb gardens were derelict vacant lots renovated by volunteers. These community gardens, now managed by neighborhood residents, can provide important green space and serve as important community resources.

NEW COMMUNITY GARDEN RULES

The Parks Department is committed to the preservation and continued success of our community gardens. As proof of our commitment, we established new rules designed to incorporate and expand on the protections afforded gardens by the 2002 Community Gardens agreement. That expired agreement, negotiated between the city of New York and the office of then State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, did not make community gardens permanent. Rather, it provided a transparent and public mechanism should certain gardens be needed for other uses.

By working with partners in the community garden community, the City Council, and other civic groups, such as the New York Restoration Project, we were able to craft new rules that improved and strengthened the provisions in the original agreement, releasing them September 13th.

How are they better? These rules offer increased levels of transparency and more opportunities for the public to be a part of the process. In addition, based on feedback we received from the public, these new rules contain preservation provisions and language that was not in the original agreement:

- Active gardens are preserved as gardens as long as they are registered and licensed by the Department and are under Parks jurisdiction.
- Licenses will be renewed as long as the garden satisfies the registration criteria
- Parks MUST attempt to identify successor gardening groups for failing gardens and has nine months from the time of default to return the garden to active status.
- New gardens may be created and will have the same protections as existing gardens
- A party licensed by the City to perform work that results in damage to a garden will be required by these new rules to return the garden to its pre-existing condition.
- The Department of Parks will attempt to provide notices required under the Current rules to gardeners in other languages.

Again, these rules, which provide much stronger protections than the expired Attorney General's agreement, were established to preserve our community gardens. There were those who spread fears that these rules were written as a means to further development. That is not and has never been our intent. Moreover, no active Parks Department gardens have been developed during the past eight years. Our record speaks for itself.

The Parks Department shares the passion of countless community garden activists who are committed to keeping our gardens green. The new rules go very far in securing this protection.

REGISTRATION AND LICENSING PROCESS

Under the provisions of the 2002 agreement, Parks registers and licenses gardeners every two years. We are pleased to announce that beginning in January of 2011, gardens will be registered and licensed for a period of four years! We would like to extend our gratitude to Speaker Quinn, Council Member Mark Viverito, Council Members Mendez, Garodnick and others for partnering with us on this extension.

Briefly, I would like to provide a review of the registration and licensing process. Groups send a representative to a GreenThumb registration session where they are given an orientation to the program's requirements, provided with information, and given assistance with filling out paperwork. Through registration and licensing, the City provides support to help strengthen gardens, strengthen gardener skills and strengthen communities. GreenThumb's services take the form of materials and technical assistance, including educational workshops.

The garden group fills out a garden survey, and provides contact information, a membership procedure, and a membership list. The group must sign the GreenThumb registration agreement, committing the gardeners to following GreenThumb rules, which requires the posting of informational signage, and mandates that each garden be open for at least twenty hours per week

to the public, and that a key be provided to the GreenThumb program office in case of emergency.

Next, the group leader must attend a garden registration session. These sessions include opportunities to meet fellow gardeners and GreenThumb staff, to learn about GreenThumb services, and to submit registration materials.

Lastly, licenses are issued to eligible gardens upon submission of completed registration materials. Gardens not on property under the jurisdiction of the Parks Department are not eligible for licenses, but must still complete the registration process in order to receive GreenThumb materials and services.

OUTREACH

We maintain contact and communication with as many of our garden groups and gardeners as frequently as possible. The GreenThumb staff, led by its Director, Edie Stone, does an amazing job of providing technical assistance and support to the gardening community. GreenThumb has provided seed, soil, lumber, and has 15 full time experts dedicated to helping community gardeners. GreenThumb's annual Grow Together conference held at Hostos Community College brings nearly 2,000 gardeners under one roof to share best practices, interact with other garden professionals and communicate with senior Parks staff. Speaking of which, I would like to take a moment to publicly thank long-time Parks Assistant Commissioner who has worked with community gardeners for many many years, Jack Linn. We have long held an open door policy when it comes to providing technical assistance to community gardeners, and Mayor Bloomberg, Commissioner Benepe, and Assistant Commissioner Linn deserves credit for continuing to provide support to ensure that community gardens thrive and flourish.

CONCLUSION

In closing, the Parks Department shares the passion of countless community garden activists who are committed to keeping our community Gardens just what they are - Gardens. We are proud of the fact that we house the largest network of community gardens in the nation and will continue to work with the community to Grow Together. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony



New York City Community Garden Coalition's Response to NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation's *Rules* for Community Gardens*

* New Chapter 6 of Title 56 of the Official Compilation of Rules of the City of New York

New York City Community Garden Coalition (NYCCGC) was at the table during the initial process of drafting the new Parks Department rules concerning community gardens, and we look forward to being involved in the drafting of future policies and legislation that will permanently preserve our city's vibrant community gardens, and create opportunities for the development of more. We are glad to see the rules state that any community garden under the Parks Department will remain so if these rules are followed. However, NYCCGC has several concerns about the new rules, identified by our leadership, members, and legal counsel. We believe our recommendations, detailed below, would offer better support for community gardens, and, going forward, request their adoption into the rules, procedures, policies, and legislation regarding community gardens.

NYCCGC recommends the following:

PART I - Create Transparent Processes for Gardens in "Default" and "Accelerated Default"

NYCCGC is concerned about what criteria the Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) uses to determine that a garden is in "default" or "accelerated default." For example, according to the rules, a garden is in accelerated default if it "affects, or poses a threat to the health or safety of the community in which the Lot and Garden are located." The rules do not provide any criteria as to what will determine this violation. There is no clear notification process for a gardening group to learn that DPR considers its activities to "affect... the health or safety of the community." By the time that group receives a notice of default, according to the DPR rules, it has only 30 days to cure the perceived problem.

1.) Form an Advisory Group to Clarify and Correct Persistent Violations

We recommend that a GreenThumb advisory group be formed, with community gardeners as a majority of members. This group would deal with violations and could include NYCCGC, and other community and greening groups, to work directly with individual gardening groups and gardeners to correct violations that have persisted and may lead to a default. This group would need guidelines; documented criteria for default and accelerated default.

2.) Form a Review Panel for Transparent Processes and Decisions on Default:

Under the current rules, the final determination of default is at the sole discretion of the DPR's Commissioner. To create a transparent process before the Commissioner's determination, we recommend a panel of three individuals be formed to hold an evidentiary hearing to arrive at a recommendation for action. One of the individuals would be chosen by DPR, another chosen by community gardeners, and the third person would be someone mutually agreed upon by both DPR and community gardeners. The Commissioner would then accept or reject the panel's determination. In the event that



the Commissioner rejects the panel's decision, a court could review if the rejection was proper. Norman Siegel has been successful in the past in having such a procedure instituted at an administrative agency.

3.) Create a Dedicated Website to Inform Gardeners and the Community

We recommend that GreenThumb establish a dedicated public website where notifications to community gardens are posted. Automated alerts regarding infractions could be sent via a RSS "web feed" subscription. GreenThumb would publish and post persistent violations 30 days after the infraction, as well as individual community garden default notifications. Notices of garden default should also be mailed and emailed to all members of the garden group as registered with GreenThumb.

PART II - Identify All Permanently Protected Community Gardens

It is NYCCGC's contention that all gardens listed in the "Offer for Preservation" section of the NY State Attorney General's 2002 Community Garden Agreement are permanently protected by that document. We request a fully documented list of actions on all community gardens listed by the Agreement. This includes the 198 community gardens listed in the agreement, as well as those which were later transferred, swapped, and added to the list after 2002.

PART III - Collectively Forge New Legislation and Policy

NYCCGC is mindful that the DPR rules cover only community gardens that are under DPR. Other gardens fall under the jurisdiction of many other agencies, including Housing Preservation & Development, Department of Education, Department of Transportation, and New York City Housing Authority, and are not covered by these rules. We are very excited to be working in a truly shared process with Speaker Quinn, Parks Council Chair Viverito, and the Mayor's office to create legislation and policies extending permanent protections and support to all current and future community gardens and urban farms. Our collaboration will provide the neighborhoods in our city with all the beauty and improved quality of life that nature provides, as well as access to nutritious, locally-grown food, opportunities for recreation, therapy, exercise, education, and inter-generational and cross-cultural connections.

TESTIMONY OF
AMY GAVARIS, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
AT
NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT
Before
PARKS COMMITTEE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF NEW YORK CITY
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2010

Thank you for allowing New York Restoration Project (NYRP) to testify today. I am Amy Gavaris, Executive Vice President of New York Restoration Project. On behalf of our Executive Director Amy Freitag, I want to thank Chairwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito and members of the City Council, as well as New York City Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe, Deputy Commissioner Larry Blackmon and GreenThumb staff for your recent work in strengthening the protections we provide New York City's community gardens. Significant progress was made, and NYRP stands ready to continue working with the City Council, the Parks Department and the gardening community to identify further options for providing our gardens with permanent protections, as well as new opportunities to grow and enhance New York City's community garden programs.

As you may know, NYRP is the proud steward of 55 of our city's community gardens – 52 of our gardens are owned by NYRP and their titles' protected in perpetuity in a land trust we established, while three of our gardens are operated and maintained through license agreements with the Parks Department. Since 1999, NYRP has invested more than \$10 million in day-to-day maintenance, restoration and programming of our 55 gardens. From installation of new raised planting beds and rainwater collection systems to major restorations completed with the help of some of our nation's most respected landscape architects and designers, we have worked hard to provide all of our gardens with the resources and support they need to grow and thrive as vibrant community meeting places and green pocket parks. We are also making an enormous investment in expanding our community outreach and gardener engagement program, as we firmly

believe it is the participation and leadership of community members that sustain these gardens – ensuring their gates are open to all, and the spaces are planted and well-maintained for schoolchildren, families and neighbors to explore and enjoy.

This year we reorganized NYRP's community outreach department in an effort to renew our commitment to partnering with and supporting the communities and gardeners we serve. This past summer, we piloted a new Garden Angels program that allowed us to employ a community member at three gardens who was responsible for expanding access to the garden while growing the number of residents using the garden space. Our hope is to secure the necessary funding that will allow us to expand the Garden Angels program next summer to NYRP-managed community gardens in all five boroughs. We are also working to establish new partnerships with community organizations and city agencies in order to leverage more resources through collaborative programming. And we are working hard to find creative approaches to making our garden design process more community-based – investing more resources on community programming and engagement than design and construction.

To encourage neighborhood involvement and expand our family of community gardeners, NYRP has introduced local, community-inspired programming, including: the NYRP Neighborhood Gardening Institute, that teaches gardening principles and best practices; the Healthy Eating and Wellness Series, that instructs parents on how to prepare nutritious meals; and the NYRP Fit Club, an outdoor exercise program. These workshops are complemented by concerts, movie nights and a host of other programs and cultural events that connect New Yorkers with their garden spaces and the outdoors. NYRP also partners with other non-profit organizations to bring additional programming to our gardens. This summer we joined with bk farmyards and Just Food to launch our first City Chicken Institute, and with the Public Theater to inspire young thespians in East Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant. Our partnership with AHRC and FECS – adult rehabilitation programs – provides an opportunity for people living with developmental disabilities to explore nature and have fun with gardening. Without community gardens, these opportunities and experiences would not exist in our city.

Sustained investment in our community gardens is also critical because gardens provide a mosaic of environmental, health, social and economic benefits to our neighborhoods and residents. Community gardens improve our city's ecosystem by helping to filter rainwater, reduce soil erosion and runoff, and restore oxygen to our air. Our gardens also provide much needed shade that helps to reduce city heat generated from asphalt streets and concrete sidewalks. These gardens are islands of calm and serenity in an ocean of noise.

Community gardens also improve the health of our residents in some of our city's food deserts – neighborhoods that lack access to healthy produce. Our gardens grow nutritious vegetables, fruits and herbs for New York City families. In fact, community gardens are critical components of the healthy food policies being advocated by the City Council, including the recently introduced Foods Works. And, community gardens also create opportunities for outdoor recreation and exercise – helping in our fight to reduce adult and childhood obesity, which is at the heart of First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* initiative.

Through our own work, we have found that community gardens are a catalyst for neighborhood improvement. Research conducted by New York University shows that community gardens increase property values by up to 9 percent – as well as property tax revenues – in their surrounding neighborhoods, and provide open space in some of the most park-deprived neighborhoods in the nation.

As all of us face the grim realities of the recent economic downturn, it has never been more important for us to leverage our partnerships and find new and innovative ways for organizations working on behalf of New York City's community gardens and gardeners to collaborate and maximize our resources. We believe that much can be achieved by the Parks Department and GreenThumb bringing together organizations like NYRP, the Trust for Public Land, Green Guerillas, GrowNYC and other citywide and local non-profits, as well as the New York City Housing Authority and the New York City Department of Education, to realize a long-term vision for our city's entire catalog of

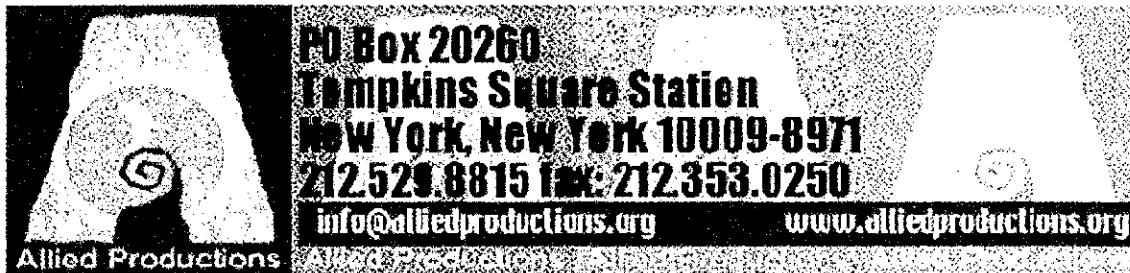
community gardens. Working as a coalition, NYRP believes we can increase the potential to secure additional funds to support our gardens, expand gardeners' access to educational programming, identify new opportunities to share resources, increase the public's access to our gardens, and further promote urban agriculture and local food production. With so much public attention and policy-maker interest focused on community gardening and urban agriculture, we must leverage this moment to increase our efforts to collaborate, and together we can continue to build an innovative and sustainable model for urban gardening that greens our city, strengthens our neighborhoods, and enriches the lives of our residents.

While we believe long-term protection of our community gardens is critically important, we believe the establishment of a long-term vision for our city's community garden program – one that builds on the good work and accomplishments of GreenThumb and others – will provide the roadmap that will ensure a healthy and vibrant community garden program for our city for many years to come.

We also believe it is critically important that the Mayor's update to PlaNYC highlight the role community gardens play in ensuring our city's long-term sustainability, and our citizens' access to open, green space. PlaNYC must recognize community gardens as necessary components of our city's green infrastructure, and recommend they be protected, expanded and appropriately funded and maintained.

By working in partnership with the communities we serve and growing the collaboration between community gardening organizations, we can maximize the many benefits gardens bring to our city and residents and ensure a diverse, community-based community gardening program that is meeting the needs of the 21st century gardener and family.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.



New York City Council
Melissa Mark-Viverito, Chair
New York City Parks and Recreation

Re: Parks and Recreation Hearing: The Present and Future of Community Gardens.

November 29, 2010

Dear Chair Melissa Mark-Viverito,

I am here to speak in favor of New York City's community gardens. Gardens are important and essential public spaces that provide food, recreation and culture to both New Yorkers and international visitors. Gardens are the life blood of our air and food for thought and nourishment.

In 1996 **Allied Productions, Inc.** a 30-year-old non-profit arts umbrella organization became founders/stewards of **Le Petit Versailles**, a New York City **Parks/GreenThumb** garden on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. We are a place for plants and people. Allied provides free public arts programming during our garden season May- November. The community we represent needs this resource as a place to organize and advocate for better neighborhoods and quality of life concerns such as the environment, LGBT youth and cultural exchanges that strengthen the diversity of our city as well as a place to relax, meditate and appreciate nature.

I request that you as Chair of the Parks And Recreation Committee urge your City Council colleagues to deny any efforts of new rules and regulations that facilitate the removal of gardens and to support all efforts to make permanent the current and future gardens of New York City.

Thank You.

Sincerely,

Peter Cramer

Allied Productions, Inc. / Le Petit Versailles

November 29th, 2010

New York City Council
250 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

Re: Parks Committee Hearing on The Present and Future of Community Gardens

Dear Council Members,

I want to begin by thanking the council for taking this afternoon to hear about the state of gardens. Now that the season has wound to a close, it is a good time to look at some of the work that we have done in gardens this year and to consider our goals for the future.

I work as the farm manager for East New York Farms!, a project working to improve food access and build a stronger community in East New York. We oversee two half-acre urban farms on Parks land under Greenthumb, we work with gardeners from another twelve gardens in the neighborhood, and we run two farmers markets selling affordable produce from Brooklyn and upstate New York.

Community gardens form an important part of the fabric of East New York. As a neighborhood that suffered significantly from arson and abandonment by landlords, an important tale of recovery is to be found in its gardens. East New York is a large neighborhood, but no matter where you find yourself it is difficult to ever be more than 4 or 5 blocks from the nearest community garden. The neighborhood has the highest concentration of the gardens in the city, and this legacy of renewal was one of the reasons we were able to start our network of gardens producing food for market.

I was happy to read the new FoodWorks policy recommendations and see gardens get the credit they deserve as urban food production sites. We are under no illusions that gardens will be able to feed every New Yorker, but we have tried to show how, working together, well-coordinated gardens can make a significant contribution to the households of many people beyond the membership of the garden.

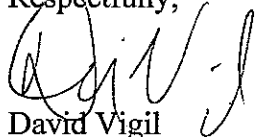
Gardens are not just a place for growing food, but a place for learning and for growing leaders. We work with 24 youth from East New York growing and selling produce, and many community gardens host classes and students. In one year at our youth farm, we hosted over 1200 visitors and volunteers. These visitors, from all walks of life and all parts of the city (and the world) are witnessing and participating in the improvement of our neighborhood and our environment. Gardens offer incredible opportunities to engage citizens, especially youth, in taking ownership of their communities.

Many have testified to the importance of gardens and all the benefits that they provide to the city

and its residents--the work that we do in East New York is also being done in the South Bronx, in Bed-Stuy, in Harlem, in Long Island City, and in many other neighborhoods. For our work to continue in earnest, we need to know that gardens will be a part of the city's future.

The new Parks Rules governing gardens hold some promising beginnings, but they are not enough. I hope that City Council will draft legislation that provides long-term protections to gardens so that urban farmers, gardeners, and garden educators can focus on more important work like building food security. I would like to see gardens as permanent fixtures in our city. In cases where a garden is threatened, future legislation should provide for improved transparency and communication between the gardens and the city so that we may find solutions that are amenable to all parties. Protecting, promoting, and supporting gardens is difficult work, but it's important work. I hope that City Council will have the boldness and vision to truly support gardens and leave a lasting legacy for the future.

Respectfully,



David Vigil

Farm Manager, East New York Farms!

United Community Centers
613 New Lots Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11207



united community centers

INCORPORATED

Ph (718) 649-7979 613 NEW LOTS AVE BROOKLYN, NY 11207
Fx (718) 649-7256 www.ucceny.org

November 29, 2010

New York City Council
250 Broadway
New York, NY 20007

Re: City Council Oversight Hearing on Community Gardens

Dear Council Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today in support of the vital resources that are our City's community gardens. I work with the East New York Farms! Project. We are a network of over a dozen community gardens and over 50 gardeners who work together to keep our community vibrant and healthy. Since we formed in 1998, we have grown over 100,000 pounds of fresh produce in gardens, and provided internships to over 140 young people. Community gardens are feeding East New York.

Gardens have played and still play an incredibly important role in our community. When no one else was willing to invest in East New York – when businesses were leaving, when banks would not issue loans in our community, when landlords were burning down their own buildings to collect the insurance money – GARDENERS came together to convert vacant, blighted lots into community spaces for rest, learning, gathering, greening, and growing. It is not enough for these gardeners, who poured their time and energy and hearts into cleaning up these lots, to know that they can keep gardening as long as the Mayor feels favorably toward gardens, or as long as no developers show an interest in their land. We want to know that these community resources will be preserved for the long term.

Gardens are a single solution that can address many of the challenges our community faces. Though we have a lack of green spaces over all, we have more community gardens than any other NYC neighborhood. In fact gardens provide some of the only green spaces in East New York. Though we face high rates of crime, gardens provide places for neighbors to gather and to feel secure. They bring a sense of life, safety, and pride back to areas that have been abandoned and feared. And though fresh food is nearly impossible to find in stores, and we suffer some of the highest rates of diabetes and heart disease in New York City, gardens provide

spaces for hundreds of East New Yorkers to grow their own fresh food, improve their health, and feed their neighbors. East New York gardeners grow an amazing array of crops that draw on their roots in the Caribbean, the South, West Africa, South Asia, and Central America.

While we have been impressed with the City's efforts to improve health and create a greener New York, we are disappointed by the failure to make the connections that gardeners have already made - that good health is not just about not drinking soda and avoiding trans fats, but heavily dependent on what you *do* eat. And what you *do* eat is heavily dependent on what is available. And the reality in many of our New York City communities, especially low-income communities and especially communities of color, is that healthy food isn't available. Not only do gardens provide the access to fresh food that is so lacking, they create food access in the greenest and most empowering way possible, by allowing us to grow our own food right here. The ability to do so is so critical that it needs to be firmly guaranteed.

In her Food Works Plan, Council Speaker Christine Quinn cites the intention for City Council to "purse policies to achieve long-term garden conservation, along with the addition of new gardens." We urge the City Council to quickly and thoroughly fulfill this commitment, with the recognition that the current Parks Department rules are subject to change with the next administration, and do not provide the long-term protections that are needed.

We strongly urge Council Members to review the policies adopted by other cities and introduce legislation that will work in the context of our dynamic city while at the same time ensuring that our gardens - and therefore our precious open space and access to healthy food - are not under constant threat of development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarita Daftary", with a long, sweeping underline.

Sarita Daftary
East New York Farms! Project Director

Testimony of The New York Botanical Garden

at the

The New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation

hearing regarding a proposed

Local Law in relation to the naming of 67 thoroughfares and public places

Pursuant to reverting back to original street name of "Southern
Boulevard" and honorary/secondary street naming of "Dr. Theodore
Kazimiroff Way"

November 24, 2010

1:00pm

Good afternoon, my name is Carrie Laney, Vice President for Government & Community Relations at The New York Botanical Garden. First, I would like to thank Chairwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito, as well as the other distinguished Committee Members, for giving the Garden the opportunity to testify today regarding Intro. 417, sponsored by Council Member Oliver Koppell, which proposes to revert the street name "Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff Boulevard", from East Fordham Road to Mosholu Parkway in the Bronx, to its original designation of "Southern Boulevard" and make "Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff Way" a secondary/honorary street name as is the current practice to pay homage to distinguished members of the community.

Our reasons for supporting this secondary street naming are varied. In the forefront is our concern for the safety of our visitors, vendors, employees and neighbors. The U.S. Postal Service, 911 dispatchers, mapping tools and global positioning systems (GPS) do not uniformly recognize "Southern Boulevard" or, as the physical signs designate an overlapping section of road, as "Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff Boulevard." This current duplicity has resulted in difficulty for emergency responders such as police and firefighters to promptly locate buildings where assistance is needed. Prolonged response times present a serious concern for us and our neighbors such as the Rose Hill Apartments, a 119 unit, nine-story building, for low income senior citizens and younger disabled persons, located across from the Garden and just south of Bedford Park Boulevard.

Additionally, as the use of online mapping and GPS increases, the delivery of goods, mail, and the ability for visitors to locate our institution is hindered. For example, when potential visitors conduct a search with the aid of "Google Maps," they find many different addresses for the Garden. They include: 2694 Southern Boulevard;

200th Street and Kazimiroff Boulevard; Bronx River Parkway and Fordham Road; and 2900 Southern Boulevard. For those systems that do recognize Kazimiroff Blvd, you must type it in as "Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff Blvd." It is often the case that the street name you are familiar with or found online, is not the exact same address recognized by the particular GPS or online mapping system you chose to utilize. The Garden's main operator receives phone calls on a daily basis from frustrated potential patrons, many who never end up finding or visiting the Garden, or then patronizing Arthur Avenue or other local businesses in the area.

The New York Botanical Garden recognizes the valuable contributions that Dr. Kazimiroff has made to the Bronx and the City of New York. It is, and always has been, our intention to honor his legacy and pay homage to his valuable work while resolving any directional challenges that are currently being experienced.

Therefore, we fully support returning the street name to "Southern Boulevard", and making "Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff" the secondary/honorary street name, as this will maintain the public honor originally intended and will eliminate the safety, post office delivery, and transportation issues that are currently a problem for us and our neighbors, including Fordham University and Rose Hill Apartments.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify today.

Contact Information:

Carrie Laney
Vice President for Government and Community Relations
The New York Botanical Garden
(718) 817-8962
claney@nybg.org
www.nybg.org

November 29, 2010

Testimony of - Ellen Belcher 285 Fort Washington Ave # 24 New York City 10032

To: City Council Parks and Recreation Committee

Oversight Hearing - The Present and Future of Community Gardens.

My name is Ellen Belcher and I am a gardener and a garden activist. I am a member of the Morris-Jumel Community Garden on West 162nd street in Washington Heights. We are registered with green thumb and for the past 25 years or so, community members have been gardening in that same spot. I am also a member of the Children's Magical Garden de Carmen Rubio, on Stanton and Norfolk on the lower east side. This garden and the children that play there have also grown on the same spot for over 25 years. This garden sits on HPD land and has been designated as subject to development. I am also a member of the New York City Community Garden Coalition.

The most beautiful thing about all the 300+ gardens in New York City is that they belong to the community, to the children and elders who live nearby, who want a place to play, to grow, to meet their neighbors and to share food and beauty. In the last few years, the world has moved toward local organically grown food (which is something you can find in most of the City's gardens) and everyone wants to get involved. For example, at this moment, the Morris Jumel Garden has 2 year waiting list - while next door to our garden, an empty lot, owned by private land speculators, has sat fallow for many years.

We need a plan to expand the number of community gardens and urban farms. Some ideas I have heard is offering tax breaks to private land holders, or even requiring land owners of empty lots to make them available to community gardeners. There are also good ideas that have been suggested for swaps of private and public land for places that it makes more sense to cultivate than build upon. There are examples of gardening and farming along highway and railroad easements, and more community gardens in existing parks. The city definitely needs to develop innovative policies and procedures to expand the City's community gardens and urban farms. I suggest a start be the many vacant lots adjacent to existing gardens - which from our side of the fence seem like speculation awaiting another Giuliani-style garden land give away. As a matter of fact, all existing vacant lots in the City should be considered first for community gardens and urban farms.

While the new Parks *Rules for Community Gardens* are pretty good at maintaining the status quo of Community Gardens under Parks jurisdiction (and I look forward to legislation that will make them permanent), they do nothing for the many gardens under the jurisdiction of HPD, DOT, NYCHA and other agencies. It seems most egregious that HPD has issued their own rules for the few community gardens growing under their jurisdiction on land they have not been able to give away to developers for a decade or more. The HPD *Rules for Community Gardens* are all about processes for closing down gardens, which I suppose includes the Children's Magical Garden de Carmen Rubio. It's high time to put this garden's land under Parks and get HPD out of the business of administering gardens, which as documented by these rules, they are definitely not good at.

We have heard that legislation to give community gardens permanent protections and to create more gardens is in the works and I hope our testimony here today will contribute to the final results. I encourage those working on the legislation to recognize the many present and future gardens will continue to grow onto land not administered by Parks and to be sure that legislation will extend support and protections to all community gardens, not just those under DPR.

Gardens need more than the language and the protections in the agreement – which these proposed rules do not provide. Community gardens should be celebrated and supported in legislation, not only should they be made permanent, they should have permanent fences, and gates, water hookups and electricity. It should be illegal for private property owners to continue to speculate on land directly adjacent to a community garden without allowing its cultivation. Gardens should no longer be mapped on city maps as vacant land and should be mapped as community gardens.



Press Release:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Benjamin Shepard 917.586.7952; Susan Howard 917.207.6738; press@times-up.org

**Times Up! Statement for Oversight Hearing on Community Gardens
Any plans for a green NYC, must include passing a law that preserves, supports and
creates more community gardens.**

New York, NY (November 29, 2010) –

The mobilization for the community gardens this summer shows there is overwhelming support for expanded green space in the city. And when needed, people will organize. While we are proud that the city responded to the work of activists citywide to preserve the gardens, we need a law. Until there is a law passed and gardens are mapped as parkland, garden supporters will remain suspect of the city's intentions. For example, we noted that in her Food Works speech last week, speaker Quinn spoke of several pieces of pending "green" legislation - the passage of which she is guaranteeing. Yet when she talked about the community gardens - it was clear that there is NO legislation pending before the City Council that would make the gardens permanent - just talk about support - but no real legislative action.

As of today, we are losing lots and lots of gardens. We've lost 350 since 1999 and a lot more than that over the decades. In 1980, the city had 1400 gardens. Today, there are only 300 community gardens preserved in parks. The few remaining under other agencies are in imminent danger of being bulldozed. Additionally the Parks Department has been in the practice of "swapping" these preserved gardens, moving gardens out of parks to be bulldozed for housing. This practice must stop. Many of these swapped gardens are still green spaces and must be preserved. We oppose the loss of these spaces. And Astro Turf and cement pocket parks don't count (and in fact do more harm than good).

We are concerned about the lack of commitment to support, preserve, or create new green spaces. The social rate of return for community gardens in terms of quality life, property values, increased civic participation, food security, green space, global warming should help make preserving and creating more gardens a priority for the city. Any discussion of PlanNYC should include ways to preserve and create more community gardens to ensure green spaces as part of the sustainable future of NYC.

And finally, gardens are not standing in the way of housing. Garden activists support the need for both more gardens and affordable housing. The city could easily reach its benchmarks for truly affordable housing if all properties that went into tax arrears and were taken over by the city, were preserved as low income housing. The City could also review all such properties to indentify land to create community gardens. In sum, ensure gardens are here for our children. Gardens are a crucial part of the solution for our global city's sustainable future.

To: NYC City Council

From: Magali Regis
601 East 11 Street 3B
New York NY 10009
fleurdelys@mindspring.com

City Council Hearing on Community Gardens
Testimony - 29 November 2010
250 Broadway New York NY

I have been a member of Creative Little Garden located at 530 East 6 Street, East Village New York City for the past 15 years. Our garden is thriving and is an invaluable asset in our community. I invite you every City Council member to stop by and visit. We are in fact more than a garden; we are a neighborhood park and local residents actively use it everyday to admire nature at work, rest, read, eat their lunch, mingle with friends, teach their kids about plants, listen to the many birds that call it home, play music, gather with their family and friends, etc. (During three seasons, we have extensive daily open hours from 11am to sunset). We are an oasis of green in the middle of this concrete city. Feel free to visit our website at www.creativelittlegarden.org which will tell you a bit more about the garden and what it has to offer. Our garden is not used just by neighborhood residents; since we are listed in many international guide books about New York, we also have many visitors from Europe and elsewhere in the world.

Community gardens in New York City offer invaluable benefits to the city and its residents. The following is a list of some of those benefits and why they should become permanently protected.

Community Organizing

- Community gardens increase a sense of community ownership and stewardship.
- Community gardens foster the development of a community identity and spirit.
- Community gardens bring people together from a variety of backgrounds (age, race, culture, social class).
- Community gardens build community leaders.
- Community gardens offer a focal point for community organizing, and can lead to community-based efforts to deal with other social concerns.

Crime Prevention

- Community gardens provide opportunities to meet neighbors.
- Community gardens increase eyes on the street.
- Community gardening is recognized by the many police departments as an effective community crime prevention strategy.

Cultural Opportunities

- Community gardens offer unique opportunities for new immigrants (who tend to be concentrated in low-income urban communities) to:
 - Produce traditional crops otherwise unavailable locally,
 - Take advantage of the experience of elders to produce a significant amount of food for the household,
 - Provide inter-generational exposure to cultural traditions,
 - Offer a cultural exchange with other gardeners,
 - Learn about block clubs, neighborhood groups, and other community information.
- Community gardens offer neighborhoods an access point to non-English speaking communities.
- Community gardens allow people from diverse backgrounds to work side-by-side on common goals without speaking the same language.

Youth

Community gardens offer unique opportunities to teach youth about:

- Where food comes from
- Practical math skills

- Basic business principles
- The importance of community and stewardship
- Issues of environmental sustainability
- Job and life skills
- Community gardening is a healthy, inexpensive activity for youth that can bring them closer to nature, and allow them to interact with each other in a socially meaningful and physically productive way.

Food Production

- Many community gardeners, especially those from immigrant communities, take advantage of food production in community gardens to provide a significant source of food and/or income.
- Community gardens allow families and individuals without land of their own the opportunity to produce food.
- Community gardens provide access to nutritionally rich foods that may otherwise be unavailable to low-income families and individuals.
- Urban agriculture is 3-5 times more productive per acre than traditional large-scale farming!
- Community gardens donate thousands of pounds of fresh produce to food pantries and involve people in processes that provide food security and alleviate hunger.

Health

- Studies have shown that community gardeners and their children eat healthier diets than do non-gardening families.
- Eating locally produced food reduces asthma rates, because children are able to consume manageable amounts of local pollen and develop immunities.
- Exposure to green space reduces stress and increases a sense of wellness and belonging.
- Increasing the consumption of fresh local produce is one of the best ways to address childhood lead poisoning.
- The benefits of Horticulture Therapy can be and are used to great advantage in community gardens.

Green Space

- Community gardens add beauty to the community and heighten people's awareness and appreciation for living things.
- Community gardens filter rainwater, helping to keep lakes, rivers, and groundwater clean.
- Community gardens restore oxygen to the air and help to reduce air pollution.
- Community gardens recycle huge volumes of tree trimmings, leaves, grass clippings, and other organic wastes back into the soil.
- Community gardens provide a place to retreat from the noise and commotion of urban environments.
- Community gardens provide much needed green space in lower-income neighborhoods which typically have access to less green space than do other parts of the community.
- Development and maintenance of garden space is less expensive than that of parkland.
- Scientific studies show that crime decreases in neighborhoods as the amount of green space increases.
- Community gardens have been shown to actually increase property values in the immediate vicinity where they are located.

The Parks Department Rule changes; on community gardens represent a measured improvement to the eight years years of benign neglect on the issue of making permanent citizen managed greening efforts.

What remains, is for the Council to insure that a legal foundation for urban gardening and urban farming is embedded into the tapestry of laws and regulations covering Land Use. The passage of Urban Farming legislation in Seattle clearly points out what a municipal legislature can do.

If you leave this matter to the whims of a future Administration: you will have failed to be a check and a balance on Executive Discretion.

Whether you believe; your friend or your foe will occupy the throne next: it is your challenge to help set the legal parameters of Executive expression with respect to the permanence of community gardening in this City.

While some of this is not be the direct province of this committee; you can have the matter researched: with Seattle's recent Urban Farming legislation as a guidepost, and express an advisory opinion to the entire Council. If you need an offset for the cost; I would suggest that you fund hard research over advocacy. You are true friends of the citizen gardening effort: when you do all you can do, to help us be all we can be.

As to your Oversight of the Parks Department's Administration of Community Gardens, I have several additional concerns. These include:

1. The need to address the retrenchment of the Sanitation Department on composting. Why are we buying compost from New Jersey; when the Department and its network of gardens could produce more cheaper? Copious compost is the best agent for amending our City soils. With enough compost we could farm directly on concrete; much more on our post- demolition lots.
2. There is an opportunity to use community gardens to promote Green technologies for increased local food production. Particularly, there are Solar, biofuel production, and water re-use options that should be implemented to make our gardens more sustainable for the future.
3. Also the use of City-owned Watershed lands for nursery production should be studied. Local Nurseries and Farms are landlocked; give them access to land in return for a cornucopia of Plant starts each season. Let our gardeners and the Parks Department, guided by our Botanical gardens and the State's Extension Service harvest hardy field grown starts each year to grow out in local gardens. New York City can be more self-reliant in supporting its volunteer labor force of for food producers.

In order for the Parks Department to optimize community gardening there needs to be collaborations with other City entities. Your committee can be the spur to make it happen.

Respectfully submitted:

Steven R. Kidd 144 west 117th Street

New York, New York 10026

Testimony from Rose Hill Apartments

at the

The New York City Council
Committee on Parks and Recreation

regarding a proposed

Local Law in relation to the naming of 67 thoroughfares and
public places

Pursuant to reverting back to original street name of "Southern Boulevard" and
honorary/secondary street naming of "Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff Way"

November 29, 2010
1:00pm

Good afternoon, my name is Annelen Madigan, I am here to represent the residents of Rose Hill Apartments. I have been the Director of Social Services for Rose Hill Housing Management Corporation since 1997. I appreciate the opportunity to testify and thank the Chairwoman and Committee Members for the opportunity for our residents and staff to be heard on this matter.

Rose Hill Apartments is a 119 unit, nine-story building, for low income senior citizens and younger disabled persons. We are located across the street from Botanical Gardens, just south of Bedford Park Boulevard. At present we have 136 residents, and there are many more in staff, home care and health care workers, visitors and relatives who travel here each day.

Here are some of the varied problems with our address. Our building was in planning and construction just about the time the naming of street was changed. Our postal address, however has remained 2855 Southern Blvd. There are constant problems with this duality. First of all, police and fire responders have a difficult time finding our building. Since we work with an older and often more frail population, this is a big problem. Many of our residents also use ambulette services and Access-A-Ride, and have received complaints from their drivers

about finding our building. Second, persons trying to visit or deliver goods cannot find us. There is confusion with many GPS systems. Recently, we had considerable trouble getting a new computer component, as FedEx could not find the building. We get many calls from delivery truck drivers and other people who have business to do in the building, who are lost. People often get confused because the Southern Blvd. signs end at Fordham Road.

In short we would be most pleased if the Southern Blvd. name was restored and support any efforts to make this happen. In support of this we had petitions signed last year and again this past weekend when we became aware of this hearing.

We mean no disrespect to the memory of Dr. Kazimiroff, who loved the Bronx and whose work on the history of the borough is most valued, or to his family. The dual name change solution would be an excellent compromise as opposed to a complete name change, and would also relieve any further confusion the complete name change may possibly effect.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak for the residents of Rose Hill Apartments.

Annelen C. Madigan, LMSW
Director of Social Services
Rosehill Housing Management Corp.
2855 Southern Blvd.
Bronx, NY 10458
P) 718.584.5101
F) 718.584.1423

Testimony of The New York Botanical Garden

at the

The New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation

hearing regarding a proposed

Local Law in relation to the naming of 67 thoroughfares and
public places

Pursuant to reverting back to original street name of "Southern
Boulevard" and honorary/secondary street naming of "Dr. Theodore
Kazimiroff Way"

November 24, 2010

1:00pm

Good afternoon, my name is Carrie Laney, Vice President for Government & Community Relations at The New York Botanical Garden. First, I would like to thank Chairwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito, as well as the other distinguished Committee Members, for giving the Garden the opportunity to testify today regarding Intro. 417, sponsored by Council Member Oliver Koppell, which proposes to revert the street name "Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff Boulevard", from East Fordham Road to Mosholu Parkway in the Bronx, to its original designation of "Southern Boulevard" and make "Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff Way" a secondary/honorary street name as is the current practice to pay homage to distinguished members of the community.

Our reasons for supporting this secondary street naming are varied. In the forefront is our concern for the safety of our visitors, vendors, employees and neighbors. The U.S. Postal Service, 911 dispatchers, mapping tools and global positioning systems (GPS) do not uniformly recognize "Southern Boulevard" or, as the physical signs designate an overlapping section of road, as "Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff Boulevard." This current duplicity has resulted in difficulty for emergency responders such as police and firefighters to promptly locate buildings where assistance is needed. Prolonged response times present a serious concern for us and our neighbors such as the Rose Hill Apartments, a 119 unit, nine-story building, for low income senior citizens and younger disabled persons, located across from the Garden and just south of Bedford Park Boulevard.

Additionally, as the use of online mapping and GPS increases, the delivery of goods, mail, and the ability for visitors to locate our institution is hindered. For example, when potential visitors conduct a search with the aid of "Google Maps," they find many different addresses for the Garden. They include: 2694 Southern Boulevard;

200th Street and Kazimiroff Boulevard; Bronx River Parkway and Fordham Road; and 2900 Southern Boulevard. For those systems that do recognize Kazimiroff Blvd, you must type it in as “Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff Blvd.” It is often the case that the street name you are familiar with or found online, is not the exact same address recognized by the particular GPS or online mapping system you chose to utilize. The Garden’s main operator receives phone calls on a daily basis from frustrated potential patrons, many who never end up finding or visiting the Garden, or then patronizing Arthur Avenue or other local businesses in the area.

The New York Botanical Garden recognizes the valuable contributions that Dr. Kazimiroff has made to the Bronx and the City of New York. It is, and always has been, our intention to honor his legacy and pay homage to his valuable work while resolving any directional challenges that are currently being experienced.

Therefore, we fully support returning the street name to “Southern Boulevard”, and making “Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff” the secondary/honorary street name, as this will maintain the public honor originally intended and will eliminate the safety, post office delivery, and transportation issues that are currently a problem for us and our neighbors, including Fordham University and Rose Hill Apartments.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify today.

Contact Information:

Carrie Laney
Vice President for Government and Community Relations
The New York Botanical Garden
(718) 817-8962
claney@nybg.org
www.nybg.org



FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT
AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Testimony of Fordham University

at the

The New York City Council

Committee on Parks and Recreation

regarding a proposed

Local Law in relation to the naming of 67 thoroughfares
and

public places

Pursuant to reverting back to original street name of
“Southern Boulevard” and honorary/secondary street
naming of “Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff Way”

29 November, 2010
1:00pm

Good afternoon, my name is Joe Muriana, and I am Associate Vice President for Government & Urban Affairs at Fordham University. First, I would like to thank Chairwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito, as well as the other Committee Members, for giving Fordham the opportunity to offer testimony today regarding the proposal to revert the street name “Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff Boulevard”, from the intersection of East Fordham Road to the Mosholu Parkway entrance to the Bronx River Parkway in the Bronx, to its original designation of “Southern Boulevard”, while simultaneously making “Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff Way” a secondary street name in accord with the current practice to pay homage to distinguished past departed members of the community. Dr. Kazimiroff was most assuredly a distinguished Bronx resident and a civic leader across the entire Borough of the Bronx, as a co-founder of the Bronx County Historical Society and a most notable 20th century Bronx voice in and for the community.

Fordham thus supports the “Dual Name” compromise that was suggested and proposed by Bronx Community Board #7, and kindly acceded to by the Kazimiroff family. The reasons for our supporting this secondary street naming are diverse and wide-ranging. Primary among them is our concern about the confusion initially generated by the fact that the United States Postal Service has for the better part of the past three decades since its original change, refused to officially recognize that street name change and the existing Kazimiroff designation. More recently, many mapping tools and global positions systems (GPS) only recognize the original “Southern Boulevard” designation, even though physical signs designate the same section of road as “Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff Blvd.”. This current duplicity has over the years resulted in confusion and resultant difficulty for emergency responders such as police and firefighters to promptly identify locations where assistance is needed, especially with respect to the Seniors Citizens living at 2855 Southern/Kazimiroff Blvd. known as the Rose Hill Apartments, a 119 unit, nine-story building, for low income senior citizens and younger disabled persons sponsored by Fordham University and located across from the Botanical Garden and just south of Bedford Park Boulevard. These people must use Southern Blvd as their mailing address, but then must remember to use Kazimiroff when calling for police and EMS/Fire response. A tough situation for elderly residents.

Additionally, as the use of GPS has increased, the delivery of goods, mail, and the ability for visitors and deliveries to locate Fordham and others has been increasingly hindered. For example when potential visitors and delivery drivers conduct a search with the aid of “Google Maps,” they find over a half a half-dozen separate addresses that incorrectly identify the street and Fordham University’s location, which has its main vehicle entrance on Kazimiroff/Southern. The NYBG has struggled with similar problems. These various addresses can give the prospective delivery person or visitor the general vicinity, but none of them are very clear with respect to the location of our institution, and prospective delivery drivers end up confused, and frequently lost. Many end up turning around and leaving the Bronx with frustration without making their deliveries. It is this that we also seek to remedy.

Fordham University recognizes the valuable contributions that Dr. Kazimiroff has made to the Bronx and the City of New York. It is always has been our intention to honor his legacy and pay homage to his valuable work while resolving any directional and locational challenges that continue to be experienced as a result of the name confusion.

Therefore, we fully support returning the legal street name to “Southern Boulevard”, and making “Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff Way” the secondary street name, as this will maintain the public honor originally intended and will eliminate the health and safety, post office delivery, and transportation issues that are currently a problem for us and our neighbors, including the New York Botanical Garden and Rose Hill Apartments.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify today.

Contact Information:

Joe Muriana
Vice President for Government and Community Relations
The New York Botanical Garden
(718) 817-3020
muriana@fordham.ed

Petition to restore the name of Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff Blvd. to Southern Boulevard.

We the undersigned are requesting that the name of our street be restored to Southern Boulevard.

Our reasons include:

The building is difficult to find.

We have problems with deliveries and emergency vehicles.

Our postal address is 2855 Southern Blvd.

We are weary of visitors getting lost, the confusion of two addresses, and the hazard of being difficult to find, especially by the police and fire department.

Name	Apt. # or other address	date
Nayda C. Alijandro	Mgrmt Office	6/26/09
Mellicia Mc Bell	75	7-1-09
Lillian Fleckofsky	8M	7/1/09
Mildred Thompson	4E	7/1/09
Johnny Choo	6K	7-1-09
Aracelis Madryu	office	7-1-09
Xan wol choi	5P	7/1-09
Pauline Becke	4B	7-1-09
Quaid Zamora	9B	7-01-09
Floresca Adams	6B	7-1-09
Frank P. Tramonico	8N	7-1-09
Maria Martinez		
Etty's Triguera	2E	
Sofronia Triguera	2E	
Robert Speck	2C	
Quella Speck	2C	
Josephine Oldak	5B	7/1/09
Sahas Badillo	8C	7-1-09

Petition to restore the name of Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff Blvd. to Southern Boulevard.

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Name	Apt. # or other address	date
Salvador Brown	2-B	7-1-09
Mitchelle Santop	4 C	
Glanna Keeter	2751 GRAND CONCOURSE 2, BX, NY 10468	7/2/09
Xenia Leraida	2855 Southern Blvd NY 10458	7/2/09
Rita	2855 Southern Blvd Bx, NY 10458	7/2/09
Carmel Henon	2855 Southern Blvd Bx, NY 10458	7/2/09
Manuel Lopez	2855 SOUTHERN BLVD BX, 10458	7/2/09
JANUAR VLAZ	2855 SOUTHERN BLVD	7-2-09
Abisid Yon	2855 Southern Blvd APT-6A	07/06/09
Jorge Fuster	2855 Southern Blvd.	7/06/09
Leonar R. Fuster		
Rodolfo Gonzalez	2855 Southern Blvd	7/06/09
Katherine Zapata	2855 Southern Blvd	7/06/09
BLANCA Guzman	2855 Southern Blvd.	7/06/09
Miguel Almeyda	1B	7/6/09
DR. Roberts.	FAMILY	7/6/09
Elena Hernandez		7/4/09
Dolores Santiago	2855 SOUTHERN BLVD	APNL
Luis Morin	2853 Southern Blvd	
Francis Adams	2855 Southern Blvd 6B	7/7/09
Lidia E. Aponte	2855 Southern Blvd 5H	7/8/09

232 east 11th street new york, ny 10003

greenguerillas

**Testimony to
NYC Council Committee on Parks & Recreation**

By Steven Frillmann, Executive Director

Date: November 29, 2010

Re: Oversight - The Present and Future of Community Gardens

Green Guerillas has been helping community gardeners cultivate community for the last 37 growing seasons -- their harvests have changed the face of neighborhoods.

Community gardeners deserve support from all of us. New York City's community gardens can and should be preserved as important green spaces, urban farms, and outdoor community centers.

The current City administration's support of community gardening should be recognized and commended.

But none of us can predict how supportive future administrations will be.

The recently published City rules have made community gardeners feel uncertain about the future of their community gardens.

We urge the NYC Council to work with community gardeners to enact any and all policies, procedures, or legislation, above and beyond the City rules, that can firmly preserve New York City's community gardens and protect them from development for years to come.

Green Guerillas would welcome the opportunity to be part of these discussions and to help community gardeners cultivate even more community over the next 37 growing seasons.

Thank you for your time.

phone: 212.594.2155
fax: 800.886.4358
email: info@nycgreen.org

brooklyn office:
677 lafayette avenue
(marcy & tompkins)
bedford-stuyvesant

**Testimony of Daniel Bowman Simon November 29, 2010
New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
Oversight Hearing: The Present and Future of Community Gardens**

Community gardens are essential to the vibrancy of New York City for numerous reasons. The unique educational opportunities that gardens provide for our youth are just some of those benefits. A look at the rise and fall of school gardens in New York City's past can help guide us into the future.

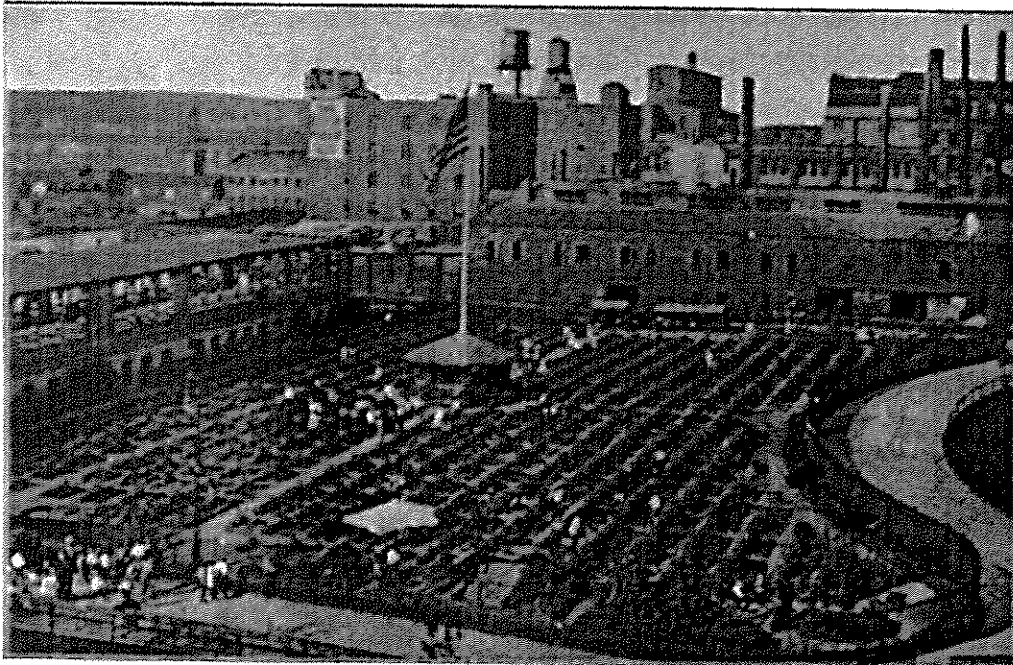


Photo by the Author

Children's School Farm, DeWitt Clinton Park, 54th St. and 12th Ave., New York City. 1909

In 1902, Fannie Griscom Parsons started the Children's School Farm in DeWitt Clinton Park on 54th Street and 12th Avenue in Manhattan. She wrote that "I did not start a garden simply to grow a few vegetables and flowers. The garden was used as a means to show how willing and anxious children are to work, and to teach them in their work some necessary civic virtues; private care of public property, economy, honesty, application, concentration, self government, civic pride, justice, the dignity of labor, and the love of nature by opening to their minds the little we know of her mysteries, more wonderful than any fairy tale."



Photo by Brown Bros.

Getting acquainted with aphids. Mrs. Henry Parsons and her little "farmers"

80 SCHOOL FARMS NOW RUNNING HERE

Movement Which Started in De
Witt Clinton Park, Has
Spread Rapidly.

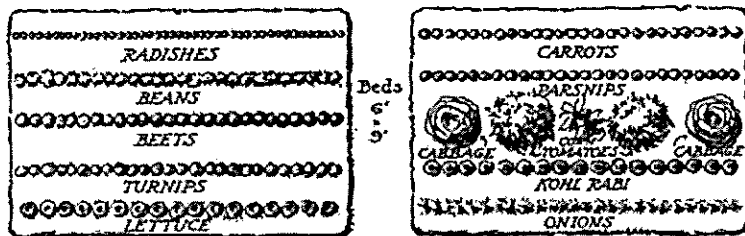
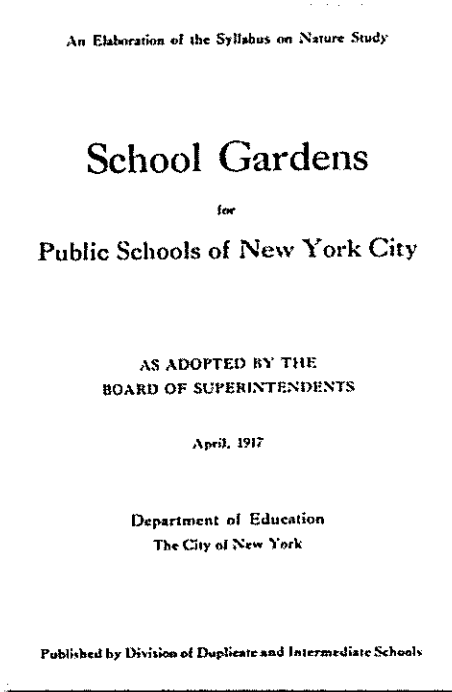
MRS. PARSONS INVENTOR

With the Aid of the Park Department
She and Her Associates Proved
the Value of the Plan.

Mrs. Parsons became the Director of the NYC Parks Department Children's School Farms Bureau, and by 1908, the New York Times reported "80 School Farms Now Running Here, Movement Which Started in De Witt Clinton Park has Spread Rapidly." As Laura Lawson writes in her book *City Bountiful: A Century of Community Gardening in America*, "Manhattan principal Margaret

Knox wrote that 'When the signs of Spring asked for by the teacher...brings only the answer 'yes, ma'am, I know when spring is here because the saloons put on their swinging doors,' is it not worth while to lead such a child to notice other signs of spring? To me this is what [a] school garden means in a crowded city district.'"

In 1917, the New York City Department of Education published *School Gardens for Public Schools of New York City* to facilitate more school gardens, because "Our efforts to lay out public parks and private gardens have proved inadequate to reach vast numbers of children who grow up in an environment from which the charm and beauty of nature are absolutely barred."



PLAN OF INDIVIDUAL GARDEN

The one on the left shows first planting. As each row matures it is replaced by row as shown in the right hand garden, so that the first planting and second planting of the same garden are shown.

65 ACRES HERE KEPT AS SCHOOL GARDENS

Association Director Reports
Elementary Pupils in City
Cultivate 302 Plots.

BIG GAIN IN RECENT YEARS

By 1925, 99 New York City public elementary schools reported school gardens. In 1930, 244 gardens were reported, and that number jumped 24% to 302 in 1931, when the New York Times reported 65 Acres of School Gardens under cultivation.

But over time, most of these acres of gardens vanished, as the general pressures of a growing population and teacher parking lots took priority over the myriad benefits that these gardens offered their respective communities. Even the Children's School Farm in DeWitt Clinton Park disappeared, to make way for what is now known as the West Side Highway. Perhaps the school garden advocates who had worked so hard to secure these gardens never expected that they would disappear, or were simply not around to fight for their survival.

Fast forward to the 21st Century, an era where Richard Louv starts off his book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* with a quote from a San Diego 4th Grader: "I like to play indoors better 'cause that's where all the electrical outlets are."



In the past few of years, school gardens have seen a significant resurgence in popularity, starting in communities across America and right at The White House. First Lady Michelle Obama has repeatedly attributed her experience gardening with DC public school students as the impetus for her *Let's Move!* Initiative to end childhood obesity and raise a healthier generation of kids in America and worldwide.



Right here in New York City, on May 13th of this year, in the school garden of Brooklyn PS29, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, joined by Rachael Ray, explained that "School gardens encourage more young New Yorkers to eat healthier diets and help them understand where their food comes from." NYC City Council Speaker Christine Quinn told New Yorkers that "Teaching children about healthy eating and where our food comes from is just as valuable as teaching them how to read and write." NYC

School Chancellor Joel Klein said that "Research shows that school gardens are excellent learning environments, and students exposed to them do better on science exams."

The resurgence of interest in school gardens means that many, many more of the City's 1.1 million public school students, their 80,000 teachers, and of course the PTAs, will want to incorporate gardening into their education and curriculum. Not every school is as fortunate as PS29 to have space available for cultivation. Therefore, we will likely need to call on the talented and uniquely suited community gardeners of the City to do their part and create partnerships with nearby schools to provide such educational opportunities.

Some might ask if we can afford to ensure permanency of our community gardens for our children and for future generations. But really, the question we need to be asking is "Can we afford not to?"

**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: Steven Kidd

Address: 144 W 117 ST

I represent: CMT Steering Committee

Address: 143-147 St. Nicholas Ave

**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: MAGALI REGIS

Address: 601 E. 11 ST 3B

I represent: Creative Little Garden NY

Address: 530 E 6 ST

**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: Aresh Javadi

Address: 79 Clinton St #17

I represent: NYCCGC

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: 11-29-10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ERIC THOMANN

Address: _____

I represent: NYCCGC

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: Faya Worley

Address: 216 W. 172nd St

I represent: Project Harmony/NYCCGC

Address: 216 W. 172nd St

**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: LARRY SCOTT BLACKMON

Address: The Arsenal, Central Park

I represent: 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: Deborah Greig on behalf of Santa Daffery

Address: 613 New Lots Ave

I represent: East NY Farms

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: David Vigil

Address: 613 New Lots Ave

I represent: East NY Farms

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: 11/29/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Daniel Bowman Simon

Address: _____

I represent: _____

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: 11/29/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: AMY GAVARIS

Address: 254 W 31st St

I represent: NY RESTORATION PROJECT

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: Ellen Belcher

Address: 285 Fort Washington Ave #24 NYC 10032

I represent: Morris James Comm Garden / Children's Magical Garden

Address: 457 W 162nd 10032 / Norfolk + Stanton 1002

**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: 11-29-10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JOSEPH P. MURIANA

Address: 5601 Johnson Avenue Bronx NY 10463

I represent: FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

Address: 441 East Fordham Road 10458
Bronx

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: 11-29-10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ~~ANDREW~~ ADIGAN

Address: 3601 JOHNSON AVE, BX, NY 10463

I represent: ROSE HILL APARTMENTS

Address: 2855 SOUTHERN BLVD, BX 10458
RE: KAZIMIROFF BLVD NAME CHANGE

**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: Dr. Ben Shepard

Address: _____

I represent: Times Up New York

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. ^{street} ~~_____~~ ^{renaming} Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 11-29-10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jacqueline Morrison

Address: 220 W-71 St

I represent: PS-84 Sidney Morrison Way

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: Peter Crum

Address: 245 E. 2nd St. #6
NY, NY 10009

I represent: LE PETIT VERSAILLES GARDEN

Address: 346 East Houston St. NY NY 10009

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: 29th of Nov 2010

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Daniel Bowman Simon

Address: NYC

I represent: _____

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: 11-29-10

Name: Steven Trillmarin (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: Green Guerrillas

Address: 232 E. 11th St, NY NY 10003

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. 417 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/29/10

Name: Carrielaney (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: The New York Botanical Garden

Address: Brnx, NY 10458

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