

The Parks Committee met first on November 19, 2008 to discuss a proposal by the School Construction Authority and Saratoga Associates architects for the restoration and renovation of the parkland across from Telecommunications High School that has been the site of temporary classrooms for ten years. Representatives from Janele Hyer Spencer's and Vincent Gentiles' offices, the community, the School Construction Authority, the Parks Department, and Telecommunications High School were present.

Julius Spiegel, Brooklyn Parks Commissioner, stated that although Parks favors the proposal that includes two volleyball courts, he wants input from the community and the board. Saratoga Associates presented a design that would use the concrete foundation from the temporary classrooms as a basis for the volleyball courts and leave the ten-foot cyclone fence that is presently standing around the area. The fence could be made more visually attractive by painting it black. There would be no lights on the court to discourage night time playing and gates could be locked during the day if desired. The plan would include a pathway that could be used as a jogging and walking track with exercise equipment along the way, a forty-foot circular decorative pavement with a Nordic theme of a compass in the center, and repair of steel bar fencing. SCA agreed to add benches and lighting along the pathway.

Concerns were expressed about the exercise equipment being too close to the highway, noise from the volleyball court, the place becoming a hangout, and the loss of passive recreational space. School Construction Authority reminded the group that this is the last year in the five-year capital program and that decisions must be made very soon. School Construction denied the requests by the committee that alternative sites be considered for the volleyball courts.

The committee suggested that the architects return to a meeting on December 3, 2008 with three additional option themes for the lot. The themes were: 1) remove chain link fence and provide additional exercise fitness equipment, 2) replace chain link fence with low steel bar fence and create a passive seating area with garden, and 3) remove all temporary classroom features and restore area to sloped lawn and tree area that existed previously. The second option was voted down because of concerns that a sitting area would encourage hanging out. It was agreed that the Community Board would be presented with final design options on December 15, 2008.

The committee met on December 3, 2008 and viewed all of the designs presented. The architects had turned the exercise equipment along the pathway to the inner side to make the distance between the equipment and the highway greater. The community groups including the representatives from the school are against the volleyball court and wish to see the property restored not renovated. They think the exercise equipment and running path are acceptable.

In essence four plans were presented to the committee. The first is the plan for two volleyball courts at the site with a ten-foot cyclone fence, the transplanting of two ornamental trees, passive walking and fitness area with decorative 40-foot circular pavement, benches and lighting along the path. The committee agreed in quorum that the entire board should vote on the proposal for the volleyball court. If this proposal is refused, the board would then see other options to vote on

which eliminate the volleyball court. The committee itself voted four to three to reject recommending approval of the volleyball courts and presents a motion to that effect to the board. If you want the volleyball courts, you must vote no on the motion. If the board wants the courts, discussion will end. If the board does not want the courts, the architect will proceed with the two alternative options for discussion.

The architect has drawings to present the other options if the volleyball court is defeated. The committee does not favor one option over the other. The first of the two proposed options is to remove the cyclone fence and curb wall, restore original steel fence, remove concrete base for the temporary classroom, regrade the area and provide a single exit at the corner of 4th Avenue and 67th Street, establish pathways with exercise equipment, and install benches and lighting. The second of the two proposed options is to remove the cyclone fence, restore the original steel fence, provide two additional fitness stations, two shade trees and six benches on the reduced concrete base, establish pathways with exercise equipment, lighting and benches. The main difference in these choices is one plan retains most of the concrete base and has exercise equipment, and the other plan removes the concrete base entirely thereby restoring a park theme. Each choice will be presented as a separate motion for the board to make a decision.

Respectfully submitted,

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