

Hudson River Park Advisory Council March 12, 2024

Meeting In-Person and Virtual. By Zoon

6:01 Start Meeting

Dan Miller, Chair

Meeting Summary

Welcome and Housekeeping- Dan Miller

- Introductions around the room in person
- Please fill in the attendance form
- Minutes Approved from January 24 Meeting

HRP AC Review of Renewals: Renewal Process was started late so we have extended the deadline. Will look at a resolution to change the timing at the next meeting. We anticipate space for a few more community and neighborhood associations. Please reach out to groups who may have an interest in the park, they do not need to be geographically neighbors of the park.

- **Parkwide Seasonal Positions Now Open**

The Trust is hiring a wide range of seasonal positions, which is part of our longstanding commitment to creating green job opportunities by hiring staff that support work happening throughout the Park with Seasonal roles and 2024 career applications. We appreciate you sharing these opportunities with your networks and to learn more visit: <https://hudsonriverpark.org/about-us/work-with-us/careers/>

- **Design and Construction**

- *Gansevoort Peninsula* - Awaiting a temporary certificate of occupancy from the NYC Department of Buildings for the restroom and concession building. Padilla Construction and Interphase Electric are completing final building finishes. This spring will replace plantings per warranty and complete permanent dog run striping.
- *Science Playground* - The Science Playground opened to the public on January 23 - Alpine Construction will return this spring to replace plantings and activate the playground's fog plume feature. There were closures for safety in February due to compacted ice freezing the safety surface. We have been monitoring crowding, which was particularly acute for one of the first warm, sunny weekends.
- *Estuarium* - The designers are continuing to develop all aspects of the building, landscape, exhibits, water intake and mechanical systems in the schematic design phase.
- *29th – 44th Street Landscape and Esplanade Design* - The HRPT Board approved the selection of Marvel Architects to lead landscape and esplanade design. We will begin stakeholder outreach and engagement later this year.
- *Pier 97* - We began providing limited public access to Pier 97 at the end of December and are aiming to open the remaining spaces including the Belvedere, Overlook, and Playground in the spring. Work on the new restroom/maintenance building is progressing.
- *Pier 45 Boardwalk Repair* - after many years of service and heavy use, the Pier 45 wood decking has reached the end of its useful life and needs to be replaced. Construction is occurring in two stages, first the far western end, followed by the southern walkway second. Work is going well and should be complete by May 2024.
- *Pier 25 Playground Improvements* - We are undertaking some repairs & improvements at the Pier 25 Playground, including to the water features and surfacing. The swing areas of the Playground will be reopening shortly with the remainder to follow this Spring.

- **Environmental and Sanctuary Initiatives**

- *Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan (ESMP) Meetings* - We hosted our third annual ESMP Sanctuary Science and Technical Advisory Council meetings this winter. At our Technical Advisory Council meeting,

all three management area subcommittees came together at our Pier 57 Discovery Tank to comprehensively review progress across the entire ESMP Action Agenda over the last year.

- *Winter & Spring Programming: Field Trips & Public Events* - The Pier 57 Discovery Tank has provided our River Project team with its first year-round programming space and has expanded both our field trip and public events through the winter months. 77% of our groups coming from Title 1 Schools.
- Last week, we also opened our spring field trip calendar. Historically, spring is our most popular season of field trips, so we are glad to be increasing our number of available time slots significantly with our SUBMERGE Marine Science Festival moving to May 17 & 18 to make the event more accessible to NYC students. This season we are also excited to debut a new program on Gansevoort Peninsula called Salt Marsh Science. This program will teach field science skills to students who will have the opportunity to build a model of a salt marsh, conduct analysis of tide pools and explore this inspiring green space. To learn more about field trips, visit hudsonriverpark.org/fieldtrips.
- Our River Project team has also been offering public-facing programs in the Discovery Tank this winter including our popular Painting Nature, Ask a Scientist and Guided Gallery events.
- *Federal Funding for Sanctuary Initiatives* - We are pleased to report that Congressman Nadler has allocated \$963,000 for habitat enhancement and research in the current NOAA funding bill that recently passed Congress, and we have already begun identifying potential enhancements. This is in addition to the \$750,000 appropriated by Senators Schumer & Gillibrand, along with Congressman Nadler, for habitat enhancement monitoring last year. We met with our TAC last fall to discuss goals & methods and have been working with NOAA to shape the scope of the project, including testing innovative monitoring techniques. We expect additional monitoring to begin this year.

- **Q&A –**

- Money has been allocated for pedestrian safety and security. Project scope has been defined to be improvements around Pier 40 based on the HUD restrictions.
- People have been jumping the railings and/or locked fences. More signage will be added in locations more frequently used. Ladders and life rings have been increased throughout the park. Life rings are preferred to ladders as they help but do not encourage people to entering the water.
- Design around Pier 79 will consider the needs of other agencies and current topics of improvement and enforcement. This will include the privately owned Pier 78 and the Heliport.
- Working on research with Stoneybrook and other partners may have duplicate efforts to what will in the future be done on Governors Island. Some of the research will be complimentary and add on to what the partners will do on Governors Island.
- The Trust has been working with SUNY and Rico Monitoring Stations and the water temperature stations to monitor water in the Park at numerous locations and the Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the data. No significant concerns were raised when looking at the temperature differences parkwide. The warmest area was still quite low and was in the southern portion of the park – Tribeca. DEC monitors Pier 98 and reports back as needed.
- The Dance Festival will need to be reevaluated and move to the fall. Costs have increased and outpaced the attendance.
- Erik Bottcher - EDC is waiting on a letter from CONED to proceed with the capital plan to electrify the Cruise Terminal with current capacity without a new Substation. If we get the go ahead- the RFP will come together early 2025 and we are still years away from shore power to the cruise ships. City Council Legislation passed last week dictates when Shore Power is available – the ships are required to use it. The costs are immense, and we need city funding and other sources.
- Tom Fox requested a presentation re: Pier 76 to the HRP AC for next month or May.

- **Public Programs** - Finishing touches on the way for an exciting 2024 Programming Season.

- *Sail4th 250* - Sail4th 250 (otherwise known as Op Sail) is a multi-state, high-profile international tall ship and government project formed to celebrate the 250th birthday of the United States. As a major

component of a nationwide endeavor, Sail4th 250 will host tall ships and vessels from around the world in the New York Harbor over the weekend of July 4, 2026, including many ships will be in the Park.

- *Field Permits* With the completion of Chelsea Waterside and Gansevoort Peninsula, our sport seasons kicks off on March 11 and runs through June 16. Each season the Trust receives requests for field permits that vastly outstrip available time and space. We are proud that this Spring season we have 55 groups across seven fields permitted for over 6,500 hours of practice and play. Summer season applications will open on March 18 and will be due no later than April 22.

- **Operations**

- The Barrier 1 security gate at 24th St. has been replaced by SDOT.
- State DOT is working with a sub-contractor to perform repairs on pavers throughout the bikeway and crosswalks. Work is expected to begin during the month of April.
- Caution signs reminding park visitors not to climb over railings due to dangerous conditions in the water will be installed throughout the park this month. The signs also contain language on suicide awareness with a Suicide & Crisis Lifeline to contact. They will be installed at areas where we have seen repeated crossing of the railings.

- **Facilities** - Our Facilities staff will begin to reenergize water systems to the drinking fountains parkwide from April 1 through April 15. All display fountains and splash park features in the playgrounds will be turned on by Memorial Day weekend.

- **Horticulture**

- We planted about 100 plants at the Christopher St. fountain.
- For the first time we hosted indoor volunteer events and feedback on the experience was positive.
- Trust staff spent about 575 hours of time this winter clearing snow and ice.

- **Public Safety**

- We reported in January, during the colder months when unhoused persons that frequent the Park and use our facilities are more vulnerable to the elements, PEP implements a policy called Code Blue. Between November 15, 2023 and March 6, 2024, PEP has conducted 964 Code Blue checks.
- The recent inclement weather and subsequent snow and ice conditions in the Park necessitated the closing of some Park assets for safety reasons.
- To address the increasing incidents of dogs in prohibited areas of the park, PEP has spent several months warning violators and educating people on Park rules and regulations. They have recently been issuing more summonses for these offenses in addition to distributing educational materials.
- Public safety maintains regular communication with NYPD personnel from the 1st, 6th and 10th. We anticipate joint education and enforcement operations to begin again in early April.

- **Real Estate and Planning**

- *Pier 76* - The Trust presented at CB4's January 11 Waterfront, Parks and Environment Committee meeting, and returned on February 8 for additional discussion. Both meetings can be viewed on CB4's YouTube page. CB4 sent a letter in March providing additional feedback. Our next step is to engage with our local elected officials to continue the discussion.
- *Pier 40 Marine Operator* - Trust received nine proposals in response to the Pier 40 Marine Uses RFP issued in August 2023. Trust has selected New York Water Tours Inc. (NYWT) and is currently negotiating the concession agreement. NYWT presented to Community Board 2's Waterfront and Parks Committee on February 7 and we will encourage them to attend an upcoming AC meeting.
- NYWT proposes to dock six vessels on the north and west side of Pier 40 offering sight-seeing and meal cruises, with a mixture of ticketing available to the general public and for private events. Similar to the previous operator Hornblower, they will also use some Pier 40 interior space for passenger processing, sales and marketing, and the storage of supplies and materials.

- *Battery Park City Resiliency Project* - The Battery Park City Authority has continued to advance more detailed design for the resiliency project affecting the southern reach of Park. As previously reported, we are pleased the design has changed to no longer run along the bikeway adjacent to the Park. We are continuing to work with BPCA as their design progresses to understand the extent of construction and potential impacts to the Park.
- Swimming in the Hudson – Robert Pirani – Study was commissioned to review the opportunities for Swimming in the Hudson. Permitting process for the DOH is very cumbersome. Report by +Pools and Riverkeeper. New provisions are outlined due to work by interested parties.
- **Next meeting is TBD in April – Usually the 2nd Tuesday of each month.**
- Public Speaker – Jim Boyd - How can we completely close the Heliport in Chelsea? Tom is working on Foil requests. Please come and join us at another time as an agenda item.

Motion to adjourn and move to end the business portion of the night @ 7:27PM

Video is available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pjrIKsDEUyk>