

**Flushing Meadows Corona Park Alliance
Meeting of the Board of Directors
Friday, April 23, 2021 at 9:00 am
Videoconference**

Board Members in attendance: Kenneth Cohen, Ali Davis, Jim Haddad, Andrea Hirsch, Andrew Hollweck, Terri Richardson, Patty Ornst, Sanjay Rawal, Vicky Schneps-Yunis, Jean C. Silva, Mitchell Silver, Michelle Villagomez, John Wang, Edwin Wong and Danny Zausner.

Other attendees: Janice Melnick, Mike Dockett, Jacqueline Colson and Taania Sheikh.

Report from Chair

Danny welcomed everyone. He asked committee members to review the minutes from the January 29, 2021 meeting, if they had not already done so. A motion was made to approve the minutes. All Directors present voted in favor.

Danny mentioned that Commissioner Mitchell Silver would be leaving and thanked him for all he has done for Parks and the Alliance, specifically mentioning his chair of the Alliance through our inception and first 4 years. Commissioner Silver in turn spoke passionately about Parks, Park workers, Flushing Meadows Corona Park and the Alliance, explaining that it was an honor to be a part of the organization and looks forward to returning for our gala and other events.

Council Member Gennaro had to step-down from the board but has appointed Sanjay Rawal to serve in his place. Mr. Rawal was welcomed and told the board a little about himself, specifically that he was a lifelong resident of Briarwood and a runner. He said he was looking forward to working with the Alliance.

Executive Director Report

Janice gave an update on Capital Projects detailing the recently completed Reflecting Pool Mist Fountain and the ongoing NYS Pavilion Project. She also provided a list of other projects in the design and procurement phases. Janice then discussed the many volunteer programs that both Parks and the Alliance would be focusing on this year including volunteer events all week for Earth Week, a highlight of which is the restoration of the Garden of Meditation. Other volunteer initiatives include Jr. Litter League, It's My Park, Litter Ambassadors, Monday Morning Pitch-ins, and of course, the Alliance's ongoing Natural Areas Stewardship.

Janice gave a brief programming update stating that fitness programming was beginning in May. In addition, based on a lightening of restrictions on outdoor events, we are planning to offer free programming beginning in July. Docent history tours will resume in-person beginning May and we started a birding club.

Lastly, Janice mentioned that we are working with TDGivetoGrow, where professionals from TD Bank are working with the Alliance, pro bono, to help us develop a marketing plan. She introduced Taania Sheikh from TD as a guest who joined our meeting as an observer.

Report from Community Advisory Board

Jean Silva, reported on the CAB. She said that because of COVID, they missed their office elections in November. At their last meeting, the CAB voted to extend the current officers through 2021 and will hold elections before the end of the year. There is currently a vacancy for Secretary. Jean said Jacqueline Colson has stepped down and thanked for her work. She also mentioned Tom Hurtubise will be heading their nominating committee. Jean said the CAB discussed the Alliance's FY22 budget and is recommending continued funding things such as Art in the Park. She further said the CAB is recommending funding examination and repairs of the Unisphere. Lastly, Jean mentioned that CAB members and FMCP Conservancy members did volunteer work on the Pat Dolan Trail at Willow Lake.

Governance Committee

Ali reported that Governance has a very long meeting, lasting around 9 minutes. The good news is that the Alliance has formally applied for 501c3 status. We should receive a response within approximately 6 months. Ali also mentioned that the bylaws were amended, reflecting the vote at our previous board meeting.

Finance & Development Committee

Andrew gave an update on the FY21 budget explaining that surprisingly, given COVID, we are actually in pretty good financial shape. While we raised considerably less funds than normal, in fact we raised more money than we budgeted and spent even less, especially on staff. Janice noted that she was just told that thanks to stimulus funds, the City would pick up the seasonal hiring the Alliance pays for (except for 3 step-ups) saving us even more money. Andrew reiterated that this has actually provided the Alliance with a bit of a surplus taking us into FY22.

Andrew then discussed the FY22 proposed budget. The budget includes having an in-person fall fundraiser on the revenue side and resumed hiring of seasonal staff as well as programming, etc. on the expense side. The proposal also includes adding \$100,000 for advanced fundraising and \$20,000 for marketing. The feeling is that we have surplus funds so we should take advantage of those funds to help us increase our fundraising capabilities. A motion was made to accept the proposed FY22 Budget and all members present voted in favor.

Patty Ornst discussed the Fall Fundraiser. We are cautiously optimistic that we will be able to host an in-person event again under the Unisphere, even if we are limited to 200 people. We are aiming for late September/early October. Janice will check on dates to avoid any conflicts and we'll send a SAVE THE DATE shortly. Patty asked people to join the committee. Vickie Schneps offered to join the committee (in chat) as did Sanjay Rawal (after the meeting).

New Business

Edwin Wong requested that the Alliance provide a letter of support for the Waterfront Alliance, who have submitted a proposal to Congress Member Grace Meng as part of the Congressional Appropriation Process. Their project is called Flushing Meadows Corona Park: A Hub for Climate Resilience. A motion was made and all members present voted to provide a letter of support for their project as long as it is vetted and approved by NYC Parks (Commissioner Silver abstained from vote). *Note: Parks later approved the project and Janice provided a letter of support from the Alliance.*

The meeting adjourned at 9:48 a.m.