Superblock Stewardship Advisory Committee Meeting  
Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: March 30, 2015

Members in Attendance: Barbara Albrecht, Rachel Belsky, Lynne Brown, Sewin Chan, Anne Hearn, Michael Hengerer, Neal Herman, Angela Kamer, Alison Leary, Larry Maslon, Allen Mincer, Julia O’Connor, Michael Patullo, Rosemary Scanlon, Eero Simoncelli, Heather Skolnick

Members Not in Attendance: Jeff Goodwin

Invited Guests (panelists):
- Beth Bingham, Director of Research and Planning, New Yorkers for Parks
- Robin Forst, Vice President, External Relations, Battery Park City Authority
- Tessa Huxley, Executive Director, Battery Park City Parks Conservancy
- Mark Kerman, Assistant Vice President, Residential & Commercial Operations, Columbia University
- Bill McClellan, Director of Public Safety, Peter Cooper Village/Stuyvesant Town
- George Reis, Landscaping Manager, NYU Operations
- Erin Lynch, Director, Office of Faculty Housing and Residential Services, NYU Operations

1. Comments from the Chair

Committee Chair Larry Maslon called the meeting to order and thanked the panelists for taking the time to share their experiences with the Committee. He called on Executive Vice President Alison Leary to moderate the discussion.

2. Panel Discussion

Leary introduced the panelists and indicated that the discussion serves as an opportunity to share best practices and learn from one another, with a particular emphasis on the challenges of managing multi-use open spaces with complex constituencies.

The discussion first turned to the management of competing interests. Panelists shared a number of strategies, including the use of programming to effectively model appropriate uses of open spaces (e.g., placing daytime art classes for seniors in an area that is not designed or meant to be frequented by cyclists). Giving cues to people about how to use space is often more effective than signage.

It was also suggested that a mechanism for gaining resident feedback—such as a survey or focus groups—was an important tool for tailoring program offerings. Such mechanisms can also help promote a sense of community among residents.
For some specific open spaces, panelists noted making use of a permitting process in which residents request use of certain spaces and are issued permits based on compliance with the regulations of those spaces and in consideration of other requests. These permits are issued for special events, such as birthday parties and weddings.

Panelists also shared that the physical landscape can also be manipulated to encourage or discourage certain behaviors. For instance, installing hardscape pavement, age-specific playground equipment, and/or water features could help define specific uses in defined spaces. Battery Park City representatives also noted that they lend equipment to teenagers for recreational purposes. With regard to enforcement of guidelines and regulations, panelists offered several strategies, including clearly defining and posting (via signage and an Intranet) specific rules for each open space. It was also suggested that horticultural quality and maintenance can help signal the ongoing care, respect, and positive use of certain spaces.

It was agreed among the panelists that dog-related issues are both common and difficult to ameliorate. Some suggested the creation of proximate, hardscape dog runs for both small and large dogs, which can be easily washed down several times per day for sanitary purposes. It was again emphasized that positive programming for pet owners is helpful in enforcing rules.

While some complexes make use of Parks Enforcement Patrol (or “PEP”) Officers, who can issue citations, to enforce rules and regulations on City parkland, it was agreed that enforcement is a multi-faceted issue that requires attention from multiple fronts. Some complexes reported being more strict when documenting violations than others—i.e., issuing summonses vs. fines for non-compliance.

When discussing the creation of a positive and respectful community environment, some panelists noted that complaints are unavoidable; it is important to document them and respond to them as best as possible. Others suggested an annual review of house and open space rules, and re-issuing those regulations with each new lease or renewal.

A design charette was suggested as a way to gain input from relevant stakeholders and to build consensus for the use of open spaces. Such an exercise, it was suggested, would allow residents to feel involved and invested in the planning process. Communicating with residents is also an important part of this process, and panelists suggested making frequent use of physical postings (e.g., bulletin boards and newsletters) and digital media (e.g., and Intranet for residents and message boards).