

November 28, 2006

Hon. Christine Quinn,
Speaker of the Council
224 W. 30 Street, Suite 1206N
New York, NY 10001

Hon. Alan Jay Gerson
51 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Council Speaker Quinn and Council member Gerson:

At its Full Board Meeting on November 16, 2006, Community Board #2, Manhattan (CB#2, Man.), adopted the following resolution:

Washington Square Park

Request for Parks Department Presentation

WHEREAS, since 1828, Washington Square Park has been a premiere gathering space, providing a cherished experience for generations of Greenwich Village residents and visitors worldwide; and,

WHEREAS, Community Board 2 seeks to protect this park, including its continued availability as a venue for the arts, recreation, play, and relaxation; and,

WHEREAS, Washington Square Park has not been renovated in thirty years, has fallen into disrepair, and the New York City Department of Parks has proposed major renovations and redesign; and,

WHEREAS, Community Board 2's April 28, 2005 resolution regarding redesign states _more lawn areas should not be created at the expense of existing uses including Y areas for formal and informal performance_; and,

WHEREAS, the Community Board notes substantial and ongoing community concern about the details of the Parks Department's plan, including from Greenwich Village block associations, park organizations, park users, historians, activists, artists, the disabled, and students; and,

WHEREAS, Community Board 2 endorsed the Quinn-Gerson/ Parks Department Agreement of October 6, 2005, which states, at page 3, *the total square footage of the inner circle, from the outermost edge of the fountain wall to the innermost edge of any seating, will be no less than 90% of the current area;* and,

WHEREAS, the City, in its Appellate brief in Greenberg v. City of New York, at page 17, states that the *overall reduction [of the plaza] would total approximately 23%;* and,

WHEREAS, the City, in its Appellate brief in Greenberg, at page 20, stated that the A *Quinn-Gerson letter was never signed by any representative of the Parks Department and contained no acknowledgment on the part of any Parks Employee;* and,

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the community for Community Board 2 to accurately understand and review the current plans for the renovation of Washington Square Park and resolve the confusion about the size of the plaza and the status of the Quinn-Gerson/Parks Department agreement;

WHEREAS, Community Board 2 can exercise its legally mandated, and procedurally required power, as the representative of the community, to give its advice on Parks Department plans only if it is given full and accurate information; the fact that the Community Board=s role is advisory does not alter the City=s legal obligation to present the Community Board with accurate information

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 2 reaffirms its endorsement of the Quinn-Gerson/Parks Department Agreement of October 6, 2005, and its understanding that there was an agreement; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Community Board 2 requests that the New York City Parks Department, at the January 8, 2007 Parks and Waterfront Committee meeting, present to the Board for its review an accurate, written, up-to-date plan, including elevations, unequivocally reaffirming the Quinn-Gerson/Parks Department Agreement, demonstrating, item by item, how its plans comport with the Quinn-Gerson/Parks Department Agreement and that it not circulate an RFP prior to the January CB2 meeting and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Community Board 2 reaffirms its support for a fountain design which allows for access to the fountain in the manner in which it has been historically accessible; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Community Board 2 reaffirms its desire to see a plan for the Park which provides the maximal access for people with disabilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Washington Square Park Task Force called for in the Quinn-Gerson agreement convene so as to assist in the resolution of disputes, clarify issues, and provide a vehicle for moving the park renovation forward.

Vote: Unanimous, with 38 Board members in favor

Please advise us of any action or decision taken in response to this resolution

Sincerely,

Maria Passannante Derr, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan

Arthur Z. Schwartz, Chair
Waterfront, Parks Recreation & Open Space
Community Board #2, Manhattan

MPD/gh

cc: Hon. Jerrold Nadler, Congressman- via fax
Hon. Thomas K. Duane, NYS Senator – via fax
Hon. Deborah Glick, NYS Assembly member – via fax
Hon. Rosie Mendez, Council member
Hon. Scott Stringer, Man. Borough President – via fax
Shaan Khan, Community Liaison, MBPO – via fax
Commissioner Patrick J. Brennan, CAU – via fax