

A New Pool and Rink for Central Park

"First, second and third nature; then after a while, architecture." That dictum of Central Park co-founder Calvert Vaux was cited repeatedly by leaders of the Central Park Conservancy earlier this month at a daylong public consultation session on the planned \$150 million renovation of the Lasker Pool and skating rink at the park's northeast corner.



For the Conservancy and many others stakeholders, Lasker is a carbuncle on the landscape of Central Park. Chris Nolan, the COO and chief landscape architect for the Conservancy, said it was if "a spaceship landed in 1966" to create a physical barrier between the Harlem Meer and the North Woods, sever the watercourse leading into the Meer, and desecrate the original mission of Olmsted and Vaux.

The idea of the project, slated to begin in 2020, is to make the pool fit better into

the landscape. Rather than being plopped on top of the land as now, with steps to climb no matter which way you approach it, the pool will be lower and better integrated into the slope from the drive down to the Meer. The brook that runs in from behind it and is currently directed into an underground culvert will instead be "daylighted" and fed directly into the Meer.



To leave room for that, the building attached to the pool--the locker rooms, entry space, etc.--will likely be built over on the side, where the concrete bleachers are now, and kind of tucked into that hillside.

The designers are exploring an interesting idea for skating (which was a far more popular activity in Central Park in cooler days a century ago). They are considering creating three small islands in the arm of the Harlem Meer close to

the pool and linking them together with a foundation that would be underwater in summer. In winter they would lower the water, put barriers on that foundation and create a natural skating rink on the Meer, leaving the pool itself to hockey.

The Conservancy is planning other public consultations on the renovation, so if you're interested consult its website, centralparknyc.org.



CO-PRESIDENTS' POTPOURRI

Dear 336 CPW Friends and Neighbors,

There is never a dull moment here at 336 CPW. Managing an almost 90-year-old building certainly has its challenges, and they seem most apparent during the budget planning process.

As we complete the budget for 2019, we are taking many expenditures into consideration. The bulk of them involve compliance with NYC Local Law 11, which mandates the periodic inspection of exterior walls of buildings like ours. The pedestrian canopies around our building and many others in the neighborhood clearly indicate the city's commitment to compliance. To walk through what shareholders can expect for 2019, the Board is holding a special town hall on Monday, November 12th at 7 p.m. at the Alexander Robertson School at 3 West 95th Street. Aside from an update on the scaffolding, agenda items include the 2019 budget, real estate taxes, the window program, our electrical distribution system, washing-machine installations, and new policies.

We urge all shareholders to attend as we examine important financial and operational realities. For those who cannot make it, a summary communication will be distributed to all shareholders.

Renovations continue to be active. We remind shareholders it is critical to abide by the clearly written and detailed alteration guidelines, and to hire architects and contractors that do so. These guidelines are meant to keep residents safe and to minimize incidents with disruptive consequences, especially leaks. In a proactive effort to protect all shareholders and our building, the board has adopted a policy of strict adherence to these requirements. Our building's architect, Ethelind Coblin Architects LP, will be involved in every renovation from application through inspections to completion. For reference, detailed documentation on the renovation process can be found on the 336cpw.org website under the Building Documents tab at the upper right (www.336cpw.org/building-docs/). Any further questions you may have on renovations should be directed to John Devall at Orsid.

As Halloween is upon us, please remember to sign up for trick-or-treat participation on the sign-up sheets that will be posted in the elevators.

Election Day is Tuesday, November 6th. Our polling place is in the public school complex at 154 West 93rd Street (between Columbus and Amsterdam) from 6:00 am to 9:00 pm.

Please remember that we are endeavoring to use email for shareholder communications. Email from the building may get caught in your spam filter so please make sure you add information@336cpw.org to your safe list. For those of you who have yet to register, please do so at <http://336cpw.org/register/>

We welcome noteworthy items for publication in these newsletters. Please email James Graff (jamesgraff1@gmail.com) or any of the board members with news you would like to share with the 336 CPW community.

Cindy Michel (Apt. 12C) and Seth Segel (Apt. 9E)

Restaurant Renaissance



Our neighborhood has seen some favorite dining establishments close down in recent years, but along with lamenting our losses we can also celebrate a flourish of new openings. Among them is Eléa on 85th Street just west of Broadway (next to the Han Dynasty), which is in its first few weeks of operation. The website Eater calls it "a more casual, less sceney sibling" of the owner's hot Flatiron spot, Kyma, with "a menu and vibe more geared to the family-friendly neighborhood." Eléa's broad menu goes beyond the usual Greek offerings to include items like cauliflower fritters, roasted oysters with chopped spinach and chard, and a generous octopus starter with roasted pearl onions and potatoes. A tip: Try to get a table on the ground floor; the large dining room downstairs can be a little loud.

Recently opened on Columbus Avenue between 72nd and 73rd Street is The Flying Fisherman and its take-out joint, Fish on the Fly. The menu is obviously centered on seafood, including "jalea," a potato-powder-crust seafood mix with onions and cilantro oil. The place offers a roster of fresh catches, including a whole branzino with banana-leaf wrap, tamarind, creamy corn and kaffir lime for \$29.



Another place due to open soon is Mokum at 464 Amsterdam Ave., between 82nd and 83rd Streets. The name is Yiddish for "safe haven," and the owner, Tea Zegarac Pollock says it will be an all-day "bakery, coffee bar and restaurant." A constant will be ratatouille, the favorite dish of Provence-born chef Benjamin Vaschetti.



Just up Amsterdam, at 85th Street, Jacob Hadjigeorgis is adding to his pickle-based UWS empire of Jacob's Pickles, Maison Pickle and Lucky Pickle Dumpling Co. with something a little different: Tiki Chick. Due to open this month (he better hurry!), the place will offer drinks, small plates and a fried chicken sandwich. And probably pickles.

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Rising Taxes and Other Burdens

Property taxes are New York City's largest source of revenue, accounting for more than \$25 billion and 30% of all its revenues in fiscal 2018. And it wants more.

The city has determined that co-ops and condominiums have been significantly undervalued and is setting about to change that. We at 336 CPW have historically benefited from a lower assessed value, which has translated into lower real estate taxes. Beginning with the current fiscal year, according to Andre Kaplan, Orsid's chief financial officer, the city has brought the assessed value up to reflect a more comparable value, and that will result in higher real estate taxes. "We have seen this across our entire portfolio of 162 buildings, and especially in the last few years along Central Park West," Mr. Kaplan said.

The increase in the assessed value is phased in over five years, so the higher value we will encounter at the end of the current tax year will be followed by further increases in the next four years. Since property taxes is a major portion of the maintenance fees we pay as shareholders, those fees will have to rise as a result. The extent of that increase, which will also have to reflect rising labor, maintenance and energy costs along with other budgetary imbalances, is something we'll be discussing at the special town hall on November 12.

Mindfulness Studies

If you notice porter Migmar Tsering poring over a neuroscience textbook during one of his rare breaks, you are seeing just an inkling of his remarkable story of perseverance--and of good fortune following on bad.

Born in Tibet, Migmar never knew his father, but the Chinese authorities did. And since his father's brother was a political prisoner for opposing China's rule over Tibet, Migmar's family was politically persecuted as well. "There is no logic to it," he says. "That's how it is."

In 2005, when Migmar was a teenager, the family decided to flee. He and his mother walked for three weeks, moving only at night to avoid detection, to get to Nepal. His mother found a way to the U.S., where she knew no one, while Migmar took classes as an exile in India. It wasn't until 2009 that he was able to finally join her in Queens, where he enrolled in Bryant High School for the last year and a half of his high school education and eventually became an American citizen.

It speaks of Migmar's talent and hard work that he landed a four-year scholarship to Connecticut College. "Freshman year was very tough," he says. "My culture is fundamentally based in Buddhism, and I had to learn to get along in a very different system."

He graduated with an undergraduate degree in neuroscience and is now pursuing a master's degree at the CUNY Graduate Center. Through shareholder Cindy Michel's housekeeper, a friend of Migmar's family eager to help him find a way to finance his studies, Migmar got an interview with Sergio. Since May the 28-year-old has been working parts of seven days a week, pounding the books much of the rest of the time, and sacrificing a lot of sleep.

In neuroscience, Migmar has found a way to reconcile his beliefs and his future career. "My studies are related to the philosophy of the mind, and Buddhism is all about the mind," he says. "There's no contradiction at all. Buddhism studies the mind through meditation; science does it through experiments."

