



CITY OF NEW YORK  
**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10**  
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**Resolution for NYC Parks - Central Park Conservancy Harlem Meer-Lasker Pool  
Renovation Project**

**WHEREAS** Lasker Pool is located on West 110th Street and Lenox Avenue/Malcolm X Boulevard in the Borough of Manhattan in Community Board 10; and

**WHEREAS** Lasker’s aging structure — long plagued by systemic problems — is beyond repair, serious flaws in the original engineering have plagued the existing facility since its construction in 1966; and

**WHEREAS** For more than 60 years, Lasker Rink and Pool has acted as a physical and visual barrier in the north end. The building severed the Ravine landscape and Loch watercourse from the Harlem Meer. Water running from the Loch into the Meer was redirected through a culvert (a tunnel that carries water around Lasker beneath the ground), which has resulted in regular flooding throughout the years; and

**WHEREAS** The project will remove this barrier so the watercourse that runs through the ravine will once again flow overland into the Meer, instead of being diverted into a culvert behind the pool and rink building. The path beside the watercourse will likewise be re-established, restoring the lost pedestrian connection and view through Huddlestone Arch toward the historic landscape. The project team’s design calls for the new recreational facility to be shifted to the eastern portion of the site rather than straddling the middle, with the pool house built into a slope in the topography. A landscaped berm will envelope the elongated oval pool and rink, fully integrating the facility into the setting; and

**WHEREAS** in expanding the recreational opportunities at the Meer, the design also provides a boardwalk across a series of small islands and the freshwater marsh where the restored watercourse will flow into the Meer. By making the facility more open and accessible, the project will support year-round programming for the first time while enabling connections among the communities of Park users, from casual strollers and picnickers to recreational runners and birdwatchers; and

**WHEREAS** The renovation will better connect the North Woods and the Harlem Meer, both currently blocked from one another by the rink; and

**WHEREAS** The facility will be rebuilt to better integrate into the landscape, offer new and enhanced outdoor activities, and increase access for communities around the north end of Central Park; and

**WHEREAS** The new recreational facility will be more open and accessible, and for the first time will be open year-round to support expanded programming opportunities. The facility will be integrated into the landscape and re-establish long-severed connections to one of the Park's most picturesque areas; and

**WHEREAS** The new facility will be built in the spirit of Central Park's original design by Frederick Law Olmsted, American landscape architect, and will provide year-round programming and expanded recreational opportunities at the Harlem Meer, enhanced swimming and skating, including a new area for free-form skating on a lake in Central Park, a larger than Olympic-size pool, and a new outdoor spray pad; and

**WHEREAS** The proposed facility will be more integrated into the surrounding landscape, and provide Park users with year-round access to restrooms and amenities, a boardwalk that travels through a series of small islands and a freshwater marsh, unhindered access across the north end of the Park — both by reconnecting the watercourse that runs through the Ravine so it flows freely into the Harlem Meer, and re-establishing the pedestrian path that once ran alongside it; and

**WHEREAS** Central Park was originally designed as an idealized rural landscape, one that would provide New Yorkers an escape from the stresses of urban life. Park designers intended for visitors to move seamlessly through a diverse and beautiful sequence of naturalistic settings; and

**WHEREAS** The massive Lasker Rink and Pool facility, completed in 1966, undermines this intention; not only does the building obstruct one of the most stunning views in the Park, but it also acts as a barrier — blocking the flow of water from the Loch to the Harlem Meer and disrupting the connection between the Meer landscape and the rest of the Park; and

**WHEREAS** The Conservancy is investing in a comprehensive reimagining of the site. The new design was created by the Conservancy's design office, led by Chief Landscape Architect Christopher J. Nolan, FASLA, with the architectural team of Susan T. Rodriguez Architecture | Design in collaboration with Mitchell Giurgola; and

**WHEREAS** the project includes building the indoor space of the new facility into the slope on the eastern side of the site, with a green roof overlooking the area better integrating the facility into the surrounding landscape, allowing visitors to move more easily across the north end of the Park between the North Woods and the Harlem Meer providing a new swimming pool and a new outdoor splash pad, which will be available for visitors before and after the public pool season, installing a seasonal ice rink for skating and hockey, constructing a boardwalk in the Meer that converts to a skating ribbon in winter, accessed from an open-air pavilion on the

shoreline, expanding nature-based recreation, re-creating the watercourse that historically existed between Huddleston Arch and the Meer; and

**WHEREAS** A new menu of recreational activities and programs — such as boating, fishing, nature walks, and wildlife observation — will be introduced, and the facility will be available to the surrounding communities more throughout the year; and

**WHEREAS** Central Park Conservancy has met with the Parks and Recreation Committee on October 10, 2018, June 12, 2019 and September 11, 2019 to present proposed design plans and garner community feedback; and

**WHEREAS** Central Park Conservancy held community planning workshops on October 13, 2018 (CPC Offices at 1 East 104 Street), October 13, 2018 (CPC Offices at 1 East 104 Street) November 3, 2018 (Dana Discover Center, Harlem Meer), June 15, 2019 (Cathedral School at St. John the Divine), July 18, 2019 (Harlem Children’s Zone Promise Academy), September 12, 2019 (Dana Discover Center, Harlem Meer); and

**WHEREAS** This project has a budget of \$150 million, which includes a \$40 million maintenance and capital repair fund, to ensure that the new facility continues to serve the public at the highest standard. The City of New York has allocated \$50 million to the project, and the Conservancy has committed to raising \$100 million and overseeing the design and construction; and

**WHEREAS** The Conservancy and the New York City Parks anticipate that groundbreaking will take place in spring 2021. Construction is expected to be completed in 2024. The Conservancy is working with NYC Parks to develop a plan to minimize inconvenience and to identify interim locations for existing programs during the construction period.

**THEREFORE NOW BE IT RESOLVED** that Manhattan Community Board 10 voted to support the joint efforts of New York City Parks and Central Conservancy to upgrade the landscape of the Harlem Meer and reconstruction of the Lasker Pool and Rink through new designs with a vote of 30 in favor, 2 opposed and 0 abstentions.