STATE OF NEW YORK

682

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

January 11, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. DINOWITZ -- read once and referred to the Committee on Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development

AN ACT to dedicate and designate Jerome Park as parkland of the city of New York, and to establish a working group for such park to enhance use thereof

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Legislative intent. The legislature hereby finds that Jerome Park, located around the Jerome Park reservoir, that is located in the borough of the Bronx in the city of New York, has been used for numerous outdoor recreational and open space purposes for over a century. Furthermore, such park has the potential to incorporate additional urban wildlife sanctuary, outdoor recreational and open space uses for the betterment of the local community. Through the auspices of master plans authorized and approved by the parks and recreation department of the city of New York and work by community groups such as the Jerome Park Conservancy and the Friends of Jerome Park, it is a sound public policy and community benefit to advance the increased use of Jerome Park for additional outdoor recreational and open space uses and to integrate such park functions with the adjacently located Fort Independence Park. Going forward, key elements of the future design of the park should help to preserve its historic essence, reveal its potential as public space, and link places and events with the park to the surrounding community. Finally, such future development of Jerome Park should frame the beauty of the reservoir with a new layer of landscape and purpose.

§ 2. To achieve the legislative intent articulated in section one of this act, all lands that are contained in Jerome Park, which are located in or adjacent to block 3246, section 12 of the land map of the borough of the Bronx, city of New York, excluding those lands that are the reservoir itself and lands bordering such reservoir shore line that are a distance of ten feet from the outside border of such reservoir shore

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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line shall be dedicated and designated as parkland of the city of New York.

§ 3. The borough president of the borough of the Bronx may assist in convening a working group for Jerome Park that shall consist of community stakeholders to establish an action plan for Jerome Park to help foster increased outdoor recreational uses, such as hiking, biking, nature studies, bird watching and other outdoor recreational uses; enhance community enjoyment of such park; and to preserve and enhance open spaces contained within the park. The working group may identify, recommend the design of and financing of capital projects to advance the increased use of Jerome Park for increased outdoor recreational uses and to enhance open spaces. Such capital projects may include, but are not limited to, walking and bicycle pathways; athletic fields and playgrounds; basketball and handball courts; table, seating and picnic areas; establishment of vista seating and viewing areas; related parking areas for bicycles; and nature trails. Membership of such working group shall consist of representatives of local civic and community organizations, Lehman College, local high schools, the state senator, member of assembly and city councilman representing senate, assembly and city council districts in which such park is located, the parks and recreation department of the city of New York, the department of environmental protection of the city of New York, and other community leaders and stakeholders such as youth, parent and senior citizen organizations.

§ 4. The working group for Jerome Park shall issue, on or before January 1, 2023, a report and findings to satisfy its charge to establish an action plan for Jerome Park to help foster increased outdoor recreational uses and community enjoyment of such park and to preserve and enhance open spaces contained within the park. Such report and findings shall be submitted to the Bronx borough president, the mayor of the city of New York, the parks and recreation department of the city of New York, and the department of environmental protection of the city of New York and to the state senator and member of assembly who represent the senate and assembly districts within which such park is located.

§ 5. After the issuance of such report and findings, such working group shall remain in existence until January 1, 2028 to help implement such action plan. During this period of time, the working group shall work with the state and city agencies to implement such action plan.

§ 6. This act shall take effect immediately, except that section two of this act shall take effect January 1, 2026.