



January 10, 2020

Hon. Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP, Commissioner
Hon. Liam Kavanagh, First Deputy Commissioner
Hon. Iris Rodriguez-Rosa, Bronx Borough Commissioner
New York City Department of Parks and Recreation By Email

Re: BCEQ Resolution Opposing Governors Ball Music Festival in Van Cortlandt Park on the Parade Grounds

Dear Commissioners Silver, Kavanagh, and Rodriguez-Rosa,

We write in support of your denial for the permits for the above stated project. We urge you to continue said denial for the reasons stated below. **We oppose allowing the Governors Ball Music Festival in Van Cortlandt Park on the Parade Grounds.** At the January 9, 2020 Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality, the resolution below was approved in full (with one abstention).

FACTS

The Governor's Ball Music Festival are proposing a 3-day event from June 5 to 7 on the Van Cortlandt Park Parade Grounds. The group proposes to gather 50,000 people each of the days from noon to 11 pm. The preparation for the festival will close the area around the Parade Grounds for approximately 18 days from May 26 to June 12 to allow for set up and break down. They will bring the 66 entertainers, Port a Potties, 4 Stages, sectional enclosures for security, and other things. Food, beverages and alcohol will be served.

DISCUSSION

We support the reasons for Parks Department denying the permits for the Festival in Van Cortlandt Park for the following reasons:

1. **"Pursuant to Section 2-08 (c) (2) of title 56 of the Rules of the City of New York the Parks Commissioner may deny a request to hold a special event if the proposed event is of such nature or duration that it cannot be reasonably accommodated in that location."**

We agree with this as many permits have been given for activities in these areas and it is unfair to those already permitted. In addition, the New York Yankees are currently scheduled to play on the same days as the Festival, impacting any mode of transportation north of the Stadium.

2. **"If the special event would interfere unreasonably with the enjoyment of the park by other users."**

We agree with this as this Festival will seriously and unreasonably interfere with our members, local residents, Bronx neighbors, and natural inhabitants' ability to enjoy the park for several weeks in the Spring. In addition, it raises the concern as to the scheduling of the Philharmonic Concert in the park – generally the second Tuesday in June. This will involve sections of Parade Ground being closed for 3 weeks and the entire Parade Ground for at least 3 days; sections of the Cross-Country Trail for 3



days; vehicles coming in and out of the park for 3 weeks and 100 parking spots along the park being removed for 3 weeks. It will greatly interfere with people enjoying the park during the spring season.

3. “Given the need for the load in, load out, and the actual event, the Department has determined that the Park is not a viable venue for an event of this size and duration.”

We agree with this as the City has already spent millions of dollars for capital project infrastructure has been spent in order to repair, renovate, and maintain the Parade Grounds, including the 800-head irrigation system¹ that took years to get working properly. In addition, there is no way to assure that there would be no leakage potentially into the fragile Tibbetts Brook Wetlands. Finally, there are currently two large construction projects at several public entrances already limiting public access.

4. “The Park has not hosted events of this duration and size before.”

We concur with this, as this a crowded residential and commercial area. Just as traffic stops when the Philharmonic, attended by a mere 2,000 persons is scheduled. The impacts of the Festival will echo throughout the community. It will make it unbearable to enjoy the natural environment.

CONCLUSION

- BCEQ finds this project to be too late to schedule, too big for the area chosen, and inappropriate for the residential areas near Van Cortlandt Park.
- BCEQ supports the Parks Department’s decision to deny the permit to hold the 2020 Governor’s Ball in Van Cortlandt Park.
- With this statement, BCEQ urges other groups and community members to take the same position.

Formed in 1971, BCEQ is a 501c3 organization that has sought to establish — as an Inherent Human Right — a sound, forward-looking environmental policy regarding an aesthetic, unpolluted, environment protecting a natural and historic heritage. We have been active in the fight to protect and preserve Van Cortlandt Park for many decades. We urge you to reconsider your approval consultant letter and to work with DEP and the community to find more thoughtful solutions to their water management concerns that will also protect our state’s historic resources.

Sincerely,

Nilka Martell

Nilka Martell
BCEQ Parks Com. Co-chair

Karen Argenti

Karen Argenti
BCEQ Secretary

c. Local Elected Officials
Community Boards
Community Groups

¹ https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/bronxcb8/pdf/park_Minutes_May_2013.pdf Bronx CB 8 Parks Committee Minutes May 22, 2013