



City of New York
Department of Parks & Recreation

Adrian Benepe, Commissioner



Hearing before the
New York City Council
Committee on State and Federal Legislation

June 15, 2011

S.2513/A.4874: Discontinue use of and convey certain park land.
a.k.a St. Michael's Cemetery

Testimony by Larry Scott Blackmon, Deputy Commissioner for Community Outreach

Good Afternoon acting Chair Rivera and members of the State and Federal Legislation Committee. I thank you for the opportunity to testify on the home rule on the committee's agenda today that would affect New York City Parks.

This legislative item as it relates to parks is a resolution requesting the New York State Legislature to pass bills introduced by Senator Gianaris, S.2513, and Assembly Member Simotas, A.4874, which would authorize the city of New York to discontinue use of certain park land and convey it to St. Michael's Cemetery in Queens. The park land that is being referred to is a 3.77-acre strip of land adjacent to the cemetery.

Any alienation action is subject to the requirement that the City use any proceeds and/or land received in exchange for the conveyance authorized by this act to acquire land for park purposes in an amount equal to or greater than the fair market value of the land being conveyed. At this time no replacement parkland has been

identified in order to adopt alienation legislation. The Parks Department is not aware of a replacement parcel to evaluate in order to ensure that the replacement parcel is of sufficient size and open space value as the parkland proposed for alienation, as is customary for a 1:1 acre replacement value for the parkland alienated.

Given the uncertainty surrounding the replacement parkland, the fair market value of the land to be conveyed to be established as per the legislation may not be sufficient to acquire replacement parkland to replace the open space value of the alienated park parcel. It would thus be premature to adopt alienation legislation prior to reaching agreement on all aspects of the land swap and the Parks Department is opposed to this piece of legislation at this time.

We take the alienation of parkland very seriously and after only extensive dialogue and negotiation. Passing this legislation without identifying replacement parkland sets a very dangerous precedent.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. SLR 19487/1 Res. No. 52573

in favor in opposition

Date: 6/15/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deputy Commissioner Larry Scott Blackman

Address: The Arsenal

I represent: Parks Department

Address: _____

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆