

**Testimony of: William A. Casari, 860 Grand Concourse #7E, Bronx, NY 10451.**

April 29, 2009 Helen D. Foster, Chair, Yankee Stadium Replacement Parks Oversight Hearing. 250 Broadway. New York, NY. 1PM 16<sup>th</sup> Floor.

I have lived near Yankee Stadium for four years and am a frequent user of local parks. I work at a nearby college and am out every day walking or biking in my local neighborhood and see how well used the parks are. During my first two years in the neighborhood I was able to walk onto the track at Macombs Dam Park and exercise there as well as walking through the spacious Mullaly Park.

**Pace of Replacement Parks and Administration**—I am concerned about the pace of the Yankee Stadium replacement parks and once they are finished, how accessible to the public the parks will be at all times neighborhood parks are normally open. I recently attended a presentation organized by Helen D. Foster's office and learned that the hours of the new rooftop replacement park will be restricted between 7AM and 10PM. This rooftop park needs to be open no later than 5AM and available to neighborhood residents until 11PM. Neighborhood boys and men often play basketball and handball into the evening, certainly later than 10PM. Other residents often want to walk on the track no later than 5:30AM before they get ready for work. **Also, I have been told that the rooftop park will be closed on Yankee Home Game days? This is unacceptable.**

This new park needs to be available at all times considering it's replacing a park that was not restricted on home game days. Metal security gates have been installed at access points to the new rooftop park easily allowing park/police officials to close the park during home games. This new park cannot be considered a replacement park unless it's open the same times the old "walk on" track and field at Macombs Dam was. That is only fair. Also, all of the parks appear to be well behind the stated construction schedules. However, the stadium and the new parking garage were finished in time for the first home game of the season. The priority favors the Yankee Organization, not the community in which the stadium resides. This is not right. The community was told it would have replacement parks available when the stadium was completed, excepting Heritage Field of course. None of them are currently available.

**Maintenance of Replacement Parks**—My other major concern is maintenance of these parks once they do open. Neighborhood residents have watched while nearly 60% of the new plantings (less than one year old) along the Grand Concourse medians have died due to lack of water. Evidently there was an issue between ConEd and the Department of Transportation regarding who was going to pay for the water in the new sprinkler system. With the brown and dead plants highlighting the newly redesigned Grand Concourse why should we think maintenance of the new parks will be any different? I have been told Parks is going to administer the replacement parks and the Grand Concourse Malls.

- Will any Parks Enforcement Patrol officers be assigned to this area?
- What will the maintenance staffing be beyond picking up trash?
- Will there be a parks keeper to insure new trees are watered and vegetation is taken care of?
- Parks has issues maintaining sprinkler systems that are well-documented. What is going to be different about these new parks in these financially challenging times? Will parks officials blame neighborhood children for breaking the sprinkler systems? And then indicate that parks only has a certain amount of plumbers to replace them?