PROSPECT PARK ALLIANCE AND PROSPECT PARK BASEBALL ASSOCIATION
CELEBRATE OPENING DAY

Mayor Bill de Blasio, Council Member Brad Lander, Parks Commissioner Join Celebration

Event Marks the Reopening of Long Meadow Ball Field 1
Renovated by the Prospect Park Alliance with Funding From the City Council

BROOKLYN, April 4, 2016 – On Saturday, April 2, Mayor Bill de Blasio, Council Member Brad Lander, Borough President Eric Adams, Comptroller Scott Stringer, and other local elected officials joined the Prospect Park Alliance and the Prospect Park Baseball Association to celebrate this year’s Opening Day in Prospect Park.

Over 1,000 players ages 4-18 paraded down Seventh Avenue in Park Slope, led by local marching bands and civic leaders, to celebrate the start of the ball-playing season. The parade culminated at the Long Meadow Ball Fields for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the reopening of Field 1, which was restored by the Prospect Park Alliance as part of a phased project to renovate the Long Meadow Ball Fields and surrounding landscapes. The second phase of the project, the restoration of Fields 6 and 7, will begin this month. The first and second phases of the Long Meadow Ball Field restoration were funded through the Brooklyn Borough President’s office, Council Members Brad Lander and Stephen Levin, and the Brooklyn Delegation.

“This year I’m thrilled to not only be celebrating the return of spring, and the return of another fantastic little league season, but also the return of Field 1 to the line-up of great recreational spaces at Prospect Park,” said Council Member Brad Lander. “Prospect Park is Brooklyn’s backyard, and I’m proud to support the restoration of the ball fields, starting with field 1 and continuing on to fields 6 and 7. Thanks to Council Member Levin, our fellow members of the Brooklyn council delegation, and Borough President Adams for their continued support as well. I look forward to watching many new games on our restored fields.”

“The restoration of the Long Meadow Ball Fields, an important Park amenity used by thousands of youth and adult league players each year, gives us extra cause to celebrate this year’s Opening Day,” said Prospect Park Alliance President Sue Donoghue. “We are so grateful to the Borough President, Council Members Lander and Levin, and the Brooklyn Delegation for their continued support and look forward to beginning the second phase of this project, the restoration of Ball Fields 6 and 7.”

“Baseball is the quintessential Brooklyn pastime,” said Mayor Bill de Blasio. “I’m incredibly proud that we can celebrate the long-awaited reopening of Field 1 at Prospect Park’s Long Meadow Ball Fields as we kickoff little league season, and I commend the Prospect Park Alliance for their vision in rejuvenating this important community space.”
“While youth baseball seems to be waning in the rest of Brooklyn, here it is alive and thriving,” said Eddie Albert, President of the Prospect Park Baseball Association. “Much of this is due to the unwavering support of our elected officials, Sue Donoghue and the dedicated people at the Prospect Park Alliance. All the children of Mayor de Blasio, Councilmember Lander and Sue Donoghue have played on teams in our organization. They know and understand the importance of learning the lessons of teamwork and gradual skill building. We are proud to be such an integral part of the youth of our community and give thanks to all the volunteer parent coaches who dedicate their time and effort to make these experiences successful.”

“Stewardship of Prospect Park is vital to the health of our community and all of Brooklyn,” said Assembly Member Jim Brennan. “There are few things more pleasant than a day in the park. The restored field means more playing days, more opportunities for families to be outdoors and more civic pride. I am very much looking forward to Opening Day.”

Although the Opening Day parade traditionally culminates at the Bandshell, this year the parade ended at the newly renovated ball field. Throughout the spring, summer and fall, the field will be in constant use by local baseball, softball and soccer leagues. The site is one of seven ball fields on the lower Long Meadow.

Field 1 restoration included improving drainage through field re-grading and a new sub-surface drainage system. These steps ensure that the field will be usable during wet weather. In addition, the backstop was reconstructed and a storage bin was added to hold ball field clay on site. New dugouts with accessible paths were installed, and a multi-sport skinned infield was created to support both baseball and softball play. The pathways around this area were re-paved, with new lighting, benches, an additional drinking fountain and bike racks installed. A new stabilized path was added, the nearby Bridle Path was reconstructed, and topography was subtly changed to provide a viewing and picnicking area near the outfield. Finally, the Alliance planted many new trees.

The Prospect Park Alliance, through funding from the Brooklyn Borough President’s office, Council Members Brad Lander and Stephen Levin, and the City Council’s Brooklyn Delegation, plans to make renovations and drainage improvements on each of the seven fields, continuing with Fields 6 and 7, which will begin this month. Turf and infield areas will be reconstructed, paths will be resurfaced and new trees will be planted. Additionally, the Alliance will reconstruct the drainage system. The project will conclude in Fall 2017, and the fields will reopen for ball play in Spring 2018, in order to give the turf a chance to grow.

About the Prospect Park Alliance
Founded in 1987, Prospect Park Alliance is a non-profit organization that sustains, restores and advances Prospect Park, Brooklyn’s flagship park, in partnership with the City of New York. The Alliance provides a majority of the staff and operating budget for the Park, caring for the natural environment, restoring historic design, and providing public programs and amenities for the Park, which receives more than 10 million visits each year. Learn more at www.prospectpark.org.

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