



District Office

8703 3rd Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11209
718-748-5200

The Council
Of
The City of New York

City Hall Office

250 Broadway
New York, NY 10007
212-788-7363

Vincent J. Gentile

Council Member
43rd District – Brooklyn

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CONTACT: Dena Libner

Call: 718-748-5200

212-788-7363

www.vincentgentile.blogspot.com

Councilman Gentile Kicks Off Two Parks Projects In One Day

BAY RIDGE—Councilman Vincent Gentile, securing nearly \$4 million for two separate parks projects in District 43, broke ground on the both projects on Thursday, July 9. As a result, the Leif Ericson Park Dustbowl will be outfitted with a state-of-the-art synthetic turf, and the Owl's Head Park Overlook will be revamped into a venue for cultural performances and events.

Leif Ericson Park Dustbowl

Councilman Gentile secured \$2.6 million for the Dustbowl project alone. The Dustbowl, located at 65th Street and 8th Avenue, is a dusty expanse that makes playing baseball or any other sport difficult – and dirty. Grass had been planted twice on the field, but did not survive – the synthetic turf funded by Councilman Gentile will allow sports ranging from baseball to soccer to football fun, safe and clean.

“We’re going to have to come up with a different name for this spot than the Dustbowl,” Councilman Gentile told onlookers at the July 8 groundbreaking event. “Playing ball here, with the new bleachers, lights and turf, is going to feel like playing ball at Shea Stadium!”

The project will also include new basketball backstops, portable pitchers’ mounds, portable soccer goals, benches, bleachers and sports lighting. A new drainage system, equipment storage unit and perimeter chain link fence will also be installed.

Bay Ridge’s Quaker Parrots have long made their home in the lighting towers surrounding the field. Councilman Gentile made sure special precautions would be taken to ensure their safety during the field’s construction and that they would have a home when the project was completed: new trees will be planted and nesting platforms will be constructed on the lighting towers to house the parrots.

Borough President Marty Markowitz contributed \$165,000 to this project.

Owl's Head Park Overlook

Councilman Gentile secured \$1.35 million for the renovation of Owl's Head Park Overlook and its 70-year-old terrace. The project will include paving, benches, fencing and landscaping; a new path will grant park patrons access to the upper terrace. A drinking fountain, bike rack, electric service and additional lighting will also be installed.

"I look at our million-dollar view of The Narrows and Staten Island, and can't help but imagine the performances and events we're going to enjoy along with the view when this project is complete," Councilman Gentile said. "The Overlook is going to become a destination spot for families looking to enjoy beautiful weather, scenery and cultural performances, and I can't wait to celebrate the project's completion with a live performance!"

Mayor Michael Bloomberg contributed \$255,000 to this project.

In a future phase, the asphalt pathway at Owl's Head Park will be transformed into a shared pedestrian and bicycle path that will connect the bike route at Colonial Road to the Shore Parkway Greenway. This \$1.28 million upgrade will be funded by Mayor Michael Bloomberg and a federal grant.