

April 8, 2025

Hon. Eric E. Adams
Mayor, City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Adams:

As representatives of Central Park and the adjacent neighborhoods, we write to request that you end the ongoing Request for Proposal (RFP) process with for-profit developers to run Wollman Rink and enter into negotiations with the not-for-profit Central Park Conservancy, which has already offered to invest some \$120 million to re-imagine the entire southeast quadrant of the Park and operate Wollman in a manner that would be better for the public and better for the Park than any private company.

When Wollman and Lasker Rinks opened decades ago, they were run by the City and the public was charged a nominal entrance fee, and free programming was available. When the City could no longer afford to maintain these facilities, license agreements were granted to concessionaires. While there is a place for private concessions in public parks to help buttress amenities that the City is unable to provide, it is not the best course when there is a willing and capable non-profit partner with the capacity and experience to undertake big projects, as there is in Central Park.

The old Lasker Rink has very recently been transformed into a magnificent new facility, now known as the Davis Center, by the Central Park Conservancy through a sole source agreement granted by the city of New York. The Conservancy's proposal to similarly re-imagine Wollman and the surrounding landscapes – detailed in a letter to your administration last October 18, 2024 -- would create financial and operational efficiencies through linking the management of Wollman and Davis, including the coordination of programming, oversight, and capital projects.

It would also turn Wollman into a truly public facility – with bathrooms that are accessible to the public, a restaurant open to all, and recreational offerings that would be far more affordable to the public than any private developer would want to provide. And it could be done in a manner that still provided a revenue stream for the City, and was sensitive to the Park's surrounding landscapes, many of which are in dire need of improvement. Specifically:

- **Accessibility.** Wollman Rink is the lowest point in Central Park and, as a result, many of the approaches to the facility are steep and out of compliance with modern ADA guidelines. Fixing those footpaths should be part of new infrastructure investments, and it should be done in a manner that seamlessly joins with the upgraded facility with the surrounding landscapes.

- **Flooding.** The failing stormwater and filtration infrastructure at Wollman and the adjacent lawns are unable to handle extreme weather events that inundate the Park drainage system and contribute to stormwater flooding. Overflowing storm sewers within parks and throughout the floodplain can lead to pooling and standing water if areas are not properly graded. Under your leadership, the City has invested heavily in vital anti-stormwater flooding projects. Studies show that every \$1 in flood mitigation saves \$7 in recovery costs. No private developer can or should be expected to tackle this kind of work in a public park, as the Conservancy has for years.
- **The Pond.** The waterbody adjacent to Wollman (The Pond) is also in dire need of dredging after decades of run-off from the surrounding landscapes, which includes a significant amount of drainage from Wollman and its rink. Due to these conditions, The Pond has silted up significantly, reducing its capacity to store water. Like the footpaths, this work is most sensibly done through a holistic and contextual approach.

The City is under no obligation to select bids received through the RFP process. The Conservancy has shown its commitment to the Parks Department and the people of New York City for decades. As official stewards of the Park for more than 40 years, the Conservancy is uniquely qualified and equipped to manage Wollman Rink and to undertake the necessary work surrounding the facility in a manner that is holistic and of the highest standards, just as they have at the new Davis Center at the Harlem Meer.

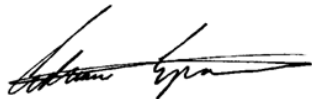
Sincerely,



Council Member Gale A. Brewer



Congressman Jerry Nadler



Congressman Adriano Espaillat



Borough President Mark Levine



State Senator Cordell Cleare



State Senator Liz Kruger



State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal



State Senator Jose Serrano



Assemblymember Alex Bores



Assemblymember Eddie Gibbs



Assemblymember Micah Lasher



Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal



Assemblymember Tony Simone



Assemblymember Jordan Wright



Council Member Diana Ayala



Council Member Shekar Krishnan



Council Member Julie Menin



Council Member Keith Powers



Council Member Yusef Salaam