

Gramercy Park Overview: Trustees of Gramercy Park, Gramercy Park Block Association

Trustees of Gramercy Park

Gramercy Park is a private ornamental park and surrounding residential district created in 1831 under a deed established by Samuel B. Ruggles, who vested the title to the Park in the Trustees. Mr. Ruggles granted the owners of surrounding residential lots and all subsequent owners “the right and privilege to frequent, use, and enjoy the Park as an easement to their respective lots.” The Park is managed by the “Park Trust” which consists of five lifetime Trustees. The conditions of Ruggles’ original 1831 deed still govern the Park today. Its provisions include an annual assessment imposed on each of the Lots to cover annual operating expenses and capital improvement projects. Park keys are annually provided to the owners of each of the surrounding Lots. The buildings on the Park have between 1-4 lots based on their Park frontage. The budget includes maintenance, payroll, security, administrative services, community relations, public relations, Park operations, events, professional fees, horticultural plants and bulbs, tree/shrub planting and care, supplies, repairs and/or restoration of the following: sidewalks, monuments, sprinkler system, equipment, benches, etc.

The Gramercy Park Block Association

Mr. Ruggles could not have imagined that his small residential community of Lot owners would eventually be home to over 2,000 residents. Nor could he have envisioned that Gramercy Park would be at the center of some of the densest neighborhoods and most desirable real estate in the world. The Gramercy Park Block Association organizes the community to fight battles to keep the Park private, and the surrounding lots residential. Under a service contract with the Park Trustees, and under their direction supervision, the GPBA provides administrative services, community and public relations, and manages Park operations and maintenance. The GPBA also manages Park events including: Palm Sunday, Easter, Fall Event, Edwin Booth’s Birthday, Christmas Tree arrival, Chanukah Menorah Lighting, Christmas Eve Caroling

The GPBA addresses safety, security, quality of life and preservation issues for the Gramercy Park community including:

- Fights legal actions that threaten the Park
- Fights threats to the residential nature of Gramercy Park
- Keeps out commercial development, tall buildings, nightlife, bars
- Addresses problems affecting the community's quality of life
- Monitors Gramercy Park building historic preservation projects
- Serves as problem-solving liaison to local police and city agencies
- Organizes Neighbors Helping Neighbors campaigns to take care of less fortunate neighbors
- Distributes regular Gramercy Park e-newsletters
- Organizes neighborhood events including: Remembrance event honoring fallen NYPD at the National Arts Club, Make Music New York, National Night Out Against Crime, World Trade Center Remembrance Ceremony and Breakfast, Veterans Day Luncheon, 13th Precinct Family Holiday Party, ESU Family Holiday Party, Paddy Maguire Toy Drive, Neighborhood Holiday Party

GPBA Services for the Trustees of Gramercy Park

Provided under service contract with the Trustees of Gramercy Park, under their direct supervision

Administrative Services

- Manage data services, office equipment, supplies
- Set up and maintain Trustee archives, Lot Owner files, records
- December through April - Manage annual Lot Owner assessments and key requests, coordinate with Key Assistant on the following:
 - Identify current Lot Owners, update contact information
 - Identify current managing agents, update contact information
 - Coordinate with building boards, owners, managing agents to update database of residents
 - Develop content of assessment materials
 - Manage personal key requests, facilitate key requests throughout the year
- Respond to all requests for Park use
- Manage Park Operations and Maintenance
 - Supervise daily work of Park caretakers, troubleshoot when necessary
 - Oversee landscape/horticulture programs - tree maintenance, seasonal cleanups, gravel replacement, threshold installation, historic preservation projects, Calder sculpture, etc.
 - Facilitate endowing trees and benches
 - Manage streetscape projects - Neighborhood Cleanup, cobblestone restoration, tree pit restoration and planting, sidewalk conditions, etc.
- Schedule and coordinate meetings
- Provide other clerical support to the Trustees as needed

Public and Community Relations

- Write and distribute communications, including all correspondence and materials concerning Park operations, maintenance, rules, projects, issues, events, etc.
- Write and distribute Gramercy Park News e-newsletter about Park operations, maintenance, rules, projects, issues, events, etc.
- Maintain and update Constant Contact database of Park resident email addresses
- Respond daily to e-mails, letters, phone calls and in-person inquiries from Lot Owners, residents and managing agents and serve as problem-solving and information resource
- Manage production of printed materials, distribute to 39 Lot Owner buildings
- Manage media relations, including social media and traditional press
 - Draft and distribute information to press
 - Schedule interviews
 - Manage social media, post articles on Park projects, events, issues
 - Distribute newspapers with articles on Park projects, events, issues
 - Manage, update press list of over 70 newspapers, blogs, other media
- Photograph and document Park projects, plantings, events
- Serve as Park liaison to NYPD and City agencies
 - Address quality of life issues that impact Park i.e. traffic, encroaching nightlife, overdevelopment, film shoots, noise, sanitation, homelessness, etc.
 - Address security issues that impact Park i.e. vandalism, robberies, burglaries, assaults, etc.
 - Coordinate with NYPD to provide access to Park video surveillance cameras

- Document and alert neighbors of safety concerns impacting Park
- Coordinate with DOT on traffic issues affecting the Park
- Monitor and advise Lot Owner buildings on historic preservation projects

GPBA work for the Trustees for the Future of Gramercy Park

- Secure and set up office
- Create a sustainable administrative and financial infrastructure that encompasses Park work
- Create a sustainable infrastructure for Park operations and maintenance
- Identify and mentor the next generation of leadership
- Create archives and a library
- Design a succession plan to ensure a seamless transfer of responsibilities

Gramercy Park Operations and Maintenance

Set up and managed by GPBA, under direct supervision of the Park Trustees

Beginning in 2003, GPBA researched, interviewed, and requested proposals from contractors, and set up Park operations and maintenance processes and systems. Working with the Park Project Manager, the GPBA continues to manage Park work in the following areas:

Park Staff and Operations

- Created staff job descriptions
- Set up operations
- Hold daily staff meetings
- Coordinate between full-time staff, part-time and contractors

Park Horticulture – planting, year-round care

- Trees
- Shrubbery, other plantings
- Flowerbeds
- Lawns
- Bulbs throughout the Park – 10,000
- Wellhead and urns
- 9/11 Memorial Garden behind fountain
- Garden around Booth statue
- Garden behind shed
- Area around Ruggles fountain
- Lexington Avenue planters
- Christmas Tree installation

Park Systems, Supplies and Equipment

- Park video surveillance system
- Irrigation system
- Electrical system upgrade
- Hazard lights at north and south gates
- Signage
- Exterminator services
- New maintenance equipment
- Supplies

Park Restoration Projects and Ongoing Maintenance, Repairs

Park fence

Park shed

Park benches

Park artifacts

Flag pole

Calder sculpture installation

Cobblestone thresholds installation

Gravel resurfacing

Major Gramercy Park projects organized by GPBA, with funds facilitated by GPBA

Restoration and planting of 41 tree gardens surrounding Gramercy Park

Restored wrought iron fence and cobblestone, iron box installation, set up seasonal planting schedule.

Annual Gramercy Park Neighborhood Cleanup and Preservation

Remove of graffiti, paint: Muni-Meters, trash receptacles, fire hydrants, traffic sign poles, yellow parking lines, traffic light control boxes, lampposts, and power wash bluestone sidewalks around Gramercy Park.

Gramercy Park Master Plan

Topographic and utility survey, soil analysis, tree and shrub analysis, hardscape inventory and analysis, review with Park staff, operations and management.

Gramercy Park Trash Receptacles

Purchased, installed and maintain trash receptacles surrounding Gramercy Park.