

New Lincoln Road Playground Slated for 2028

By David Flumenbaum

In November, the Prospect Park Alliance announced that plans for a redesign of the Lincoln Road Playground had been approved by NYC Public Design Commission. Opening in 1941 as part of a sweeping New Deal program, the Lincoln Road Playground has served PLG children for 85 years as an indispensable community space for families. The Echo spoke with Prospect Park Alliance landscape architect Rob Garcia, one of the leaders of the project, on what PLG kids and parents can expect from the new playground.

Echo: What can the kids of Prospect Lefferts Gardens look forward to in the redesigned Lincoln Road Playground?

Rob Garcia: In addition to new age specific play equipment, children can look forward to an improved centralized water play and a new sensory garden area located between the woodland themed play areas for 2-5 and 5-12 age groups. These areas provide engaging sensory interactions and act as a buffer between the age specific play areas to improve the overall play experience for all age groups. The 2-5 ages play area will feature a Robinia wood equipment and a variety of climbing, balancing, sliding and ground play elements. The woodland themed ramped play structure will include hammock seating, play panels, a slide, and transfer stations to create an inclusive experience. A leaf climber and a balance course leading to the playhouse structure promotes lower level climbing and interaction. The playhouse structure steps and rope climber that leads to an elevated slide platform which provides an experience for adventurous children in this age group. On the other side of the playground, the 5-12 age group will have a mix of new steel and Robinia woodland themed equipment. The biggest



Image: Prospect Park Alliance

addition being a new steel tower structure featuring ropes and elevated climbing challenges, two slides, play panels, talking tubes, hammocks, and sensory engaging elements beneath it. A tower structure with elevated platforms will be fully enclosed in a reinforced wire mesh, allowing children to safely climb to be at eye level of the surrounding tree canopy. A new rope course and lower accessible Robinia ramp structure will offer more adventurous play for the older age group closer to the ground. At the ground level new belt and accessible swings, play panels and spinners provide engaging sensory experiences.

Echo: How long should PLG families expect the playground to be closed during renovation?

Garcia: Both playground projects (Third Street and Lincoln Road) are slated to begin construction in 2027 and open for the community in 2028, following the City's three-phase

design, procurement and construction process.

Echo: Will all of the current structures/features be replaced? Are there any key features that will be retained in the new design?

Garcia: All of the play structures, with the exception of the existing bucket swings, frogs and existing tree pit decking will be replaced. Bucket swings, frogs and existing tree pit decking will all be restored and retained in the new design. Many of the perimeter benches will be preserved and restored with the addition of armrests for improved accessibility. The existing 7-foot tall perimeter fencing will be restored and existing gates will be modified to be 4-foot tall for improved access. The topical hardwood decking from the existing play equipment will be salvaged and used as the decking for the new tree covered boardwalk that

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Stoop Talk

By Roberta Woefling

I'm sitting here with my Rutland I neighbor Nina Browne, to discuss her solo art show "Notice/Know/Kin: A Human/Tree Biography" running at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Conservatory Gallery until March 15th.

Roberta: I've known you for... is it 25 years, Nina? When we first met, you were a professional woodworker. At the same time, you always seemed to be super learned on plants, trees and tree pits. During block cleanups, you distributed and explained Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG) handouts about tree bed care to everyone. Next thing you know, you're an educator at the Botanic Garden (and still are). And now, out of the blue, you're an artist. I wasn't aware of this latest stage, so I thought it would be a good opportunity to sit down and get your input on these transitions and evolutions. Where do you want to start, Nina?

Nina: It's interesting to me how we put people into categories -- you were a woodworker, now you're a painter. But everyone is a whole, mysterious combination of things. Part of putting together the story of this exhibit was to explore how all these paths in my life intersect and I hope people find the parallels in their own lives. It's not like I left any part of my life behind. I carry them with me everywhere, from training as an anthropologist, to being an educator, to being an ecologically-minded furnitur maker, to being a parent, to doing marquetry.

Roberta: What's marquetry?

Nina: Marquetry is "painting" with wood veneers. It's an art form that originated in ancient Egypt where wood veneers are cut and assembled piece by piece to make pictures, sort of like a jigsaw puzzle. I have some of this work on display in the show. I often used marquetry on sacred objects like altars boxes and memory boxes. For a time I had my own business, and a few neighbors might remember me trying to make a living at that. But 25 years ago, it was hard to be

taken seriously as a woman in this trade. It was amazing to see how easily people accepted me as a gardener, whereas it was so hard for people to trust that I was a good woodworker. Ironically, I was a talented and experienced woodworker, but a total beginner gardener.

Roberta: So, it's not "out of the blue," but a slow progression of skills that were already in your wheelhouse. Where did the art come in?

Nina: My mom is a painter and she put a paintbrush in my hand for the first time. Some of my earliest memories are standing in our kitchen in Paterson NJ, where I grew up, at my little easel, painting. I've always loved to paint.

Roberta: So, art was just part of you.

Nina: Absolutely. When I chose to train as a cabinet and furniture maker, it was a way for me to become a useful artist in a way that I thought I'd be able to make an income. I think I internalized a lot of bias from society that says, "You can't make a living as an artist."

Roberta: My assumption, as an architect, is that when you were a woodworker, you were making cabinets for kitchens, for example.

Nina: I did that, too. That was my bread and butter for most of my woodworking career.

Roberta: I guess I didn't know much beyond that. Not that I don't associate artistry and spirituality with you, because you do come across that way. These qualities are evident in your exhibition. You are earthy, grounded and connected to nature. I won't say you're nature incarnate, but you are, sort of.

Nina: We all are.

Roberta: Well, that's true.

Nina: An important step in my journey was attending interspiritual seminary. Near the end of our studies, a group of seminary colleagues gifted me a Quaker-inspired "clearness committee." They asked me questions to help me discern how I was going to show up in the world, and

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Elaine Marvin, Wife of LMA President, Dies at 79

By Bob Marvin

Elaine Marvin, a resident of Midwood Street for over 50 years passed away peacefully at home, in her sleep, on September 24, 2025. Elaine had been in declining health following a brain bleed, caused by a fall, in June 2024, but her passing was unexpected.

Elaine was devoted to our neighborhood. After being introduced to Prospect Lefferts Gardens on the 1974 house tour, she worked on every house tour from 1975 through 2019; she was scheduled to work on the 2024 house tour, but her brain bleed occurred the night before.

Elaine was an early childhood elementary school teacher for over 30 years, starting in 1968 at P.S. 178 in the Ocean Hill Brownsville Demonstration District, where the idealistic young teachers frequently visited their students at home. She later taught at P.S. 165, in Brownsville, and at P.S. 58, in Carroll Gardens. Elaine was also devoted to Prospect Park. She taught for a time at the Brooklyn Center for the Environment and the Prospect Park Audubon Center, appropriate places because of her love of nature, especially birds. Elaine loved birds so much that she had an artist paint the front parlor ceiling of her home with a mural including a cloudy sky with many local birds. She said that she wanted that done so she could look at it should she ever be unable to visit the park.

Elaine is survived by her husband of 55 years, LMA President Bob Marvin and by her son Jonathan, daughter in law Onilé, and grandson Freddy.



Lincoln Road Playground

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provides shade through the middle of the playground. The existing play equipment decking is in excellent shape. From the start of the project, we wanted to find a way to repurpose this material and extend its use in a sustainable way.

Echo: The theme for the restoration is “Layers of the Forest” Can you elaborate on what this means for the play equipment and playground features?

Garcia: The “Layers of the Forest” is in reference to the three layers (forest floor, understory, and overstory canopy) of Prospect Park’s forest. The playground is surrounded by woodlands, and we thought it would be really fun to frame play and experiences around each forest layer to target different age groups, allowing children to remain engaged as they mature with the playground. The equipment and features selected are all meant to facilitate movements, challenges, and experiences encountered while interacting with the different layers of a forest. The 2-5 ages play areas feature more lower-level climbing and balance equipment based around challenges such as stumps, tree trunks, and branches encountered on the forest floor. The new trees, wood equipment, sensory garden and stone elements allow children to engage different textures and sensory experiences. The 5-12 aged play areas offer more challenging unscripted play, featuring climbing and elevated experiences encountered in the understory and overstory canopy layers. Spinners, rattle wheels and swings facilitate wind, sound, and motion experiences encountered in the upper canopies at the ground level. The 5 new native black tupelo trees being installed through the middle of the playground build upon the existing tree canopy and create a more wooded environment, providing kids with the feeling of playing in a woodland, instead of next to one.

Echo: What are some of the broader general concerns/modernizations that go into NYC playground redesign these days?

Garcia: I think there is a greater focus on inclusivity and accessibility when designing play equipment and spaces. As with any project we always want to produce a design that ensures all in our community are able to enjoy Lincoln Road playground. As you know, our neighboring communities have strong connections with the park and the playground, which puts extra emphasis on engaging the community early on. At the start of the playground project, Prospect Park Alliance went through an extensive community engagement process. Before developing any designs we held multiple community workshops that included virtual meetings, tabling at the playground, and surveys where playground users shared feedback and desires. This community feedback helped us envision the future playground design. Key community feedback we heard from this outreach was a strong desire for more shade elements, improved water play, swings for older kids and a greater variety of more complex climbing elements. Parents, caretakers and educators also expressed interest in a gathering space that can facilitate larger groups and families. The kids’ raw feedback like adding a zip line or giant slides really challenged us to select equipment that lived up to the kids’ expectations.

Echo: Will those fascinating metal frog sprinklers survive the restoration?

Garcia: Yes, they will survive the restoration. The frogs will be restored with new spray nozzles and used as water features along with supplemental ground jets in the proposed water play design. The frog at the north end of the water play, closer to the tot area, will feature an arched spray pattern accompanied by shorter ground jets and mini domes that cater to the younger group.

Lincoln II Resident Thomas Jambois Dies at 83

Thomas Frederick Jambois died on July 7, 2025 in Nice, France of an apparent heart attack doing what he loved -- snorkeling in the ocean. He was there visiting his good friends, having wonderful meals and enjoying life.

Born January 18, 1942 at Wisconsin’s Richland Center Hospital to Eleanor Jambois, née Joyce, a teacher and subsequent homemaker, and William Henry Jambois, a barber who started Bill’s Barbershop in Monona, Wisconsin. Thomas graduated Magna Cum Laude from Harvard University in 1964 and received his Ph.D. in Mathematics from UC Berkeley in 1968. In 1974 he married the love of his life, Emilie Lowerre, who sadly passed away on her birthday, May 25, in the year 2010. Tom taught Mathematics at Hunter College, CUNY, until he retired in 2018.

Tom and Emilie bought their Brooklyn Brownstone in 1978 and lovingly restored and maintained it, with Tom doing a major restoration in the last few years. He was preceded in death by his parents and his wonderful wife, Emilie. He is survived by all of his siblings -- Mary Kniaz, Judy Womack (Boyd), and “the twins” William (Gloria) and Robert (Beverly).

Tom loved to share wine from his vast wine cellar and he loved to dine on fine food, which he prepared in his phenomenal kitchen. A well-informed conversationalist, Tom had wide ranging interests from fine wines, to scuba diving, to binge watching, to travel, to opera - he was a subscriber to The Metropolitan Opera, Carnegie Hall and the Chamber Music Society. Most of all he loved spending good times with family and friends. Tom was deeply loved and will be sorely missed by all who knew him.



Stoop Talk

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what kept coming up were plants and trees, especially trees, and community. Working as the sole proprietor of a small woodworking business was not only hard financially, it was not a great fit for me. I am very much a collaborator. I enjoy working with other people.

Roberta: It’s hard working for yourself. No chitchat or office banter. It’s just you.

Nina: And I really longed to connect with living trees. I had been working with dead trees for a long time. I loved these dead trees and cared for their bodies that gave me so much, but I felt like I needed to give something back to them while they were alive. So, I started taking classes at the Botanic Garden in “street tree stewardship.” That’s when, you remember, I’d come to our block association meetings saying, “Hey, we’re doing everything wrong!”

Roberta: Speaking of BBG, working there seems like a dream job for you. How did it happen and how long have you been there?

Nina: Since I first moved to Brooklyn in my 20s, I’ve always loved going there. I took my kids there almost every day. After taking a class or two, I went to “Making Brooklyn Bloom,” an annual conference that I now help organize. When I helped launch a school garden project at my kids’ public school, I joined BBG’s Garden Alliance, another program that now I manage. I helped organize our block around the Greenest Block contest. When BBG launched the Brooklyn Urban Gardener Program, I was in the first graduating cohort. So I was getting involved in all of BBG’s community programs. When a job opened up working with these programs, it seemed like the universe was telling me something. I jumped on the chance. This winter will be my 15th anniversary with BBG.

Roberta: I assume you know a lot more about plants and trees now than you did before.

Nina: Yes! Plants and plant science are the easier parts. The parts that I’ve been able to learn on the job. Being a good organizer and communicator is the harder part. And the more important part. My job is mainly about relationships and helping Brooklynites build relationships within their communities, rooted in working with and loving plants. I feel like the work that I do listening to people, helping them grow their connections with the natural world is my ministry. It’s such a full-circle moment to be showing my art at BBG!

Roberta: So back to your art show. Considering everything you’ve shared, was there anything specific that you wanted to get across with it?

Nina: A big aspect that people can expect is that the show tries to spark contemplation and conversation. I want to engage people to think about their own relationships with trees and to spark “gift thinking.” So there’s a series of questions that I pose throughout, and I hope folks will pause and consider them and maybe talk about their answers with someone or maybe talk to a tree about it.

Roberta: Well Nina, you certainly are very well-rounded. And yes, full-circle moments were mentioned in the art descriptions at the show, and it was evident that you produced work that embodied an array of your seemingly tangential qualities. It was enlightening for those who didn’t know your background, as I didn’t. You live three houses over and I didn’t know you were painting!

Nina: Yeah, I’m not great at self-promotion or marketing. Though I’m happy you follow me now on Instagram: @myinnernature.art

Christa Hann Foster, PLG Community Leader, Dies at 88

Christa Hann Foster, 88, passed away on May 27, 2025 in Kings County Hospital, Brooklyn, NY. Born in Grassau, Germany, she was the eldest of three children born to Martha and Wilhem Hann. Her parents were pub owners and raised the family in an apartment above the pub.



In the mid-1950s while studying English and German Literature at the prestigious Heidelberg University, she met the love of her life, Cyril “Eddie” Foster. He had been drafted in the U.S. military and was stationed on a U.S. base in Germany and had enrolled at Heidelberg to continue his education. Because of their love of music, it’s not surprising that they met at a jazz club one evening while enjoying the sounds of a live jazz band. Christa and Eddie were married in 1962.

In 1966, Christa and Eddie moved to the U.S. and briefly stayed with his family at 143 Rutland Road. Soon after, they moved into a brand new apartment building at 75 Hawthorne Street and because of their devotion and love of Prospect Lefferts Gardens, they purchased their first home in 1972 at 173 Rutland Road where they remained for the next 53 years.

In the late 1960s, Christa accepted a position with the McGraw Hill Publishing Company and then moved on to work for the Society of Nuclear Medicine, where she became the managing editor for The Journal of Nuclear Medicine helping to promote education, research, professional networking and grassroots activities for nuclear medicine.

Christa was a community activist at heart and with her expert skills for organization and attention to details, served as the Executive Director for the Prospect Lefferts Gardens Neighborhood Association. Having been awarded a state grant, these funds allowed them to focus on neighborhood needs and services. She also volunteered on many other neighborhood organizations and served for many years as the Treasurer for the Lefferts Manor Association. She was also an active member for the Rutland Road Block Association, Brooklyn Botanic Garden and Prospect Park.

Christa loved taking road trips with her husband and family throughout the northeast traveling to Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Canada and also spending time back in Europe.

Christa was a caring and devoted wife, aunt, friend and community activist. For the neighborhood, Christa represented a true community activist and loving neighbor, but to her family in Germany, she was a heroine whose achievements were beyond imagination.

Christa is survived by her brother Eckhardt Hann, niece Conny Hann, her husband Axel, two grandnephews, Jan and Filip, of Germany, sister-in-law Kitrena Foster, niece Terri Foster of Brooklyn, and her devoted caretaker, Sandra Ramdeen and her husband Raj of Queens.



Dues are \$25 per household or \$15 per senior citizen household. Dues cover January through December.

Pay online by using QR code below or clicking on membership link at LeffertsManor.org or go to Lefferts-Manor-Association.square.site.

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