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**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

## **MAYOR ADAMS APPOINTS NYC PARKS LEADERSHIP**

*Susan Donoghue Appointed Commissioner*

*Iris Rodriguez-Rosa Appointed First Deputy Commissioner*

**NEW YORK** – New York City Mayor Eric Adams today announced the appointment of two officials who will carry out his vision for a more equitable parks system where all New Yorkers can enjoy the physical, mental, and emotional benefits that open space provides.

Susan Donoghue will serve as the commissioner of the City of New York Parks & Recreation. In that role, she will oversee more than 30,000 acres of land under the agency’s purview, including parks, playgrounds, recreational facilities, and beaches. A staunch advocate for parks equity, Donoghue will ensure that the agency’s mission of preserving and expanding well-maintained parkland is aligned with the mayor’s goal of reducing long-standing disparities in access to greenspace.

Iris Rodriguez-Rosa will serve as the first deputy commissioner. As first deputy commissioner, Rodriguez-Rosa will manage the agency’s efforts to improve parks throughout the city and create more high-quality greenspaces. A veteran of NYC Parks who currently serves as the Bronx borough commissioner, Rodriguez-Rosa has been a steadfast champion for better parks in underserved areas.

“Parks are more than places for recreation and enjoyment — they are powerful tools for equity,” said **Mayor Adams**. “For too long, many communities throughout our city have been denied easy access to these vital spaces. Under the leadership of Sue Donoghue and Iris Rodriguez-Rosa, we will work to ensure that every New Yorker can enjoy the myriad benefits greenspaces can provide.”

“In between our concrete and asphalt are New York's most precious assets, it's free public green spaces,” said **Deputy Mayor for Operations Meera Joshi**. “Sue and Iris' unwavering commitment to nurturing, and growing our precious parks, ensuring they are available for all and fortifying them against climate crisis will make ours a stronger and more beautiful city.”

“Our parks and open spaces are critical to the quality of life of all New York City residents. They improve the air we breathe, enhance our physical and mental health, and strengthen our communities. I am extremely honored and humbled to take on this role as NYC parks commissioner and work alongside the dedicated and essential workers who care for our 30,000 acres of parkland. Mayor Adams and his administration understand the importance of safe and equitable access to parks for all New Yorkers, and I’m committed to joining the team and ensuring that parks and open spaces across New York City are accessible and welcoming for all,” said **incoming Commissioner Susan Donoghue**.

“I have dedicated my career to making the New York City park-going experience one that helps connect communities to amazing open spaces that provide mental, physical, and emotional benefits to all. I am thankful to Mayor Adams, his administration, and Commissioner Donoghue for allowing me the opportunity to continue to serve the City as its new NYC Parks first deputy commissioner. It is my honor to join the agency’s leadership team and I look forward to continuing to work with our invaluable Parks staff in their steadfast commitment to our great park system,” said **incoming First Deputy Commissioner Iris Rodriguez-Rosa**.

“Across our city, parks and public spaces will be essential to meeting the multiple challenges New York City faces, from public health to climate change and more. From her time at the Prospect Park Alliance and NYC Parks, Commissioner Susan Donoghue brings unmatched expertise and passion for our city's parks. I'm excited to work with Commissioner Donoghue and Deputy Commissioner Rodriguez-Rosa to ensure we deepen our investment in public spaces for all neighborhoods and for future generations,” said **New York City Councilmember Shekar Krishnan, chair, Committee on Parks and Recreation**.

“During the pandemic, New Yorkers gained new appreciation for the incredible resources our parks provide local residents. From fresh air to play space, parks have been lifelines to so many in our communities, and ensuring they continue to be maintained and improved is critical to the health, happiness and success of our City. Both Sue Donoghue and Iris Rodriguez-Rosa will bring incredible knowledge, strong records of service, and a deep commitment to equity to their new roles. I look forward to working with Commissioner Donoghue and First Deputy Commissioner Rodriguez-Rosa to ensure our City's Parks remain the best in the world,” said **New York State Assemblymember Danny O'Donnell, chair, Committee on Tourism, Parks, Arts, and Sports Development**.

“In a challenging time for our city, when New Yorkers relied more than ever on their parks as spaces for recreation, social life, and exercise, Sue Donoghue tapped into the love for Prospect Park and channeled volunteer energy to address staffing shortages and leaned into making the park more inclusive and accessible. I commend the Mayor on a great choices in Sue Donoghue as Parks Commissioner and Iris Rodriguez as Deputy Commissioner, both of whom will bring to our parks a strong emphasis on ensuring all New Yorkers can enjoy them for years to come,” said **New York City Comptroller Brad Lander**.

“Congratulations to Susan Donoghue and Iris Rodriguez-Rosa on their new roles leading our New York City Department of Parks and Recreation,” said **Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson**. "Having quality public park facilities and spaces has always been a priority of mine

as we continue to work to build a healthier Bronx, and First Deputy Commissioner Iris Rodriguez-Rosa has been a champion of parks in The Bronx for years. I look forward to working with both of these dynamic women, and Mayor Adams, to ensure every neighborhood has equitable access to green space and resources in our city.”

“The 32nd Council District is the home of many great parks, the largest being part of over 7 miles of beach along the Rockaway Peninsula. I congratulate Commissioner Susan Donoghue and First Deputy Commissioner Iris Rodriguez-Rosa and look forward to collaborating with them on a plan that will insure all our city's parks are getting their fair share,” said **New York City Councilmember Joann Ariola**.

“I am delighted that two, excellent veteran Parks administrators have been selected to run the Department of Parks and Recreation,” said **New York City Councilmember Gale A. Brewer**. “In Brooklyn, Sue Donoghue established an impressive record from daily operations to strategic vision. Iris Rodriguez-Rosa has a stellar reputation for her efforts in the Bronx. She is always cheerful and cares deeply about how parks can support New Yorkers and their activities and health. Iris’s empathy and strong leadership skills mean that everyone working with her wants to be supportive of her efforts. I join those who are ecstatic about these appointments.”

“New York City’s parks make our communities healthier, happier, and more sustainable. My district is home to some of our city’s great green spaces, like St. Vartan Park, Robert Moses Playground, Bryant Park, and more. I commend Mayor Adams for these appointments and look forward to working with this team to improve our city’s parks,” said **New York City Councilmember Keith Powers**.

“I can’t think of a better person to lead our Parks Department,” said **New York City Councilmember Shahana Hanif**. “I’ve had the privilege to work with Sue over the years to secure much needed funding, including through Participatory Budgeting, for the Endale Arch, the Prospect Park Lake, freeze-resistant water fountains, and other critical upgrades. Sue has a stellar track record leading the Prospect Park Alliance and ensuring the park is an inviting space to all New Yorkers. I look forward to continuing to work with her to make our parks cleaner, greener, filled with free cultural programming, and walkable to everyone regardless of ability.”

“I congratulate our new Department of Parks and Recreation Commissioner, Susan Donoghue,” said **New York City Councilmember Robert Holden**. “Our city’s parks and other recreational sites are a vital part of our communities here in Queens, as are city trees. They are essential to the physical and mental health of all New Yorkers. I have had a productive working relationship with our new First Deputy Commissioner, Iris Rodriguez-Rosa, in the past. I look forward to working with her again, along with Commissioner Donoghue, to keep our parks beautiful and accessible to everyone.”

“I am so thrilled to learn of Susan Donoghue’s appointment as Commissioner of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. Sue has been a staunch steward of Prospect Park for almost ten years, and understands the role parks play in fostering healthy, active, and engaged communities. I’m confident Susan will work tirelessly to preserve our existing parks, playgrounds, and open spaces while simultaneously expanding access to city-run programs and

green spaces in our most marginalized communities,” said **New York City Councilmember Crystal Hudson**.

“The selections of Susan Donoghue as Parks Commissioner and Iris Rodriguez-Rosa as first deputy commissioner are absolutely stellar choices by Mayor Adams. Our parks are essential to our daily lives, and it's of paramount importance that we have thoughtful, experienced leaders to steward them. NYC's parks are in great hands with the selection of both of these women. Prospect Park is my family's backyard, and I'm thrilled that Sue Donoghue, who knows first-hand just how crucial it is to Brooklynites and New Yorkers more broadly, will be in a position to make it better than it already is,” said **New York City Councilmember Rita Joseph**.

"Our parks represent an opportunity to gather, celebrate, de-stress, and find respite. As someone who has lived in Corona my entire life, representing an outer borough district, I've seen how essential parks are to families and older New Yorkers especially in underserved areas and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Our partnership with NYC Parks has been key to improving quality of life and I look forward to building on this with new Commissioner Susan Donoghue and first deputy commissioner—and the first Latina in this role—Iris Rodriguez-Rosa," said **New York City Councilmember Francisco Moya**.

“I am delighted that Mayor Adams has appointed two hard-working and fabulous women, Susan Donoghue, as Commissioner and Iris Rodriguez-Rosa, First Deputy Commissioner of the New York City Parks and Recreation Department. I wish Commissioner Donoghue and Deputy Commissioner Rodriguez-Rosa the best of luck in their new positions, and look forward to working with them to help revitalize and beautify all the parks in the 46<sup>th</sup> District, including the largest park in Brooklyn, Marine Park and the highly utilized, Canarsie Park,” said **Council Member Mercedes Narcisse**.

“Sue Donoghue has been a tremendous leader of the Prospect Park Alliance and I am so happy she will be bringing her expertise to improving and expanding Parks across our city,” said **New York City Councilmember Lincoln Restler**.

“Our Parks play a vital role in the health and well-being of all New Yorkers. During COVID, Parks were often the only source of recreation and solace, and are an important part of the NYC landscape. Parks in the Borough of Queens, and in my district are in great need of resources and attention, which is why I am happy to see that the leadership appointments made by Mayor Adams today are individuals with experience and expertise from throughout the City. I look forward to working with newly named Commissioner, Susan Donoghue, and First Deputy Commissioner, Iris Rodriguez-Rosa, to vitalize our Parks, especially those in Queens,” said **New York City Councilmember Lynn Schulman**.

“I'm ecstatic that both of these women will be our new leaders for the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. I cannot wait to see the great things that will come from this new leadership, as I know their vast knowledge will serve as a vital asset in the progression of The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. I want to send a huge shout out to The First Deputy Commissioner Rodriguez-Rosa representing the Bronx and making us proud

with her hard work and dedication to incorporating high-quality green-spaces in our communities,” said **New York City Councilmember Althea Stevens**.

“As a member of the City Council Parks Committee, I am excited to work with Commissioner Donoghue and Mayor Adams to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to our green spaces,” said **New York City Councilmember Sandra Ung**. “Throughout the pandemic, New Yorkers have come to appreciate our city’s beautiful parks even more than before and it is imperative that we continue to invest in maintaining our green spaces and ensuring equitable access for New Yorkers.”

“Prospect Park Alliance is delighted that Mayor Adams has selected Sue Donoghue as our next Parks Commissioner. In her tenure in Prospect Park, Sue has transformed Brooklyn's Backyard for the benefit of all the communities the park serves, and we thank her for her vision and leadership. In her new role, we know she will be a fighter for all New Yorkers in the preservation and improvement of the City's parks and open spaces, which are essential to our daily lives,” said **Prospect Park Alliance Board of Directors Chair Iris Weinshall**.

“We'd like to send our warm congratulations and support to New York City's new Parks Commissioner Susan Donoghue. As a longtime partner of New Yorkers for Parks, a respected leader within the city’s parks community and a vocal proponent of strengthening New York’s parks system through the Play Fair Coalition, Susan has the experience and vision the Parks Department needs so urgently amid Covid-19—a crisis that continues to underscore how critical it is that New York invest in a more equitable, fully-funded parks system. We look forward to working with Commissioner Donoghue to help advance Mayor Adams' commitment to increasing parks funding to one percent of the City budget and ensuring New Yorkers across the five boroughs have access to safe, vibrant open spaces,” said **New Yorkers for Parks Executive Director Adam Ganser**.

“When Sue Donoghue came to Prospect Park she hit the ground running and happily engaged park users, stakeholders and Community Committee members. It was always a pleasure to speak with her and she always listened to our concerns. I look forward to the rest of the city discovering how good she is at her job and witnessing her continued love of parks. Best of luck to the new Commissioner,” said **Prospect Park Community Committee Chair Dany Cunningham**.

“It has been an honor working with Sue Donoghue throughout New York-Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital's longstanding partnership with the Prospect Park Alliance -- which was made even stronger during the last two years of the pandemic when Prospect Park proved to be vital to the physical and mental health of our community. Susan lives by the Alliance's mission to provide an accessible and equitable resource to the Brooklyn community, and I'm certain that she will only expand on that mission as she broadens her focus to all of New York City. We wish her success in her new role and look forward to continued collaboration,” said **New York-Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital President Robert Guimento**.

“From her work on Census 2020 to centering Caribbean-American culture and heritage, Sue Donoghue has proven time and time again to be an ally in fostering democratic, inclusive and

equitable spaces for Brooklynites and New Yorkers at large. We congratulate Sue on her appointment as NYC Parks Commissioner and applaud Mayor Adams for appointing a leader who can #GetStuffDone,” said **I AM CARIBBEING Founder Shelley Worrell**.

### **About Susan Donoghue**

Susan M. Donoghue will serve as New York City Parks Commissioner. She currently serves as President of Prospect Park Alliance, the non-profit organization that operates the park in partnership with the City of New York, and Prospect Park Administrator.

In this dual appointment by Prospect Park Alliance and NYC Parks, Sue is responsible for setting the vision and overall strategy for Prospect Park, Brooklyn's flagship, 585-acre park. Sue leads a workforce of 200 Alliance and NYC Parks staff in the day-to-day operations of the park, which spans from landscape management to maintenance and operations; design and construction; volunteer services; visitor services; public programs and other functions that keep the park green and vibrant.

As President of the Alliance, Sue oversees fundraising and revenue-generating activities that provide \$12 million in general operating support for the park each year. Since her appointment in 2014, she has been responsible for raising over \$130 million for capital improvements in the park, including the recent restoration of the Flatbush Avenue perimeter and new entrances to the park, and the upcoming restoration of the Vale in the park's northeast corner. Sue led the development of a comprehensive strategic plan for the Alliance, establishing the framework for continued innovation and success. She also spearheaded the transformation of People + Culture at the Alliance through the lens of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Prior to her appointment, Sue served as a Senior Advisor and Assistant Commissioner at NYC Parks, where she played a leadership role in PlaNYC, Mayor Bloomberg's blueprint for enhancing the city's sustainability. Sue earned a Master's in Public Administration from NYU's Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service. She is a long time New Yorker, and she and her husband and three children avidly enjoy New York City parks as part of their daily life.

Commissioner Donoghue will report to Deputy Mayor for Operations Meera Joshi.

### **About Iris Rodriguez-Rosa**

Iris Rodriguez-Rosa will serve as first deputy commissioner of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. She currently serves as Bronx borough commissioner.

Rodriguez-Rosa started her career organizing tenants and the community in Williamsburg Brooklyn in the late 1970s under the Federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) program. She then began public service with the City with Brooklyn Borough President Howard Golden as a community Board liaison and later in 1979 became the District Manager for Community Board 4 in Bushwick Brooklyn, deemed then as the youngest ever appointed. Iris began her career at Parks in 1986 serving as Director of Community Boards; continued as an operations manager in upper Manhattan and for the better part of 20 years; and later served as Chief of Recreation in the Public Programs division in both the Bronx and Queens. It was in this capacity that she realized that bringing health & fitness opportunities to New Yorkers was

exceedingly important, and that parks and facilities offer the perfect environment for creative programming. It was with her initial efforts and support from Parks that she was able to obtain programming funding from elected officials for events such as movie nights, family days and concerts.

As of June 2015, Iris has served as the Bronx Borough Parks Commissioner. In this role she helped work with and merge the Friends of Van Cortlandt Parks and the Van Cortlandt Conservancy to become what is now the Van Cortlandt Alliance; she has been a champion along with former Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. on the renovation of the Orchard Beach Pavilion; and she has helped execute countless playground renovations for the benefits of hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers across the city. Iris is the adoptive parent to her two nieces Sylvia and Jasmine. and helps care for her nephew Jason and grandnephew Amir. Her anchor and best friend are her husband Manny Rosa, and they have five beautiful grandchildren: Noel, Sophia, Annabel, Rafael, and Aaron Jeremiah.

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