

# **Hoving Calls a Meeting to Plan For Restoration of Bryant Park**

Troubled by the growing deterioration of Bryant Park, Parks Commissioner Thomas P. F. Hoving has called a meeting tomorrow of the area's community leaders to discuss plans to restore the park.

The supervisor of the park, Andrew Petrochko, said yesterday that homosexuals, litterers and vandals in the park were creating an unmanageable situation for him and his grounds crew.

Mr. Hoving said he would meet with the Sixth Avenue and Fifth Avenue Associations and with other community leaders at the Overseas Press Club to discuss Bryant Park and to suggest ways to improve the park.

The Commissioner's public relations officer, Mrs. Mary P. Nichols, said that some of the plans included bringing in the department's maintenance crew, which works in the citywide "Operations Spruce-up" program.

Bryant Park, 9.6 acres of

greenery behind the Public Library between 40th and 42d Streets, has for years been the subject of jokes, controversies, complaints, and articles. The homosexual population of the park was discussed in the novel "City of Night," written by a homosexual.

Commenting on the park's deterioration, Mr. Petrochko said:

"It's the worst I've seen it in my 25 years here. In my opinion the three main objectives for restoring this park are getting rid of the undesirables, putting on more permanent staff laborers for Bryant Park, and cracking down on the litterers and the vandals."

"The homosexuals and the wins are my biggest headache," Mr. Petrochko said. "The homosexuals make faces at people during lunchtime and at night occasionally paint the busts of Mr. Goethe and Mr. Dodge with lipstick and rouge."

The police details in the park

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# CLEANUP IS URGED FOR BRYANT PARK

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are irregular, according to Mr. PPetrochko," and the undesirables take advantage of our lack of adequate protection."

"The resident alcoholics," he went on, "sleep in the park and in the daytime annoy everyone by passing out, panhandling, and by rummaging through the garbage cans."

The police round up the alcoholics from time to time, but according to Mr. Petrochko, "once the winos are dried out at Bellevue, they make a beeline for Bryant Park."

Littering and vandalism are "bordering on the ridiculous," a member of the park's maintenance crew said. The crews gather 110 garbage cans and 14 50-gallon drums of litter a

day, in addition to 50 pounds of soot fallout.

Mead Harrison, one of the ground crew, said that the most prolific litterer was a man they call the "Paper Ripper," who has been seen once, but who visits Bryant Park at 10-day intervals with shopping bags filled with 4-by-4 inch squares of newspaper that he scatters all over.

"It takes me practically all day to clean him up," Mr. Harrison said.

## And There's the Pigeons

"Our most persistent vandal is the pigeon," Mr. Petrochko said," because the pigeon eats our ivy, our grass, our flowers, and presents a health menace."

The park's pigeons, which are said to number more than 500, are often carriers of the disease Ornithosis, described by the New York City Health Department as a sometimes fatal ailment of the pulmonary tract when contracted by humans.

"But everyone seems to want to feed them," Mr. Petrochko said, "and even though that's against the law, it's impossible to stop the pigeon feeders."

Commissioner Hoving calls the pigeon "a rat with wings."

Understaffing is the park's "most exasperating problem," one park worker said. The park crew consists of Mr. Petrochko and five laborers.

"But with days off, sicknesses, and requests from Duffy, Herald Greeley Squares for maintenance work, we are usually shorthanded," Mr. Petrochko said.

The Bryant Park crew is also responsible for the maintenance of the flower boxes from 14th to 57th Street.

Mrs. Nichols said that the Commissioner would talk about these problems at tomorrow's meeting.

"We also will be talking to the Police Department soon about providing some kind of program for more patrolmen in the park," Mrs. Nichols said.

Last week mercury-vapor lights were installed in the park for more illumination at night. And there is the possibility, according to Mrs. Nichols, that live music will be provided in the park "to help bring in a better element of people."