

Minutes of the June 26, 2023 Meeting of the Special Committee on
The Hudson River Greenway
(pending committee approval)
Recording Available on YouTube:
<https://youtu.be/iupS8oLx0Ws>

Attendees:

Committee: Bob Bender (chair), Laura Spalter

Other CB8 Members: Steve Froot, David Gellman;
Also, Farrah Kule Rubin, District Manager

Community: Michael Hinman, Dr. Robert Morrow, Brent Schneider (Sen. Rivera's office), Adam Staropoli (Assemblyman Dinowitz's office); Igor Bronz, Brett Costello, Robert Fass, Linda Hirlehy; Jodie Colon, Sherida Paulsen, Yael Levy, Cliff Stanton, Belinda, Bob Walters, Ray Bromley, Michael McHugh, Sanny, Elvis Machuca, Laura Antunez, Tanbir Chowdhury (Councilman Dinowitz's office), Jim Zisfein

Agenda:

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

Minutes of the May, 2022 meeting were approved unanimously.

Discussion of Outreach Efforts Since 2022 Meeting

Committee chair Bob Bender reviewed activity over the past year. Highlights included:

A citywide greenways coalition dedicated to expanding greenways throughout the city. Friends of the Hudson River Greenway in the Bronx (FHRG Bx) has joined, as has the committee, pursuant to the 2014 CB8 resolution endorsing the Hudson River Greenway in the Bronx.

The NYC City Council passed, and Mayor Adams signed, an act authorizing a new greenways map to update the 1993 map. The Hudson River Greenway in the Bronx (HRG Bx) is on the 1993 map as "planned but unbuilt," which remains its status today.

Committee chair Bob Bender and FHRG chair Cliff Stanton have met with DPR and DOT greenways coordinators to brief them on the status of the HRG Bx. Bob and Cliff also met with Hudson Valley Greenway Authority executive director Scott Keller, who advised that the HVGA may provide up to \$500,000 in matching grants for the engineering/environmental study.

Committee members met with Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson and State Sen. Gustavo Rivera to brief them on the HRG Bx. Both are supportive.

Bob has met with staff members of Rep. Ritchie Torres, who represents the northwest Bronx. Both staff members were enthusiastic about the HRG Bx and provided information about possible funding for the engineering/environmental study that is the next step in implementing the HRG Bx.

Bob mentioned that the City of New York received a \$7.5 million RAISE grant (federal transportation grant) on behalf of the Harlem River Working Group to study a Bronx Harlem River greenway from Randalls Island to the Metro North railyard in Marble Hill. Bob said that whatever is good for the Harlem River greenway bodes well for the Hudson greenway and vice-versa.

Two important meetings will take place over the summer. One is a citywide greenways coalition strategic planning meeting; the other is an Environmental Bond Act “listening tour” meeting in the Bronx. The 2022 Environmental Bond Act is a potential source of funding for the engineering/environmental study for the HRG Bx.

Greenway Open Discussion

Dr. Robert Morrow mentioned that a new greenway trail from the Ludlow Metro-North train station is being planned. This station is the northern end of the 2018 Metro-North feasibility study that identified potential routes for the HRG Bx. He also reported on new construction underway near the riverfront in Yonkers.

Cliff Stanton of the FHRG noted that the HRG Bx is farther along than it may appear, and farther along toward fruition than last year.

Robert Fass asked whether there is any risk that Metro-North (MNR) may back away from the feasibility study, given turnover at the agency. Bob replied that while this may be possible, the strong support of elected leaders for the HRG Bx makes this scenario unlikely.

Debra Travis asked about access points to the HRG Bx. Bob acknowledged that the feasibility study has identified access points only at the two MNR stations, Spuyten Duyvil and Riverdale. Other access points will eventually have to be identified.

Debra also asked about resiliency efforts similar to those undertaken on the portion of the Manhattan Hudson River Greenway that is on piers in the Hudson river. Bob noted that environmental mitigation will be required for whatever portion of the HRG Bx is on piers. But the project offers an opportunity to go beyond mitigation to improve resiliency in the river and to mitigate against riverbank erosion caused by rising river levels and storm surges.

Jodie Colon asked which agency will issue an RFP for the engineering/environmental study and which entity will fund it. Bob Bender replied that the operating authority for the HRG Bx has yet to be determined, and that entity will most likely be the lead agency in requesting and overseeing the study. Funding will likely come from the federal or NY state government or a

combination of both, so it is likely that both the city and state will be involved and will between them determine the appropriate lead agency and operating authority.

Laura Spalter thanked the representatives of elected officials who attended the meeting. Bob seconded Laura's thanks and also thanked the ongoing pro bono advice from Leaf Island/Mott McDonald regarding resiliency and other environmental issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 pm.

Minutes written and submitted by Bob Bender