

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SANITATION COMMITTEE OF BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8

AT ITS SEPTEMBER 16, 2020 MEETING

(PENDING COMMITTEE APPROVAL)

In attendance:

Committee members: R. Fanuzzi, K. Argenti, C. Tepelus, R. Spalter, D. Travis, M. Gluck

Community Board members: L. Spalter, D. Jackson, N. Fazio, E. Dinowitz, M. Goodman, D. Gellman

P. Hill (CM Cohen), J. Colon (NYBG), D. Hersch, A. Grullon, L. Chenven, D. Hersch, G. Sherman, J. Webster, L. Kim Alexander, J. Haller, A. Rauch, M. Gibbs, J. Colon, S. Silverman, D. St. Hilaire, L. Mercado, A. Vani Kannan, E. Mory, M. Miller

I. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the Environment and Sanitation Committee meeting of May 17, 2020, were approved unanimously.

II. Chair's Report

- A. NYS Senator Jose Serrano Jr. and Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal co-sponsored a bill to ban the use of the herbicide glyphosate on State property. The chemical is an active ingredient in many common weed killer products and is widely used to kill weeds in parks, playgrounds and picnic areas.
- B. NYC Council passed a bill, Intro. 886A in May 2017 creating an Environmental Justice Working Group and an Advisory Board. The working group is composed of representatives of city agencies, who work with the members of the Advisory Board to develop a citywide, comprehensive Environmental Justice Plan that will provide guidance and recommendations on incorporating Environmental Justice concerns into city decision-making, operations, programs and projects. Environmental Justice defines policies, programs, and sites whose environmental impacts disproportionately affect communities of color and other disadvantaged populations. Chair will seek reports, as required by legislation, and cited environmental justice as part of CB8 Special Committee on Racial Equity efforts to identify potential racial disparities.
- C. DEP reports record low water main breaks due to ongoing repair and replacement.
- D. DDC reports that HEDA 003, water main replacement in the Fort Independence neighborhood is complete. Environment and Sanitation committee recommends that all DDC plans and DEP maps make plans to
- E. NYC DCP will hold a workshop for community members on the Waterfront 2030 plan on October 1, with registration information available through the Board office. NYC DEP produces a comprehensive plan for its waterfronts every 10 years. This workshop addresses the Bronx, Harlem, and Hudson Rivers, and names Bronx CB8 as a stakeholder.
- F. NYC DSNY Commissioner Kathryn Garcia resigned, citing the failure of the Mayor's office to maintain regular garbage pickup in the wake of FY 2021 budget cuts, among other issues. NYC

business leaders have also issued letter to Mayor objecting to sanitation conditions of the city's central business districts.

- G. Chair reports that DEP Green Infrastructure division sees no change to its capital projects schedule or funding, including those for Daylighting of Tibbetts Brook. 6 contracts were completed over the summer. DEP does not have capital commitments for more right of way (street-based) green infrastructure projects, a priority of the E and S committee. The new Private Incentive Program, which provides large institutions with financial incentives and logistical support for the installation of water retention and reservoirs that capture storm water, is put on hold due to cuts to the expense budget.

III. FY 2022 Borough Budget Consultation

The committee prepared the follow questions for the Borough Budget Consultations with DSNY on January 21 and DEP on September 30:

DEP:

Are there any changes to capital commitments for Daylighting of Tibbett's Brook?

Can we request the renovation of DEP-owned unmapped street, Dickenson Avenue, be placed in the 10-year capital plan?

How can ROW Green Infrastructure projects be added to the DEP capital plan?

Does Wards Island 056 have sufficient staff to handle operations despite budget cuts for 2021?

What changes has DEP made to the Jerome Park Reservoir maintenance budgets and contracts for 2021?

DSNY:

How much is the snow removal budget cut and will 2021 be baselined?

How much is the litter basket pick-up service cut?

What changes in frequency are planned in light of budget cuts?

Is the Adopt-a-Basket program still funded?

Committee also discussed DEP property, Dickenson Avenue, and its importance to the planned DOT project connecting Goulden and Dickenson. E and S capital priorities will coordinate with Traffic and Transportation committee priority on the project.

IV. DSNY Organic Food Drop-Off Sites

J. Colon, Manager of NYC Compost Project hosted New York Botanical Gardens, reported on the future of community composting and organic food recycling in NYC. Organic curbside pick-up program and composting education program has been eliminated for FY 2021. Programs were in wide use throughout CD8. J. Colon thanked the committee for letter and the chair for testifying at NYC City Council budget hearings and announced that with the help of CM Cohen, 2.9 million of 6.4 million dedicated to organizations supporting community compost funding has been restored, with funding for

Grow NYC eliminated. DSNY funded NYC Compost project is now based on organic waste drop off sites due to large number of complaints from participants in curbside pick up program and new City Council legislating (CORE) borough drop-off sites. NYC Compost Project is seeking to create 40 new drop off sites throughout the Bronx and at least 3 in CD8. KHCC and Mediator will be adding drop-off services; J. Colon seeks at least 1 more site, and mentioned nearby sites in CD7, including Lehman College and Mosholu Preservation house. NYC Compost Project, email compost@nybg.org, will assist any institution or organization to become a drop-off site but there are no leaf crunches, leaf-pick up, community education, Master Composter courses. Volunteers are essential in the light of program cuts. G. Sherman of KHCC announced start of program encouraged others to serve as drop-off sites.

L. Chenven promoted a network of volunteers connected with cooperatives to visit active drop-off sites and share composting experience. J. Colon welcomed support of volunteers and their coops, and emphasized that mapped sites are open to the public, typically staffed by volunteers, and should have consistent hours. J. Colon also advocated community support for new compost cooperatives and small businesses. Compost may be hauled out of the borough but NYC Compost Project seeks to turn locally generated compost into local soil.

C. Tepus noted absence of drop-off sites in Riverdale and as a future project, encouraged local businesses to host drop-off in central business districts.

J. Colon distinguishes between food waste and wasted food, and noted prior programs at Schervier on the subject. Because food production requires energy and transportation-related environmental costs, she recommends wasting less food and greater attention to food usage as a sustainability strategy in addition to properly preparing composting food waste for volunteers.

L. Mercado, a Master Composter, L. Kim Alexander, and A. Grullon reported on the work of North Bronx Collective restoration project at Tibbett's Tail, on Bailey Avenue. Group, convened in response to COVID partners with Church of the Mediator is removing trash and remediating soil in Tibbett's Tail, expanding the work of Friends of Tibbetts Tail. North Bronx Collective seeks to grow medicinal herbs and host programs at site. J. Colon noted that there is no longer funding for composted soil drop-off to community-based greening sites. North Bronx Collective asks for help from Bronx CB8 in clearing trash from Tibbett's Tail.

V. Special Committee on Racial Equity and Environment and Sanitation Committee

Chair reviewed charge of SCRE and proposed that committee participate in work of NYC Environmental Justice working group and to bring special attention to the budgets and services that affect underserved populations. Committee can review sanitation conditions along Broadway and Bailey Avenue, and record number of baskets, complaints, pick-ups relative to other areas. Chair noted that BIDs and merchant societies can pay for extra sanitation services but many communities are not served by them. Committee discussed absence of merchant supported organizations in areas throughout the district.

N. Fazio of Economic Development Committee expressed interest in evaluating impact of merchant organizations on sanitation conditions and business climate throughout the district.

VI. Old Business

Committee voted to re-prioritize and make additions to committee FY 2022 expense capital priorities in light of FY 2021 budget cuts and current conditions:

1. DSNY--Compost Project: Full support for personnel and equipment required for program training, outreach, and service delivery to members of CD8.
2. DSNY Litter Basket Pick—restoration and expansion of litter basket placement and pick up especially in areas of illegal dumping and heavily trafficked commercial districts.
3. DSNY—Organic Recycling Pick-Up: Full support for personnel and equipment required to maintain regular curbside pick-up of organic waste in CD8.
4. DEP--Air, Noise, and Asbestos Inspectors: Support and expanding staffing and training to enforce new NYC laws
5. DSNY--Manual Litter Patrol Personnel: Support funding for adequate personnel to staff Manual Litter Patrol (MLP) operations to expedite cleaning in hard to access areas of CD8
6. DSNY—Snow Removal: Support restoration of funding for snow removal to FY 2020 level
7. DEP--Jerome Park Reservoir Personnel: Support full deployment of DEP staff to protect and properly maintain DEP property in and around JPR reservoir and to supervise public access to CD8 residents.
8. DSNY--Community Relations: Support addition of personnel, both borough and citywide, to properly engage Community Boards and community organizations with DSNY programs and policies

Capital:

1. DEP--Green Infrastructure: Support expenditure of DEP funds for construction of right of way and public retrofit green infrastructure projects in high flow/flood-prone areas of CD8, in consultation with Environment and Sanitation committee.
2. DEP Dickenson Avenue—Support modifications and improvements in DEP-owned property to enable completion of DOT project at Goulden and Dickenson.
3. DEP--Daylight Tibbetts Brook: Support expenditure of agency funds necessary to daylight the freshwater wetland known as Tibbetts Brook, which currently discharges into the Van Cortlandt Lake Weir and the Broadway sewer, and reconnect it to the Harlem River to reduce combined sewer overflow.
4. DSNY -- Snow Removal Haulster: Support the purchase of an additional haulster to maintain inventory necessary to remove snow from the narrow streets of CD8.
5. DSNY---215th Street Garage Rehabilitation: Support funding for rehabilitation of DSNY Garage Facility supporting service delivery in CD8.

VII. New Business

- A. C. Tepus asked for future meeting to address environmental justice areas in CD8.
- B. J. Webster noted impact of rodent mitigation measures undertaken by private company with support of elected officials in other community districts.

VIII. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

R. Fanuzzi

Environment and Sanitation Committee Chair