

Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Committee on the Hudson River Greenway
April 6, 2021 via Zoom (Pending Committee Approval)

Attendees

Committee: Bob Bender (chair), Dan Padernacht, Laura Spalter

Other CB8: Eric Dinowitz, Steve Froot, David Gellman, Rosemary Ginty, Camelia Tepelus, Debra Travis, Sergio Villaverde

Community: Nortrud Spero, Sura Jesselsohn, Audrey Bleier, Abigail Martin, Betty Klein, Christopher Steffens, Cliff Stanton, Damian McShane, Joe Kozlowski, Jon Orcutt, Judy Gurland, Mike Heller, Robert Fass, Twahira and Jordan, Yael Levy, Robert Morrow, Bernard Stein

Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 PM.

Minutes of the May 2020 committee meeting were unanimously approved.

Update on Outreach on the Hudson River Greenway

Bob Bender provided an update on activity since the last committee meeting. He mentioned the CB8 2014 HRG resolution, the 2016 City Council resolution (994) endorsing the HRG link in the Bronx, and the 2018 Metro-North feasibility study. Bob introduced Cliff Stanton, chair of the Friends of the Hudson River Greenway (FHRG) and mentioned the Memo of Understanding (MOU) between FHRG and the Trust for Public Land (TPL). He also noted that the Department of City Planning (DCP) Vision 2020 Waterfront Plan called for public access to the Hudson River. Recent public meetings organized by DCP identified waterfront access as the number-one priority.

The next step in making the HRG a reality is an engineering study, which is estimated to cost between \$2.5 and \$3.5 million. FHRG and TPL have begun applying for foundation grants to help raise the funds and also as endorsements of the Greenway link in the Bronx and Yonkers.

Introduction of Yonkers Partners

There was discussion of the current state of access to the Hudson in Yonkers by Nortrud Spero and Joe Kozlowski, as well as prospects for improving access. Also discussed was the extent of support for the HRG in Yonkers. According to Nortrud and Joe, support seems to be stronger

among state officials representing the area than among local elected officials, who appear to be more committed to development of the waterfront.

Dr. Robert Morrow spoke on behalf of a paddling and canoe club affiliated with the Beczak Environmental Center in Yonkers that is urging better access to the Hudson in Yonkers. Dr. Morrow said that the Yonkers mayor and city council are proponents of a river walk along the Hudson in Yonkers. He noted that Westchester county legislators representing Yonkers support river access. There was also discussion of how the HRG would best maneuver around the Westchester County sewage plant on the river.

Strategy for Moving Forward

This conversation began with a discussion of the Biden infrastructure proposal in Washington, DC and how the HRG fits with the goals of the proposal. The support of our federal elected representatives, Sens. Schumer and Gillibrand and Rep. Bowman, will be essential to securing federal funding.

Questions and comments followed. Deb Travis asked about the impact of the rising river on Metro-North's Hudson line and what Metro-North's plan is to fortify the riverfront, which so far is unclear. Rosemary Ginty made the point that Metro-North is likely seeking financial aid from the infrastructure bill and we should work with Metro-North. Bob Bender suggested that the best way to do this is through the support of our elected officials. Dr. Morrow recommended reaching out to Rails to Trails. Dan Padernacht suggested contacting Amtrak as well as Metro-North because Amtrak owns the swing bridge at Spuyten Duyvil. Camelia Tepelus reminded everyone that other groups are also seeking federal infrastructure funding so we should move quickly in seeking this funding.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.