

(Pending approval)
Bronx Community Board 8
Minutes of the Environment and Sanitation Committee
Held October 17, 2018 at Mosaic Mental Health Center

Attendance

Committee Members: Laura Spalter, chair, Bob Fanuzzi, vice chair, Bob Bender,
Community members Rob Spalter, ,and Karen Argenti,
Absent: Margaret Della, Michael Frishman, Steve Froot, Martin Gluck

Guests: Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) representatives, Effie Ardizzone,
Bronx Liaison, Steve Elie-Pierre, Lefrak, Michael Bomar, P.E, Project Director, Jonathan
Landsman, DPR

Community: Robert Press, Douglas Tappan, I-C Levenburg, George Diaz, Jaclyn Jeffrey-
Wilensky, Paul Martorana, Mae Eng

Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM.

The minutes of May16th could not be approved due to a lack of quorum.

DEP Presentation: Pumping Station at 235th and Palisade Avenue
For more details, see attached presentation.

Representatives described the need for the Total Reconstruction of the Pumping Station at 235th and Palisade Avenue located inside Riverdale Park. The purpose of this pumping station is to move wastewater/sewerage to the Ward's Island Treatment Plant. The pumping station was constructed in 1966 with a 50-year lifespan, and it is beyond that now.

DEP said that all of the infrastructure must be replaced: pumps, electrical, heating, and cooling systems, in addition to the sub ground building. They are installing new *force mains* to connect to a manhole located at the intersection of Palisade Avenue and West 231st Street. They will install an Interim Pump Station while the main pump station is being built.

The current building and chain link fence will be completely demolished, and replaced with an attractive stone facade building with wrought iron fence within the same footprint as the current structure. Their next step is to present their design to the Public Design Commission.

The committee was shocked to learn that the plan calls for closing Palisade Avenue to vehicular through traffic for 18 to 20 months between 232nd Street and Douglas Avenue; Palisade Avenue will be used as the staging area for contractor trailers and equipment. Palisade Avenue will also be closed to vehicular traffic from 231st Street to 232nd Street for one month as they install two new *force mains*. However, the East side or northbound lane of Palisade Avenue will remain open to pedestrians, bicyclists, and emergency vehicles at all times. They stated that all residents would have access to their residences. They anticipate that the project will start in April 2020 and end in May 2022.

The committee raised many questions and concerns regarding the closing of Palisade Avenue for staging. However, DEP reiterated that they worked closely with DPR and DOT throughout the process, and that both agencies have approved the plan, due to lack of other options. Riverdale and Wallenburg Parks border this area of Palisade Avenue. DPR stated that they will not permit any staging in the park, although a few weed trees will be removed.

DEP told the committee that they would assume responsibility for notifying the public regarding closures and impacts. DEP, not DDC, will be responsible for the project, which is not subject to the Wick's Law, so there will be only one contractor.

The committee acknowledged that this is a critical environmental infrastructure project. There was consensus that the staging issues on Palisade Avenue fall under the purview of the Traffic and Transportation committee.

Issues raised with Effie Ardizzone, Bronx DEP liaison.

- The chair requested further information on the scoping letter received by the Board last month for the Jerome Park Reservoir Gatehouse Structural Restoration, and was advised it does not pertain to construction.
- DEP is doing extensive pipe repairs at 236th and Oxford. The sewerage problem at West 238th and Bailey is finally under control. DEP is working to repair the broken pipe.
- Bob Bender reported that the basins at the bottom of the hill on West 254th Street are clogged resulting in flooding. He will call 311 for a tracking number, and Effie will follow up and report back.
- Karen requested more frequent cleaning of the weir in Van Cortlandt Park to benefit the lake.
- In response to complaints about the taste or color of the water due to repair work at upstate reservoirs, Effie reported that the water is safe to drink.
- The chair requested that prior to extreme rain events, the catch basins on Broadway be cleaned as a priority to mitigate against flooding. Effie said that DEP and DSNY pre cleaning vulnerable highways. She reported that a recent severe flooding situation inside several Broadway businesses was due to an internal pipe that burst, not storm runoff.
- Discussion regarding a letter that was sent to the Board by Community board 8 in Queens re ponding (flooding) after DOT resurfaces some streets because the slope is wrong.

Chair's Report:

- Congratulations were given to Bob Fanuzzi on his recent appointment as president of Bronx Council for Environmental Quality (BCEQ), and to Karen Argenti for her appointment as Secretary of BCEQ. Also, kudos to Karen for making the City and State list of the 50 most influential people in the Bronx (she was number 34). The group was honored at Wave Hill last month.
- The chair attended an August 29th meeting in Albany with state DEC that was coordinated by Karen Argenti, BCEQ and Christina Taylor, Friends of Van Cortlandt Park. The purpose of the meeting with Deputy Commissioner James Tierney and his staff was to brief DEC on our issues around daylighting Tibbetts Brook, water quality, Van Cortlandt Park Lake, and the wetlands in advance of DEP's Long Term Control Plan for Community Board 8. Commissioner Tierney advised on next steps: an engineering hydrology feasibility study for daylighting, meeting with the deputy mayor of Yonkers about their Saw Mill daylighting project, DPR sending DEC the location and design of the clogged chambers in Van Cortlandt Park so that DEC can advocate with state DOT on maintenance.

Representatives from Parks and other water advocacy groups were "present" via conference call. Commissioner Tierney asked that the group circle back in the fall on these issues via conference call.

- The Board sent a letter last winter to DOT re their lack of maintenance of step streets shoulders. The chair shared a letter received in June from DOT Borough Commissioner Nivardo Lopez. It states that DOT is studying the “impacts of shifting maintenance responsibility” to other agencies, and would report to the Board in a few months.

Water Working Group Report

Chair Karen Argenti reported on two summer meetings sponsored by BCEQ, the New York City Soil & Water Conservation District, and Hudson Riverkeeper. They are continuing their efforts to explore Green Infrastructure (GI) possibilities on public and private property to absorb storm water runoff.

The first meeting, which included a walking tour, was held at Amalgamated Houses with members of the Amalgamated board, Assemblyman Dinowitz, Councilman Cohen, community board 8 reps Laura Spalter and Eric Dinowitz, and the Department of Education. Coordination with Amalgamated Houses, DPR, DOT, and DOE are being actively pursued. The second meeting was held at Clinton High School and included representatives from DEP, DOE, CB 8, and educators, among others seeking to involve schools in GI and environmental programs.

Karen distributed a new brochure based on the work of Community Board 8's Water Working Group and sponsored by BCEQ, New York City Soil & Water Conservation District and Riverkeeper. Entitled Harlem River Watershed Hilltop Green Infrastructure, it is a concept plan or blueprint for GI projects in the area between Van Cortlandt Park, Jerome Park Reservoir, and several schools. This area is located at the top of the Harlem River Watershed. To learn more check out the website www.riverkeeper.org/harlemriverhilltop.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Submitted by,
Laura Spalter, chair
Environment and Sanitation Committee