

Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Committee on the Hudson River Greenway

May 7, 2020 via Zoom

(pending committee approval)

Attendees

Committee: Bob Bender, Dan Padernacht, Laura Spalter

Other CB8: David Gellman, Rob Jacklosky, Debra Travis

Community: Cliff Stanton, Friends of the Hudson River Greenway; Louis Kleinman, Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance; Jessica Haller, Jodie Colon, Luke Szabados, IC L'Engel, Michael Amabile, Michael Heller, Betty Klein, Joe Kozlowski, John Benfatti, Kristan Roehrs, Paul Rivers, Neile Weissman, Jon Trambert, Shari Hall, KRVC; and unidentified callers.

Agenda

The meeting began at 7:05 pm.

Minutes of the meeting of June 13, 2019 were unanimously approved.

Bob Bender began by stating that he would briefly review committee activities since it last met in June 2019. He noted that the Friends of the Hudson River Greenway (FHRG) has been revived under the leadership of Cliff Stanton. Councilman Andrew Cohen put Cliff and Bob in touch with Carter Strickland of the Trust for Public Land (TPL), which has expertise in establishing greenways. This led FHRG and TPL to establish a memorandum of understanding whereby together they could do fundraising and provide a fiscal conduit for funding of the Hudson River Greenway (HRG).

Since the study sponsored by Metro-North (MNR) in 2018 that identified a feasible route for the HRG alongside the MNR tracks, the next step in the process of establishing the greenway is an engineering study. Councilman Cohen had hoped to secure \$500,000 for this purpose but has been unsuccessful. It appears that we will have to find funding from foundations such as the Booth Ferris foundation, which provides funding for New York City projects. FHRG and TPL hope to secure such funding, although it may be insufficient to fund the full engineering study. Booth Ferris, for example, generally provides grants of less than \$200,000.

Carter Strickland contacted Matrix, the firm that did the MNR feasibility study. Matrix suggested that an engineering study with 30% design for the entire length of the HRG would likely cost between \$2.5 and \$3.5 million. Given the cost, it may be necessary to do the engineering study in segments, just as it is likely that the HRG will be built in segments.

Hoping to get advice about fundraising, Bob, Cliff, and Carter had planned to meet with representatives of the Hudson River Park Trust, which operates a portion of the Manhattan HRG. That meeting fell victim to the coronavirus outbreak. We hope to reschedule it.

Following the review of the status of the HRG, participants in the meeting asked questions. The questions covered several topics, including the persistent rumor that there are homeowners who may have riparian rights along the river, which has never been established but should be definitively determined; the potential health benefits of the HRG; whether it might have a positive effect on the economy of the northwest Bronx; whether the HRG could be linked to an economic renewal of New York City; and whether the HRG might link to bicycle routes elsewhere in the Bronx.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:15 pm.

Minutes by Laura Spalter and Bob Bender

Submitted by Bob Bender