

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT & SANITATION COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 23, 2005  
AT THE BOARD OFFICE, 5676 RIVERDALE AVENUE**

*Board Members of the Committee present:*

Bradford Trebach, Committee Chairman  
Paul Dillon  
Nellie Jordan  
Laura Spalter  
Bert Feinberg

*Other Board Members present:*

None

*Community Members of the Committee present:*

Robert Spalter (from Riverdale Community Association)

*Also in attendance:*

None

*The Committee met at 7:40 p.m. – B. Trebach in the Chair.*

1. It was agreed that the Minutes of the Committee's meeting of Nov. 15, 2004 be adopted.
2. Committee-related issues regarding the recently unveiled Broadway and West 230<sup>th</sup> Street revitalization proposals.

The Committee reached consensus on the following points:

- (1) In terms of environmental factors such as air and noise pollution, a site that backs onto an interstate highway and is skirted by an elevated subway line is particularly unsuitable new housing, and would be more conducive to retail stores and service establishments.
- (2) To the extent that it is economically reasonable, any development project for this site should be energy efficient and environmentally friendly, and should incorporate attractive landscaping.
- (3) Mindful of the fact that at least one shopping center in District 8 has been stingy about providing basic cleanup service for its complex, any developer for the new site should give adequate assurances about maintaining a high standard of cleanliness from facade to curb.

3. Lead in drinking water.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that tap water can absorb lead from soldering, fixtures and pipes in the plumbing of some buildings and homes. In an effort to minimize lead absorption from plumbing systems, the Department of Environmental Protection adds a corrosion control compound and adjusts the water's pH. The agency monitors the effectiveness of these corrosion control measures by tracking lead levels in tap water taken from selected homes around the city.

Displaying a DEP water-testing kit, the Chairman explained that city residents can have their tap water checked for lead as part of the city's Lead in Drinking Water Program. The kit contains two bottles to be filled with tap water and returned postage free to the Environmental Quality Institute at the University of North Carolina. To request a free testing kit, call the city's Citizen Service Center at 311.

4. Graffiti-vandalism situation.

L. Spalter reported that the Riverdale Community Association has been promised \$5,000 in state money this year for local graffiti removal. The RCA will use the money to hire a professional graffiti-removal service to clean defaced property.

5. Problems with overflowing litter baskets.

The Chairman reported that overflowing litter baskets have become a growing problem in Community District 8. He said that local residents should report any overflowing baskets to the Board Office so that the Board can track the problem and ask the Sanitation Department to address each instance.

6. Update on canine-waste trouble spots.

The Committee discussed several locations where the Sanitation Department should deploy enforcement officers to deal with violations of the canine-waste law. The Chairman said he would bring the locations to the attention of the Sanitation Commissioner.

7. Trash recycling.

At the request of B. Feinberg, the Chairman discussed the city's trash-recycling program. Discussion topics included the return in 2004 of glass recycling and weekly recycling collection.

The Chairman handed out an editorial from the Feb. 20, 2005 issue of *The New York Times* titled "That Pesky New York Nickel," about reforming the state's bottle-redemption law. The editorial discussed a bill before the State Assembly that includes "two very good ideas." One is to add bottles containing tea, water and fruit juice to the law, which now covers bottles holding beer and carbonated drinks. The second idea is to take back nickels from unredeemed containers and put the money to public use – in recycling programs, for example.

Also discussed was an article from the Feb. 17, 2005 issue of *The Wall Street Journal* titled "Drying Up Waste Stream With Power of the Sun," about harnessing "plasma torches" to turn trash into fuel and building products. The article noted that New York City officials say they are looking at plasma machines to reduce the 24,000 tons of daily trash the city now has to truck to distant states such as Virginia. The trucking has been going on since the city closed its last landfill in 2001 and has raised the cost of garbage disposal to as much as \$80 a ton, the article reported.

8. Any other business -- No other matters were raised.

*At 9:14 p.m., the Committee was adjourned to a day and time to be fixed by the Chairman.*

Respectfully submitted,

Bradford Trebach  
*Chairman,*  
*Environment and Sanitation Committee*