

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT & SANITATION COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD ON NOVEMBER 21, 2005  
AT THE BOARD OFFICE, 5676 RIVERDALE AVENUE**

*Board Members of the Committee present:*

Bradford Trebach, Committee Chairman  
Saul Scheinbach, Committee Vice Chairman  
Philip Friedman  
Laura Spalter  
Alec Diacou

*Other Board Members present:*

None

*Community Members of the Committee present:*

Robert Spalter (from Riverdale Community Association)

*Also in attendance:*

Wylton Fishman

*The Committee met at 7:37 p.m. – B. Trebach in the Chair.*

1. It was agreed that the Minutes of the Committee's meeting of April 27, 2005 be adopted.
2. Update on the Facility Monitoring Committee for the Croton Water Filter Plant project.

The Vice Chairman reported that the NYC Department of Environmental Protection has agreed, at the insistence of the Facility Monitoring Committee (FMC), to retrofit the project's non-road vehicles with diesel-particulate filters, which reduce harmful emissions by 90 percent. The DEP is implementing these changes.

The FMC and the DEP are now discussing what technology to use in order to reduce emissions for the fleet of 60 privately contracted trucks going to and from the site. The FMC's goal is to get the highest emission reduction possible.

DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd will attend the next meeting of the FMC, scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on Dec. 1 at the Jewish Homes and Hospital System, 100 West Kingsbridge Road.

3. Lot cleaning.

West 240<sup>th</sup> St. and Independence Ave. On Nov. 15, in response to a complaint from the Vice Chairman about trash and other debris on the mapped but undeveloped portion of West 240<sup>th</sup> St. at the east side of Independence Ave. (opposite the parking-lot exit of Riverdale Temple), the Chairman sent a personal e-mail to the city Sanitation Commissioner. He is awaiting a response.

4. Graffiti-vandalism situation.

Verizon building at 3001 Kingsbridge Avenue. On Nov. 18, the Chairman contacted regional property manager for Verizon Communications, Ruth Irsner, regarding the need for graffiti removal from the company's building at West 230<sup>th</sup> Street and Kingsbridge Avenue. Ms. Irsner faxed the Chairman a copy of a work order instructing her maintenance staff to repaint the defaced areas as soon as weather conditions are appropriate.

Fieldston Road overpass of the Henry Hudson Parkway. The Chairman has asked the Department of Transportation to have its bridge and overpass graffiti-removal crew clean the Fieldston Road overpass. He is awaiting a response. R. Spalter said that there is also graffiti along the Mosholu Parkway extension from the Henry Hudson Parkway near the Major Deegan Expressway overpass. The Chairman said he would report that location to the DOT as well.

5. Problems with overflowing litter baskets.

The Chairman reported that overflowing litter baskets continues to be a 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. Cellphone antenna equipment on apartment buildings.

The Chairman reported on complaints received from residents of Greystone Park, a seven-story co-op building at 3840 Greystone Avenue, where a cellular-communications base station was recently installed on the building's roof and antenna panels were bolted to the building's parapet.

A group of the building's residents says that the co-op's board of directors failed to inform the shareholders before it agreed to let Nextel Communications install the cellular equipment in exchange for a monthly fee. The opposition group is trying to find a way to have the cellular equipment removed. They claim that the equipment could harm both residents' health and their property values.

The Chairman said that approval by the Federal Communications Commission is needed for cellphone antennas on buildings higher than 200 feet, but the agency does not keep track of antennas on shorter buildings like Greystone Park. Neither does the Department of City Planning or the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications. And the Department of Buildings only lists antennas as minor alterations.

Regarding the Federal guidelines on cellular antenna installations, the Chairman noted that

the FCC's Local Government Advisory Committee published a 34-page guide on the subject on June 2, 2000. The guide, *A Local Government Official's Guide to Transmitting Antenna RF Emission Safety: Rules, Procedures, and Practical Guidance*, is available online at [http://wireless.fcc.gov/siting/FCC\\_LSGAC\\_RF\\_Guide.pdf](http://wireless.fcc.gov/siting/FCC_LSGAC_RF_Guide.pdf).

The Vice Chairman said that although the general scientific opinion at the moment is that no evidence exists of any adverse health effects caused by cellphone antenna emissions, there is no definitive proof that such emissions harmless.

The Chairman said that for the past few years, a state assemblyman, Michael N. Gianaris (36<sup>th</sup> Assembly District, Queens), and a city councilman, Peter F. Vallone, Jr. (22<sup>nd</sup> Council District, Queens), have spearheaded local legislative attempts to regulate the proliferation of cellphone transmission equipment. He recalled, for example, that Mr. Vallone has called for the NYC Health Department to study the effects of extended exposure to such equipment.

As for Greystone Park, it was the consensus of the Committee that the situation is a private co-op dispute that must be decided either in a court of law or by agreement between the parties.

8. Request for fire hydrant.

On Sept. 28, the chairman received a complaint that there are no fire hydrants accessible to the cluster of houses located on Alderbrook Road, a private lane off of West 247<sup>th</sup> Street near Independence Avenue.

The danger posed by the lack of fire-hydrant service became clear when the Fire Department responded to a small fire there on Sept. 27. According to local residents who contacted the Chairman, the firefighters said their hoses would not be able to reach all the way from Alderbrook Road to the nearest hydrant.

On Sept. 29, the Chairman sent a letter to Lillie Z. Farrell, Director of Community Outreach at the DEP, requesting prompt attention to this matter. Effie Ardizzone, a community coordinator at Ms. Farrell's office, telephoned the Chairman on Nov. 21, saying that since Alderbrook Road is a private street, the residents would need to hire a contractor to have the hydrant installed. The contractor would need to submit a sketch to the DEP showing the location of the proposed hydrant. The proposal would then be considered by the DEP's Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations.

9. Autumn leaf collection.

The Committee received a notice from the Sanitation Department announcing that Bronx Residents can put out their bags of fallen leaves for collection on Saturday, Nov. 26. Sanitation will then take the leaves to its composting facilities to turn them into high-quality compost, which the department will eventually give away for free through its Compost Giveback Program.

10. Lack of Trash Pickup on Tulfan Terrace.

P. Friedman complained that the Sanitation Department will not pickup trash from in front of the houses on Tulfan Terrace, a private street off of Oxford Ave. near West 236<sup>th</sup> Street. He said that he and other homeowners on Tulfan Terrace have to bring their trash down to Oxford Ave. in order to have it removed, and even then the service is sporadic. He also noted that tickets are issued if such trash is not positioned in a specific manner, despite the fact that workers from the neighboring construction site often move around the bags of trash.

The Chairman said that, according to the local Sanitation supervisor, the mouth of Tulfan Terrace is too steep for the new garbage trucks, which bottom out when they reach the base of the hill. As for the ticketing, he will look into the matter.

11. Wyldon Fishman, a resident of Sycamore Avenue, urged the Committee to work toward reducing Riverdale's "carbon footprint," meaning the pattern of greenhouse gases we produce (measured in units of carbon dioxide). She expressed concern about carbon emissions from idling vehicles and from slowed traffic at toll plazas. She also suggested ways to make Riverdale more ecologically friendly adding new sidewalks, bicycle paths and trees.

12. Any other business – No other matters were raised.

*At 9:00 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*

*BT:db*