

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT & SANITATION COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON APRIL 17, 2006
AT THE BOARD OFFICE, 5676 RIVERDALE AVENUE**

Board Members of the Committee present:

Bradford Trebach, Committee Chairman
Saul Scheinbach, Committee Vice Chairman
E. Allen Dennison, CB #8 Board Member
Bert Feinberg, CB#8 Board Member
Alec Diacou, CB#8 Board Member

Other Board Members present:

None

Community Members of the Committee present:

None

Also in attendance:

Etanjalie Narraph (from The Riverdale Press)

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. 21, 2005 be adopted.
2. Update on the Facility Monitoring Committee for the Croton Water Filter Plant project.

The Vice Chairman reported that Facility Monitoring Committee (FMC) will meet on April 20. Among the agenda items are security issues and plans to reduce harmful emissions from construction vehicles.

3. Lot cleaning.

Manhattan College Pkwy. at Greystone Ave. On Feb. 28, the Chairman sent a complaint to the city Sanitation Commissioner about the trash-strewn area north of Manhattan College Pkwy. at Greystone Ave. (opposite Brust Park). On April 6, the Chairman received an e-mail message from Henry Ehrhardt, Deputy Director of the Office of Community Affairs at the Department of Sanitation, saying that the location has been submitted to the lot-cleaning division for inspection and processing.

Henry Hudson Pkwy. East service road near Christ Church. A. Diacou reported that areas next to the roadway just north of Christ Church at 5030 Henry Hudson Pkwy. are littered with trash. The Chairman said he would report the location to the Department of Sanitation.

4. Graffiti-vandalism situation.

The Committee discussed a Dec. 29, 2005 press release announcing that Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg signed legislation to make commercial property owners and owners of residential buildings of six or more units responsible, for the first time, for failure to remove graffiti from the outside of their buildings.

The press release also announced that the Mayor signed legislation increasing the age at which it is legal to possess graffiti instruments – such as etching acid, aerosol spray paint cans, and broad-tipped indelible markers – from 18 to 21 years of age.

In addition, the press release announced the signing of legislation that replicates a New York State law allowing for an individual convicted of a graffiti-related crime to perform community service in a graffiti-removal program as their punishment.

5. Problems with overflowing litter baskets.

The Chairman reported that overflowing public litter baskets continue 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 its 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. Budget priorities for Fiscal Year 2008.

Sanitation

Capital Budget:

None

Expense Budget:

- (i) Two Sanitation workers assigned for Sunday basket pick-ups to service all commercial areas – 1089505E.
- (ii) Two Sanitation (MLP) workers for drop-outs – 1089101E.
- (iii) Increase Canine Enforcement Unit. Need two agents for Bronx County – 1080205E.

Department of Environmental Protection

Capital Budget:

None

Expense Budget:

- (i) Personnel for weekly cleaning, maintenance and rodent control along the perimeter of Jerome Park Reservoir between the fence and curb.

8. Identification of historical resources in relation to installation of cellphone towers.

The Chairman noted the receipt of letters of notification from G.C. Environmental, an environmental consulting firm, regarding two National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) surveys being performed on sites in Community District 8 in accordance with the

Federal Communications Nationwide Programmatic Agreement for Review Under the National Historic Preservation Act (47 CFR Part 1). The sites, 2805 Heath Ave. and 2475 Palisade Ave., are apartment buildings upon which cellular base stations and antenna panels have been installed.

Board 8 has signed on as a consulting party in both matters in order to receive copies of all notices and submissions to the New York State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO), and have the opportunity to file comments as part of the statutorily mandated review process.

On March 29, 2006, the Chairman received copies of the initial submissions made to the SHPO. These documents are on file at the Board Office, where they are available for public viewing.

9. Safety of cellphone antenna equipment on apartment buildings.

Referring to Minutes of the Committee's meeting of Nov. 21, 2006, the Chairman explained that decisions to install cellular-transmission equipment on buildings less than 200 feet high in New York City are basically unregulated, private deals between mobile phone companies and property owners. And as cellular base stations and antenna panels seem to be popping up in record numbers, the Chairman noted that elected officials in Queens are spearheading local legislative efforts to regulate, study and keep track of such devices, particularly those near schools.

Councilman Peter F. Vallone, Jr., of Queens, for example, has sponsored a bill that would require the installation of antennas to be approved by the City Planning Commission and the City Council. The Bloomberg Administration and telecommunications companies have opposed the legislation.

Discussion ensued regarding a news article ("'No Evidence' of Mast Health Risk," BBC News, Mar. 3, 2006), in which Prof. Anthony Barker of Sheffield Teaching Hospitals in Britain suggested that mobile telephone antennas and handsets are no more dangerous than television or radio transmitters. The article quotes Prof. Barker, who has three decades of experience studying the biological effects of electromagnetic fields, as saying "There is no reason to expect mobile phone signals – which are essentially low-powered radio transmissions – to be bad for health." He said that for over 80 years there have been wireless transmissions – "we have big TV and broadcast radio transmitters all around us." He said concerns were only raised when phone antennas – "which is also a radio transmitter" – were proposed.

The Chairman noted that the article also states that a laboratory study concluded last year that radio waves from cellphones do harm body cells and damage DNA. However, the article states that European Union-funded research did not prove that such changes were a risk to human health.

The Committee received copies of an April 6, 2006 statement from the Web site of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration titled "Use of Wireless Communication Devices and the Risk of Brain Cancer" (<http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/wireless/braincancer040606.html>). The FDA statement dismissed a recent Swedish study suggesting a link between long-term use of cellular and cordless telephones and brain tumors, but said the agency will continue to monitor the safety of the wireless devices.

The study, by researchers at the Swedish National Institute for Working Life, combined analysis of two studies published in 2003 and 2005. It found an increased risk of malignant brain tumors associated with use of the phones over a decade or more in populations in Sweden.

The FDA said that such a finding was inconsistent with the conclusions reached by other studies and pointed out several shortcomings, including the design of the study, which was conducted by surveys distributed by mail, and the lack of supporting data from laboratory animals. That makes the conclusion "difficult to interpret," the FDA statement said.

A.E. Dennison suggested that in the future, the Committee should limit its focus on this topic to concerns of a purely local nature.

10. Late Trash Pick-ups.

On April 5, the Chairman received a complaint from Dr. Marc G. Odrich, president of the Fieldston Property Owners Association, about trash pick-ups after midnight in the Fieldston Historic District. Dr. Odrich reported that a Sanitation crew serviced the houses along the 4600 block of Fieldston Rd. at 1:24 a.m. on March 24 and again at 1:19 a.m. on

March 31. Since residential pick-ups are supposed to occur before midnight, the Chairman said that he reported the situation to the local Sanitation supervisor for investigation. A. Diacou, who is a Fieldston resident, attributed the situation to “long overdue crew rotation” and noted that the problem has since stopped.

11. Borough-wide clean-up campaign.

The Chairman announced that Borough President Adolfo Carrion, Jr. has invited Bronx residents to volunteer for the “Team Up to Clean Up The Bronx” campaign scheduled for Saturday, May 6. For those who are Saturday Sabbath observers, Sunday, May 7 is the designated clean-up date. To register a clean-up activity in your neighborhood, call the Bronx Borough President’s Office at (718) 537-5584.

12. The Vice Chairman discussed a recent workshop he attended given by the City Parks Department’s Natural Resources Group. It provides training and issues permits for volunteer park stewards. He urged participation by anyone interested in protecting our parks from non-native, highly invasive vines, which he said are an environmental threat.

13. Maintenance of MTA Properties

The Committee discussed a March 2006 City Council report titled “The Eyesore Next Door: Outdoor MTA Properties are Poorly Maintained,” which surveyed various neighborhoods in terms of the cleanliness and maintenance of Metropolitan Transportation Authority property. District 8 was ranked the sixth cleanest out of 24 neighborhoods surveyed.

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