

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT & SANITATION COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON JUNE 19, 2007
AT THE BOARD OFFICE, 5676 RIVERDALE AVENUE**

Board Members of the Committee present:

Saul Scheinbach, Committee Chairman
Bradford Trebach, Committee Vice Chairman
Anthony Cassino, Board 8 Chair
Thomas Giallorenzi, Committee member

Other Board Members present:

none

Community Members of the Committee present:

none

Also in attendance:

The Committee met at 7:35 p.m. – S. Scheinbach in the Chair.

1. Minutes of the Committee's meeting of March, 21 2007

The committee adopted the minutes with no amendments.

2. Update on the Facility Monitoring Committee for the Croton Water Filter Plant project.

The Chairman reported that the cost for the filtration has skyrocketed from the original estimate of \$1.3 billion to close to \$3 billion, at least double the original estimate. This includes the DEP latest estimate of 2.2 billion for site preparation and actual construction, plus \$250 million for mitigation and Parks, plus \$450 million for design costs. These costs will be borne by rate payers who will experience a projected 53% rise in water rates over the next four years.

The DEP has claimed this is due to inflation from 2003 to now, and inflationary rises would have similarly affected the Eastview site; however, had Eastview been chosen no hole was needed and construction could have been done two years earlier without incurring inflationary rises.

The result is that construction which should have started February 8, 2007 will begin in August at the earliest. Meanwhile, the City is being fined \$11,000/day for failing to start on time.

In light of these considerations the Chairman placed a resolution for a vote before the committee asking for a City Council investigation of the cost overruns (see attached). After a brief discussion the committee voted unanimously for the resolution.

He also reported that the DEP failed to communicate these events to the FMC, whose members only learned of it from a news report, which the DEP admitted was a leak from their agency. However, a chagrined agency has begun filing reports with the committee. The May report stated that in March 20% of the 216 workers on site were Bronxites and 46% were City residents. In addition, 15 of 33 seats had been filled for first of two classes in project HIRE funded by the DEP. Another 30 applicants were accepted in the Carpenter's Union pre-apprenticeship program.

The next FMC meeting will be on June 21 at the DEP Bronx office. The complete minutes for FMC meetings can be found at the DEP website, <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/news/croton.html>.

3. Update on the Consolidated Edison high voltage transmission line.

The Chairman reported that on May 30th, after hearing all the testimony from active parties, including the Joint Monitoring Committee representing Yonkers, the Bronx and Manhattan, the presiding judge recommended that the PSC should certify Con Ed's preferred route through Riverdale. Judge Bouteiller also recommended that Con Ed not receive a certificate of environmental compatibility and public need from the PSC until it provides acceptable plans to show how it will minimize construction-related impacts, specifically:

- a. Noise mitigation
- b. Traffic mitigation and public transit coordination
- c. A municipal services plan addressing police, fire and EMS.

On June 15th Assemblyman Dinowitz' office representing the Joint Monitoring Committee, requested an extension until June 22nd to file its comments in response to the Recommended Decision.

On June 18th the presiding judge granted an extension to June 26th for all active parties.

The Chairman reported that Assemblyman Dinowitz' office has requested that members of the Joint Committee send comments to that office. One such request asks Con Ed to repave streets curb to curb and not just along the trench. In addition, T. Giallorenzi has suggested that the MTA reinstitute skip stops on the No. 1 subway line to alleviate the bus line congestion that is certain to occur along Riverdale Avenue.

4. Canine waste

The Vice Chair reported on violations at Faraday Avenue near Fieldston Road. He has reported this to the Department of Sanitation.

5. Graffiti vandalism update

The Vice-Chair reported on a list he has compiled of ten blue postal boxes and 42 green relay boxes in the district that have been spray painted. He has forwarded the list to the Department of Sanitation. Chairman Cassino reported that the Mayor's Community Assistance Unit (CAV) sent a list of 50 sites in the district where it had removed graffiti as of June 19, 2007. However, he voiced his concern that, despite their efforts, graffiti was on the rise in the district. He cited recent spray painting of play equipment and benches in Brust Park and adjacent street signs as well as other sites. Even the temporary illuminated warning sign at W. 246th Street and the Henry Hudson Parkway E. has been defaced. He said the situation has become intolerable. He asked for and received Committee support to ask the 50th Precinct to increase enforcement by taking photos of "tags" and putting more effort into identifying and arresting offenders.

6. Any other business

Posting of Illegal Signs

The Chairman reported that several real estate agents have been illegally posting signs on public thoroughfares. In January 2007 he sent a letter to the offenders asking that they assure the Board that they will end this practice. While most complied, some have not. Chairman Cassino stated that some agents are posting as many as eight signs per listing. He said that these and other signs, illegally posted on lampposts and utility poles, are a blight. The offenders can and should be fined, and he asked the committee to support further action through the Department of Sanitation's enforcement arm. The committee concurred.

Lot Cleaning

The Vice Chair reported that the tree-lined divider between W. 246th Street and Delafield Lane was so filled with trash that residents were considering hiring a cleaner. Recently cars were prevented from parking there due to Con Ed work, so he requested that the Department of Sanitation do a cleanup. Unfortunately, the cleanup only extended along the temporary no parking area. He has requested that Sanitation finish the job. Bronx 8 Superintendent Rocchio has responded that he would try to do that when he gets surplus cleaners.

At 8:21 p.m., the Committee was adjourned to a day and time to be fixed by the Chairman.

Respectfully submitted,

Saul Scheinbach
Chairman,
Environment and Sanitation Committee