

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT & SANITATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON OCTOBER 17, 2007  
AT THE BOARD OFFICE, 5676 RIVERDALE AVENUE**

*Board Members of the Committee present:*

Saul Scheinbach, Committee Chairman  
Bradford Trebach, Committee Vice Chairman  
Laura Spalter, Committee member  
Herb Young, Committee member

*Other Board Members present:*

*Community Members of the Committee present:*  
Robert Spalter

*Also in attendance:*  
Manny Grossman, Riverdale Press

*The Committee met at **7:37 p.m.** – S. Scheinbach in the Chair.*

1. Minutes of the Committee's meeting of June, 19 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 CFMC met Sept. 20 and he sat on the Committee along with CB 8 chair Cassino and Councilman Koppell. About 100 people, mostly union members attended the raucous meeting. The general contractor for the plant construction (Skanska), Union reps and business agents pledged to do their best to hire Bronx workers, under constraints they normally face. The committee asked that they return from time to time to report on progress.

Assemblyman Dinowitz gave the same presentation he gave to the full Board on September 11, 2007 outlining the failure of the DEP to explain cost overruns going from \$1.2 to \$2.8 billion or more and he cited the release of up to 1.2 million gallons per day of groundwater runoff from the site into local sewers forever without the proper permits. The DEP said discrepancy is due to inflation and listing costs differently, e.g., design costs were not included in total, and they would provide a full cost breakdown of the project for the FMC at the next meeting (the Chairman noted that on September 28 a report

published by the Independent Budget Office confirmed that figure). The DEP also said they had the proper sewer permits and later produced them. The Bronx Parks Commissioner Aponte asked if the DEP could arrange to use the water currently being sewered to irrigate park vegetation and Chairman Cassino pointed out the irony of a filtration plant dumping so much water. When the DEP said water runoff was usual for large construction projects, E&S Chairman Scheinbach stated they should be thinking environmentally and use their imagination to retrieve some of that water, which Councilman Koppell pointed out, was burdening the sewer system. The general tone of the committee was of astonishment that the DEP didn't have a better solution.

Following his review of the CFMC meeting, the Chairman said it was unclear when construction would begin. Meanwhile, the City is being fined \$30,000/day for failing to start on time with the total at about \$6 million to date and all this would be reflected in higher water rates.

The Chairman said that the agenda for the next CFMC meeting to be held at 7pm on October 18 at the DEP Bronx office included "reuse of groundwater". So he was hopeful that at the next CFMC meeting, the DEP would announce it had found a way to use some of the groundwater runoff.

The Chairman noted that he had heard nothing concerning the resolution passed by the Board last July 13 asking for a City Council investigation of the cost overruns.

On a positive note, in its final report, Emisstar, the company that retrofitted diesel equipment at the site with pollution control devices, has reported that over the course of the two-year Croton excavation project, cumulative mass emission reductions of 0.7 tons of particulate matter (PM) were achieved, NOx was reduced by 1.2 tons, hydrocarbons by 0.4 tons, and CO by 7.1 tons. On a mass basis, PM emissions were greatly reduced, from a high of 58 kg/month in March, 2006, to a low of 2 kg/month in June, 2007, for a total reduction of 96.5 % from the baseline.

The complete minutes for CFMC 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 August 23 the PSC approved the application of Con Ed for construction of the transmission line along their route. However, they ordered Con Ed to revise its Environmental management & Construction Plan to reflect comments and concerns raised by the community before it can begin construction. These involve:

- a. Noise mitigation
- b. Traffic mitigation and public transit coordination

c. A municipal services plan addressing police, fire and EMS.

The Chairman said he didn't expect construction to begin before early 2008.

4. Canine waste

The Vice-Chair noted violations at Faraday Avenue and Fieldston Road as well as Oxford Avenue and Tulfan Terrace. He said the Dept. of Sanitation is responsive to requests to send an inspector.

5. Graffiti vandalism update

A bank wall at 235<sup>th</sup> Street & Netherland Ave. vandalized as were more mailboxes. Another wall at 236<sup>th</sup> Street and Riverdale Avenue was vandalized. Ms. Spalter noted that the city can remove graffiti for free with owner's permission and the bank manager should be approached. Four arrests were reported in the past week. The committee expressed the hope that some of the vandals would spend a few days in jail.

6. Any other business

Posting of Illegal Signs

The Chairman reported that in response to complaints from this committee and other citizen groups, S6106 and A9414 have been introduced in the NYS senate by Mr. Padavan and the NYS assembly by Mr. Dinowitz, respectively. The bills are identical and prohibit the **placement** of an A-frame, sandwich board sign or other signs on any sidewalk or curbstone or any public property. The bills also make the owner of the establishment **whose name appears on the sign** liable for the fine. He said he would do what he could to get these bills passed into law. These bills remedy language that only made **affixing** or **attaching** signs illegal and liable the **owner of the property** where the sign was placed rather than the **owner of the sign**.

Sanitation Parking Rules

The Chairman noted that the Department of Sanitation is considering a change in alternate side parking rules for street cleaning. The Vice-Chair explained the details: the Department may reduce or eliminate cleaning in areas that have scored at least 90. Since all of Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights, Van Cortlandt Village and Riverdale have achieved that or better, all of the CB 8 District qualifies for a temporary reduction upon recommendation by the Board. Ms. Spalter said the experiment was a good idea. The committee agreed that once-a-week cleaning would suffice for many residential streets. The Vice-Chair suggested a joint meeting with the Traffic & Transportation committee in November to more fully explain the proposal and get community feedback.

Lot Cleaning

The Vice-Chair has reported the following to the Dept. of Sanitation: mapped street but undeveloped portion of W. 252<sup>nd</sup> and Post Road, and southbound Henry Hudson Parkway between w. 246<sup>th</sup> Street and Manhattan College Parkway where contractors have been dumping kitchen debris.

Tree Planting

The Vice Chair reported that he has been using the NYC.gov web site to request tree plantings at neighborhood locations under the Million Trees NYC plan.

At 8:32 p.m., the Committee was adjourned to a day and time to be fixed by the Chairman.

Respectfully submitted,

Saul Scheinbach  
Chair  
Environment and Sanitation Committee

SS:db