

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT & SANITATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON OCTOBER 21, 2009  
AT THE BOARD OFFICE, 5676 RIVERDALE AVENUE**

*Board Members of the Committee present:*

Saul Scheinbach, Committee Chairman  
Bradford Trebach, Committee Vice Chairman  
Thomas Giallorenzi  
Andrew Cohen  
Laura Spalter

*Other Board Members present:*

none

*Community Members of the Committee present:*

none

*Also in attendance:*

none

*The Committee met at 7:31 p.m. – S. Scheinbach in the Chair.*

1. It was agreed that the Minutes of the Committee's meeting of May 19, 2009 be adopted.
2. Illegally posted signs.

The Chairman described recent actions concerning illegal signs. He said signs on lampposts and traffic control boxes blight the community. They are illegal and subject to hefty fines of \$75-\$300 per sign. Not only do individuals seek free advertising by posting signs, but community organizations and facilities do it as well. He hoped that by publicizing the law, community groups would seek legal means like email, bulletin boards, etc. to provide information to the public. He mentioned a case in Queens where the Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis and Lions Club of Maspeth, Queens, were facing \$7,200 in fines for attaching 32 posters to light poles advertising a street fair in June 2008. An Environmental Control Board (ECB) hearing was recently held for one egregious violator in Bronx Community Board No. 8 who has posted hundreds of illegal signs, and the Chairman hoped the judgment would discourage that offender. He said that both he and Mr. Trebach, and other concerned citizens have been active in removing signs and reporting violators to the Department of Sanitation (DSNY). He urged members to report illegal postings to 311. On a related issue he said a bill was introduced into the city council by Councilman Koppell that would make "open house" and other signs placed on public spaces like crosswalks, sidewalks, medians, Greenstreets and park perimeters illegal. The bill also includes a "rebuttable presumption" that the name, address or other id on the sign is the person responsible

and will get the fine. However, other council members expressed concerns about an economic impact and the bill is stalled in committee. Thomas Giallorenzi said he saw an "open house" sign standing parallel to a curb in the vicinity where local buses stop. He and Andrew Cohen said they would contact state senator Jeffrey Klein and suggest he introduce a bill banning such signs.

3. Update on the Facility Monitoring Committee (FMC) for the Croton Water Filter Plant project.

The Chairman said that the next FMC meeting would be held on Thursday, November 5<sup>th</sup> at 7PM in the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) community office, 3660 Jerome Avenue. He hoped the DEP would finally have a decision on public access to the Jerome Park reservoir. At the last FMC meeting held June, 18th, the major issue discussed was the design for the Mosholu golf course and clubhouse. He said there were concerns that the parking lot was to be built outside the original alienation area, taking away even more public park space. In addition, the final configuration of the golf course was unclear.

4. Gas drilling by hydraulic fracturing.

The Chairman distributed several articles on this subject to committee members and he reviewed recent development in federal, state and local governments: A controversial drilling process for natural gas may soon begin in the Marcellus shale, a layer of rock in upstate New York. The process, known as horizontal gas drilling or hydraulic fracturing, involves forcing a mix of water, abrasives and chemicals, many that are toxic, into underground shale deposits to liberate tiny pockets of natural gas entrapped in the shale. Each well can use millions of gallons of water. Much of the tainted water is never recovered and can leach into water tables. The recovered portion is stored in above-ground pools where it can spill. According to the New York Times, spills at 3 drilling sites in Pennsylvania have already occurred, and according to ProPublica over 1,000 cases of contamination have been documented by courts and western state and local governments. In 2005 the Energy Policy Act exempted this method of drilling from the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. Although a bill has been introduced into the senate and house removing the exemption, it would not result in a ban. Both New York Senators, Schumer and Gillibrand, are sponsoring the bill, but our congressman, Eliot Engel, has not signed on to the house bill. At the state level, after months of study, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) released rules governing drilling for natural gas in upstate New York. The rules require that operators must identify and disclose the percentages of all chemicals in the "fracking" solution. They also require buffer zones around reservoirs, and drilling within 1,000 ft. of any water tunnel requires special approval. The 60-day public comment period ends November 30<sup>th</sup>, and many groups have complained it is too short a time to consider such a complex issue. At the local level the Environmental Protection Committee of the City Council is holding hearings on the issue on October 23<sup>rd</sup> to possibly seek a complete ban on drilling in the NYC watershed. The Chairman said that Bronx Community Board No. 8 was already on record (June 19<sup>th</sup> resolution) as requesting a ban on such drilling in the entire state and he would send a letter to elected state official and the NYSDEC repeating that request,

and that the comment period be extended to 90 days to allow a city report to be filed. He said that at a minimum, the state should ban drilling in the NYC watershed, which only represents <10% of the area with gas deposits.

5. Graffiti vandalism

The Vice-Chair noted that despite various graffiti-removal programs, graffiti is on the rise in CB8. Laura Spalter said she would develop a list of vandalized properties and submit it to Assembly Dinowitz's office, since he recently announced his own anti-graffiti program.

6. Any other business

In response to a request by Robert Press about recycling compliance in CB8, the Chairman said the Department of Sanitation reported 19% of total tonnage recycled for the past 8 weeks.

*At 8:32 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*