

**BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8**

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SANITATION COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 29, 2014, AT  
AMALGAMATED HOUSES, 74 VAN CORTLANDT PARK SOUTH**

**PRESENT**

Robert Fanuzzi  
Bob Bender  
Laura Spalter  
Robert Spalter  
Effie Ardizzone  
Anthony Brown  
Eric Landau  
Muslima Adams  
Ruby Palma  
Karen Argenti  
Kristin Hart

**AFFILIATION**

Committee Chair, CB8  
CB8  
CB8  
Community Committee Member  
DEP  
DEP  
DEP  
Marble Hill Green Team  
Marble Hill Green Team  
BCEQ  
FIPNA

Chairman called the meeting to order.

- I. Reported on the Bailey Avenue "Triangle," a site earmarked for Greenstreets under defunded DPR program. Without DPR funding, the site became overgrown and refuse-filled. Residents have been cleaning up and planting flowers in the triangle in the hopes of creating a community garden. Special thanks go to Kristin Hart, Margaret Groarke, and Mary Forrester, who are looking into Green Thumb membership and also working with Green Up, a community outreach division of Bronx Botanical Gardens, and DSNY NYC Compost, sited also at Bronx Botanical Gardens. B. Bender remarked that similar potential garden sites can be located along the perimeter of the Jerome Park Reservoir. Committee will continue outreach to FIPNA and other community groups in the area.

II. DEP Tree Restoration Agreement

Eric Landau announced a restoration agreement for 533 trees in the Bronx. Croton Filtration Monitoring Committee and BX8 had sought tree replacement for trees removed along the perimeter of the Jerome Park Reservoir and within Fort Independence Park as part of USDEP/NYDEC dam maintenance agreement. DEP agreement paves the way for DPR to replant trees in this area.

III. DEP Presentation, CRO 521 (Jerome Park Gatehouses)

Mr. Anthony Brown, project manager for CRO 521, and Mr. Eric Landau of DEP presented new version of the Gatehouse demolition, deconstruction, and reconstruction

project. This was previously viewed by E and S committee members in May 2014.

Features include:

Deconstruction and demolition of gatehouses 2, 3, 6. Reconstruction of gatehouses 5 and 7. Construction of new four foot fence at the lip of the reservoir. Removal of existing ten foot fence next to inner roadway. Construction of two foot traffic barrier at edge of inner roadway. Creation of "greenbelt" between inner roadway and 4 foot fence at reservoir's lip. Ten foot "smart" fence preventing community access to inner roadway remains in place. Questions arising from the first presentation were forwarded to DEP and were answered by this presentation. They are as follows:

DEP is planning to go before Public Design Commission in January for final approval of CRO 521.

Canopies over the deconstructed gatehouses have been remodeled to suit committee's objection to their non-historic character. New gatehouse canopies are historically compatible with other restoration features under CRO 521.

Ornamental fencing cannot be afforded along the entire perimeter of the reservoir. Ornamental fencing will only be around gatehouses. Cost is estimated to be 8 million.

Committee liked changes to canopy over deconstructed gatehouses. Committee did not like neglect of gatehouses that lead to the deconstruction and demolition of 2, 3, and 6. Community member Karen Argenti noted that gatehouses were mentioned in JPR Conservancy's successful application to National Registry for Historic Places.

Committee members noted the reduced height of the fence at the edge of the waterfront as being not conducive to public access planning. Eric Landau stated that no public access is planned by DEP. Committee members discussed resolution passed by CFMC previous evening, Tuesday, October 28, 2014, and passed the following resolution:

**Whereas**, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) appeared before the Environment and Sanitation Committee of Bronx Community Board 8 on May 2014 and October 29, 2014 to present its plans to reconstruct Gatehouses 5 and 7, deconstruct Gatehouses superstructures 2 and 3, demolish Gatehouse superstructure 6, and remove an existing inner fence and construct a new lower one around the Jerome Park Reservoir (JPR); and,

**Whereas**, this project, CRO 521, received preliminary approval from the Public Design Commission of the City of New York (PDC) in July 2014 and the final application requires Community Board review and a copy of its resolution before final PDC approval; and

**Whereas**, Jerome Park Reservoir has received designation by New York State and National Registry of Historic Places as being "*associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history*" and "*embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction*"; and

**Whereas**, both the National Registry of Historic Places application and the New York State Office of Historic Preservation notes the historic nature of the superstructures of Gatehouses 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 as representative of New Deal era, WPA Art Deco architecture

**Whereas**, DEP has allowed the superstructures of Gatehouses 2, 3, and 6 to deteriorate to a point beyond economically practical and logistically feasible repair, as noted by the Public Design Commission in its July 2014 preliminary approval of CRO 521

**Whereas**, DEP states that the primary reason for the deconstruction of the superstructures of Gatehouses 2, 3, and 6 is cost and has no plans to replace them,

**Whereas, DEP proposes under** CRO 521 to remove the current 10 foot inner fence, located next to the inner roadway, and replace it with a new 4 foot high chain link wall atop the historic ring of the Jerome Park Reservoir and at the edge of the drinking water supply that, according to DEP, will make future public access impossible

**Whereas**, the 2011 DEP "Report and Recommendations of the Jerome Park Reservoir Access Working Group" concludes that "DEP should allow limited public access to JPR on discrete occasions as part of a pilot program that can take place after the Croton Filtration Plans is operating and related construction at JPR is complete"

**Whereas**, the Croton Facility Monitoring Committee, composed of Community Board 7, 8 and 12 chairs, the Council Member, Borough President, and agency representatives), passed resolutions demanding JPR limited, public access according to the terms of 2011 DEP "Report"

**Therefore be it resolved**, that Bronx Community Board 8 does not support the DEP Gatehouse Project CRO 521 because the design includes elements such as the construction of a 4 foot chain link fence that will permanently preclude any controlled public access at JPR, as it is too close to the water and will not offer the protective security of the existing 10 foot fence; and,

**Be it further resolved**, that any design elements proposed under CRO 521 conform with the historic and aesthetic structures and facilities that placed JPR on the National Register of Historic Place, and promote ongoing efforts to make JPR more usable and accessible to area residents as per the 2011 DEP "Report and Recommendations of the Jerome Park Reservoir Access Working Group"

**And be it further resolved** that DEP reconsider any design changes under CRO 521, such as removing the current 10 foot fence and placing a new four foot fence on the rim of the reservoir that could endanger the reservoir's historic, functional and aesthetic architecture.

**Vote:** 4 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions

In Favor –

B. Bender, R. Fanuzzi, L. Spalter

Community Member –

R. Spalter

IV. New Business

Committee members engaged DEP rep Eric Landau on the “bioswale” program that uses natural features of landscape and urban design to reduce Combined Sewer Overload (CSO) rates. DEP and its programs were invited back for future discussion.

Committee members also expressed interest in “daylighting,” bringing buried waterways to the surface, as opposed to “bluebelting,” building infrastructure for waterways, as more green and sustainable, less damaging to surrounding environment. With an eye on Van Cortlandt Park and Tibbett’s Brook, committee invited DEP back to explore.

Submitted by,

Robert Fanuzzi, Chair  
Environment & Sanitation Committee