

**Bronx Community Board 8**  
**Minutes of the Environment and Sanitation Committee**  
**Held on January 18, 2017 at the Board office, 5676 Riverdale Avenue**

**Attendance:**

**Committee members:** Laura Spalter, chair, Bob Bender, Steve Froot, David Kornbluh, **Community Committee members:** Karen Argenti, Rob Spalter  
**Committee members absent:** Bob Fanuzzi, vice chair, Amy Joy Robateau

**Guests:**

Ignazio (Iggy) Terranova, Citywide Community Affairs Officer, NYC Department of Sanitation, (DSNY) Eric Bell, Community Board 8, Christina Taylor, Friends of Van Cortlandt Park, Cristina Lang, representing Senator Klein, Maya Ciarrocchi, Debra Travis, Guillemette Bowler, community residents

**Agenda**

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM. The minutes of the December 21, 2017 meeting were unanimously approved.

**2. Step Streets: Sanitation report by Ignazio Terranova, DSNY**

- **Background.** Community Board 8 has 26 step streets, more than any other board in the Bronx. The community board has received numerous complaints from residents regarding lack of maintenance: garbage, weeds, graffiti, rats, and icy conditions. The chair photographed and shared the dismal conditions found on West 238<sup>th</sup> between Cannon and Orloff Avenues, W. 238<sup>th</sup> between Waldo and Irwin, and Summit Place between Heath and Bailey Avenues.
- Mr. Terranova reported that DSNY is only responsible for the steps located **inside of** the railings. Maintenance, including cleanliness, **outside of** the railings is the sole responsibility of the Department of Transportation. This is often a weed and garbage strewn cobblestone surface dotted with weed trees. Furthermore, he stated that union rules do not allow DSNY employees to clean DOT areas.
- Mr. Terranova reported that DSNY does not have a budget to allocate staff to clean step streets. Instead, the department relies on labor through the Department of Probation and community service requirements, which is irregular at best.

- Mr. Terranova advised that the public call 311 regarding graffiti on step streets. When calling in complaints it is important to identify the step street by its main street name and include both cross streets. The city will obtain waivers from private owners bordering the step streets, and will remove or paint over graffiti. Cristina Lang reported that Senator Klein also has a graffiti removal program.
- The chair noted that at last fall's Bronx Borough Consultation, Connie Moran, Bronx DOT Commissioner, stated that DSNY is responsible for all step street areas, and possibly DPR if weed trees are growing through cobblestones or cement cracks.

### **Committee Actions:**

- This spring, the committee will invite DSNY and other agency representatives, elected officials, and community residents to participate in a walking tour of select step streets to address issues.
- The chair will contact Councilman Cohen's office regarding feasibility of the FedCap program, a sanitation service funded by his office.
- The committee will review policies contained in the "Leventhal Memorandum" (1983) named for then Deputy Mayor for Operations, Nathan Leventhal. The memorandum seeks to delineate maintenance responsibilities of DSNY, DPR, and DOT on city properties such as step streets, overpasses, and underpasses where assigned jurisdiction may not be clear.
- The chair will follow up with Mr. Terranova regarding garbage and dumping at 3660 Waldo (The Majestic) adjacent to the 238<sup>th</sup> Street step street located between Waldo and Irwin Avenues.
- Budget requests. Committee will follow up with DSNY re the need for additional snow equipment for narrow streets (haulsters, bobcats, skid steer loaders, etc).

**Organic Recycling Update:** Mr. Terranova reported that organic recycling pickup will be extended to all of Bx. Community Board 8 by the fall of 2017 on a voluntary basis. Participation will become mandatory in 2019. The expansion includes private homes and apartment buildings.

**New Snow Plan:** CB 8 has been divided into sectors. Each sector contains Critical Routes (highways, main thoroughfares, first responder facilities like hospitals), Sector Routes (all other streets wide enough to accommodate a full size DSNY collection truck and plow), and Haulster Routes (dead ends, narrow streets). The new plan will plow all three routes within a sector at the same time.

### 3. Putnam South: Garbage Dump or Future Greenway?

The chair presented pictures of garbage, dumping, and graffiti along the long defunct CSX Right of Way (ROW) located between Van Cortlandt Park South and W. 230th Street running alongside the Major Deegan Expressway (behind Broadway stores, Stop and Shop, BJ's, etc.

The chair endeavored to invite a CSX to this meeting. In conversations with their representative CSX acknowledged that they are responsible for cleaning up the blight and will do so. However, it will take time. The CSX representative also stated that representative would attend a future E and S meeting.

**Background:** The track has not been operational for years. In 2011, the ULURP process was completed, (see separate attachment with minutes of the 2010 full board ULURP approval) and the land was mapped as parkland in order to establish a new mixed use "Rails to Trails." The DPR plan will provide access links to Broadway at W. 238<sup>th</sup>, W. 234<sup>th</sup>, and W. 230<sup>th</sup> Streets. The Putnam South addition will link to the Putnam Trail in Van Cortlandt Park. However, the city has been unsuccessful in negotiating a price with CSX for the rights to use thier right-of way. Ultimately, the Parks Department has also discussed leasing the Right of Way from MTA (once it is no longer in use) in order to extend the trail from W. 230th to 225<sup>th</sup> Street.

#### **Future Actions:**

- Develop a one-page fact sheet about Putnam South to help advocate for the Greenway and advertise the economic, recreational, and environmental benefits for our community;
- Reach out to potential stakeholders such as elected officials, the Broadway BID, KRVC, Transportation Alternatives, Manhattan College and others;
- Plan a site tour with stakeholders to publicize the current blight and future vision;
- Coordinate activities with the Parks and Economic Development Committees of Community Board 8;
- Continue advocating for the daylighting of Tibbetts Brook inside Van Cortlandt Park and Putnam South in order to reduce water pollution caused by Combined Sewer Overflow. Christina Taylor noted that establishing a recreational trail can be done independently of daylighting Tibbetts Brook;
- The chair will continue to communicate with CSX representatives regarding the sanitation problems.

**4. Old Business:** Jerome Park Reservoir (JPR). The chair drafted a letter to DEP Deputy Commissioner Eric Landau requesting a master plan for JPR and inclusion of CB 8 into the DEP's Long Term Control Plan. The Commissioner was invited to attend our joint Environment and Sanitation / Parks Committee meeting scheduled for April 26<sup>th</sup>.

**5. New Business:** The Board received notice that DEP is considering changing its rules for its Green Infrastructure Grant Program. The chair objected to the late public notice of the hearing and amendments, because there is not adequate time to explore the issues in committee. The public hearing will be held on February 15th, which is also the last day to submit comments. Karen Argenti raised several concerns with the proposed amendments. The committee agreed that Karen would draft comments prior to our February meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Submitted by,  
Laura Spalter, chair  
Environment and Sanitation Committee