

Bronx Community Board 8
Minutes Of the Environment and Sanitation Committee Meeting
Held March 29, 2017 at Riverdale Mental Health Conference Room,
5676 Riverdale Avenue

Attendance

Committee members: Laura Spalter, chair, Robert Fanuzzi, vice chair, Bob Bender, David Kornbluh, Steve Froot, Rob Spalter, community member, Karen Argenti, community member

Guests: Deirdre Burke, Broadway Community Alliance, IC L-Engel, BCEQ, Christina Taylor, Friends of Van Cortlandt Park, Shari Hall, KRVhC, Suzanne Corber, Save Putnam Trail/BCJN, Ben Gelbtuch and Dasha Gelbtuch, community residents, Mark Hugel, community resident, Debra Travis, community resident, Tsehay Ashagre, community resident

Presenter: Effie Ardizzone, Bureau of Communications and Intergovernmental Affairs, NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM.

The minutes of February 15, 2017 were unanimously approved.

1. Street Flooding:

A list of recent complaints made to the board and 311 were sent to Ms. Ardizzone by the chair in advance of the meeting. Ms. Ardizzone addressed flooding locations with several residents in attendance: Broadway, 249th and Arlington, and Tibbett Ave. and 232nd St.

- Ms. Ardizzone reported that catch basins used to be inspected every 3 years, but are now inspected annually. A new city council law mandates that DEP prepare a report on catch basin conditions for each community board. Ms. Ardizzone reported that it is not completed yet. She will keep us informed, and get back to us regarding the number of catch basins in CB 8. A suggestion was made that DEP conduct an audit of responsibilities regarding this infrastructure.
- Ms. Ardizzone said that street grading issues and property owners failing to contain their storm water runoff exacerbate flooding and pooling problems.
- She advised the committee to work with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to mitigate curbing and surface conditions that prevent water from reaching catch basins.
- The chair will follow up on flood complaints with the Traffic and Transportation committee to get input from DOT.
- The chair will seek clarification regarding whether 249th Street, a flooding site, is a private street.
- After a flooding complaint is called into 311, the DEP sends a unit to clean the catch basin(s). They are often found blocked by leaves, garbage, and debris. It was noted by a resident that catch basin maintenance has improved flooding conditions on Broadway.
- Property owners and merchants are responsible for cleaning catch basins located near their homes or businesses. Merchants are required to clean 18 inches from the curb.

DEP Programs:

- Ms. Ardizzone distributed Leak Detector Dye Tablets that save consumers water and money by indicating leaks in their toilet systems.
- She reviewed and distributed information regarding DEP's noise regulations and violation protocols.
- The Sewer Service Line Protection program with American Water Resources is an insurance program that protects property owners in case of damage to their pipes that hook up to the city main. For more information on these and other programs consult the DEP web site: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/home/home.shtml>

Green Infrastructure Program. The Environment and Sanitation committee and the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park are partnering with DEP to distribute 100 free rain barrels on **Saturday May 6th**. Rain barrels save homeowners on their water bill, reduce combined sewer overflow by diverting water from our sewers, and provide property owners with a source of water for gardens or other uses. Note: since the committee meeting Senator Klein, Assemblyman Dinowitz, and Councilman Cohen have been added as sponsors.

2. **Putnam South Greenway Resolution.** Negotiations between CSX Corporation and the Department of Parks and Recreation have been stymied for years over the price. The committee unanimously passed the resolution below calling on CSX to sell their Right of Way for this abandoned portion of the rail line to the Department of Parks and Recreation in order to extend the Putnam Greenway South between Van Cortlandt Park South and W. 230th St.

**Resolution
Environment and Sanitation Committee
March 29, 2017**

1. Whereas, the 1998 Report From the Bronx Advisory Committee to the Hudson River Valley Greenway resolved in part to support a multi-use path along the Putnam Rail, although it was not formally included within the Hudson River Valley Greenway corridor, and it further recommended that NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) initiate a full study in cooperation with NYC Department of Environmental Protection; and

2. Whereas, Bronx Community Board 8's 197-a Plan adopted by the City Planning Commission and the City Council in 2003 proposed including reuse of the abandoned Old Putnam Line railroad right of way (ROW) south of Van Cortlandt Park as an opportunity for the creation of a new multipurpose linear open space in Kingsbridge; and

3. Whereas, on October 12, 2010 Bronx Community Board 8 voted to approve a ULURP application by DPR to amend the City Map in order to establish a new linear park south of Van Cortlandt Park, Putnam South, running generally alongside the Major Deegan Expressway, between Van Cortlandt Park South and West 230th Street; and

4. Whereas, on January 5, 2011 the City Planning Commission approved the DPR application, including authorization for any acquisition of real property related thereto; and

5. Whereas, in order for DPR to move forward with its plan for Putnam South, a “rails to trails” greenway, it must first acquire the ROW owned by CSX Corporation (CSX), which has not operated its rail line at this location for decades; and

6. Whereas, negotiations between CSX and DPR have reached an impasse, because CSX has placed an appraisal valuation of its property far exceeding monies allotted for this project from Croton Filtration Plant mitigation funds; and

7. Whereas, CSX donated their property in lower Manhattan to New York City, which enabled the High Line to be built; and

8. Whereas, there are tremendous recreational, economic, and environmental benefits to Bronxites who will use the mixed use bicycle and pedestrian greenway to connect to the Putnam Trail in Van Cortlandt Park and other greenways; and

9. Whereas, businesses on Broadway could benefit greatly by DPR’s vision of several access points to Broadway at West 238th, West 234th and West 230th Streets along the three quarter mile greenway; and

10. Whereas, DPR has presented conceptual plans to construct a mixed use greenway, utilize green infrastructure, and daylight Tibbetts Brook both inside Van Cortlandt Park and along the proposed Putnam South greenway to relieve flooding and serious water pollution issues resulting from Combined Sewer Overflow; and

11. Whereas, on April 12, 2016 Bronx Community Board 8 passed a resolution presented by the Environment and Sanitation Committee to support the priorities of the Coalition for the Daylighting of Tibbetts Brook, advocates for renewed negotiation with CSX in order to build the Putnam South Greenway; and

12. Whereas, CSX has recently demonstrated their willingness to work with Bronx Community Board 8 by acknowledging the sanitation issues and other problems along their property, and establishing a timeline to clean their ROW;

Therefore, Be it Resolved, that Bronx Community Board 8 requests that the new management of CSX treat the Bronx as they treated Manhattan regarding the High Line, and either donate or reduce the price of their land sufficiently in order to enable the Department of Parks and Recreation to commence planning and construction of the Putnam South Greenway; and

Be it Further Resolved, that as a priority for Community Board 8, we will work with DPR, our public officials, relevant government agencies, community groups, and other stakeholders to make the Putnam South Greenway a reality for deserving residents of the Bronx.

Vote: 7-0-0

In Favor: Laura Spalter, Bob Fanuzzi, Bob Bender, David Kornbluh, Steve Froot, Rob Spalter, Karen Argenti.

Opposed: 0

Abstentions: 0

3. **Old Business:**

- Step Streets. The chair distributed a draft of the Step Street Conditions Report, a one-page check off list to evaluate Community Board 8's 26 step streets for safety, cleanliness, and graffiti. The backside of the form lists the 26 step street locations. Committee members offered suggestions and signed up to evaluate various step streets. They will return the form at the April meeting if possible.
- Joint Meeting. Topics for the April 26 joint meeting with DEP and the Parks Department representatives were reviewed with Ms. Ardizzone.
- Plastic bag law discussion will be deferred to a future meeting due to time constraints.
- The Energy and Environmental Fair sponsored by the Christ Church Ministry has been moved to Sunday, October 15th. The committee will reserve a table.

4. **New Business:** none

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Laura Spalter, chair
Environment and Sanitation Committee