

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SANITATION COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON DECEMBER 17, 2014
AT RIVERDALE JEWISH CENTER, 3700 INDEPENDENCE AVENUE**

PRESENT

Robert Fanuzzi
Laura Spalter
Bob Bender
David Kornbluh
Marvin Goodman
Robert Spalter
Julian Sepulveda
Iggy Terranova
Haley Rogers
Sharon Jaye
Danny Steiner
Jodie Colon
Margot Perron
Karen Argenti
Matt Turov
Christina Taylor
Gene Binder
Clare Donohue
John H. Reynolds
Jennifer Scarlott
Danny Steiner
Matthew Singer
Molly Butts
Suzanne Corber
Emily Peterson
Linda Paul
Anita Dutt
Wyldon King Fishman
Consuelo Hernandez
Marcia G. Yerman

AFFILIATION

Committee Chair, CB8
Committee Vice Chair, CB8
Committee Member, CB
Committee Member, CB8
CB8
Community Committee Member
DSNY
DSNY
DSNY
NYC DOE
NYC DOE
NYC Compost Project NYBG
Van Cortlandt Park

FVCP
BCJN
BCJN
BCJN
BCJN
NYC DOE
NYC DOE School of Law & Finance
NYC DOE School of Law & Finance
BCJN/SPT
BCJN

PA P.S. 207

The meeting came to order at 7:10 p. m.

I. Acceptance of Minutes

Vice Chair L. Spalter proposed that the minutes of November 19, 2015 be amended to include the phrase “particularly along Broadway, as noted by community member Jodie Colon” in Part V. The November minutes were accepted as amended.

In favor: L. Spalter; D. Kornbluh; B. Bender; R. Fanuzzi

None opposed.

II. Chair’s Report

Chair R. Fanuzzi forwarded announcement of NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that water will be released into the Harlem River through the fall and winter of 2014 and the Spring of 2015 as part of the testing of the Croton Water Filtration Plant in Van Cortlandt Park.

R. Fanuzzi also reported on his attendance at the DEP public presentation of its Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) for abatement of Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO). (Terms explained below.) DEP has designated eight waterways throughout NYC—Alley Creek, Bronx River, Coney Island Creek, Flushing Bay, Flushing Creek, Gowanus Canal, Jamaica Bay, Newtown Creek, and Westchester Creek—whose water quality is currently being measured and addressed through gray infrastructure—facilities designed to capture or treat rainwater and sewage overflow—and/or green infrastructure—designs such as bioswales or rooftop gardens that mimic the absorbent capacity of natural surfaces and features.

III. Recycling and Green Teams in NYC Schools

Upon recommendation of DSNY, Mr. Danny Steiner, Sustainability Coordinator at JFK Bronx Theater School, reached out to BxCB8 Environment and Sanitation committee for assistance in meeting DSNY recycling standards. DOE Director of Sustainability Dr. Sharon Jaye reported on close working relationship between DOE and DSNY, and the requirements of school principals to appoint a Sustainability Coordinator along with a “Green Team” of support students and faculty to assist. Janitorial staff is excluded from Green Teams. According to Dr. Jaye, many schools have trouble meeting recycling standards because a large part of the sorting process takes place in classrooms and custodians cannot separate garbage from recyclables after the fact. JFK [need school name] Sustainability Coordinator Matthew Singer noted the need for Green Team initiatives to be integrated into the curriculum so that more students understand the recycling process and overall goals of sustainability. Dr. Jaye spoke of need for culture of sustainability to be adopted by NYC schools so that burden is shared beyond Sustainability Coordinators, Green Teams, and principals. Ms. Jodi Colon of NYBG

Bronx Green-Up/DSNY NYC Compost made note of DSNY “Golden Apple” awards given to schools and community organizations that meet DSNY recycling standards and recommended that the award, guidelines, and its deadlines—May 1, 2015--be publicized among Bronx CB8 schools.

Ms. Haley Rogers of DSNY also announced that DOE schools are being included in DSNY Organics Recycling program. Currently, 40-50% of schools participate in program but in five years the program will be mandatory for all. Organics Recycling will divert the currently available 80-90% recyclable material from schools’ waste stream and help DSNY meet its long term diversion goals. Schools are a major part of the DSNY strategy. Ms. Rogers stated that Organics Recycling will be coming to Bronx CB8 schools, possibly in October, and will significantly increase the recycling demands and sustainability goals. DSNY and DOE are currently working together to determine which local schools will be part of Bronx 8 Organics Recycling program.

Given the focus of DSNY and close partnership with DOE, R. Fanuzzi emphasized the need for involvement of BxCB8 Education Committee and thanked member M. Goodman for attending the meeting. S. Alexander, Chair of Education Committee, has expressed interest in holding a joint meeting to further address “Green Team” best practices, support local school Sustainability Coordinators, and to provide outreach for rollout of Organics Recycling in local schools.

Matthew Singer made report of excessive litter on Marble Hill Terrace leading to JFK campus, adding to Danny Steiner’s request for increased recycling and garbage receptacles on 230th street. Mr. Iggy Terranova of DSNY asked that requests be put in writing so that he can pursue.

IV. Diesel Train Emissions in Marble Hill

Clare Donohue reported the efforts of Bronx Climate Justice North to remove CSX parked diesel trains and propane (liquefied petroleum gas, or LPG) storage cars from nearby the Marble Hill Metro North station. She presented research on the harmful effects of diesel exhaust on the health and asthma rates in the Marble Hill neighborhood, which she called an “environmental justice area” given its proximity to the Major Deegan Expressway, Broadway, and subway. She also noted the potential danger of stored LPG tanks and their history of explosions. Chair R. Fanuzzi advised that Traffic and Transportation Chair M. Heller has been working closely with Metro North on the problem of CSX engines and cars on local tracks. B. Bender stated that the Traffic and Transportation Committee had addressed the issue at its December meeting and would be taking it up in more detail. R. Fanuzzi noted the documented hazards of diesel exhaust on the health of the local community and recommended that Ms. Donohue and members of the Bronx Climate Justice North make 311 reports of

excessive idling and suspected air pollution caused by diesel exhaust. He noted that DEP is responsible for air quality standards in New York City and recommended measurements, as other homeowners in the area have done. The committee voted unanimously to write a letter to Ms. Donohue and Bronx Climate Justice North thanking them for their advocacy of the air quality of the Marble Hill area and for bringing the problem of diesel exhaust to the committee's attention.

V. Water Quality and Combined Sewer Overflow

Vice Chair L. Spalter reported on research she undertook on the relation between 311 calls and Hansen Report data (monthly DEP report on complaints) for sewer back-ups and Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) rates in Bronx Community Board 8. According to DEP Community Affairs Eleftheria Ardizzone, sewer back-ups are caused by a variety of factors, including leaf clogging, and are remediated on an as needed basis. She cautioned against using 311 calls/Hansen Report as data for measuring CSO rates or sewer capacity.

Karen Argenti reported on advocacy and research undertaken by the Bronx Committee for Environmental Quality (BCEQ) on water quality of the Harlem River and CSO rates in Bronx CB8. CSO, a diluted mixture of rain water and sewage, known as combined sewage, is the main contributor toward lowering water quality standards. If action is not taken, this pollution will degrade the city's rivers and streams, permanently limit swimming and boating access, and threaten the public's health. To become compliant with the US Clean Water Act, communities with combined sewer systems are developing long-term CSO control plans (LTCP) that will ultimately provide full compliance with the Clean Water Act. Community Board 8 in the West Bronx is part of the Open Waters LTCP which incorporates the Harlem, Hudson and East Rivers and Citywide that will be submitted in December 2017.

Christina Taylor, who also attended the DEP LTCP public meeting, confirmed that the Harlem River, into which Bronx CB8 CSO flows, is not slated for remediation until 2017. R. Fanuzzi proposed to look further into the CSO rates of the Broadway Sewer and to have DEP report at their next meeting.

K. Argenti emphasized the measurement of water quality as the most important factor in devising a LTCP. Water quality standards should match the usage, whether swimming or fishing, and the LTCP needs to bring water quality to that standard. She also noted the effect of paving on stormwater runoff, which brings 45-46 inches of rain per year into overburdened pipes and sewers. She calls for design to mimic natural features to collect the storm water and solve the problem of flooding, CSO inputs, and polluted water.

Several committee members asked if the water quality of Van Cortlandt Lake had been measured for CSO; committee will pursue at next meeting. R. Spalter asked how all the water from the Parade Grounds had been dealt with in the renovation. Margot Perron

offered that they had installed pipes underneath it which then drained into the lake. B. Bender also noted impact of “daylighting” Tibbett’s Brook in Van Cortlandt Park on area CSO rates.

K. Argenti announced to the committee that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is proposing a New Water Quality Standard for the City’s Worst Waters and the hearing and comment period is in January. She advised members of the Environment and Sanitation committee to attend informational and public hearings and to make their voices heard.

R. Fanuzzi thanked K. Argenti for the research and advocacy of Ms. Argenti and the Bronx Committee for Environmental Quality and will attach her presentation with the minutes.

R. Fanuzzi and B. Bender announced that the discussion of CSO and Bronx Community Board 8’s LTCP will be discussed at a combined Environmental and Sanitation/Parks and Recreation meeting in January, where special reference will be made to the impact of CSO on Van Cortlandt Park and the wetlands management measures recommended by the recently adopted Master Plan.

VI. Old Business

R. Fanuzzi made note of recommendation of community member for increased involvement of City Harvest, the food rescue organization, in Bronx CB8 as a way to increase the diversion rates of local businesses. He will reach out to S. Villaverde, Chair of Economic Development Committee of Bronx CB8.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45.

Respectfully submitted,

R. Fanuzzi,
Chair, Environment and Sanitation Committee