

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SANITATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MARCH 18, 2015 AT THE MANHATTAN COLLEGE CAFETERIA

PRESENT

Robert Fanuzzi
Laura Spalter
Bob Bender
Robert Spalter
Robert Press
Andrew Sandler
Suzanne Corber
John Young
Matt Turov
I-C Levenberg Engel
Catherine O'Brien
Jodie Colon
David Gellman
Christina Taylor

AFFILIATION

Committee Chair, CB8
Committee Vice Chair, CB8
Committee Member, CB
Community Committee Member
CB8
rep. Councilman Cohen
Save the Putnam Trail

Save the Putnam Trail
B.C.E.Q.
Nature Group
NYC CP/NY136

Friends of VCP

Minutes of the February 18, 2015 meeting of the Environment and Sanitation Committee were reviewed and accepted by a unanimous vote of committee members.

I. Chair's Report

R. Fanuzzi congratulated Bronx Council on Environmental Quality on its March 18 annual meeting

Announced DSNY Organic Recycling Forum hosted by Councilman Cohen on March 31, 2015, in Stu-Fac Lounge of Fieldston Upper School

Starting on March 24, Kennedy High School campus will become a NYC Compost drop-off site. Chair congratulated Ms. Jodi Colon and Mr. Danny Steiner, green team leader of JFK Theater.

II. BCEQ Presentation on Water Quality, Combined Sewer Overload, and Potential Green Infrastructure Sites in Community Board 8

Karen Argenti, Co-Chair of the BCEQ Water Committee, introduced work of BCEQ and its ongoing research and advocacy on behalf of the Harlem River. The Harlem River is not up to the Clean Water Act standards of the United States Department of

Environmental Protection but it is not included in the USDEP-mandated NYC DEP Long Term Control Plan. DEP is not scheduled to create a Long Term Control Plan for CSO in the Harlem River until 2017. Ms. Argenti noted that Community Board 8 lies in the Harlem River watershed and that development and environmental polices effect water equality. The main source of contamination of the Harlem River is combined sewer overflow, water runoff from storms and sewage backup, entering directly into river from the Broadway sewer near the Broadway Bridge. The larger sewer system that feeds the Broadway sewer is called the sewershed. According to DEP, 50% of the city's/borough/s CSO comes from the CB8 sewershed emptying into the Harlem River.

Committee called for current measurement of water quality of Harlem River and for verification of CSO rates in local sewer substations that feed into the Harlem River.

Paul Mankiewicz, Ph. D., Vice-Chair of the BCEQ, and Phoebe Mankiewics, Researcher for the BCEQ Water Committee, reported on the impact of green infrastructure, curb cuts, and bioswales on remediating CSO. Directing runoff to a tree pit or bioswale is easily accomplished with curb cuts. Trees hold together soil and increase it's ability to hold and retain water runoff. Dr. Mankeitz referred to successful bioswales he had created in the South Bronx with NYS DEC using curb cuts, tree pits, and bioswales, all built within the right of way of DOT streets. Collaboration between DOT and DEP is necessary for right of way green infrastructure.

Dr. Mankiewicz also described the groundwater retaining properties of large trees and their root system. Loss of large caliper trees in Community Board 8 contributes to diminished water quality, soil erosion, roadbed erosion, and air quality, through the transpiration of trees. R. Fanuzzi noted that the Special Natural Area District that is located in Bronx Community Board 8 contains provisions that address underground drainage systems and that the removal of large caliper trees undermines the naturally existing and effective underground drainage system in these areas. He will refer the effect of large caliper tree removal on 105-422 section of the SNAD regulation to the subcommittee proposed by the Land Use Committee.

Dr. Mankiewicz and committee also noted the importance of Tibbett's Brook daylighting in Van Cortlandt Park, as runoff from the Van Cortlandt Lake currently runs into the Broadway Sewer. Tibbett's Brook daylighting is an example of green infrastructure "upstream" from street flooding and CSO discharge site.

With the assistance of Ms. Mankiewicz's Graphic Information System modeling, members of the E and S Committee and BCEQ surveyed possible sites where green infrastructure might be needed and useful. Using Ms. Mankiewicz's mapping, sites were identified on Riverdale Avenue and Bailey Avenue, the Henry Hudson Parkway, and Broadway.

To help confirm Ms. Mankiewicz's GSI research, Jodie Colon of CERT proposed that members be outfitted and trained to measure water runoff during storms. CERT members will contribute their findings to BCEQ at the May meeting of the E and S committee.

The E and S committee plans to draft a resolution calling for a DEP Green Infrastructure plan for CB8.

R. Fanuzzi thanked BCEQ for its advocacy and advanced research in this environmental problem and CERT for its collaboration with BCEQ.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45.

Respectfully submitted,

R. Fanuzzi
Chair, Environment and Sanitation Committee