

Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Committee on the Hudson River Greenway Held on April 13, 2016 at the Riverdale YM-YWHA

Attendees:

Committee: Bob Bender (chair), Laura Spalter

Absent: Philip Friedman

Other CB8: Robert Press, Michael Heller, Tony Creaney, David Gellman, Amy Joy Robateau, Dan Padernacht

Guests: Rob Spalter, Gary Klingsberg, Cristina Lang (Sen. Klein's office), Joshua Stephenson (Councilman Cohen's office), Daine Meenagh, Ann Creaney, Herb Barret, Judy Gurland, Sandy Shalleck (Riverdale Nature Preservancy), Jack Lehnert (Friends of the Hudson River Greenway), Tracy Shelton (KRVC), Cliff Stanton (KRVC), Holly Maikin (KRVC), Joseph Kozlowski, Nortrud Wolf Spero (FCWC/YGCAC)

Agenda:

The meeting began at 7:35 PM. The minutes of the June 2015 committee meeting were approved with an amendment to indicate that the reference to "no private property owners" west of the Metro-North tracks was intended to refer to riparian rights of individual landowners. The committee acknowledges the property and rights of the Riverdale Yacht Club and the College of Mount St. Vincent.

The chair introduced Cristina Lang from Sen. Klein's office to update those present on the status of the planned Metro-North scope-of-work study. Ms. Lang said that the \$250,000 allocated in the state budget at the request of Sen. Klein was now available and that Metro-North is planning to meet with the community to discuss the study sometime in May. MNR has been collecting data in advance of an RFP to be sent out to bid this summer.

It was suggested that KRVC might wish to send MNR its renderings of what the HRG might look like.

It was also suggested that the committee reach out to the two Bronx representatives on the MTA board, Chuck Moerdler and Fernando Ferrer, to invite them to the May community meeting. Ms. Lang will assist in reaching out to Mr. Ferrer.

Among items suggested for consideration in the MNR study are these:

How will users access the Greenway from the W. 254th St bridge, which is the only available access point at present?

Can the study examine placing the HRG on land as well as on the water?

The committee will forward questions from those who attended the meeting to MNR once the date of the meeting has been confirmed. Ms. Lang is coordinating with MNR.

It was noted that Councilman Cohen has sponsored a resolution in the City Council, currently under consideration in the Council's Parks & Recreation Committee, urging Metro-North and other appropriate agencies to facilitate the Hudson River Greenway. The chair asked Mr. Stephenson to thank the Councilman for this resolution.

The chair discussed information provided by Jennifer Greenfield of the Bronx River Alliance regarding possible sources of funding for the HRG. There are grant opportunities at every level of government. The most lucrative, the Tiger grants administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation, are also the most competitive, with a rigorous application process. Stressing environmental benefits from the Greenway could be a valuable approach to gaining grant money. Likewise any benefits that might accrue to MNR from strengthening the shoreline and protecting infrastructure could be helpful in obtaining funding. Finally, emphasizing the regional value of the Greenway in connecting the HRG in Manhattan with the proposed HRG route in Yonkers could be an asset in seeking funding. The chair emphasized that detailed engineering studies will be expensive. Finding a skilled grant writer will be an important objective of the committee in coming months.

The committee should reach out to city, state, and federal agencies as well as to Greenway officials in Manhattan and Yonkers. Several of those agencies have already been identified and contacted.

Questions were raised about who will be the operating authority of the Bronx HRG and how funding will be managed. BOEDC (the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation) has already agreed to handle any funds that are obtained by CB8 for the HRG. The matter of the operating authority will be addressed at the state level, where Sen. Klein and Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz will participate.

Cliff Stanton of KRVC announced that Greenway day will be April 17 at the shoreline park adjacent to the Riverdale MNR station. RiverFest will take place June 5.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.