

Minutes of the Special Committee on the Hudson River Greenway meeting, October 10, 2018

Riverdale Y, 5625 Arlington Avenue

Attendees:

Committee: Bob Bender, Dan Padernacht, Laura Spalter

Other CB8: Rosemary Ginty, Eric Bell, David Gellman

Community: Frederic Klein, Assemblyman Dinowitz's Office; Sura Jeselsohn, Along the Hudson Homeowners; Zak Kastro, *Riverdale Press*; Tracy Shelton, Shari Hall, Camelia Tepelus, KRVC; Sandy Shalleck, Riverdale Nature Preservancy; Joseph Kozlowski, Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct; Nortrud Wolf Spero, LPRA; I C'LEngel, BCEQ; Herb Barret; Julian Castro; Yael Levy; Cliff Stanton; Gary Klingsberg; Linda Hirlehey; Robert Fass; John Benfatti; Anthony Connors

Agenda:

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm.

Minutes of the October 30, 2017 meeting were unanimously approved.

Discussion of Metro-North Greenway Feasibility Study Final Report

Bob Bender explained that the purpose of the meeting was to review the final report of the Bronx Greenway Trail Feasibility Study commissioned by Metro-North (hereafter MNR). He said that the report is in two volumes and that the most relevant information for the committee's purposes is in volume 2. He explained that MNR delivered the final report to the community board in March, after which a CB8 working group met in the spring, reviewed the report, and sent questions about it to MNR. MNR representatives met with working group in July and responded to the questions. They said, however, that they did not want to hold another public meeting to discuss the report.

Note: The complete report is accessible on the Community Board 8 homepage so these minutes include only a brief description of the study.

The main takeaway from the study is that there is a feasible route for the Greenway from Spuyten Duyvil to Ludlow, one that MNR has endorsed pending engineering studies. The feasibility study is a guide for the engineering study that must now be done. MNR will not fund or participate in the engineering study, but it must review it to be sure that MNR safety, security, and access requirements are satisfied.

Among significant safety and security considerations: where the HRG is on land, there must be an 8-foot-high non-scalable fence separating the trail from the railroad and the trail must be at least 15 feet from the nearest railroad tie. MNR's maintenance road must not be infringed on.

MNR noted that in places land ownership must be verified and negotiations must be conducted with any private landowners (including institutions). In addition permits and approvals will be required from several governmental agencies. Portions of the route will require Amtrak's review.

There are four types of trail proposed: on piers in the water, on top of built-up rip-rap; on top of a retaining wall along the riverfront; and at grade on land. Type 1 is the most expensive; type 4 the least expensive. In some places only type 1 is an option. In all cases, the trail should be ten feet wide and it must be ADA accessible.

Where type 1 construction is done, the trail must be 12 feet above mean water level to account for increased river depth due to rising sea levels and potential storm surges. Construction materials must resist break-up in the event of severe flooding. All construction will have to be done from barges docked in the river.

The study shows two basic trail alignments; the difference between them depending largely on whether the overhead feeder cables just north of Spuyten Duyvil can be buried, freeing up property currently occupied by the towers that support these cables. MNR has said that it is not aware of a reason why this cannot be done and is investigating further. Both trail alignments would re-route the HRG to the east of the tracks between approximately W. 246 St and W. 254 St to avoid interfering with the Riverdale Yacht Club. This would be done using ramps and bridges to cross over the tracks. At W. 254 St. the HRG would return to the riverfront.

Access points other than the Spuyten Duyvil, Riverdale, and Ludlow MNR stations need to be investigated. The hope is that additional access points can be identified.

Next Steps

Two steps must be taken now: one is to find an operating authority; the other is to find a firm to do an engineering study and raise money to fund the study. Bob Bender suggested the New York State Parks department as the operating authority and has discussed the matter with Assemblyman Dinowitz, who has promised to arrange a meeting with NYS Parks representatives. Finding and funding the engineering firm is the next goal. The cost of this study has been estimated at between \$1 and \$2 million.

Numerous questions were asked and discussed following the presentation, which took approximately 45 minutes. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Minutes by Laura Spalter and Bob Bender