

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT & SANITATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2010  
AT THE BOARD OFFICE, 5676 RIVERDALE AVENUE**

*Board Members of the Committee present:*

Saul Scheinbach, Committee Chairman  
Laura Spalter  
Bert Feinberg

*Other Board Members present:*

None

*Community Members of the Committee present:*

Bradford Trebach  
Robert Spalter

*Also in attendance:*

Andrew Sandler (rep. Councilman Koppell's office)

*The Committee met at 7:32 p.m. – S. Scheinbach in the Chair.*

1. It was agreed that the minutes of the Committee's meeting of April 20, 2010 be adopted.
2. New Community Member.

The Chairman warmly welcomed former Board Member Bradford Trebach to the Committee, noting that Mr. Trebach agreed to join as a Community Member, and that the Committee is lucky to have him. He thanked him for his eight years of service as a Board Member, and recalled with profound gratitude Mr. Trebach's active role as Chairman of the Environment & Sanitation Committee, Chairman of the Special Committee on Board Structure & Operations, Chairman of the Traffic & Transportation Committee, and, most recently, Vice Chairman of the Board. He said it was shameful that many Board reappointments were made for purely political reasons and not on the merits. Otherwise Mr. Trebach would still be a valuable Board Member. Mr. Trebach said that before his appointment to the Board, he was a longtime Community Member of the Committee, and that he intends to continue being of service to the Board.

3. Horizontal gas drilling.

The Chairman said that the State Senate acquiesced to the interests of the gas and oil companies by passing a bill (S8129B) in August suspending drilling until May 15, 2011, a mere nine months. He said this was not the bills supported by

the Board in the resolution passed last June. Those bills (A10490 and S7592) made more sense. It would have established a moratorium on drilling until 90 days after the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) filed its report, due at the end of 2012, on the safety of horizontal gas drilling. As part of its study, the EPA requested detailed information on the chemicals contained in the “fracking” fluid. Up to now that was considered proprietary by the drilling companies. The EPA held a contentious hearing in Buffalo, NY just two days ago. The State Assembly will be considering these bills this session and he hoped they would reject the nine-month suspension (A11443B) and pass the moratorium.

4. Illegally posted signs.

The Chairman reported that the incidence of illegal postings in Community District 8 had remained low throughout the summer. He attributed this to the publicity, some of it negative, which made it clear that offenders risked large fines. The Chairman presented a copy of a letter he sent to State Legislators. It is a follow-up to letters sent out in 2008, along with the Board's resolution, supporting Assembly Bill 9414 and Senate Bill 6106A. The Chairman said that the bills, which close loopholes used by commercial advertisers to avoid fines when placing signs on public property, were currently dead. In a response to his request for information on the status of these bills, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz replied that the City Council did not pass a home rule message requesting the change. Therefore the state could not act.

5. Recycling pickup schedule changes.

The Chairman reported on changes effective August 30. Collection was changed from Thursdays to Tuesdays going west from Johnson Ave. and Irwin Ave. to the Henry Hudson Parkway, and south of West 238<sup>th</sup> St. to the most southern point of Johnson Avenue. The changes are posted on the Department of Sanitation Web site.

6. Invasive plant species and their impact on green spaces.

The Chairman provided information on aggressive, invasive, non-native plants that are killing trees in parks and other green spaces. Porcelain berry and Asiatic bittersweet are the prime culprits. They grow as vines, attacking trees, shading them out and eventually killing them. Porcelain berry also grows well along the ground until it finds something to climb up. Cutting the vines is only a short-term solution because each shoot can send out a dozen new vines and each vine can grow 20 feet in a season. They have no natural enemies here and, if unchecked, can overwhelm parkland woods in just a few years. This was happening in Riverdale Park until the Natural Resource Group, a division of the Department of Parks, mounted an aggressive campaign of cutting vines and applying herbicide to the stumps. However, pockets of vines remain and are resurging. Many landowners don't even realize that their property is being engulfed by vines. The Chairman said years ago he joined a volunteer stewardship program and has been cutting vines and removing roots in Riverdale Park. He hoped that by

publicizing the issue others would sign up by calling the Partnership for Parks Bronx coordinator, Anthony Martinez, (718) 430-1861. L. Spalter suggested that the next Committee meeting be an educational tour of green spaces in Community District 8 to see the impact of invasive vines. The Chairman agreed.

7. Graffiti-vandalism situation.

B. Trebach updated the Committee on graffiti at the following locations:

- Van Cortlandt Park Overpass of the Henry Hudson Parkway  
After Mr. Trebach e-mailed a complaint to the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT), he received an e-mail message from the Borough Commissioner assuring him that the spray-painted graffiti on the overpass closest to Broadway would be removed by the end of September 2010.
- West 235<sup>th</sup>-236<sup>th</sup> Street Overpass of the Henry Hudson Parkway  
On Sept. 13, Mr. Trebach asked the Board office to notify DOT about graffiti on one of the lower walls of the stone overpass.
- Retaining Wall on West 238<sup>th</sup> Street near Riverdale Ave.  
Neighborhood volunteers have painted over the graffiti on a retaining wall on West 238<sup>th</sup> St. between Fieldston Rd. and Riverdale Ave.

8. Other business.

- As a result of 24 deaths this year due to West Nile virus, the NYC Department of Health announced it would be spraying the pesticide Anvil 10 in Community District 8 from trucks to reduce adult mosquito populations. The sprayed area is bounded by Broadway on the east; Mosholu Avenue and West 254<sup>th</sup> St. to the north; the Hudson River to the west, and W. 232<sup>nd</sup> St. to the south. The spraying will occur on Thursday, September 16 from 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. Residents are advised to stay indoors during spraying. In case of bad weather, spraying will be done on Monday, September 20 at the same times.
- Andrew Sandler announced a DEP Community Service event at the Riverdale YM-YWHA on September 21 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. sponsored by Councilman Koppell. The event will discuss water rates, automated meter reading and the direct-debit program.

*At 8:49 p.m., the Committee was adjourned to a day and time to be fixed by the Chairman.*

Respectfully submitted,

Saul Scheinbach  
Chairman,  
Environment and Sanitation Committee