

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT & SANITATION COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON OCTOBER 13, 2010 ALONG PALISADE AVENUE**

Board Members of the Committee present:

Saul Scheinbach, Committee Chairman
Thomas Giallorenzi

Other Board Members present:

none

Community Members of the Committee present:

Bradford Trebach
Robert Spalter

Also in attendance:

Andrew Sandler (from Councilman Koppell's office)

The Committee met at 2:00 p.m. in front of the Riverdale Temple – S. Scheinbach chairing.

1. It was agreed that the Minutes of the Committee's meeting of September 15, 2010 be adopted.
2. Walking tour to assess the impact of invasive vines on our green spaces.

The Chairman thanked everyone for taking time to attend in the middle of the day, and proceeded with a walking tour of Riverdale Park and adjacent private properties. He said his aim was to show them the damage to our green spaces caused by the invasive vines porcelain berry and Asiatic bittersweet. The group headed west along W. 246th Street. The Chairman pointed out porcelain berry profusely growing along the western edge of Delafield Estates. Much of the rustic wooden fence had fallen down and the remaining sections were covered in vines. Vines were also growing up the sides of mature trees, shading them out. The Chairman said that unless these vines were controlled they will soon overrun the trees and kill them. Additionally, birds carry the berries away, so areas like this serve as reservoirs for reseeding invasive vines in places where they already were removed. The group continued on to Palisade Avenue and headed south along the eastern edge of Riverdale Park. He said several years ago the Natural Resources Group had spent weeks removing vines from the park. Nevertheless, pockets of growth were reappearing. At several spots the Chairman pointed out both porcelain berry and Asiatic bittersweet growing near the park fence line and up some trees. Native vines like Virginia creeper also grow up tree trunks, but unlike the invasive vines, which spread over the tree crown,

the natives stick to the trunk. The invasive vines are also shade-intolerant so they begin growing along edges like the fence line. As the group approached the Hayden House the Chairman pointed out the extensive growth of porcelain berry along the property line. He said this was another source of reseeding, and unless property owners are made aware of the problem, Riverdale Park will continue to be infested. He also showed the group a young birch tree with a corkscrew-shaped trunk. It grew that way because it was slowly strangled by an Asiatic bittersweet vine entwined around the trunk. Although he had cut the bittersweet and freed the tree, it would always be misshapen. Directly across from the Hayden House the Chairman pointed out a section of the park that had been once overgrown with porcelain berry. Due to his efforts and those of the Natural Resources Group, the area was restored. Where a porcelain berry forest once grew, now a diversity of plant species thrived, signaling a healthy ecosystem. But he warned that absent vine-controlling measures, the park and other green spaces eventually will lose their trees and become an unhealthy monoculture of vines. The group headed back to The Riverdale Temple.

At 3:02 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