

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT & SANITATION COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON MARCH 16, 2011
AT THE BOARD OFFICE, 5676 RIVERDALE AVENUE**

Board Members of the Committee present:

Saul Scheinbach, Committee Chairman
Laura Spalter

Other Board Members present:

none

Community Members of the Committee present:

Bradford Trebach
Robert Spalter

Also in attendance:

none

The Committee met at 7:30 p.m. – S. Scheinbach in the Chair.

It was agreed that the Minutes of the Committee's meeting of October 13, 2010 be adopted.

Horizontal gas drilling (Hydraulic fracturing or Hydrofracking)

The Chairman gave an update on the impact of the increased use of hydraulic fracturing, or hydrofracking, a method to recover natural gas, which involves the high-pressure injection of fracking fluid, a mixture of water, sand and chemicals into shale deep underground. The process creates and keeps open tiny fissures, allowing trapped natural gas to bubble up and be collected. Millions of gallons are used per well. Only 10%-40% of the fracking fluid is recovered. Some of the chemicals found in fracking fluid are antifreeze, formaldehyde, sodium hydroxide, hydrochloric acid, alcohols, ethers and diesel oil. Diesel oil contains toluene, xylene and benzene. The first two affect the central nervous system, while benzene, along with formaldehyde, is a known carcinogen. Energy companies want to retrieve gas from the Marcellus Shale, a huge geologic formation extending across upstate New York. At the end of 2010 Governor Paterson issued an executive order directing the NYDEC to determine the safety of hydrofracking. The governor also declared a moratorium until July 2011. Governor Cuomo has taken no position on hydrofracking, except to say he supports the NYDEC process. In 2009 there were over 400,000 gas wells in the US that use hydrofracking. Currently hydrofracking is ongoing in 32 states, including Texas, Colorado, Ohio, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. The number of wells in Pennsylvania has doubled to 71,000 since 2000. In 2009, 3,300 permits to drill in the Marcellus shale were issued, up from 117 in 2007. The benefits are

clear, jobs, money for states and landowners, and cleaner energy. Shale gas equals about 10% of the nation's total and could serve all our electrical needs for 15 years. However, the potential for wastewater from wells to pollute water supplies may outweigh any benefits. For example, in 2008 drilling and coal mine waste released during a drought overwhelmed the Monongahela River, causing local officials to advise Pittsburgh residents to drink bottled in the New York Times on radioactivity in the wastewater, the Pennsylvania DEP announced that water samples taken in November and December downriver from sewage treatment plants handling such wastewater showed no problematic levels of radioactivity. However, they have not yet released the figures. As part of the study in September 2011 the EPA asked nine major drilling companies to reveal their proprietary list of fracking chemicals. All complied except Halliburton, which was issued a subpoena. In February 2011 the EPA released its Draft Hydraulic Fracturing Study Plan. The plan will investigate plan will be weakened by pressure from energy companies and politicians from oil and gas states like Texas and Oklahoma. They claim that the 2004 EPA finding exempting hydrofracking from the Safe Water Act was politically influenced, and not based on good science. The EPA Draft plan was reviewed by the EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB). The SAB was asked to provide an independent review of the draft plan for its scientific soundness. In its initial comments on March 9, 2011, the SAB raised concerns about taking on too much in the study in light of constrained budget and time pressures. The panel of experts also agreed that the research questions were too general and needed to be made more specific. They also discussed the need to study the impact of increased drilling in a region over many well sites.

Illegal postings

The Chairman said illegal postings were at a low, but this week he removed several large "Arizona Iced Tea" posters glued to the base of light poles, and a few illegal "Dogwalker" flyers.

Graffiti vandalism

B. Trebach reported that on December 27, 2010 he received a post office response to his complaint regarding graffiti on collection boxes. The letter said the boxes had been painted over. He also reported graffiti on Johnson Ave. mailboxes to the Postmaster General. On March 16th he received an acknowledgement from the Department of Transportation regarding his complaint of graffiti painted on the north side of the tunnel of the Manhattan College overpass of the Henry Hudson Parkway. L. Spalter was contacted about a community project for a boy scout. She suggested the removal of graffiti from post office boxes.

Other business

The Chairman and Committee member B. Trebach visited the intersection of Bailey Place and Ft. Independence St., in response to a complaint by Robert Drake, a resident. A triangle formed by concrete barriers provides a dumping ground for trash and dog waste. Trash was also observed along the sidewalk behind the triangle and between 3444 Bailey Pl. and 3457 Ft. Independence St. The Chairman reported the filthy condition to the Board office for cleaning by the Department of Sanitation. The Chairman also reported to

the Board office that the power lines along the sidewalk were being pulled down by overhanging vines and tree limbs, and that a resident had reported sparking. Con Ed should be notified. Mr. Trebach suggested that the triangle in question be made into a GreenStreet and said he had already sent a letter to the Commissioner of Parks & Recreation, Adrian Benepe.

At 8:06 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