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PUBLIC HEARING

on the

JAMAICA BAY WATERSHED

PROTECTION PLAN

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94-20 Guy R. Brewer Blvd.
Jamaica, New York

February 9, 2006
6:15 p.m.

Reported by: DAWN ANATRA

Correction to the following transcript: On pages 23-48, the names "Mr. Sewell" and "Mr. McLaughlin" should be replaced with "Mr. Mundy."

A P P E A R A N C E S:

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION and JAMAICA
BAY WATERSHED PROTECTION PLAN
COMMITTEE

BY: ANGELA LICATA, Deputy

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT of
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

BY: JOHN McLAUGHLIN

JAMAICA BAY WATERSHED PROTECTION
PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BY: BRAD SEWELL

1 **MS. LICATA:**

2 My name is Angela Licata. I'm a Deputy
3 Commissioner for New York City
4 Department of Environmental Protection
5 and we are working very diligently on
6 what we came to present to you tonight,
7 the beginning of our Watershed
8 Protection Plan for Jamaica Bay. And we
9 are going to have a number of presenters
10 tonight to explain the purpose of the
11 meeting, so I don't want to detract from
12 any of that, but I would like to simply
13 open by stating that it is very
14 important to me and to my colleagues at
15 the department, as well as to our
16 Commissioner, Emily Lloyd, that we make
17 this process for watershed planning a
18 very collaborative effort. And that's
19 why very early on in the process, we've
20 come to the community to get your input
21 into this planning process.

22

23 Now, we don't expect that all of you
24 will be, at this juncture in time, ready

1 and willing to provide us with comments
2 that we asked about the process. So
3 what we intend to do is to come back to
4 you a few times, then have an iterative
5 responsive planning process where we can
6 incorporate your concerns as we all
7 learn more together about the
8 impairments or the concerns and issues
9 that are affecting Jamaica Bay. And
10 that is truly the intent of tonight's
11 meeting as the underlying intent of the
12 Watershed Protection Plan which is to
13 ensure the productivity and
14 sustainability of Jamaica Bay and to
15 speak about what issues and what sort of
16 a purchase we can take, maintenance,
17 watershed to ensure its brighter future.

18
19 Jamaica Bay obviously is truly a
20 crowning jewel in New York City's
21 environment and its protection is a
22 really worthy effort. So, at the
23 current time I'd like to -- oh, remind
24 you of a few housekeeping items.

1

2 If people would just sign in on the
3 attendance sheet or if they would like
4 to speak, on the speaker's sheet, then
5 we will ensure that we get you a
6 transcript of tonight's meeting so that
7 you'll have a record of the proceedings.

8

9 John McLaughlin is going to take us
10 through a little bit more in terms of
11 introduction.

12

13 **MR. McLAUGHLIN:**

14 I guess we should just introduce some
15 people at the table over here. It's
16 Doug Rely(phonetic), he's the Deputy
17 Commissioner for Water and Sewer
18 Operations. And Brad Sewell from NRDC
19 is a member of the advisory committee.
20 Also I'll introduce the rest of the
21 advisory committee. Doug Adamo from
22 National Park Service, Manny Caughman,
23 Chris Zeppie, Dan Mundy, and Len
24 Houston.

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I just hope you've had a chance to look at some of the posters in the back before going through this and if you also had a chance to go over the local law in some detail. We will try to give you a very quick summary of it now.

Primarily what it does, is it establishes a pathway towards restoring and maintaining the water quality and the ecological integrity of the bay, something that's been long overdue. And that local law then charges DEP to develop a comprehensive watershed protection plan in consultation with the advisory committee.

I just want to say why Jamaica Bay is important. It's a very critical ecological habitat and I just want to give a couple of reasons why I think it's important. It provides an important ecological, cultural,

1 recreational asset in a highly urbanized
2 area, even though it's relatively small
3 geographically, it has many diverse
4 habitats. It contains salt marsh, also
5 grasslands, woodlands, maritime shrub
6 lands, and brackish and freshwater
7 wetlands.

8
9 There's sufficient nursery for about 81
10 different fish species. It's a prime
11 migratory route along the Atlantic
12 Coastal flyway and it's a renowned
13 herding location with 325 bird species
14 recorded and about 62 confirmed breeds.

15
16 It's also a dry habitat for reptiles and
17 amphibians, and small butterflies.
18 There's actually 54 species of
19 butterflies that utilize some portion of
20 the bay.

21
22 Other reasons why it's important: it
23 provides local marine research and acts
24 as an outdoor classroom, provides --

1 perhaps this is the engineering side,
2 provides flood control and protection
3 against storm surges and protects the
4 infrastructure. It's also a national
5 pollution attenuator. And throughout
6 the watershed it supports populations of
7 about 214 threatened rare or endangered
8 species, both flora and fauna.

9
10 Let's go through some quick summaries of
11 local law. One of the tenants of it is
12 restore and maintain the water quality
13 and ecological integrity of the bay, and
14 to do that, we'll assess the technical,
15 legal environmental economic feasibility
16 of the following: We will look at some
17 BMP's within the watershed to minimize
18 soil erosion, control saltwater runoff
19 and also check on non-point and point
20 source pollution, addressing threats to
21 the aquatic habitat. Part of the things
22 we will also be looking at is land
23 acquisition. There is a map at the back
24 that lists vacant property that's both

1 public and privately held. The scale
2 of the map makes it very difficult to
3 see how much is available. But there's
4 a small window we'll show you that some
5 of the parcels are very close together,
6 and with those closer parcels perhaps
7 something can be done.

8

9 Greater coordination between regulatory
10 agencies that have control over the bay.
11 There's many federal, state, local
12 entities that have some jurisdiction
13 over the bay, but sometimes we don't
14 really work very well together.

15

16 Develop a protocol for coordination with
17 the New York City Offices of
18 Environmental Coordination, develop a
19 public education and environmental
20 awareness program and a program to talk
21 about existing regulations or modify
22 those to make those more efficient. And
23 then there are some problems that occur
24 in the bay. We have seasonal low

1 dissolving oxygen levels at select
2 locations. That's primarily in the back
3 of the bay closest to the airport. The
4 shoreline contains degraded and
5 disturbed public habitats. And the key
6 factor, the reason for local law is the
7 loss of wetlands within the bay.

8 Historically there are about maybe
9 16,000 acres, Dan maybe you can confirm
10 that. Of that 16,000, about 14,000 has
11 been failing over the past 200 years.

12

13 I mentioned that agency jurisdictional
14 coordination. Part of the problem with
15 the bay also is limited public access.
16 We'd like to look at that. The Belt
17 Parkway in effect may as well be a fence
18 or a wall because you can't get to the
19 bay. And also there's been limited
20 promotion and public education about the
21 bay. We'd like to increase that.

22 That's all things we can look at. The
23 obvious one being public restoration.
24 Look at some shoreline and habitat

1 preservation. I mentioned land
2 acquisition. A key thing is major
3 species control, large portions of the
4 bay, since it does have construction
5 filters on soils, it may have a model
6 stand for either fragmities or above-
7 water Japanese knotweed which can spread
8 to other regions of the bay. Slow water
9 management support, it's important to
10 mention that. Maybe Doug could talk to
11 you a little about some of the capital
12 improvements being done to the sewer
13 system within the watershed and also
14 construction of CS sub tanks is going to
15 be built at Padigan.

16
17 Some things we're looking at is if
18 there's ways to increase circulation
19 within the bay. We're kind of limited
20 with that, since that may require
21 substantial effort to try to increase
22 that and eventually the greater
23 regulatory intervention and interagency
24 coordination and substantial public

1 education program.

2

3 Some of the things we are doing now,
4 comprehensive water quality plan to
5 reduce nitrogen at the four plants have
6 discharged into the bay. Two are being
7 upgraded 26th Ward and Jamaica. I
8 mentioned combined sewer overflow, at
9 basin tank. I believe that's a 45
10 million gallon tank that will ease some
11 CSO vents. We have a floodables
12 program, catch status, the catch basins
13 within the watershed will have a hood to
14 prevent that from getting into the water
15 body in the first place. And then we're
16 also a cost-sharing partner with the
17 Army Corps on some large projects within
18 the bay under a program called JPER.

19 It's not just us doing work in the
20 bay, there's many other entities
21 evaluating, restoring and looking at
22 various things within the bay. They
23 include the Army Corps, the National
24 Park Service, Department of City

1 Planning, Department of City Parks &
2 Recreation. There's also Jamaica Bay
3 Task Force, local elected officials and
4 others. I don't know if Barbara Brown
5 is here. She's from Queens Alliance,
6 this evening, but she's also very key in
7 this. Her group is trying to restore a
8 portion of Ottawa Park which is the
9 headwaters of the bay, which are
10 extremely critical to the overall health
11 of the bay.

12

13 This is a repeat of what I just
14 mentioned, but there are other agencies,
15 Department of Health & Mental Hygiene,
16 Department of State, DEC and other
17 environmental agencies having
18 jurisdiction of the bay, EPA, Official
19 Wildlife Service, and the National
20 Marines Fishery Service. That's a quick
21 summary. I'll turn it over to Brad.

22

23 **MR. SEWELL:**

24 Thanks, John.

1
2 I've got the honor of being up here
3 representing the advisory committee for
4 the Jamaica Bay Watershed Protection
5 Plan. This advisory committee is
6 creature of the local law that is
7 requiring this plan to be developed. It
8 set this advisory committee to do
9 exactly what it suggests, to advise and
10 consult with DEP for the purposes of
11 developing the best possible plan and
12 one that really came out of that
13 consisted of public involvement in the
14 maximum range and depth of the expertise
15 as possible. So, who's on the Jamaica
16 Bay Advisory Committee, we're going to
17 talk about? What will the Jamaica Bay
18 Advisory Committee do? What's our work
19 plan? That is how you all can get
20 involved in this effort, right now on an
21 ongoing basis, through the next few
22 months and then in the months and years
23 after that. So first, who's on the
24 advisory committee? I actually want to

1 ask the committee members to introduce
2 themselves again. We have someone come
3 in, everyone has to
4 identify who they're with and then
5 there's additional information, far too
6 much information, I'm sure, in the back
7 in a handout with some background
8 information on who each of us are and
9 who we work for. I think it's what our
10 background is that's relevant to this
11 effort.

12

13 So, Doug, want to kick it off?

14

15 **MR. ADAMO:**

16 I'm Doug Adamo, Chief of National
17 Resources at Gateway National Recreation
18 Area, National Park Service.

19

20 **MR. CAUGHMAN:**

21 Manny Caughman, Community Board 12,
22 community activist.

23

24 **MR. ZEPPIE:**

1 I'm Chris Zeppie, Director of
2 Environmental Focus for the Port
3 Authority of New York/New Jersey.

4
5 **MR. MUNDY:**

6 Dan Mundy from Jamaica Bay Eco Watchers.

7
8 **MR. HOUSTON:**

9 Hi, my name is Len Houston. I am Chief
10 of the Environmental Analysis branch at
11 the US Army Corps of Engineers, New York
12 District offices.

13
14 **MR. SWANSON:**

15 Larry Swanson, Associate Dean of the
16 Marine Sciences Research Center, Stony
17 Brook University.

18
19 **MR. SEWELL:**

20 As I said, the local law is what set up
21 the advisory committee, and pursuant to
22 the local law we have some very specific
23 facts, and again, as I noted a few
24 minutes ago, we're to provide advice on

1 an ongoing basis and we're also
2 specifically to provide recommendations
3 for what's to begin, the final plans
4 developed by DEP, and that's submitted
5 to the council. So, again, then the
6 plan, it's a requirement again under the
7 local law to include a DEP response to
8 the advisory committee's
9 recommendations, and then our term ends
10 three months after the plan is
11 completed.

12
13 So, areas for committee recommendations
14 pretty much track what is supposed to be
15 in the plan and what's already been gone
16 over. We are supposed to provide
17 recommendations on specific goals for
18 restoring and maintaining the bay. The
19 boundaries for the plan, then the
20 measures to include in the plan, and
21 John ran through these, and it's
22 everything from different ways of
23 controlling storm water -- storm water
24 and problems associated with storm

1 water, together with effluent from the
2 storm water treatment plants are primary
3 problems in terms of the bay's water
4 quality and some different ways of
5 dealing with storm water and different
6 ways of dealing with development
7 planning, including land acquisition and
8 then a number of processes ranging from
9 public education to different
10 coordination and enforcement protocols.
11 And then we would have to look at the
12 feasibility of these measures and
13 actually inform our recommendations and
14 then finally, to provide a schedule,
15 give recommendations concerning the
16 schedule for the plan, everything from
17 interim to final milestones for what the
18 plan should accomplish to schedules for
19 implementation of specific measures and
20 then finally some way of recommendations
21 concerning how to figure out if we're
22 making progress or not, so, sort of
23 monitoring methodology.

24

1 Now, you want a goal as being obviously
2 cooperative, but also independent from
3 DEP. We would like to think that we are
4 going to try to promote new approaches
5 in areas that maybe fall outside the
6 traditional things that DEP and the
7 other agencies have been able to do,
8 such as, sewage reduction and
9 development of environmental controls.
10 Would represent the views of multiple
11 agencies, such as those that John
12 mentioned and that are represented at
13 the table, and then also the members of
14 the public, and to serve you and then
15 also serve in addition as sort of a
16 larger resource for you in terms of
17 questions about the plan and obviously
18 provide input into the plan. Now,
19 important dates coming up, in addition
20 to this round of public meetings that
21 we've concluded tonight, we're going to
22 have additional public meetings
23 significantly later in the process once
24 we have a draft put together. Then

1 July, July 1st, under the local law, we
2 submit our recommendations to DEP and
3 the City Council. And then DEP will
4 take those recommendations from there.
5 Obviously there's going to be a lot of
6 back and forth before that, but -- then
7 DEP takes a final step in September and
8 they submit their plan and then on an
9 ongoing basis after that, there is
10 reporting requirements by the local laws
11 to see how the plan is doing. Now,
12 what's our work plan, we're doing public
13 outreach meetings now, were developing a
14 preliminary draft of our various
15 recommendations and identifying
16 outstanding information needs and then
17 in March, April we'll conduct some
18 workshops to try to fill these
19 outstanding information needs and then
20 in May we're going to complete our draft
21 recommendations, take more public
22 comments and then finalize the
23 recommendations in June and wrap it up
24 by July 1.

1
2 And how you all can get involved is the
3 most important part. Fill out a comment
4 sheet tonight and anytime you want to
5 submit a comment, suggestion,
6 recommendation, issue, concern, you can
7 get it to us. There's a web site that
8 we have set up, which is listed here.
9 And there are copies of this
10 presentation in the back of the web
11 site. That way, so you can get updates
12 and meeting announcements along with
13 contact information. By going to the
14 web site you can attend public outreach
15 meetings that will come later on.
16 Encourage others to get involved. And
17 if you want to send any specific plan
18 suggestions, you can use me as a point
19 of contact for the whole advisory
20 committee and my address is listed. And
21 that's it. So, thank you all for coming
22 out again. And I think we're now going
23 to take a couple of comments.
24

1 Dan, do you want to run this part?

2

3 **MR. MUNDY:**

4 Thanks, Brad.

5

6 First, I'd like to acknowledge that some
7 elected officials or representatives
8 that are elected officials are here
9 today and we thank them for attending.
10 We have representatives from the State
11 Senate in Malcolm Smith's office,
12 Senator Maltese, a council member from
13 William Lloyd Comrie's office, from
14 Assemblywoman Cook's office and from
15 Councilman Jim Gennaro's office, and
16 Queensboro President Helen Marshall's
17 office. We thank you for attending.
18 If anybody else came in after the sign-
19 in sheet, I'm sorry I didn't have them,
20 but you come up to me, I will get your
21 announcement in before the end of the
22 meeting. Thank you.

23

24

1 **MR. McLAUGHLIN:**

2 We have nine sign-ins and we would like
3 to limit the talk to about approximately
4 three minutes for each individual, so
5 that everybody has an opportunity to
6 speak tonight. So we would like you to
7 close up when I walk up to the podium if
8 your time is nearing.

9

10 There's four different sign-in sheets.
11 I don't remember which one was first.
12 I'm just going to take them in the order
13 in which the sheets were given to me.

14

15 We have William Nelson.

16

17 **WILLIAM NELSON:**

18 Good evening everyone. My name is
19 William Nelson. I actually had prepared
20 some testimony and I'll hand this to the
21 committee for a record, but I just want
22 to touch on certain points. In looking
23 at the presentation, I noticed that
24 there were certain priority issues that

1 are established by the committee, one
2 being, providing some access to the bay
3 and some educational opportunities of
4 the bay. Manny Caughman, who actually
5 sits on Southern Queens Park
6 Association's advisory board, knows that
7 we've been working for several years,
8 about five years through a Department of
9 State grant to put together a study on
10 how we can provide access on the bay.
11 For years, Southern Queens Park
12 Association, through a summer day camp
13 has thousands of youngsters to the bay
14 and you know, we found that to our
15 dismay, you know, garbage being dumped
16 in the bay and a whole lot of problems
17 and issues here, and obviously we
18 believe that if we opened up the bay and
19 acquire some of those sites for, you
20 know, for public use and park use, that
21 we become sort of an ecological buffer
22 and it would enable us to teach
23 youngsters and adults about the beauty
24 of the bay and not just, you know, what

1 we see there now and all the dumping
2 that's occurring. So, I'm actually not
3 going to take up too much time because I
4 do have another engagement, but more
5 detailed statements are what I handed to
6 the committee and actually we are
7 releasing our draft plan within the next
8 few weeks and we want to share that with
9 everyone when it comes out. So, thank
10 you and I appreciate the time.

11
12 **MR. McLAUGHLIN:**

13 Thank you. I also have been handed a
14 sheet saying that we have a
15 representative of Senator Ada Smith in
16 the audience, and we again thank you for
17 attendance and participation in this
18 event.

19
20 The next speaker we have is Michael --
21 it looks like it says, Michael Greene;
22 is it? I might be pronouncing it wrong.

23 **MICHAEL GREENE:**

24 I really did not expect to be speaking

1 so early. I made sure to sign up kind
2 of late on the list but then it got
3 shuffled. I didn't have it all
4 prepared. I guess there are a couple of
5 things that came to mind that I would
6 like to say to this group. First of
7 all, what a great turnout. This is a
8 lot of people. I was very impressed
9 with the information in the back that
10 was displayed for the public. I thought
11 that was really a good clear job. I
12 learned I didn't know about the issue
13 and was able to learn quite a lot about
14 it just by being in the back looking at
15 the maps and talking with people. So
16 that was really also good. I appreciate
17 the tone. It's really nice when a
18 government organization gets up there
19 and shows you that they really do want
20 input. I mean, for me, that's what I'm
21 getting from this whole experience. I'm
22 very happy about that.

23

24 All those are great things. It looks

1 like a very exciting project beyond -- I
2 mean, both for the protection of
3 Jamaica Bay and for the possibilities of
4 being kind of a broader impact within
5 the neighboring communities. I thought
6 that one of the most exciting things was
7 about the vacant land that you were
8 identifying and how that could be
9 integrated in some general ecological
10 matter to support the work that we're
11 doing. We are looking at it as an
12 ecosystem in New York City. I mean, in
13 a part of New York City, this is the
14 very advance concept. So that's
15 exciting.

16

17 One of the other ideas also was about
18 how storm water, for example, one of the
19 things perhaps that people might not
20 know, is that with our sewer system --
21 excuse me, the reason I know this is I'm
22 the chair of a different DEP citizens
23 advisory committee which looks at the
24 sewer plants and the sewer systems that

1 tries to reduce pollution that goes into
2 those plants, therefore, having a good
3 impact on the waterway. And, what it's
4 very nice to see as well, is people
5 looking at what can be done here to
6 reduce the amount of runoff, rainwater
7 runoff that goes into the sewer system
8 and causes it to overflow, and instead
9 perhaps, be able to bring it into the
10 bay, perhaps directly or you know, not
11 having to join the sewer system
12 essentially. That was one of the ideas.

13
14 What this also means, in order to do
15 that was, is you want to have a plan
16 whereby pollution is not getting into
17 the storm water that easily, through the
18 ground, stuff that people leave around.
19 I mean, for example a used car or cars
20 or just anything, that oil is getting in
21 or different types of pollution. So it
22 also brings to mind other issues that
23 are of an environmental nature with the
24 whole community. So that was something

1 that would seem to me that there's going
2 to have to be a lot of efforts like
3 that. That the DEP or different
4 committees, we are working on that right
5 now, so hopefully, we will be able to
6 work with you and assist that.

7
8 The other thing that struck me was that
9 I think I saw 10 or 12 different
10 government agencies that were listed as
11 far as where there was some
12 jurisdiction. That's a tremendous
13 amount and I would wish you good luck to
14 working with all those agencies because
15 that would be, as we know, one of the
16 most difficult parts of the project. I
17 would suggest early on to have, perhaps
18 a group with the agencies. Kind of an
19 early task force trying to get people so
20 that they start getting to know each
21 other, who are the principal players
22 from the agencies, and just open lines
23 of communication, so that could be a
24 little smoother as we move forward. So

1 that's it.

2

3 And the only other thing I didn't see
4 with the CAC and it looks like a very
5 strong CAC, I didn't see anything about
6 if people want to join the CAC on a more
7 regular basis, and I was hoping that
8 perhaps, I don't know if you have
9 elections every year or two years or
10 anything like that, but I would imagine
11 this is going to be a long-term project
12 and then you're going to want people
13 involved on that kind of a level. So, I
14 hope that's true too. Thank you.

15

16 **MR. SEWELL:**

17 Next on the list we have Erik Baard.
18 Erik.

19

20 **ERIK BAARD:**

21 I'll just hit four things in kind of a
22 bullet point fashion and if any of them
23 appeal to you, just come up to me
24 afterwards.

1
2 I'm with the Citizens for New York City
3 and we're a neighborhood improvement
4 organization since '75 with the
5 environmental program. We had a few
6 things. The first thing is we're making
7 Jamaica Bay a priority area for the
8 summer of 2006 and hopefully for a few
9 more years. And what that means is we
10 will be trying to steer grants towards
11 that area. There's small grants for
12 little volunteer organizations on the
13 neighborhood level. But one of our
14 priorities is water access, getting
15 paddle boats or rowboats onto the water
16 in Jamaica Bay, and therefore building
17 an environmental constituency, getting
18 them on the water then they start caring
19 about it through that connection.
20 Towards the end, we're looking at maybe
21 trying to coordinate an event on
22 September 9th with kayakers, bikers, and
23 hikers all converging on the greenhouse
24 at Floyd Bennett Field. so you have all

1 these people arriving through the bay,
2 working and doing volunteer work in the
3 greenhouse, and those plants themselves
4 may be planted in the bay and also in
5 public spaces throughout the City. So,
6 September 9, we're going for, it just
7 happens to be that's when the water
8 temperatures are good, the air
9 temperatures aren't too brutal, and the
10 current works so that the people from
11 the Canoe Club don't have to work so
12 hard to get there.

13

14 The last thing for the citizens is that
15 we're working maybe to create a thing
16 called naturecalendar.org. We bought
17 the domain and we're looking to build an
18 online kind of a seasonal rhythms for
19 New York, so that anyone can look at a
20 calendar online and know what's going on
21 in nature within the five boroughs that
22 weekend or you put your ZIP code in and
23 find out what's going on in your
24 neighborhood, put in birds, you know as

1 a category, see what's going on with
2 birds or just pick a day and see what's
3 happening anywhere in the City on that
4 day, that might be interesting for you
5 if you just want to go out. So, our
6 goal is that things that are going on in
7 nature would be as reliably listed as,
8 you know, Opera and baseball seasons.

9
10 So, those are the three things I wanted
11 to let you guys know about and you can
12 always come up to me afterwards and I'll
13 give you my card and propagandize you
14 further. And then just as a volunteer,
15 I got into this by starting a community
16 boathouse on the East River, so I do
17 have some experience in this matter for
18 people who would want to start boating
19 programs in Jamaica Bay. I've got my
20 little cards out there about the Long
21 Island City Community Boathouse, if
22 you're curious about that. And so,
23 there's some firsthand practical
24 experiences so you don't make my

1 mistakes. Thank you.

2

3 **MR. SEWELL:**

4 Number five, we have Paul Maukiewg.

5

6 **PAUL MAUKIEWG:**

7 Thanks, Dan.

8

9 I just wanted to talk about a plan
10 because unless you plan for a watershed,
11 you can't possibly maintain or protect
12 the resource. And this is one of the
13 most important resources on the earth.
14 It's the stopping place for hundreds of
15 species, literally multiple thousands of
16 birds and literally connects the tropics
17 with the far North with habitat,
18 otherwise it would not be here. It was
19 like really even Nassau County. But
20 then, I just wanted to say, in
21 protecting the watershed and attempting
22 to look at the whole bay, we have really
23 a spectacular opportunity because, as
24 you know, in some parts of Brooklyn and

1 Queens you have flooding. In other
2 areas we have trees dying when you've
3 had droughts. The vegetation literally
4 regulates the water table. That's what
5 makes it go up and down, and it's the
6 soil that actually is able to hold it,
7 and DEP has a great structure,
8 45 million gallons that it can capture.
9 It's about an inch of water over two and
10 a half square miles, but really, there's
11 about 50 times that much space in the
12 sands and the glacial material right
13 under the top three feet of the
14 watershed. And the cost of catching
15 water and putting it into the ground, as
16 the Parks Department has showed in
17 Seattle, it's very much lower than
18 pouring concrete. And if you remember
19 the hot summer days, the main coolant
20 here is water. A tree can evaporate
21 literally thousands of gallons of water
22 a day and every gram of water takes with
23 it 500 calories and basically cools the
24 landscape. So, my encouragement to this

1 process is only to try to literally make
2 the properties much more valuable by
3 catching water on the streets like
4 they've done in the Seattle Sea Street
5 program, by literally making green
6 street parks and park land throughout
7 the landscapes. In areas where there's
8 flooding, it will actually get rid of
9 the water. If you have good maples or
10 pine trees that can actually do that
11 kind of work. In other areas you can
12 capture sometimes literally tens of
13 gallons of water for 2 square feet of
14 land.

15
16 Another side that I just want to address
17 quickly is, the bay itself is a great
18 resource because it works to filter and
19 I think we need to see how the bay is
20 being made to behave like it did really
21 a relatively short time ago before they
22 dug the deep holes to create Kennedy
23 Airport and Floyd Bennett Field. The
24 bay probably filtered itself with

1 oysters, with muscles, with clams, about
2 once a day or once every few days. I
3 know this is one thing that DEP is
4 looking into with this process that
5 would be made to encourage this
6 altogether. Because those creatures
7 actually cost virtually nothing. But
8 literally an acre of salt marsh can take
9 out literally hundreds of pounds of --
10 40 pounds of nitrate each year and
11 hundreds, if you count what's stored
12 below the marsh itself. So the uplands
13 catches the water and the marshes
14 itself, the oysters, the muscles, the
15 clams can actually do the filter work
16 and I hope that besides the -- I know
17 that besides the concrete
18 infrastructure, we'll look at the
19 natural systems that have the method of
20 supporting the rest of us as well.
21 Thank you.

22

23

24 **MR. SEWELL:**

1 Thank you, Paul.

2

3 I could go on at this time, but if I
4 didn't introduce and have him come up
5 and say a few words, the gentleman that
6 is responsible for us being here. The
7 councilman who held the public hearings
8 for the last four years from his
9 oversight committee environmental chair,
10 and introduce Local Law Number 71 and
11 had it to follow-through till it was
12 passed and that's the reason why we're
13 sitting here tonight. James F. Gennaro,
14 Councilman, would you please come up
15 here, sir?

16

17 **COUNCILMAN JAMES F. GENNARO:**

18 Good evening. Thank you for being here
19 in such great numbers to work on what we
20 all know is a very important thing, to
21 bring this bay back to health. I thank
22 Dan for his gracious introduction and
23 for your 40, 50 years or whatever of
24 advocacy for the bay, whatever, and

1 everyone who has been so involved in
2 representing all these great
3 organizations that are going to come
4 together to do the great work that has
5 to be done. I'm the chairman. I get
6 some of the credit or whatever, but I've
7 been really inspired by people like, you
8 know, Larry Swanson, who taught me when
9 I was undergraduate at Stony Brook in
10 the environmental community, Paul
11 Maukiewicz, another great friend and all
12 the great folks at DEP that really, you
13 know, got me going on this issue, so I
14 thank you. I thank all of you. This is
15 a great opportunity to orchestrate a
16 very, very special plan. Not just
17 another plan, but a very, very special
18 plan that would be the blueprint for the
19 saving of this bay. And also it's my
20 hope, a paradigm for other threatened
21 waterways. I don't want to take away
22 from the substance of the evening by
23 going on to all the political blather
24 and you know, gushing, whatever. But I

1 am very exciting about the fact that so
2 many people are coming together for this
3 process and I'm very confident that we
4 are going to have a really excellent
5 plan that I promise to find the money
6 for, okay. So, I do have something to
7 do with DEP's capital budget, don't I
8 Doug? Isn't that my job? And I'll
9 quote from Emily Lloyd right here on
10 paper. Look at this. What does she
11 say, right here? I'm very thankful for
12 the DEP. In particular, Emily Lloyd for
13 embracing the plan and the advisory
14 committee and it's a critical role in
15 crafting this plan. It's particularly
16 encouraging that Emily Lloyd has stated
17 that creation of this plan, this
18 watershed plan, is one of DEP's most
19 urgent and important projects. That's a
20 good thing that the Commissioner thinks
21 that. And I want to thank the Mayor in
22 a special way for signing this
23 legislation and having these good folks
24 from DEP work with us, to the council's

1 appointees, Dan Mundy, Larry Swanson,
2 one of my early mentors, Brad Sewell,
3 representing the good folks from NRDC,
4 and of course, you know the members that
5 have been put forward by the committee
6 -- by the Mayor. I don't know them and
7 I'll -- you know, first name is Doug,
8 and Len, and Chris and me, my guys. And
9 so, thank you so much for participating
10 in this -- in this great work. And one
11 person also that I really want to thank
12 in a very, very special way who works
13 day in and day out on all the great
14 environmental issues for the committee,
15 for the council, is my own excellent and
16 wonderful Chief of Staff, Peter
17 Washburn. I think we have to give him a
18 round of applause. He works under the
19 radar, but I am a success because of him
20 and all the good work that he comes
21 forward and does. He's a great
22 environmentalist in his own right and he
23 really helped to forge what happened in
24 the committee, and I owe him a real debt

1 of gratitude as of all of us do for the
2 wonderful work that's going on here.

3

4 I actually snuck out of an event at
5 Anton's. Do you know Anton's in Queens
6 Village, a big political event and
7 everything, so, so about 20 minutes ago
8 I said, could you hold my drink for a
9 minute, I just have to step outside.
10 The ice cubes are probably melted by
11 now. Hopefully this person has put the
12 drink on some table some place. But I
13 am expected back there, but I really
14 couldn't miss this wonderful opportunity
15 to come by and wish this process well
16 and thank you all in a special way for
17 all that you're doing, so thank you from
18 the bottom of my heart.

19

20 Once upon a time I had an environmental
21 job. I was an environmental policy
22 advisor to the City Council. It was a
23 great job. It was wonderful. I got to
24 go to things like this all the time. I

1 did you know, environmental stuff you
2 know, twenty-four/seven and now that I'm
3 Chairman of the committee, I'm running
4 around to this and that, so I really do
5 relish the free moments that I actually
6 get to sort of be an environmentalist
7 and participate in forums like this.
8 But I got to go back. Duty calls.
9 Thank you all, very much. God bless you
10 all.

11

12 **MR. SEWELL:**

13 Thank you, Councilman Gennaro for those
14 inspirational words. The DEP, you know,
15 can't very well get up here and say it,
16 but I'll reiterate what Jim said, and
17 that was that the Commissioner, Emily
18 Lloyd, has been very active with us our
19 very first meeting on the boat ride that
20 she attended. It was about four or five
21 hours, very lengthy. She went all
22 around the bay with us. She listened to
23 things that we had to say and she has
24 been very closely watching this on her

1 end, and we've heard from her a good
2 number of times and we want to thank her
3 for that input, and myself, on the
4 opinion that because of this we're going
5 to have great cooperation and good team
6 work on this.

7
8 The next speaker that we have is
9 Mickey Cohen. Mickey, would you please
10 come up here.

11

12 **MICKY COHEN:**

13 Thank you, Dan.

14 So, I followed Councilman Gennaro up
15 here this evening and what an honor that
16 is. Follow him any place, any time,
17 wherever you want to take me,
18 Councilman.

19

20 I was present at the September 11 --
21 January 11th meeting of this advisory
22 council and there was a young man who
23 made a comment during this open mic
24 session and he really stirred up my

1 imagination, as he did the imagination
2 of many other people present, but he's a
3 local fishermen and a boatsman, and he
4 fishes year-round. He reported to this
5 group, at that time, that he had
6 observed the Asian Shore crab in Jamaica
7 Bay sometimes in accumulations in
8 gatherings of hundreds of crabs and he
9 was extremely concerned about that
10 phenomenon. He thought that they might
11 actually be one of the causative agents
12 in one of the greatest crisis we are
13 experiencing in Jamaica Bay. That is
14 the destruction of the salt marsh and
15 grass. And as you are very much aware
16 of, I'm sure, various agencies have been
17 attacking the problem trying to find out
18 what might be a cause of the depletion
19 of the salt marsh grasses, not only in
20 Jamaica Bay, but in salt marshes around
21 the East Coast. His thought that they
22 might be eating the marsh grasses is an
23 extremely important item. Now, there's
24 no -- he didn't have any proof of that,

1 but this was a suspicion. And I came
2 home and I immediately got to work
3 following up on various reports about
4 Asian Shore crab activities. Would you
5 believe that there was some 25,000
6 references to Asian Shore crab on the
7 web. Now, I can't tell you that I read
8 all 25,000 of those reports, but I did
9 spend an inordinate amount of time going
10 through the reports on various
11 observations of Shore crab activities,
12 and I summarized them as best I could.
13 A summary along with a rather
14 descriptive illustration is waiting for
15 you on the back table. If it happens at
16 all, the issues that I put together for
17 you, it's just an information sheet. If
18 they've run out, you can find copies on
19 this on the American Literal Society web
20 site, as well as the web site for the
21 Jamaica Bay Task Force. What I'm hoping
22 for, is that I'll be able to gather
23 together a volunteer's group who will be
24 able to follow some distinct protocols

1 for coming out into the shore of Jamaica
2 Bay at low tide and counting and
3 measuring the Shore crab so we can get
4 an idea of the population.

5
6 Any kind of information that we gather
7 is going to be helpful, but we must find
8 out whether the Shore crabs are indeed
9 eating the grass. And this could be
10 done in one of the many local school
11 laboratories. I went out -- I should
12 note those of you who live in Howard
13 Beach or Broad Channel of the Rockaways,
14 any place around Jamaica Bay, two weeks
15 ago we had several days of extraordinary
16 low tide, and I went out on one of those
17 particularly low tide days to perform a
18 rather long -- very particularly
19 transecting right on the spurs that you
20 walk collecting Green crabs and Asian
21 Shore crabs. The Shore crabs are out
22 there at the ratio of about -- the way I
23 counted them -- it was six Shore crabs
24 for every four Green crabs. So, many of

1 the references that I've read, mentioned
2 that the Shore crabs are replacing the
3 green crabs in their ecological niche.
4 So there's one little observation that I
5 made, at least to verify that
6 information.

7
8 Will you all please keep an eye on those
9 web sites. They're mentioned again in
10 the brochure that's in the back and keep
11 in touch with me. There's a web site, I
12 mean an e-mail number that I have.
13 Please call me if you think that you'd
14 like to get started with us in the
15 springtime. This is not going to be
16 directed completely by me. I hope only
17 to organize it through the auspices of
18 the Jamaica Bay Guardian, but I'd like
19 to get together with those in the
20 academic circles as well, to figure out
21 really good sites protocol. Thanks very
22 much for your time.

23

24 **MR. SEWELL:**

1 Thank you, Mickey. And out of those
2 25,000, I think about 24,000 and
3 something, there's a recipe for the
4 Asian crab for eating them in a soup; am
5 I right, Mickey?

6

7 **MR. COHEN:**

8 Actually, that's what I thought was the
9 case. I was looking through these
10 recipes for Asian Shore crab, didn't
11 realize that I was looking not through
12 recipes for Asian Shore crab but an
13 Asian recipe for crab.

14

15 **MR. MUNDY:**

16 The next speaker we have is Dr. Frans
17 Vedhagen.

18

19 **DR. FRANS VEDHAGEN:**

20 My name is Dr. Frans Vedhagen. I'm an
21 environmental or sustained ability
22 sociologist, and I am speaking here
23 tonight as the president of SAFE Inc.,
24 which stands for Sane Aviation for

1 Everyone, which is a coalition of about
2 24 separate groups around in the
3 metropolitan area and we are working for
4 a sustainable, equitable and accountable
5 aviation industry. And so, I am also
6 teaching sustainable aviation at the
7 College of Aeronautics at LaGuardia and
8 I'm affiliated with the Aviation
9 Institute here at your college. My
10 comments are threefold.

11
12 First of all, I want to congratulate the
13 DEP and the city government for the
14 process that is being followed here, the
15 iterative process from the very
16 beginning because what often happens is
17 that the scoping process of a project
18 like this is being done by so-called
19 technical experts without input from the
20 community and other stakeholders. So,
21 congratulations. I'm also very pleased
22 to see that the DEP takes this very
23 seriously. They sent two deputy
24 commissioners to be here, so many people

1 of the staff of the DEP, so I did feel
2 this is very serious and I congratulate
3 the DEP and also the Bloomberg
4 administration for this kind of
5 initiative.

6
7 My second comment are a couple of
8 questions, particularly in terms of the
9 impact of the airport on Jamaica Bay
10 watershed. I would like to see that the
11 project compares the health of Jamaica
12 Bay with a similar bay, namely, Peconic
13 Bay, to see in terms of pH levels and
14 other things. Probably the pH may be
15 somewhat similar because generally
16 speaking, saltwater -- I would really
17 like to see a comparison made in that
18 regard.

19
20 The second point, of course, in terms of
21 the airport, there is the runoff.
22 Particularly the deicing and the glycol.
23 I don't know to what extent there are
24 studies there, but I think it's very

1 important that these studies are being
2 done and maybe the City may consider
3 having a deicing shed, like they have in
4 Paris and other airports, where they
5 have infrared heat deicing planes. So,
6 that's an important part.

7
8 The third one in terms of the airport
9 are the fuel allowance of the oil depots
10 to the airport. From a friend of mine
11 in the National Park Service
12 Headquarters, I learned that some of
13 those lines are leaking, and I wondered
14 to what extent that's true and what kind
15 of studies are done. So, I think it's
16 very important that also the health of
17 lines is going to be included.

18
19 My last point deals with actually an
20 increase into the whole process.
21 Generally I don't volunteer other people
22 in my organization, but I have one
23 particular gentleman called John Vasio
24 (phonetic) who lives near Jamaica Bay

1 and who has been involved for decades in
2 all kinds of committees in that regard,
3 that I would like to see that he might
4 become a part of the advisory committee.
5 He knows the bay very well. As a matter
6 of fact, I also know the bay a little
7 bit out of practical experience because
8 I used John's place as a storage for my
9 windsurfing board when I was windsurfing
10 around the whole bay for a year. Not
11 for the whole year, but during one
12 particular year.

13

14 And the last point is, in terms of the
15 planning process, I would like to see
16 that the whole project is based within
17 the framework of a value base planning
18 approach. And what I mean by this, I
19 can't exactly explain now because time
20 is not there, but what I can say is
21 this, I'm heading up a steering
22 committee in the City to get 100 leaders
23 in government, business and civil
24 society together in a consultation where

1 they are going to work on building
2 sustainable communities, so that is the
3 whole concept. Some people call it
4 smart growth, other people, they call it
5 local attempt 21, and I think I'm going
6 to input into the planning process of
7 the project, as a sustainable
8 sociologist, this particular framework
9 for consideration of the advisory
10 committee and also of the DEP.

11

12 So, once again, many congratulations. I
13 think this is an excellent way to start
14 to have people making input and really
15 use the resources and the creativity of
16 people in Queens. Thank you.

17

18 **MR. MUNDY:** Next we have David Burg,
19 please.

20

21 **DAVID BURG:**

22 Thank you, Dan. Thank you to the
23 advisory board for heading this
24 wonderful hearing.

1
2 I want to say my name is David Burg.
3 I'm the president of Wild Metro. We are
4 a nonprofit organization interested in
5 protecting nature where people live,
6 protecting nature in metropolitan
7 regions around the world. With a
8 headquarters in Manhattan, we're fairly
9 new. I have a lot of experience in
10 Jamaica Bay going back for 20 years. I
11 was president of New York City Audubon
12 and created a lot of Jamaica Bay
13 programs. Picked up some of the torch
14 from the former DEP Commissioner Al
15 Appleton, who before he was DEP
16 commissioner, created for the bay
17 programs for Jamaica Bay when he was
18 president of the Audubon Society. And,
19 even before that, my own background with
20 the bay, my dad grew up in Brooklyn. I
21 had an aunt who lived in Laurelton, who
22 I did visit all the time. So, we got to
23 know the watershed area of the bay from
24 an early age. It is as people have said

1 today, a very special place and it's a
2 place that many of us have seen in our
3 lifetime, lots of change. We don't know
4 all the courses for the degradation or
5 the loss of marshes. That's the reason
6 it's hard to know because you've heard
7 some of those things tonight. We've
8 seen the growth of housing, and the
9 growth of roads, and the growth of
10 airports, and the change of airports, so
11 we have a lot of things going on at once
12 in the bay. I was a professional
13 naturalist. I also worked in the real
14 estate field. It's sort of an odd
15 combination. I think that we need to
16 have plans. This is the part that I
17 would really urge the committee, I think
18 you're very fortunate in having a lot of
19 people I've worked in a lot of different
20 capacities, Chris and Len in the harbor
21 restoration program. I've been
22 privileged, working in Metro, done some
23 research and I'm very privileged to work
24 with Brad on some protection issues in

1 Staten Island. We have a terrific team
2 here. But I think your hardest part of
3 this is going to be that you don't want
4 to do another report. You want to do
5 something that will have some practical
6 measures. If you would look and cut to
7 the chase of what's going to be the most
8 controversial, it's going to be
9 development control. And as a former
10 real estate person, I would like to urge
11 you to take the position that can try to
12 reach out to both sides on this issue.
13 Wild Metro survives on the good graces
14 of very formidable, very successful real
15 estate people involved in this
16 organization. They have proven that you
17 can protect the environment and have
18 economic and real estate growth. The
19 challenge is, you want to do that with
20 leaving open space, so that means
21 increasing neighborhood densities. You
22 get into a lot of other issues that
23 other New Yorkers know about, the
24 important traditions, the small

1 distribution of income between
2 neighborhoods, the racial segregation in
3 neighborhoods, which I faced as a real
4 estate person and tried to overcome
5 without much success. You're going to
6 have to see it connected to series of
7 issues that are attacked. One of the
8 things I've done with Audubon is we
9 initiated a lawsuit to try to stop the
10 Gateway Shopping Center. I believe the
11 best example is the mall opened sprawled
12 within the City, I think the Audubon
13 project is a mistake.

14 51 percent of the subsidized housing for
15 Queens is located in the Rockaways, for
16 example and I think it was kind of out
17 of sight, out of mind. I think we need
18 a more comprehensive approach. How
19 could you do a combination of regulatory
20 and economic incentives to get the kind
21 of city we all want and need. I think
22 that's going to be a big challenge. And
23 if I may, one plug. Wild Metro working
24 with Long Island University is

1 sponsoring a conference on urban ecology
2 and remodeling. We have one of the
3 presentations that Russell Burke is
4 working on is the ecology of Jamaica
5 Bay. I have brochures here. There's a
6 little minor e-mail glitch
7 unfortunately. You have to insert
8 Brooklyn before LIU. But if you're
9 interested I'll put this in the back.
10 Thank you.

11
12 **MR. MUNDY:** Next we have Carter Craft.

13
14 **CARTER CRAFT:**

15 Good evening. My name is Carter Craft.
16 I'm director of the Metropolitan
17 Waterfront Alliance. We're a coalition
18 of community based groups in New York
19 and New Jersey working together for a
20 better waterfront. I just want to make
21 a few points.

22
23 In such a big place as Jamaica Bay, I
24 think number 1, we should also at the

1 same time think small. And in thinking
2 small, something I think the task force
3 should advocate for and does on the
4 ground level so they keep doing, is to
5 continue the marsh restoration processes
6 ongoing and keep working to reduce the
7 nitrogen. I think we should keep
8 looking at the runoff from JFK Airport
9 and how to minimize it. I think we need
10 out to look at doing small and local
11 things like introducing oyster colonies,
12 eelgrass and maybe some underwater reefs
13 because these sort of small-scale
14 projects can be great educational
15 opportunities for young people, for
16 school groups, for classes; and that's
17 the constituency that really needs to
18 get engaged in this process.

19
20 We also have to recognize, you know, in
21 the big picture we are the problem with
22 Jamaica Bay. We eat, we drink, we
23 flush, we drive, it's our runoff, it's
24 out litter, it's our consumer

1 preferences and habits. We can't just
2 find alternative methods for dispersing
3 the effluent and the runoff. We have to
4 stop the storm water runoff. If there's
5 one agency that can look ahead down the
6 road, just as they looked back 180 years
7 from the creation of the Manhattan Water
8 Company, its DEP that can look ahead 180
9 years from now and maybe this watershed
10 and sewer shed plant and come up with a
11 comprehensive green building, porous
12 painting surfaces throughout the
13 watershed and sewer shed, so that we
14 reduce the runoff before it ever becomes
15 runoff. My feeling is that we can't
16 engineer in the traditional sense with
17 concrete and steel our way out of the
18 problem because the problem being
19 created is a product of concrete and
20 steel and runoff and asphalt and
21 imperfect surfaces. In terms of how the
22 group is structured, I'd say outreach
23 involvement also needs to be made
24 immediately to the Department of

1 Transportation and the Department of
2 Buildings because it's their agency
3 processes which widen streets, which
4 require that parking lots be paved,
5 which require that buildings have roof
6 surfaces or allow building surfaces to
7 have roofs that just run the water off.
8 As taxpayers we are paying for buildings
9 and DEP to create and allow all these
10 new infrastructures that we then expect
11 DEP to then solve through all the runoff
12 that we've created through these other
13 agencies. So, we're using our tax money
14 on one hand to solve the problem that we
15 are causing on the other, and that's the
16 cycle that needs to be broken.

17

18 In looking at transferring City owned
19 vacant water from parcels, you know, I
20 say extend that to vacant and City owned
21 parcels within the whole watershed and
22 sewer shed or community gardens can be
23 created in the public parks and empty
24 spaces.

1
2 Just sort of the last two points. I
3 think public access and education is
4 absolutely critical. Our organization
5 and in collaboration with the park
6 restoration program has been doing
7 inventory of access points in and around
8 New York City. We found about, I think
9 between four and 450 thus far, and per
10 square mile or per linear mile on the
11 waterfront. Jamaica Bay, I think,
12 actually has fewer than a lot of the
13 other stretches of waterfront in the
14 City, in terms of places that allow you
15 to go right down and into the water. In
16 terms of creating more access to the bay
17 and getting more young people involved,
18 we've also got to find ways to create
19 access that protect and enhance the
20 natural habitat which is so sensitive.
21 We have to look at those two things
22 together.

23

24 My last point really is to, in getting

1 about this planning process which we see
2 as kind of revolutionary for how the
3 City is attempting to do business, we
4 should look at other places and learn
5 from other places. Talking to Dan,
6 communicating with Dan recently he's
7 mentioned some technologies in Europe
8 and Japan that can help to reduce
9 nitrogen. There's also examples right
10 across the Hudson River and New Jersey,
11 where about five years ago they created
12 a statewide watershed management area
13 program. Took the whole state, broke it
14 up into watershed Management areas.
15 Some of those grids worked better than
16 others, passing on contact and
17 background information to the advisory
18 committee on some of the programs that
19 worked.

20

21 And just as a last point, I think we've
22 all got to be aware and I'm also
23 encouraged by the leadership that so
24 many national environmental

1 organizations, as well as local
2 involvement and agency attention, but we
3 have to remember that the plan is really
4 only the beginning. While we've got the
5 commitment from the chair of the
6 Environmental Protection Committee
7 tonight to help find the money to make
8 that plan a reality, we can't just take
9 him at his word. We've got to make it
10 stick. And in solving the problems
11 which we've all created in and around
12 Jamaica Bay, is going to last through
13 the next mayoral administration, so
14 let's continue to work together and help
15 make Jamaica Bay the great resource that
16 it once was and can be again in the
17 future. Thank you, very much.

18

19 **MR. MUNDY:** Barbara Brown. Barbara,
20 please come.

21

22 **BARBARA BROWN:**

23 Good evening. I'm Barbara Brown. I'm
24 the Chairperson of Eastern Queens

1 Alliance and Idlewild Park Preservation
2 Committee. A couple of my remarks, I'm
3 going to start by talking about Idlewild
4 Park, because until, let's say the last
5 year, Idlewild Park was not on the
6 Jamaica Bay map. Idlewild Park is the
7 head of the bay. For those of you who
8 don't know where it is, it's tucked away
9 just north of JFK and it's all that
10 green space on either side of what
11 people who live in the area call Snake
12 Road. But it is the head of the bay.
13 It is the major source of freshwater to
14 the bay and it needs attention just as
15 other parts of the bay need attention.

16
17 One of the things that we are asking for
18 is that there be no further intrusions
19 upon construction, upon or demapping of
20 the wetlands in Idlewild Park. Some of
21 you may know that several years, I think
22 in 2003, they -- we call it raping of
23 the park. They put in an international
24 air cargo center. They alienated 25

1 acres of land out of that park and
2 constructed an international air cargo
3 center. We're calling for no further
4 intrusions. And part of that is, that
5 if you look at a map of Idlewild Park,
6 an official map, you see red striated
7 lines going through the park, and we're
8 told that that's the mapped Nassau
9 Expressway. We're asking that that
10 Expressway be demapped. We have been
11 told that there are attempts to do that,
12 but thus far those lines are still there
13 going through Idlewild, and if Nassau
14 Expressway ever goes through Idlewild,
15 you're destroying probably at least a
16 hundred acres of the marsh and plants in
17 that park.

18

19 The other thing is that there is a plan
20 for Brookville Boulevard to be
21 redirected or they call it straightening
22 it out. Brookville Boulevard which
23 probably just stopped in the middle of
24 the marshland years ago with no

1 consideration for the flow of the water
2 coming from one side to the other, it
3 doesn't need to be straightened out.
4 What needs to be straightened out is the
5 culverts under it need to be opened up
6 so there is more of a flow of water from
7 one side of the park to the other. The
8 other things that need to be done, we
9 call on the state really to enforce
10 wetland regulations. We find that
11 people are building houses well within
12 the 150 feet of so-called controlled
13 areas within the wetlands, and that the
14 people who buy these homes are
15 unsuspecting and they end up with
16 basements that are filled with water,
17 when really DEC is supposed to be
18 protecting those wetlands. We've also
19 been calling on the City to turn over
20 its city-owned parkland to -- its city-
21 owned wetlands to parks. There's a
22 parcel of land just south of -- on the
23 south side of Rockaway Boulevard
24 bordering Thurston Basin, and that's

1 under the control of EDC. Now, EDC
2 wants to put -- they want some kind of
3 industrial commercial use of it. We
4 were successful in stopping a Brookville
5 -- they call it a Brookville Mall, strip
6 mall, we were successful in stopping
7 that, but up until now, although we have
8 petitioned the mayor, that land is still
9 under EDC control and there's still a
10 sign out there saying that they're
11 looking for people to acquire that land.
12 We're also asking -- privately owned
13 parcels along that track, and we are
14 asking that the City either issue
15 conservation easements to the owners so
16 they don't keep trying to develop those
17 properties or that they purchase the
18 property outright, if at all possible
19 and attach it to the park. Because if
20 you look at a map of the park, there's a
21 lot of green space that you think is a
22 part of the park but it really isn't
23 because it's still privately owned.
24

1 We are also calling for the replacement
2 -- restoration and replacement of
3 structural and functional aspects of
4 wetlands in the park. And that calls
5 for money. DEP and NRG have been doing
6 quite a bit of mitigation there, but
7 they're dependent upon mitigation money.
8 There aren't monies being appropriated
9 just for Idlewild's sake, an important
10 place that needs to be preserved and
11 restored.

12
13 In terms of stewardship, we are doing
14 quite a bit with the little bit of money
15 in terms of stewardship, trying to reach
16 out to youngsters in schools. This past
17 year we served over 50 different classes
18 in Districts 28, 27, and 29, but we are
19 looking for a dedicated Idlewild Park
20 salt marsh and science learning center
21 which Parks tells me is going to cost
22 about 4.6 million in order to put such a
23 structure in the park. But it's
24 important because our kids -- first of

1 all, our kids need to be turned on to
2 science. And secondly, if we want
3 children to grow up to be adults who
4 respect and value the environment, then
5 we need to start that education now.
6 And not enough of it is going on in the
7 schools and we find that what we're
8 doing is very valuable. The teachers
9 are looking for our interns going to the
10 schools and educate them, but much more
11 money is needed.

12
13 We also need access to the larger bay.
14 Right now we have access to the salt
15 marsh and we are in the process of
16 putting in a kayak launch in Idlewild
17 Park so people will be able to get out
18 to launch. But there is a need for
19 people to be able to get access to the
20 bay. And in Southeast Queens, Thurston
21 Basin is a major point where that can
22 happen, and that goes back to that
23 parcel that's owned by DTC that needs to
24 be turned over to Parks and developed

1 into an open recreational space for
2 people to enjoy it and also a place
3 where they can launch boats.

4
5 Other watershed issues, we know that in
6 Southeast Queens the water table has
7 been rising since they stopped pumping
8 the wells that belong to the Jamaica
9 Water Co. And those of us who live over
10 there were happy to hear that we were
11 not going to be drinking all that
12 Jamaica Water because it was not good
13 when water kind of bleaches your
14 stockings, you know. That's an issue.
15 But there needs to be some other uses
16 for some of that groundwater because the
17 water table is very, very high and
18 Southeast Queens is sitting -- a lot of
19 it was filled in land anyway. So,
20 nondrinking water uses need to be found
21 for the groundwater in the Southeast
22 Queens area.

23
24 In addition, there needs to be

1 appropriate technology for getting some
2 of that water into the storm sewers, and
3 I understand that DEP is working on
4 that. Because of that, there is no
5 place for the water to go. In terms of
6 flooding from storm water runoff, there
7 needs to be some sort of requirement
8 about porosity and the ratio of porous
9 versus non-porous surfaces. A lot of
10 people, we find in the community, they
11 have driveways and backyards and they're
12 paving them over and it seems like there
13 should be some kind of regulation about
14 that because the more pavement you add,
15 the less place there is for water to go
16 and that's an issue. There needs to be
17 some development of other places for the
18 water to go. I know there's an idea
19 floating around about the development of
20 wetland areas in other parts of the
21 watershed and we applaud that. And some
22 of that, a possible place for that to
23 happen is in some school yards. There
24 are a lot of schools that have so-called

1 gardens but they're not developed or not
2 used for anything and those would be
3 perfect areas to create school wetland
4 areas and the children could learn about
5 wetlands, as well as serve as a purpose,
6 a place for some of that runoff to go.

7

8 An increase, someone mentioned before,
9 an increase in the number of green
10 streets. There are a lot of concrete
11 medians throughout our area and we don't
12 have enough green streets in Southeast
13 Queens.

14

15 And finally, all the industrial projects
16 that sprout up in our area. We have
17 large warehouse districts and so forth.
18 There needs to be a requirement that
19 they incorporate open landscaped areas
20 to serve, not only to serve as buffers
21 between the community and themselves,
22 but also to provide some places for
23 water. Right now, they're just concrete
24 and steel.

1

2 And my last comment is, that there are a
3 number of industrial places around the
4 Idlewild area. There are concrete
5 factories there and water runs -- I
6 don't know what they are producing
7 that's running off into the wetlands,
8 but I think there needs to be some
9 looking at that. Some of those are
10 actually in the Five Towns area, but
11 there are also some on the City side,
12 and some of that needs to be looked
13 into. Thank you.

14

15 **MR. MUNDY:**

16 Thank you, Barbara. I'd like you to get
17 some of those maps of the area to us,
18 Barbara. Some of those maps that were
19 talked about in the past, if you can get
20 them to our committee, please, of your
21 area that we're talking about and other
22 stuff that has to be done. Get us
23 something in writing.

24

1 Now, we're back to the first speaker,
2 Rich Spadlla, come up here.

3

4 **RICHARD SPADLLA:**

5 Good evening and thank you for allowing
6 me to be here. I have lived in
7 Rosedale for about 50 years and spent a
8 lot of the years fishing, hunting, scuba
9 diving through those channels that Mrs.
10 Brown is talking about. I use the
11 currents to take me through these canals
12 in the back behind the factories and
13 then when the current changes, I come
14 back out and catch crabs and eels and
15 things like that. But I have a love for
16 the Jamaica Bay in its whole and its
17 entirety. What I am interested in at
18 this time was not brought up yet, but it
19 has to do with the environment around us
20 and our own well-being. I'll start with
21 political leaders unknowingly or
22 knowingly allowing a deadly pesticide
23 called Malathion to be sprayed over the
24 five boroughs in the past years,

1 disregarding the after effects and the
2 complaints. Now, the statistics are
3 over 3.4 million pounds and 238,000
4 gallons of lethal pesticide, namely
5 Malathion were used in only one year.
6 What I believe is that a lot of this has
7 to do with our environment as far as
8 affecting it and our health. Because it
9 was two years ago what happened was,
10 Malathion was sprayed from the air and
11 what happened is that the hospitals in
12 Queens and a lot of other areas were
13 overwhelmed by medical problems. The
14 doctors knew nothing about them because
15 they weren't attuned to what they called
16 chemical warfare so-to-speak, and what
17 happened was, during this September, the
18 temperatures varied from 71° to 87°
19 changing the chemistry of the pesticide,
20 Malathion into an extremely toxic
21 illegal nerve gas. Now, they were
22 spraying nerve gas on communities, on
23 our environment, and many people were
24 ending up in the hospital with symptoms

1 that the doctors couldn't comprehend and
2 they weren't aware of where it came
3 from. At the same time, look at the
4 concept that if this Malathion can
5 affect us, what it does to small
6 creatures and fish, and so forth. There
7 was one statement that was out about
8 two years ago in reference that they
9 sprayed a lake in Staten Island and
10 within two days, thousands of fish came
11 up dead. This gives you an incite on
12 what's going on with the spraying every
13 summer. What I'm asking is that this
14 whole group here look in to something
15 like this, maybe that its part of the
16 problem. Thank you.

17 **MR. MUNDY:** I thought we were at the
18 end, but Ellen Hartig are you here? I
19 didn't see you come in.

20
21 **ELLEN HARTIG:**
22 Hello. Thank you for still including
23 me, Mr. Mundy. My name is Ellen
24 Hartig. I'm a former researcher at

1 Columbia University and I now do
2 environmental consulting. I'm a
3 professional wetland scientist. I just
4 want to say what a pleasure it is to be
5 here at this point, I think early on
6 involved in the finding and
7 documentation of the marsh loss at
8 Jamaica Bay, I remember when I first
9 ordered aerial photographs and I ordered
10 a series from 1959, 1974, 1994 and took
11 a look at these and was astonished that
12 there was -- you just looked at the
13 photos and you could see dramatic loss
14 over time of the marshes and it was too
15 dramatic. It was not a matter of just
16 changing the tidal flow. I could trace
17 the timing of the tides. And there
18 really was this loss and we took it to
19 the agencies and about the same time,
20 the communities, very active, knowing
21 something was wrong with the marshes,
22 and that was Dan Mundy. And to think
23 now, that there was work going on in
24 academia, there was work going on by the

1 community. There was work going on by
2 advocacy groups and all brought this
3 information to government agencies. And
4 now, government agencies are working and
5 using this information and are moving
6 forward, and so it's just, I think, the
7 best of all possible worlds when these
8 often disparate groups are able to come
9 together and then really move the
10 science forward and go from the science
11 to changes in policy. And it's also a
12 matter here where initially with
13 National Park Service where the approach
14 was, what uses were appropriate, that
15 there was a preservation approach, that
16 if we can not build on those weapons and
17 not to construction, then we're doing
18 preservation and the marshes will be
19 here forever. But it turns out, as we
20 found out, that that's not enough and
21 that you need to manage the marshes, you
22 need to monitor, you need to do other
23 things in the watershed to protect the
24 marshes, and that's really, I think,

1 what we're moving towards here, and it's
2 great to see this happen. Jim Gennaro
3 had to go to a party, and it was very
4 much his doing to take this information
5 that was being made available to him and
6 move it forward to a change in
7 government policy and New York City DEP
8 is going to take this on and work it
9 into their water supply and wastewater
10 agency. So, I just wanted to say that
11 and I look forward to continuing along
12 this avenue in cooperation with the
13 community here. So, thank you.

14

15 **MR. SEWELL:**

16 Thank you. That concludes the speaker
17 list that I have in front of me. I'll
18 turn the microphone back over to the
19 DEP.

20

21 **MS. LICATA:**

22 In closing, I guess, I would just like
23 to applaud all of you that came out
24 tonight. This was really an amazing

1 meeting and a wonderful start, and I
2 don't want to detract from all of the
3 wonderful input that you gave. I just
4 would again, on behalf of all of us
5 here, would like to thank you for your
6 participation and we would look forward
7 to the future of this endeavor. Thank
8 you.

9

10 **MR. SEWELL:**

11 Also just to echo this on behalf of the
12 advisory committee, thank you very much
13 for coming out on the cold evening.

14

15 (Time noted: 8:13 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Dawn Anatra, a court reporter and Notary Public within and for the State of New York, do hereby certify:

That the foregoing transcript is a true record of the proceedings.

I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

DAWN ANATRA