



*Jerry Iannece*  
Chair

# COMMUNITY BOARD 11

*Serving Communities of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston,  
Hollis Hills, Little Neck & Oakland Gardens*

*46-21 Little Neck Parkway, Little Neck, NY, 11362*

*Tel (718) 225-1054 Fax (718) 225-4514*

*email: [ON11@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:ON11@cb.nyc.gov)*

*Website: [nyc.gov/queenscb11](http://nyc.gov/queenscb11)*

*Susan Seinfeld*  
District Manager

## COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Board Members

From: Henry Euler

Date: December 1, 2010

Re: Environment Committee Meeting

---

On November 29, 2010 the Environment Committee met to discuss a number of issues. Present at the meeting were Committee Members Henry Euler, Chair, George Karahalios, Gordon Keit, Christina Scherer, Tom Lloyd and Roy Giusetti and Board Members Andy Rothman and Mel Meer. Susan Seinfeld also attended.

1) Grass clippings will no longer be collected by Sanitation, beginning April of 2011. It is unclear whether this agency will modify the new regulation to allow for some pick up of grass clippings and other garden debris. Many thoughts and opinions were expressed by those present including:

a) People who do their own lawn cutting should be encouraged to purchase mulching lawnmowers to reduce or eliminate the need for debris pick up. Grass clippings are fertilizer for the lawn. Grass clippings and other garden debris can also be added to the compost pile, for those having one.

b) Many people who cut their own lawn have small plots and no room for compost piles or bins. There should be somewhere to bring grass clippings and other garden debris for composting purposes, e.g. parks, garden centers, botanical gardens. The City Council/Borough Presidents in conjunction with the Community Boards should develop a program for recycling garden debris.

c) Professional gardeners should be taking garden debris with them. It was hoped that the debris would be used for composting purposes.

d) Some present felt that Queens and the other suburban parts of the city are being discriminated against by the City with the enactment of the new grass clippings regulation.

e) As one alternative, it was suggested that instead of grass, people plant flowers and shrubs in open areas.

f) Some members expressed the concern that some people may pave over their lawns because of frustration with this new regulation. This could affect drainage from rain run-off.

g) Most present felt that the public needs to be made aware of the new regulation and educated about ways to recycle their garden debris.

Action by Committee: Susan Seinfeld will contact other Community Boards to see how they will cope with the new regulation and if they would be interested in joining with Community Board 11 to develop some kind of program to deal with garden debris collection. Henry Euler will speak to Councilman Halloran and write a letter to Sanitation asking for further clarification on this issue and what people can do with garden debris when the new regulation goes into effect. Perhaps a meeting with Sanitation can be arranged.

2) Noise produced by lawn mowers and leaf blowers disrupts quality of life. Points discussed at the meeting included:

a) There are regulations concerning allowable noise levels on the books, however, they are difficult to enforce.

b) Not only is the noise a problem, but these machines, especially the 2- cycle models, cause pollution. Also, leaf blowers stir up dirt, dust and chemicals that may have been placed on the lawn. It was recommended that people should purchase 4- cycle machines since they burn cleaner than 2- cycle ones. It was also suggested that machines that vacuum up garden debris be fitted with bags that do not leak dust and other materials.

c) Professional gardeners should not be removing mufflers from their garden equipment.

d) Manufacturers of lawn mowers and leaf blowers need to know that the public desires quieter machines.

Action by Committee: Further research is needed. Several communities in Nassau and Westchester Counties have restrictions on noisy garden machinery. Some communities have summer time bans on leaf blowers.

3) The Department of Transportation (DOT) continues to spray herbicides along roadways to control unwanted vegetation. According to Queens Commissioner Maura McCarthy and research done by the committee Chair, chemicals (products) used include glyphosate (Dow Accord XRT), sulphometuron methyl (Dupont Oust Extra), and diglycolamine salt aka dicamba (Riverdale Vanquish).

Points discussed at the meeting included:

a) These chemicals are dangerous and may pose a health and safety hazard to people.

b) There are other ways to control unwanted vegetation.

c) These chemicals can drift from the site where they were originally sprayed endangering nearby residents and pets.

d) Spraying was done in July along the service road of the Clearview Expressway (42nd Ave. to Northern Blvd. going southbound). Vegetation that was sprayed (English ivy) quickly died and left an unattractive appearance for months. Spraying was also done near PS 159. Spraying was also seen being done by the project across from APEC on November 23rd. It is not known what chemical was sprayed at this site or for what reason.

e) Nearby residents were not notified prior to the July spraying.

Action by Committee: Henry Euler will write a letter to DOT Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan reiterating our concerns over herbicide spraying. He will also bring this to Councilman Halloran's attention.

4) Trees are being removed again along the LIRR right of way. This was noticed in the Auburndale area (in CB 11) and also near the Murray Hill and Flushing Main Street stations. The reason given is that leaves falling on the tracks cause slippage when trains brake. Comments by the committee included:

a) Trees are important in protecting our environment. Leaves fall on the tracks from other trees not near the tracks, especially on windy days. It seems foolish to cut trees when perhaps there are other ways of dealing with slippage.

b) Trees were being removed from embankments along the LIRR right of way, increasing the possibility of soil erosion.

c) When trees were cut before by the LIRR, evergreens were planted to replace the deciduous trees in some places. This was done at the behest of local civic and community groups. These plantings insured a visual and noise buffer between adjacent homes and the railroad, and reduced the possibility of leaves drifting onto the tracks.

Action taken: Susan Seinfeld will contact Bob Brennan at the LIRR to see if more evergreens can be planted.

(Note: Mr. Brennan was contacted on 11-30-10 and said that there was no money available to plant evergreens. Senator Padavan had provided funds to purchase the evergreens previously planted.)

5) A concern was raised at a previous zoning meeting as to whether materials stored behind businesses adjacent to Alley Pond Park along Northern Blvd. in the Douglaston Alley were having a negative effect on the wetlands.

Comments made included:

a) Since several auto related businesses line the southern part of Northern Blvd. at this location, there was a concern that toxic materials could be leaching into the Alley wetlands.

b) At the entrance to the park behind the two existing auto dealerships, the Chair noticed a huge amount of litter in front of the fence as well as some behind the fence on park land. The entrance is blocked by many parked vehicles from these dealerships.

Action taken: Susan Seinfeld will contact Parks Administrator Janice Melnick and Queens Commissioner Dorothy Lewandowski to report these concerns.

(Note: Ms. Melnick was contacted on 11-30-10 and stated that the Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) had issued summonses to these businesses for past infractions. They pay their fines, but continue these illegal practices. She will send PEP out again to investigate.)

6) The State Assembly is considering a law that would issue a moratorium on the use of hydraulic fracturing when drilling for natural gas in New York State. The concern is that

this process uses chemicals that could leach into wells, streams and reservoirs, threatening our water supply. Community Board 11 passed a resolution in November, 2009, voicing concern over this process.

Comments made by committee members included:

a) One member felt that there were stringent rules in place to insure the safety of this process and that we need to rely less on foreign sources of energy supplies.

b) Other members were concerned that the quality and purity of our water supply could be compromised if the chemicals used in this process got into our water sources. Also, the waste water generated in this process has to be disposed of safely because of its toxic nature. It was also mentioned that the drilling equipment at sites ran 24/7 adding to pollution and noise problems.

Action taken: The vote by the State Assembly was scheduled for November 29th. The committee agreed to see how that vote would go and did not take any direct action at this time.

(Note: The Assembly approved the moratorium by a wide margin. The moratorium extends until May 15, 2011. Since the State Senate has already approved this action, the bill now awaits Governor Paterson's signature to become enacted. The moratorium will give the new Governor and the State Legislature time to evaluate the State's energy policy.)

The meeting adjourned at 9 PM.