



The City of New York

## Queens Community Board 11

Serving the Communities of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston, Hollis Hills  
Little Neck and Oakland Gardens

**Jerry Iannece** Chairperson / **Susan Seinfeld** District Manager

To: All Board Members  
From: Environmental Committee  
Henry Euler, Co-Chair  
Date: August 15, 2014

On Tuesday, August 12, 2014, the Environmental Committee met with Open Sewer Atlas NYC Project representatives to discuss the NYC sewer system. Present were Paul DiBenedetto and Henry Euler, Co-Chairs of the Environment Committee; First Vice Chair Laura James; Second Vice Chair Ocelia Claro; Third Vice Chair Eileen Miller; Committee Members: Roy Giusetti, Anthony Koutsouradis, Jyothi Sriram, community member Ravi Sriram, and District Manager Susan Seinfeld.

Below is a snapshot of their work and goals taken from the Open Sewer Atlas NYC project handout:

This community planning project has “the goal of creating transparency regarding the confusing world of New York City’s sewer system. The project is a partnership between a Pratt Institute faculty and student team and the Stormwater Infrastructure Matters (SWIM) Coalition. The project aims to make available information that may assist in the improvement of waste water/stormwater management by organizations with limited access to technical information and data. Open Sewer Atlas NYC will be engaged in mapping and research in the sewershed/watershed areas of Alley Creek, Newtown Creek, Bronx River, Jamaica Bay and the Gowanus Canal. (The people involved with the project) will be working with organizations in each of these areas to understand the stormwater/waste water issues specific to their geography and develop information and tools that reflect these conditions.”

The people involved with the project “will be seeking insight from the communities in the study areas regarding which data will be most valuable and compelling. (Their goal) is to hand off user-friendly data and visualizations that will assist their partner organizations to advocate for better water quality and stormwater management strategies.” The project people are working with city agencies in order to collect information to use and distribute.

During the meeting, many points were discussed and questions were answered. We concentrated on concerns within Community Board 11 where the Alley Creek sewershed/watershed lies. Much information regarding types of sewer systems (combined vs. separated types), flooding issues, outfall areas, 311 sewer and flooding complaints and seepage basins was presented and discussed by the representatives with the committee members and Susan Seinfeld. Discussion also occurred regarding the lack of sewers in the Douglas Manor area and the impact that it has on the quality of the water

in Little Neck Bay. We also spoke about the water table in our communities and the fact that there are many underground springs that affect us. Discussion also occurred regarding the new retention tank in the Alley and its impact on the sewershed.

The representatives of the project asked the committee members what we would recommend as the best ways to inform the public about all of this information. They also wanted to alert the public as to things they can do to improve water runoff and sewer issues. Suggestions included not paving over yards in order to facilitate water absorption, keeping catch basins open, not depositing dog feces and other toxic materials into catch basins and using rain barrels to collect water for garden use.

Susan Seinfeld and the committee members recommended that the project representatives contact the community via the community board newsletter, civic association newsletters and by inserting an information flyer into water bills.

Because of all of the information presented and its importance, the committee members decided to invite the project reps to come to a full Board meeting in October or November to do a short presentation for the entire community board membership and the residents of the communities that we represent. The project reps agreed to do so and the meeting was adjourned.