

ESCR CAG Meeting Summary – July 1, 2021  
via Zoom

**CAG members present (in bold)**

Anthony Rivera <b>Ayo Harrington</b> <b>Camille Napoleon</b> <b>Charles Krezell</b> <b>Chris Collins</b> Christine Bookin <b>Christine Datz-Romero</b> Damaris Reyes Daphne Williams Dereese Huff	<b>Dianne Lake</b> <b>Ditashiah Kohn</b> <b>Michael Marino</b> Dov Goldman Felicia Cruickshank <b>Frank Avila-Goldman</b> Freddina Fulton Wendy Brawer <b>Robin Schatell</b> <b>Martin Barrett</b> Mercedes Harvell	<b>Mike Arnon</b> Kyle Athayde Nancy Ortiz Paul Burke Peter Davis <b>Richard Heitler</b> Sam Moskowitz <b>Seth Coren</b> <b>Susan Steinberg</b> <b>Trever Holland</b>
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**DDC presentation**

(Link to presentation slides: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/escr/downloads/pdf/20210701-ESCR-CAG-Meeting-11-FINAL.pdf> )

(Link to live recording: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jj\\_kkEf3g7o&t=1310s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jj_kkEf3g7o&t=1310s))

1) *Overview of Contracts/Construction Progress*

Q & A:

Dianne: For PA1, has the contract been registered?

Desiree: Process is still ongoing.

Chris: When is the estimate for when they finish the blacktop on project area 2?

Ahmed: floodwall by mid-September, by early October, that blacktop will be temporarily restored and opened

Chris: Will you be using that space to stage for the northern part of park?

Ahmed: No, that area will be reopened.

Martin: Since you brought up that the northern part of the park construction should be done this fall, the other (southern) part is then planned for completion by the second quarter of 2022?

Desiree: Yes, by the first or second quarter of 2022

Chris: When will the northern portion of the park -- that is, south of the black top before 20th street --- when does that start, and when does it end?

Ahmed: It will start mid to late October for north side of the park, and the flood wall be finished summer 2022

Martin: So, the southern part of the park will be open while the northern part is closed?

Ahmed: The plan is to go as far south as East 20th Street.

Chris: The southern portion of the park below 20th Street will start later, will be in commission and blacktop temporarily restored?

Desiree: We will come back to the CAG with a more comprehensive presentation on PA2 schedule.

## *2) Environmental/Air Quality Monitoring*

Q & A:

Charles: You moved the air monitors because there was too much interference from buses idling? Aren't those roads still close to where people live?

Desiree: the red dot on slide 21 shows where it was, blue where it was moved to. It is still between the residences and the construction.

Charles: Shouldn't it still be closer to where people live? Isn't the point to monitor the air where the people live?

Jeffrey: The point of air monitoring is to track the impacts of the construction. And if the monitors close to the construction are having normal readings then further away will not be worse.

Charles: If things are bad naturally, doesn't the air get worse because of the construction?

Jeffrey: We are trying to manage the construction. These locations were selected based on environmental consultant's experience with this work.

Charles: How does the hot weather and humidity affect the air quality in your experience? How does it affect the air monitoring?

Desiree: We will come back with an answer on that.

Wendy: Where is the data from SO-S3 and SO-S4?

Desiree: Each month has four charts, one for each monitor. All of the data is in the chart.

Wendy: Is this the data which is going to the public?

Desiree: We will publish the quarterly reports. And also include monthly updates to the CAG

Wendy: Can you make this open data to the public?

Desiree: Not at this time.

Wendy: If the park is to be 42% open all the time, how is public health going to be protected when the public needs to be restricted from construction areas?

Desiree: The track and the pool are open in PA2, adjacent to construction; it's the mitigation and the air monitoring which are enforcing the protection of the health. The monitoring plan is put in place to protect anything surrounding the construction area. We need to protect the workers, the public, and everyone on site.

Wendy: I am very concerned about the air quality monitors showing spikes right next to the pool and track where people are exercising.

Desiree: Most air quality is measured on a 24-hour average; our charts run on a 15-minute average, so when the spike occurs the project manager takes action. If there was a spike, we would have an alert.

Wendy: In PA1, you mentioned large rocks being removed, and also minimal disturbance. This is not minimal; we cannot take this lightly and cannot minimize the impact in this group setting.

Desiree: The majority of the fill is being brought on to the site; it's not being excavated. It is unknown exactly what is underground when we start digging, if the limited amount of material cannot be used, it has to be excavated. If it does meet a certain criterion, it has to be removed. We prefer to take the existing fill, recycle it, and then reuse it

Wendy: Will the CAG be notified if there is additional testing for the soil; will you be informing us when additional testing is happening?

Desiree: Will come back with an answer. Recommendations of the report of field testing are now in the contractor's specifications. Assuming we will not notify the CAG when every test is happening.

Ayo: I would be more interested in hearing questions from people who live in that sector -- maybe next time we can hear from them. Community Board 6 has had multiple meetings about everything East River, and I would prefer to hear from people who actually are affected in this area.

### *3) Section 3 / MWBE & What We've Heard*

Trever: If we could find out some more information about the amphitheater cover; there has been some talk about incorporating solar design into the cover. If the redesign is focused on resilience, I would love to see that included.

Charles: is any of the construction on Avenue C related to this project?

Desiree: Milling south of the project is DOT work, and also at 18<sup>th</sup> Street there is Con Ed exploratory work and ConEd will be moving to the intersection of Ave C and E 20<sup>th</sup> and we will issue an Advisory for this location.

Wendy: Is there a definition for Mitigation for PA1?

Desiree: Mitigation is the way to reduce or soften the effects from construction or disturbance. Examples were provided. It depends on what the activity is. Means of reducing effects from an activity.

Wendy: Report on FDR submitted just before meeting?

Desiree: Will come back with a response.

Frank: I would like to have some clarity on the passageway to the park in the Pier 42 area. I saw one circumstance with cops and EMT going in one direction and bikes and passengers going in the other.

Desiree: Bring up with DOT and come back with a response.

### **CAG-only portion**

#### *Stuy Cove Site*

Chris: The timeline has changed; they are pushing back to September for completion. The understanding of the contract has changed in regards to the scope of DDC. A little bit of bait and switch going on, they are building a wall, doing nothing else; they are not putting the park back together. There is supposed to be landscaping and benches and paths, but it is not in their contract to do that after the wall. We do not have an idea what that park will look like after the wall is built. Stuy Cove Park is looking bleak.

Martin: We were told that folks with disabilities would be able to make their way up the path. We asked for call boxes and sufficient lighting in the parks, someone on Avenue C has no visibility up to 20th Street; our concerns are with safety. The contract does not seem to have the whole picture.

Chris: We are able to do things in the park, when they go to the southern portion, it's unclear what will happen to the north portion while they are building a wall.

Martin: I don't know what will be used for staging, it's long enough that they can do one part for construction and other for staging simultaneously

Dianne: Are we going to ask for the CAG to share their concerns? Call for action?

Chris: It would be a good idea for the CAG as a whole to write a letter and get them to commit to what is going to happen to the berm while under construction

Paula: We can help facilitate an official letter from the CAG

Tara: We could reach out to an elected official or borough president to see if they could expedite this matter

### *Flood Protection*

Tara: We are unclear about if and what the interim flood protection plans is.

Dianne: The city did a study and one conclusion was that there is no plausible way to implement flood protection along the East River because the sewers behind it will back up and flood the area anyways. They said it was too costly and time consuming if the water is going to come in anyway.

Frank: We need a transparent emergency plan for when construction starts.

Vaylateena: There are issues with flood protection -- people of color and low-income families are not protected if the only protection plan is to relocate. I want to see this group of people like myself protected.

Trever: discussing interim flood protection vs. emergency preparedness which LES Ready! does a good job of talking about and handling those issues. Many reasons have been cited for why IFP doesn't work for this area, a whole series of drainage and other issues. It became more about individual building protection. Maybe we can have OEM come.....

Dianne: Given the obstacle of sandbags, is this something that we should pursue and talk about again, or are we satisfied with the City's plan for interim flood protection before the flood wall is built?

Vaylateena: According to [this information from the City](#), protection for low lying areas, it says interim protection is very limited

Trever: What is the expected date for flood protection – not for the project to be complete but for flood protection itself?

Tara: I recall that that work wasn't going to start until next year.

Martin: When flood protection is done, it will be irrelevant for the northern part of ESCR.

Tara: We'll see if OEM can come to a meeting in the near future.

### *Environmental monitoring*

Paula: Environmental report was released right before the meeting; if you have follow-up questions, please send them our way so we can share them with DDC.

### *Newsletter*

Thanks to Damaris and Dianne for following up and expressing interest!

### *General questions*

Damaris: What kind of conversation have we had about air filters? That could be an immediate mitigation to address everyone's concerns around air quality, dust, and particulates. What are the CAG's thoughts on proposing that to the city?

Wendy: There is a DIY version air that I'm going to make for \$40. It can be a good way to engage people about the issue of indoor air quality. We have a pamphlet in different languages about it.

Damaris: It's not realistic that 1,000's of residents will be able to create their own filters. The City should be buying air filters for households. I don't think we need to turn this into a project, but if we think it's a viable proposal to ask the City? wants to know what the group feels

Trever: In short, I think we should pursue it.

Robin: I support the ask, Damaris. Also, the City should do a public open house presentation like the ones they did before to keep people on track about what's going to happen. I'm worried about the trees being taken down given our current heatwaves. Also, I'm not clear on the timetables for when things will be open and closed. Can this group get behind an ask for an open house?

Dianne: A few years ago DDC did open houses for ESCR.

Robin: It's been a while now with COVID.

Damaris: My 2 cents are that I think those events are great and important for people who don't have access to tech, but I would like to recommend a hybrid model that's in-person and livestreamed. Also, regarding coastal resiliency in the south part of the neighborhood, we might want to pay attention to some of the things they're doing such as videos and virtual tours that were helpful and useful to give folks information. Meetings like this are really dense. Things with models and interactivity are more effective. I can lend organizational support to facilitate and make that happen.

Tara: We can prepare a formal letter to request air filters. Also, let's set an internal deadline of July 15<sup>th</sup> for the CAG to submit any questions to Pratt Center about the environmental report that was released today.

Damaris: Can you include the link to this zoom? I can never find the links to this meeting. Anything that we can do to make this as easy as possible. Are we really worried about Zoom bombing?

Tara: Moving forward, we'll put the Zoom links directly in the calendar invite.