

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF OCTOBER 30, 2014 MEETING OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE HUDSON RIVER GREENWAY AT THE RIVERDALE MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Attendees:

Committee members: Philip Friedman (Chair), Bob Bender, Laura Spalter

Other CB8: Robert Fanuzzi, Michael Heller, David Kornbluh, Robert Press

Others: Herb Barret, Tom Durham, Frank Anelante (Riverdale-Spuyten Duyvil Coalition), Diane Meenagh, Gary Klingsberg, Paul Elston (Friends of the Hudson River Greenway), Diane Sargent, Neile Weissman (New York Cycle Club), Rob Spalter, Cliff Stanton (KRVC), David Gellman, Maya Rajamani (Riverdale Press)

Agenda:

The meeting began at 7:35. Chair Phil Friedman welcomed everyone and explained the purpose of the meeting. The Hudson River Greenway (HRG), he said, is no longer a matter of “if” but “when.” He encouraged attendees to go on a site walk at the Riverdale Park extension along the waterfront adjacent to the Metro-North Riverdale station on Sunday, November 9, 11am to noon. The HRG presents challenges; let’s divide the tasks so that they are manageable. The Chair read the June 10, 2014 CB8 resolution concerning the HRG. He identified some major hurdles regarding implementation of the HRG.

D. Kornbluh: We must identify the obstacles to implementing the HRG and figure out how to overcome them.

P. Elston: We want to examine the entire HRG, not just the segment north of West 254 Street.

Chair: Yes, we should advocate for the entire Bronx HRG, not just one segment.

R. Spalter: We can start with one segment.

M. Heller: We should identify an implementation phase. Metro-North (MNR) is not opposed to the HRG. Who can help make the HRG feasible? Let’s find funding and bring in engineering experts.

L. Spalter: Could there be Hurricane Sandy money available?

M. Heller: MNR has access to funds but its capital plan already exceeds its current resources by \$15 billion so it is not a likely source of funds.

Chair: Is the project financially feasible? Yes. Can it be made cost effective? That's what we want to find out. Let's break down the project into segments to answer this question.

F. Anelante: Shouldn't we be working with the MTA?

Chair: Yes.

L. Spalter: The Parks Department has already built segments of the HRG into the Hudson River.

M. Heller: Can Friends of the Hudson River Greenway (FHRG) bring in engineers?

P. Elston: FHRG cannot promise to do this. Everyone wants to get to the waterfront. How do you get there. There are many ways to get from the Henry Hudson Bridge to West 254 Street.

Chair: How bicycles will get to West 254 Street will have to be addressed to obtain funding. Not specifying a route may serve Riverdale but it will not serve Manhattan or Westchester, the links to the HRG.

P. Elston: MNR is one component in the HRG planning process, but the real question for us is, What does the community want. We can't defer the HRG to MNR.

L. Spalter: MNR has just responded to the committee's invitation. (She read a letter from MNR to CB8 dated October 29, 2014.)

R. Fanuzzi: This letter is important because MNR clearly says that it supports the CB8 HRG resolution.

P. Elston: MNR's assertions about Track Six in this letter and elsewhere simply are not true.

D. Gellman: Agree.

Chair: MNR has made its objections known. We can always request further clarification.

R. Spalter: Maintenance cars do use Track Six.

L. Spalter: MNR told us last spring what its position is.

P. Elston: We should not simply take MNR's word for what it says.

C. Stanton: Agree

R. Fanuzzi: We can only move forward by getting engineering studies.

D. Gellman: We have to represent the community, not MNR.

N. Weissman: MNR will agree to mutually beneficial actions.

M. Heller: It's important that MNR has agreed to work with the community (referring to 10/29/14 letter). We need professional information to move the HRG forward.

At this point the Chair showed a map of the HRG route on his laptop. The HRG appeared in four segments. The Chair then asked, How do we make the HRG useful to as many people as possible? We need more access points to the HRG.

F. Anelante: Let's start by building one segment of the HRG. That would be a real accomplishment.

D. Gellman: We should start at West 254 Street and avoid contention over other access points.

Chair: FDNY and NYPD should be brought into the discussion? Who is willing to do research into this subject? (There were no volunteers.)

M. Heller: The question is, How do we do engineering studies? How do we identify funding sources for these studies?

P. Elston: Don't rely only on Senator Schumer. The other local elected officials must contribute.

D. Gellman: Elected officials want to hear from us. They want to know what we want. But we have to have a unified position on what we are requesting.

Chair: We should contact our local elected officials to help us identify sources of funding.

D. Gellman: The focus of the study should be on how we use existing property to get the full HRG.

C. Stanton: We need broad community support to move forward.

Chair: We have to work with MNR.

P. Elston: We should represent the community, not MNR.

Chair: Let's engage MNR and find a way to work together. What is the next step in this process? Let's send a letter to local elected officials to find funding for consultant/engineering services.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9 pm.