

Environmental Committee
Community Board Ten
February 15, 2007

Present: Fran Vella-Marrone, Greg Ahl, Mary Nolan, Joanne Seminara, Larry Stelter

Excused: Elaine Guido

Absent: Anna DeMetz, Judith Grimaldi, Stella Kokolis, Gloria Melnick

A quorum was not met.

Guests Present: Josephine Beckman (District Manager), (Stephanie Gevinco (Councilman Gentile), John Johnson NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), Joseph Pane, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), Al Alfazadour (Resident) and Gail Asfazadour (Resident).

Meeting Location: Community Board Ten Office

The Meeting commenced at 7:20 PM and closed at 8:30 PM.

The first topic of discussion was raccoons. The representative from the NYC DOHMH stated that raccoons are considered wildlife and as such are under the jurisdiction of the NYS DEC. Only when the raccoons are rabid does the NYC DOHMH have jurisdiction as it is then considered a health issue. If an individual were to observe a raccoon and believe it to be rabid, you can call 311 and Animal Care and Control (ACC) will pick up the animal and dispose of it. If ACC can not come then the police will answer the call.

ACC will not come on a regular basis to remove raccoons from private property. The owner of the property can obtain a trap from ACC. A deposit is required and is refunded when the trap is returned. Once a raccoon is trapped, the owner is instructed to release the raccoon in an appropriate location. If the person is not able to release it themselves, then ACC will pick it up and dispose of the animal. However, they do not do this as regular practice and encourage the property owner to do so.

The representative from NYS DEC stated that the State licenses Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators who may be hired to rid your property and home of raccoons. They will trap or apply poison for a fee. However, in NYC they can only trap as most poisons can not be used in NYC. He also informed the committee that the raccoons can not be released anywhere in NYC because they could be rabid. They should be taken to ACC and have ACC dispose of it. They will also test the raccoon for rabies. The DEC representative also gave suggestions regarding keeping raccoons from your property such as hosing down the area where the raccoons have visited to remove the scent left by the raccoon for marking for future visits; not putting out garbage in plastic bags but rather in

pales or putting the plastic bags out later rather than earlier when putting them out for pick up; or non toxic repellents such as one called ROPEL which gives raccoons a bad taste in its mouth (these repellents need to be reapplied on a regular basis). It is important to cut out the food source. As such don't leave garbage out in plastic bags and don't leave out food for other animals such as the dog.

The raccoons are looking for food and shelter and since there is no natural predator to Bronx population had rabies come years ago and as such this thinned out the population as many died. However, other animals including domestic dogs and cats also became afflicted with rabies . S.I. now has rabies and Queens/LI boarder also has rabies. The Brooklyn population of raccoons is now at an all time high and is prime for rabies. Because raccoons live in packs and there are so many of them it is easy to pass rabies through the population quickly. There has not been a case of human rabies in 50 years as reported by the NYC DOMH. Presently, NYC DOMH is vaccinating cats in SI against rabies. Dogs and cats should be vaccinated against rabies.

The committee questioned the use of some sort of birth control to control the population growth. The representative from NYS DEC stated that this was tried with deer however, it was not successful as the pills need to be taken regularly and it is difficult to get the same animal to take it on a regular basis. Raccoons live 5 to 6 years and one female produces approx. 5 per year.

The NYS DEC has good information on its website which can be located on the NYS gov't website.

Councilman Gentile has introduced a bill in the City Council which would require the responsible City agency to remove any raccoon from any outdoor public and private property upon receiving a request for such removal. Since there is no quorum, it was the sense of the meeting that Community Board Ten support this legislation. A motion from the full board is required.

The second issue to be addressed by the committee was a request by Councilman Yassky for support of his legislation which pertains to sidewalk litter tickets for residential property owners. The legislation will require NYC DOS to issue a warning and not a fine to first time violators. This warning would be stricken from the record if another violation did not occur within 30 days, so that only homeowners who are found to have sidewalk litter twice within a 30 day period would be subject to a fine. Since there is no quorum, it was the sense of the meeting that Community Board Ten support this legislation. A motion from the full board is required.

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Community Board Ten has received a number of complaints recently from residents who have received fines from NYC DOS regarding dirty areaways. This fine is given out when a homeowner had litter on their private property such as a front lawn or driveway. The residents who received this fine stated that the litter was minimal and in most cases occurred when litter was blown from the sidewalk or street into their property or from a passerby. There the sense of the committee was that Community Board Ten write a letter to NYC DOS asking that discretion be used when enforcing Administrative Code 16-118 (2) which states that backyards, areaways, courts, alleys and air shafts must be kept lean at all times. Since there was no quorum at the meeting, a motion from the full board is required.

Respectfully submitted,



Frances T. Vella-Marrone
Environmental Committee Chair