

Environmental Committee
Community Board Ten
September 14, 2006

Present: Fran Vella-Marrone, Greg Ahl, Anna DeMetz, Judith Grimaldi, Gloria Melnick, Mary Nolan, Larry Stelter.

Excused: Joanne Seminara

Absent: Elaine Guido, Stella Kokolis

A quorum was met.

Guests Present: Josephine Beckman, Alan Bortnick (CB 10 Member), (CB 10 District Manager), Stephanie Gevinco (Councilman Gentile), Lillie Farrell (DEP), Bill Grander (DEP), Frank Locar (DEP), John Petito (DEP), Iggy Terranoca (DSNY), P.O. Trischetta (68 Pct.), Sgt. Strype (68 Pct.), Nadia Zonis (CUNY), Matthew Sollars (CUNY), Regina Farage (resident), Richard D'Auria (resident).

Meeting Location: Community Board Ten Office

The Meeting commenced at 7:10 PM and closed at 9:00 PM.

The meeting began with a discussion regarding the recent trend in placement of clothes bins in Community Board Ten. These are bins that are used in the collection of used clothing. In many cases the bins are not clearly labeled with information identifying the owner of the bins. These bins have been placed on public property and in some case create litter conditions as a result of overflowing items and many are an obstruction. Iggy Terranoca of DSNY was present to address the issue and explained that this is a new problem that is not presently addressed in the law. As such, DSNY is trying to create a protocol to address it. At this point, they are using the procedures they use when addressing conditions pertaining to construction containers. If any clothing bin has caused either a litter condition or an obstruction, DSNY will first issue summonses and if the condition is not remedied then they will remove it. In the case of a bin causing an obstruction, the remedy is for the owner of the bin to remove it. But, if there is no contact information available for the owner of the bin, DSNY will remove it. It should be noted that because the law does not specifically address clothes bins including where and how they may be located, DSNY is still searching for a legal avenue to properly address this matter. Mr. Terranco also informed the meeting that the clothes bins sponsors are licensed by the Dept. of Consumer Affairs and many of the bins may not have sponsors with proper licensing and may not be legitimate. DSNY is looking into this. The committee unanimously passed a motion to recommend that Community Board 10 advocate that the NYC Council introduce and pass legislation to regulate clothes bins.

Another issue addressed by the DSNY representative is regarding an update on enforcement pertaining to waste receptacles. There has been both education outreach and summonses issued on commercial strips in Community Board 10 pertaining to household garbage placed in public waste receptacles.

The DEP representatives reported on the capital improvement project regarding the Grit and Scum building at Owls Head Pollution Plant. According to the DEP representatives, a tentative bid advertisement has been scheduled for October/November 2006 with the award and order to proceed after the beginning of the next fiscal year of July 1, 2007. The duration of the project is 40 months. This represents another delay in this project as it was reported to us in June of 2006 that construction would begin in the 1st quarter of 2007 (January-March). The project has been delayed approx. 3 years due to contract issues and fiscal deferment. The committee expressed to the DEP representatives that this was unacceptable. The committee also reminded the DEP representatives that Mayor Bloomberg has made a public commitment to complete this project. The DEP representatives stated that they will take back our concerns to the DEP Commissioner. A discussion took place concerning the bidding process and the committee asked for a written timeline with regard to this process to be received prior to the full board meeting. A follow-up meeting will be set with the appropriate authorities regarding the bidding, awarding and commencement of this project.

DEP also reported on the status of the cleaning of the 6 digester tanks at the Owls Head Pollution Plant. Because of construction on mechanical equipment within close proximity of the digester tanks, the cleaning of the tanks was stopped with one tank cleaned and 5 remaining to be cleaned by the end of 2007. The cleaning of the tanks is part of regular maintenance.

The committee asked the DEP representatives for an update on the 311 system. At the committee's June 2006 meeting, the DEP representative stated that all 311 calls pertaining to Owls Head will go directly from the 311 operator to the plant via the computer system. There will no longer be a middle step in which the call was diverted to another location before being sent to the plant via fax or phone call. As per the DEP representatives, this system has still not begun. The committee asked to receive a written timeline regarding implementation of this new system prior to the full board meeting.

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There was also discussion regarding the 311 operators and their efficiency in fielding and directing calls pertaining to Owls Head Pollution Plant. The results are mixed. Improvement in this area is still needed. Monthly summaries for Owls Head nuisance complaints were distributed by DEP for May and July. A summary chart of complaints from January 2006-July 2006 was also distributed.

Presently there is a restriction on general vending on 86th Street from 4th Avenue to Ft. Hamilton Parkway which prevents businesses from placing goods outside of their stores. This became effective October 20, 1994. In recent years a proliferation of goods being placed outside of businesses along 86th from Ft. Hamilton Parkway to Gatling Place has taken hold and it is not only become an eyesore but also a hazard. Although some business owners have agreed to a voluntary restriction others have not. As such, the committee unanimously passed a motion to recommend to Community Board Ten that a letter be written to the Small Business Administration requesting an extension of the restriction on general vending on 86th Street from Ft. Hamilton Parkway to Gatling Place.

The committee discussed the matter of Graffiti in Community Board Ten and the importance of having business and building owners complete waivers that would give the city permission to remove the graffiti from their premises free of charge. There was also discussion pertaining to the success the 68th Pct. has had regarding identifying, arresting and prosecuting of graffiti vandals. Graffiti is a crime that requires constant vigilance involving both the apprehension of graffiti vandals and removal of the graffiti.

Respectfully submitted,



Frances T. Vella-Marrone
Environmental Committee Chair