



# THE CITY OF NEW YORK

## BOROUGH OF THE BRONX

### COMMUNITY BOARD 7



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## LAND USE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

### Thursday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010 @ 6:30 PM

Meeting called to order at 6:40 P.M. – Attendance sheet on file – Quorum established

- I. Rene Alberts and David Nimowitz of Urban Prairie made a presentation on sustainable site furniture that might be used in an urban waterfront park. Their work focuses on ways to “keep plants alive in hostile urban environments.” Examples include kiosks, seating, bicycle racks, trellises, retaining walls to form planting areas, planters, trash and recycling containers, water fountains and wayfinding signs.
  - A. They described the economic and environmental costs associated with rainwater runoff. Combined sewers dump untreated sewage into the river during heavy rains, resulting in fines from the EPA and poor water quality. This also requires the construction and operation of more treatment facilities to handle the rainwater. Some cities are trying to address this by charging for stormwater to encourage owners to adopt practices to reduce stormwater runoff. They talked about examples including greenroofs and swales.
  - B. The products they work with seek to reduce the amount of materials used, and rely on recycled and other sustainably produced materials. One of the designers has been focusing on a “cradle-to-cradle” process to reuse and recycle their materials.
  - C. They noted a trend toward locally-sourced materials, which require less transportation, add to the local economy, and build expertise that is available on-hand to help on projects.
  - D. Ozzie Brown asked about durability and Barbara Stronczer asked about removing graffiti. They noted that their products have been designed for use in New York City parks and have been used for years. They stand up well to wear, and have designs to discourage skateboarding. While products are not graffiti-proof, they can either be easily cleaned or painted.
- II. Richard Geuther from the Department of City Planning explained that the Webster Avenue rezoning will require a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). They will release a Draft Scope, which will explain the items that will be studied as part of the EIS. A public hearing will be scheduled for the public to comment on the scope, probably in mid-May.
- III. Ozzie reported on the waterfront, the proposed hotel on Webster Avenue, and the Fordham Library.
  - A. The Columbia University graduate urban planning students studying the waterfront will be distributing a questionnaire to get input from people in the community. The Community Board will send out a link to the questionnaire through its email distribution list.
  - B. Ozzie talked about a recent meeting at the Borough President’s office with the developer seeking to build a hotel on Webster Avenue. The BP and other elected officials do not support the site for a hotel.
  - C. Representatives of CB7 had noted at that meeting there was interest in using that site for the animal shelter required for the Bronx the Department of Health has proposed for the Fordham Library. The Department of Health explained they do not have funding to build on the site on Webster Avenue, but they indicated a reduced animal facility would require only a small portion of the library. They followed up to ask that CB7 request the City Council enact legislation that would allow a reduced facility, rather than a full-service animal clinic.
- IV. There was some discussion about the differences between a 197-a and a 197-c, and Ozzie explained that the committee is pursuing a series of 197-c actions to continue making improvements while CB7 lacks the resources to pursue a 197-a.



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- V. Jay Shuffield provided a brief report on street mapping issues. He asked Richard Geuther to find out if CB7 could serve as an applicant for the de-mapping of Oliver Place, and possibly other map changes.
- A. Jay explained that he has identified 14 street locations where there is a possible irregularity with the official city map. There are often technical issues related to streets, such as utilities, so some locations may not end up being candidates for a map change. He is preparing a PowerPoint presentation about these locations so the community board can discuss the issues with each location.
- VI. There was general discussion about the CSX railroad, which owns a large parcel along the waterfront. Ozzie explained that the company is based in Florida, and owns a vast network of railroads across the country.
- A. It was noted that the Parks Department is in the process of acquiring property for the Putnam Greenway from CSX, so we should make sure they are aware of our interest in this site as well.
- B. Barbara Stronczer agreed to invite the Parks Department to discuss plans for the Putnam Greenway and the properties along the waterfront. Jay suggested contacting Joshua Laird.
- VII. Charlesetta Rhett expressed concern that private owners of property on the waterfront might not want to develop their property the way the community board would recommend with its plan. It was noted the City could acquire property for a park even if the owner does not want to sell, although it would be more difficult. It was also noted that a strong vision for the waterfront might be persuasive for the owners, or for the City to purchase the property.
- VIII. Yvette Page urged coordination with other waterfront efforts, including the City's waterfront plan and the Harlem River Waterfront Working Group. Ozzie explained that he and Fernando have been staying in touch with the Harlem River Waterfront Working Group. Jay expressed concern that the City's process for the waterfront plan is too rushed. There is a place on the Department of City Planning's website to submit comments.
- IX. The meeting was adjourned around 8:30 pm.