

PENDING COMMITTEE APPROVAL

MINUTES OF THE APRIL MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SANITATION COMMITTEE

OF BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8

April 29, 2020

Zoom

In attendance:

Committee members: K. Argenti, B. Bender, M. Della, R. Fanuzzi, R. Spalter, L. Spalter, D. Travis, C. Tepus.

Andrew Hoyles (DSNY), Stephen Caruso (DSNY), Pat Hill (CM Cohen)

CB8 members: E. Dinowitz, D. Gellman

John Trambert Mary Ellen Gibbs, Sima Wolf, Jodie Colon, Henriette Cohen, Ann Rauch, Liz Manning, Glenn Fischman, Lois Coleman

The meeting came to order at 7:35 pm.

I. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of March 18, 2020 meeting were unanimously approved.

II. Chair's Report

A. Mayor's Executive Budget, released through the NYC Office of Management and Budget, proposes the following budget cuts to DSNY operations and programs: Snow Savings (DSNY) - \$52M in FY20; Temporary Suspension of Organics Program and Organics Processing (DSNY) - \$21M in FY21; Temporary suspension of community composting subsidy (DSNY) - \$3.5M in FY21; Suspend E-Waste Collection (manufacturers still mandated to collect) (DSNY) - \$3.4M in FY21 and outyears; Reduce dedicated weekday basket truck service (DSNY) - \$2.5M in FY21 and outyears; Temporary suspension of SAFE Events and Special Waste sites (DSNY) - \$2.2M in FY21; Reduction in funding for recycling outreach programs (DSNY) - \$2.9M in FY21 and outyears; Eliminate 4th Day Curbside Collection in Rat Zones – utilization has been low on 4th days - \$1.5M in FY21 and outyears; Reduce Brooklyn North Cleaning – no evidence this increase has improved cleanliness - \$1.2M in FY21 and outyears; Reduce Sunday and Holiday Basket Service – reduced usage currently \$1.7M in FY21 and outyears; Reduce Highway Cleaning - \$133K in FY20.

Note that some budget cuts take effect within this fiscal year, which lasts until June 30, 2020; others are scheduled for the 2021 fiscal year, which begins on July 1, 2020.

B. Mayor's Executive 2021 budget does not affect DEP capital investments in Jerome Park Reservoir rehabilitation or upstate capital projects for the Cat-Del or Croton aqueducts. DEP is scheduled to contribute \$128 million to FY 2021 budget. DEP Green Infrastructure capital commitments remain constant, with steep reduction planned for 2024.

C. Congratulations to committee member Bob Bender for his service to Bronx Community Board 8 as Chair of the Parks Committee.

D. Happy Earth Day! 50th anniversary was observed on Wednesday April 22.

III. DSNY Service Cuts and Adjustments

A. Stephen Caruso, Citywide DSNY Community Affairs Officer, describes changes and cuts to sanitation services:

Sanitation pickup now occurs from 5 am to 1 pm rather than 6 am to 2 pm to avoid contact with public. Service delays are common because of workplace and terminal cleaning, and required shutdowns if an employee falls ill. Operations are delayed as the terminal is shutdown properly disinfected. Residents should put out their garbage out at 4 pm on the day before. Residents cannot place service delivery complaints via 311 unless they are chronic; DSNY will take complaints directly from Community Board.

Alternate Side Parking will not be in effect until May 12. DSNY needs residents and property owners to keep sidewalks and street gutters clean. DSNY is still issuing violations for this obligation, with agent discretion. Mechanical brooms are still in operation and trying to access curblines.

SAFE events are cancelled for disposal of paint, batteries, and other household waste; e-waste is no longer being collected; devices should be brought to retail or returned to manufacturer or donated. DSNY is still considering whether e-waste violations will be issued; no new appointments will be taken.

Improperly discarded PPE is creating a sanitation health crisis; DSNY needs residents, using shovels and gloves, to help discard PPE waste safely.

Additional basket curbside pickups will be cut. Exit ramp and road pickup is stopped. Rat abatement is cut.

FY 2020 increase in litter baskets and litter basket service is gone in proposed FY 2021 budget. CD8 enjoyed one-year increase in service. Mr. Caruso asks for community support to maintain last year's elevated service.

B. Andrew Hoyles reported on the proposed cuts and suspension of DSNY organic recycling and composting education and outreach. Chair noted that CD8 was a pilot district for the first DSNY organic recycling initiative in 2014-15., with new DSNY program, "Make Compost, Not Trash" to the Bronx in 2019. Food scrap drop-off sites are also closed, at the Church of the Mediator and Bronx Botanical Gardens. Brown bins will not be collected for compost after May 4. Compost materials will be collected as trash. Resident are asked to store their bins.

Meeting attendees and committee questions asked the following questions: can the program be improved during the pause? Can city open centralized drop-off sites at DSNY facilities? Did agency or Mayor's office make the decision to cut the programs? Where is the line for each program in the budget? Has agency calculated extra cost of personnel and transportation for compiling trash? Where is the best place to find data on costs and benefits of recycling?

Mr. Hoyle reports that the program will be starting from square one if and when it is restored. All members of the organic team are being redeployed for emergency service. Mr. Hoyle reports that DSNY will be reviewing and hoping to strengthen the program by making organic recycling mandatory and citywide and assisting grass-roots efforts. DSNY is investigating opening drop-off sites in interim. DSNY facilities are open. Community recommends DSNY Compost website for information and resources. Mr. Hoyle supports citizen advocacy to restore budget. Mr. Caruso notes cost of service cuts to employees. DSNY welcomes help from community.

Jodie Colon with Friends of Spuyten Duyvil and the first Master Composter in the Bronx notes that curbside composting, recently launched by NYC Compost Project with 17 buildings committed, is also cut. Compost education and assistance to NYC residents provided by NYC Compost will be no longer available. Grow NYC has also been cut, which assist with recycling and compost. Costs to air, water, soil quality, public health, climate, food access, and community vitality are anticipated. She notes that most organic recycling programs are outside contractors, making them vulnerable to budget cuts, but are key to sustainable local food systems and urban agriculture that provides local residents with fresh and healthy food. Negative precedent of recycling program termination in 2000s is cited. J. Colon also notes that City Council members recognize impact of programs and budget cuts and are planning stop-gap measures. Community boards can serve as advocates for importance of programs to healthy and equitable city.

Committee members and meeting attendees applaud J. Colon's service to the community and note impacts of DSNY budget cuts on waste, gardens and tree pits, community organizations, rat abatement. Mayor's Management Report provides data on costs of shipping garbage and recycling.

Attendees submitted suggestions for stop-gap measures and budget cut alternatives, green community based organizations, green job training, education, internships, and community-wide green space management. J. Colon noted that NYC Compost helped to create many local volunteer organizations. K. Argenti asked if NYC Compost project can be placed in DSNY capital budget, like Green Thumb. Attendees cited example of cities reducing weekly trash pickups and retaining organic curbside pick-up to reflect reduced garbage load; households, apartments, and districts can have variable pick up schedules, based on

Chair recommends formation of Organic Waste and Composting Working group within E and S Committee to work closely with DSNY on restoration and stop-gap community measures.

E and S Committee supports grass-roots and coordinated lobbying efforts on behalf of organic recycling and composting and will respond to Executive budget through City Council hearings and letter.

IV. Committee Budget Priorities for FY 2022

The committee discussed its budget priorities for the fiscal year 2022. Fiscal year 2022 begins on July 1, 2021. The committee voted to present these preliminary budget priorities to the Executive Committee, as per the request of the Budget Committee. Committee members debated issues of the budget calendar, Board budget participation process, and the preliminary status of the committee decision. CB8 budget priorities for FY 2022 will be publicly presented, discussed, and adopted prior to the October 2020 Board meeting.

Expense:

1. DSNY--Compost Project: Full support for personnel and equipment required for program training, outreach, and service delivery to members of CD8.
2. DEP--Air, Noise, and Asbestos Inspectors: Support and expanding staffing to enforce new NYC laws
3. DSNY—Organic Recycling Pick-Up: Full support for personnel and equipment required to maintain regular pick-up of organic waste in CD8.
4. DSNY--Manual Litter Patrol Personnel and Litter Baskets: Support funding for adequate personnel to staff Manual Litter Patrol (MLP) operations to expedite cleaning in hard to access areas of CD8 and sufficient litter baskets in areas with record of frequent 311 calls and illegal dumping and heavily trafficked commercial districts.
5. DSNY--Community Relations: Support addition of personnel, both borough and citywide, to properly engage Community Boards and community organizations with DSNY programs and policies
6. DEP--Jerome Park Reservoir Personnel: Support full deployment of DEP staff to protect and properly maintain DEP property in and around JPR reservoir and to supervise public access to CD8 residents.

Capital:

1. DEP--Green Infrastructure: Support expenditure of DEP funds for construction of right of way and public retrofit green infrastructure projects in high flow/flood-prone areas of CD8, in consultation with Environment and Sanitation committee.
2. DEP--Daylight Tibbetts Brook: Support expenditure of agency funds necessary to daylight the freshwater wetland known as Tibbetts Brook, which currently discharges into the Van Cortlandt Lake Weir and the Broadway sewer, and reconnect it to the Harlem River to reduce combined sewer overflow.

3. DSNY -- Snow Removal Haulster: Support the purchase of an additional haulster to maintain inventory necessary to remove snow from the narrow streets of CD8.

4. DSNY---215th Street Garage Rehabilitation: Support funding for rehabilitation of DSNY Garage Facility supporting service delivery in CD8.

In favor: B. Bender, R. Fanuzzi, L. Spalter, R. Spalter, D. Travis

Abstain: K. Argenti, C. Tepus.

V. The meeting was adjourned at 9:40.

Respectfully submitted,

R. Fanuzzi,
Chair, Environment and Sanitation Committee