



The City of New York
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #1

3024 THIRD AVENUE
BRONX, NEW YORK 10455
(718) 585-7117 • Fax (718) 292-0558 • Email: bx01@cb.nyc.gov

Serving and Representing: Port Morris, Mott Haven and Melrose



VANESSA L. GIBSON
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

CLARISA M. ALAYETO
CHAIRPERSON

ANTHONY R. JORDAN
DISTRICT MANAGER

Environmental Justice & Sanitation Committee Minutes

February 21st, 2024

Cesar Yoc, Chairperson

The conversation centered around environmental justice in the South Bronx, with Angel Garcia emphasizing the need for long-overdue resources and environmental justice. Michael Pimentel expressed interest in learning more about environmental justice, while Anthony Jordan shared his experience working on environmental justice issues. Members discussed environmental contamination in various areas of the Bronx, including the former Melrose dry cleaners site, and raised concerns about the lack of a New York State environmental remediation office in the Bronx. They emphasized the urgency of addressing these issues and the importance of involving elected officials and community members in the solution. Speakers also emphasized the need for community engagement and involvement in environmental remediation projects, and stressed the importance of setting clear expectations and holding elected officials accountable for their actions.

Outline

Environmental justice in a community board meeting.

- Committee members discuss environmental justice and their roles in the community board.

Environmental justice in the South Bronx.

- Angel Garcia (MEAC) and Precious Quick (Bronx Works) discuss environmental justice as a fight for human dignity.
- Leslie Vasquez, representing the Mott Haven and Hunts Point Community and Environmental Justice, emphasizes the importance of providing resources to historically marginalized communities like the South Bronx.
- Michael Pimentel, a new member of the committee, expresses his desire to learn more about environmental justice and sanitation issues in the South Bronx, hoping to lend a voice to changing the situation.

Environmental justice in a NYC community.

- Melrose Committee member Angel Garcia presents on environmental justice situation in Melrose community, highlighting toxic chemicals from nearby lot.

Environmental contamination and cleanup efforts.

- PCE, TCE, and DCA chemicals from a dry cleaner site pose health risks to nearby residents.
- New York City residents demand action from state environmental agency to clean up toxic waste site.
- Company hired to clean up contaminated site using in situ chemical oxidation method.

Environmental remediation in a NYC neighborhood.

- Residents question Dec's ability to clean up contaminated site in Queens due to lack of environmental remediation office in NYC.
- Residents organize to demand answers from government officials about environmental contamination in their neighborhood.
- Community members and elected officials in South Bronx advocate for environmental remediation, call for taskforce to address issues.

Environmental hazard remediation in a NYC neighborhood.

- Michael Pimental emphasizes the urgency of addressing the 20-year-old PCE contamination issue in the community.
- Angel Rodriguez highlights the community's frustration with the slow response to addressing environmental hazards in their neighborhood, which has been known about for over 20 years.
- Michael Pimental and Angel Garcia express concern that some residents may be sitting on environmental hazards, and call for the community board to support their efforts to ensure proper testing and implementation.
- Ngande Ambroise expresses frustration with lack of communication from DEC and TRC companies, requesting a dedicated office or location for community members to ask questions and receive updates.
- Ngande Ambroise suggests having a representative from DEC or TRC companies visit the community once a month to address concerns and provide information.

Environmental justice and contamination in the South Bronx.

- Committee members propose meeting to discuss environmental justice issues with representatives from each group to ensure involvement and representation.

- Angel Garcia expresses frustration with lack of NYS DEC representation in New York City, particularly in the South Bronx, and suggests organizing a visit to Assemblywoman Chantel Jackson's office to advocate for better representation (March 7 at 1pm).
- Angel Garcia and Chairperson would like to see at least two board members attend the visit to show commitment to the issue.
- Angel Rodriguez raises concern about the safety of chemicals used to break down PCE in the ground, while Speaker Precious Quick questions the process and lack of information provided by NYS DEC.

Managing elected officials' expectations.

- Angel Garcia and Raihannah Jefferson discuss their efforts to get elected officials to support their cause, including a tour and task force meeting.
- They have been campaigning for support and have finally gotten commitments from some officials, including Assemblywoman Jackson, Senator Serrano and Assemblymember Septimo.
- Ngande Ambroise emphasizes the importance of setting clear expectations for elected officials, citing the need to hold them accountable for their actions.
- Angel Garcia agrees, suggesting a checklist of specific actions to take during the election period to ensure accountability.
- Ngande Ambroise emphasizes the importance of holding elected officials accountable and engaging them in community concerns through proactive measures.
- Ngande Ambroise suggests bringing citizen-elected members to the table to create a sense of accountability and address community issues.

Show of support for community initiative.

- Angel Garcia seeks Community Board support for March 7 meeting, including a letter calling on NYS DEC to take action.

Environmental contamination in the South Bronx.

- Residents express concern about developers building on contaminated lots in their neighborhood without proper testing or remediation.
- Community members demand accountability from elected officials regarding environmental cleanup in the South Bronx.

Soil contamination and its impact on a community garden.

- Angel Garcia emphasizes the importance of being direct and assertive when communicating with NYS DEC about the need for a new community center, rather than approaching them with a "please can you help me" attitude.

- Raihannah Jefferson expresses frustration with NYS DEC's lack of communication and willingness to support the effort to make sure the new community center gets built.
- Precious Quick asks about the impact of discovering the contaminated site on the garden's operations, and Raihannah Jefferson replies that they haven't seen any direct effects.
- Maximino Rivera raises concerns about indirect exposure to contaminants through air inhalation, and Angel Garcia mentions that they have an air monitor in place as part of a multi-area air monitoring project.

Chemical issue and its potential impact on community.

- Ngande Ambroise suggests adding timeframes, deadlines, and health hazards to action plans for chemical issue.

Environmental hazard and jurisdiction issues.

- Partner agency resistant to health testing, citing lack of access to buildings despite previous claims.
- Residents seek answers on chemical contamination and its impact on their community.
- Angel Garcia reveals 20-year history of environmental hazard issue, with ongoing calls for action.

Environmental cleanup and community support.

- Ngande Ambroise suggests inviting both government agencies to the table to identify whose problem it is.
- Cesar Yoc recommends sending questions in advance to ensure a productive meeting and avoid coming unprepared.
- Argelia Ortiz suggests the community board write a letter of support for the task force meeting and potentially designate a local location for people to get answers to their questions.

Environmental justice and cleanup efforts in New York City.

- Committee passes resolution motion for letter of support for site.
- District manager seeks state action to address contaminated sites from historic dry cleaners in the Bronx.

Environmental issues in the Bronx.

- Committee members unanimously pass two motions, discuss environmental awareness.
- Cesar Yoc suggests using a survey to gather information on air pollution in the Bronx, with the goal of identifying areas of high pollution and proposing solutions to the Bronx borough president's office.

- Argelia Ortiz shares an article about sites in the Bronx that need remediation, potentially useful for the project.

Using technology to address community concerns in NYC.

- Chairman seeks to leverage technology to address community complaints and track progress in sanitation and environmental issues.
- Michael Pimentel suggests downloading 311 app to report dirty sidewalks, while Speaker 5 plans to investigate why people are not picking up after their dogs.

Action Items

1. Send specific questions to DEC regarding the Melrose Ave site cleanup in advance of the March 7th taskforce meeting for review by elected officials and community groups. (Melrose Environmental Awareness Committee)
2. Hold a taskforce meeting on March 7th at 1pm at Assemblywoman Chantel Jackson's office to discuss the Melrose Ave site cleanup. (Melrose Environmental Awareness Committee)
3. Send two delegates from the Community Board 1 Environmental Justice Committee to attend the March 7th taskforce meeting. (Community Board 1 Environmental Justice Committee)
4. Draft a letter of support from Community Board 1 for the Melrose Environmental Awareness Committee's 3-point call for action regarding the Melrose Ave site cleanup
5. Draft a resolution calling on state elected officials to request DEC open a regional remediation office in New York City by 2025.
6. Develop a map showing potential contaminated sites from historical dry cleaning businesses in Community Board 1. (Community Board 1 Environmental Justice Committee)
7. Download the 311 app to easily file complaints about sanitation issues. (Environmental Justice Committee Members)
8. Investigate enforcement of laws requiring dog owners to clean up after their pets.