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Morry Galonoy
Chairperson

Debra Markell Kleinert
District Manager

April 28th, 2022

Environment Committee Meeting Minutes

this was a teleconference zoom meeting

Attendees

Frank Wu
Laura Shepard
Lauren Springer
Anthony Tudela
Caroline Spitzer

Absentee

Morry Galonoy
Karla Perez
Steven Raga

Community Board 2 Staff

Debra Markell Kleinert, CB2 District Manager

Guests

Gil Lopez, Smiling Hedgehog Ranch
Daniel
La Shaun Lesley

Frank Wu welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the CB2 Environmental Committee Meeting.

Frank Wu introduced Gil Lopez.

Gil Lopez, Smiling Hedgehog Ranch spoke about Borden Avenue under the LIE.

- It has been in the CB2 area for 11 years.
- Gil Lopez has also been doing work around the Newtown Creek.
- Gil Lopez wanted to discuss a specific site that he has been working on.
- Borden Avenue under the LIE
- He presented a slide show. *(Please see Attachment #1)*
- The area is on an unmarked street so it has no address.
- Gil Lopez discussed the environmental concerns at this site, which are:
 - For the past 30 years there has been squatting of parking commercial trucks & trailers.

“Serving the Communities of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Maspeth”

- Illegally dumping of commercial and environmental waste
- In November of 2021 Gil Lopez and others did a clean-up in this area.
- There are many illegal users at this site.
- Borden Avenue street end is managed by DOT.
- They would like a state park.
- They worked with Newtown Creek on this extensive clean up.
- They worked with a group for a soil test.
- No Public Land Licensed without Public Benefit.
- Gil Lopez is requesting the Environmental Committee to ask DOT:
 - To not license this site to any commercial business before hearing from other community potential uses, and
 - To let DOT know that the current informal users of this site are not the only ones who want to use the site.
- Gil Lopez informed the committee that there will be another clean-up on May 7th, 2022 at this site.
- Some users cleaned up their mess before the November 2021 clean up so they wouldn't get fined for it.
- It was stated some of the regular users of this site were:
 - Northshore Neon Sign company-parked trucks there for 30 years and dumped material.
 - Cobra Scrap Oil - they were fined by DEC in 2014 for dumping thousands of gallons of oil directly into a drain that goes directly to the Creek. This company still operates on site.
 - It was stated other site users are stripping automotive parts and fluids are dumped on this site.
- Gil Lopez is partnering with community organizations like Newtown Creek Alliance to provide the best use of this land.
- The DEP Pump House will be directly across the street from this area.
- This whole area is very industrial, as it is right under the LIE overpass, trucks are parked there, supplies are stacked.
- A question was asked about what Gil Lopez visions the area to be used for?
 - There have been a few visions from different organizations.
 - Newtown Creek Alliance mentioned using it for a boat house and launch.
 - Gil Lopez and team have been in contact with the DEP Remediation Division who are looking for an area to store clean soil as well as compost for free to give to groups who are doing performing greening.
 - An excellent area to relocate Big ReUse.
- There are many potential uses for this area instead of staying as a parking area.
- Jersey barriers were put up as it is a dead end street.
- They presented to many elected officials about the Dutch Kills Loop. But not specifically on this Borden Avenue site.
- They are specifically asking DOT to find out who is using this site.

- Smiling Hedgehog plan on making a public comment at the CB2 May 5, 2022 meeting and also plan to meet with the Transportation Committee.

Frank Wu, Chair suggested drafting a letter of support to DOT, with the Transportation Committee approval, stating CB2's direct objection to giving any type of license to these outside organizations that have been mentioned previously.

CB2 District Stakeholders for Environmental Committee

Frank Wu discussed the Environmental Committee and the broad range of topics that are covered. Ranging from air quality and building emissions. He went on to discuss the Mission Statement of the Environmental Committee and the Stakeholders. The committee discussed the stakeholders list.

Draft Letter to HPD for LIC RFP (Environmental Considerations, Building Efficiencies & Open Space)

Frank Wu showed an example of what the Environmental Committee can do. There is City owned land in LIC by the waterfront, Housing, Preservation and Development (HPD) is announcing an RFP for that land. This letter would be from CB2 expressing an ask from HPD to keep a parcel as an active open space. Another request in this letter is about building emissions. Quality of life has to be considered in newly constructed buildings. Frank Wu asked the committee if there were any other suggestions to add to this letter. A committee member mentioned to add that parking requirements should be waived for this site. This is the last remaining parcel in Long Island City on the waterfront.

Questions and Discussions

Frank Wu mentioned that the MTA is getting electric buses. Electric buses are 60% more expensive than diesel buses. MTA said that even though it is higher in cost it is important to improve the air quality.

The name of the Environment Committee will be renamed to include Parks.

Laura Shepard made a motion to send the letter to the DOT supporting the ask of Gil Lopez and Daniel regarding the use of Borden Avenue under the LIE.

A committee member mentioned inviting The Trust for Public Land to request funding to address inequities in parks.

An air quality presentation from Queens College was presented to the Environment Committee a year ago, a suggestion was made to invite them back for any updates in their data.

Every meeting the committee records the existing CO2 air quality. Today's reading was 419.56 parts per million up a point from last month. This is still heading in the wrong direction.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:
Kim Waber