



Meeting Summary

Canarsie Planning Committee Meeting #1

Monday, June 17, 2014, 7:00pm to 9:00pm

Hebrew Educational Society, 9502 Seaview Ave Brooklyn, NY 11236

Attendance:

Emily James	Committee Co-Chair	Elie Rubenstein	Hebrew Ed. Society
Harold Jones	Committee Co-Chair	Chris Gorman	NYS GOSR
Maria Gerrett	Committee Member	Chelsea Muller	NYS GOSR
Lucina Clarke	Committee Member	Kaye Matheny	Consultant Team
Yosef Serebryanski	Committee Member	Arana Hankin	Consultant Team
Debbie Tiamfook	Committee Member	Bill Calabrese	Consultant Team
Avrohom Hecht	Committee Member	Tanya Gallo	Consultant Team
Roxanne Persaud	Non-Voting Committee Member	Evan Lacher	Consultant Team
David Louis	Non-Voting Committee Member	Sam Saliba	Consultant team
Joy Riley	Attendee		
Olivia McDermott	Attendee		

Agenda Item: **Introduction/Program and Committee Planning**

Presenter: **General discussion**

Summary of Discussion:

- Committee began with introductions
- Planning Team stressed the open nature of the meetings
- Committee will be chaired by Emily James and Harold Jones
- Ethics handbook passed out, which the committee needs to review, sign, and return in the next week
- An attendance policy needs to be set by the committee
 - Other committees used 3 absences as the threshold for participation, although some flexibility will exist
 - Committee agreed this standard is reasonable
- Question about meeting frequency
 - Meetings will occur once every 3-4 weeks
 - Finalizing the work plan is early priority
 - 4 Public Engagement Events: one in July, one in August, one in November, and one in December
 - Discussion of schedule of deliverables, culminating in a list of priority projects
 - Mondays at 7pm work best for the committee, which agreed to the following tentative schedule
 - Public Engagement Events:
 - #1– Monday, July 14th at Hebrew Education Society
 - #2 – Monday, September 8th

- #3 – Monday, November 10th
- #4 – Monday, January 12th
- Committee Meetings:
 - #2 – Tuesday, July 8th
 - #3 – Wednesday, August 6th
 - #4 – Monday, September 22nd
 - #5 – Monday, October 6th
 - #6 – Monday, October 20th
 - #7 – Monday, November 3rd
 - #8 – Monday, December 8th
 - #9 – Monday, January 5th

Agenda Item: **NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program overview**

Presenter: **General discussion**

Summary of Discussion:

- Round 1 of NYRCR included 10 communities
- Round 2 of NYRCR includes 5, including neighboring Mill Basin, Marine Park, Bergen Beach and Georgetown, working as one Planning Committee called “Southeast Brooklyn Waterfront”
- Jamaica Bay working group will continue to meet and Canarsie committee will be able to plug into this work
- Opportunities exist to connect with other Jamaica Bay initiatives that have been working in the area
- Implementation will begin to roll out for first phase of NYRCR projects
- Committee members are welcome to attend meetings for other committees to encourage cross-pollination and collaboration
- Committee meetings are open, but it is mostly a working session for the committee
- Funding source for program is CDBG-DR (Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery)
 - Has some requirements, but team will work with the PC to make sure projects either fit the eligibility or identify other funding sources
 - Plan is aspirational and meant to represent community’s vision for resilience in Canarsie
 - Reiteration on the public nature of the committee meetings and potential to open up part of the meeting for public participation
- Steps towards the plan includes
 - Establishing vision
 - Understanding needs and opportunities
 - Outlining specific strategies

- Define projects that represent these strategies

Agenda Item: **Committee vision, ideas, and ongoing work**

Presenter: **General discussion**

Summary of Discussion:

- Open community discussion: each committee member introduced the issues, needs, and previous work that they feel is most relevant to this process
 - Major issue is mortgages and insurance premiums that have drastically increased
 - Needs are wide and variable: transportation, economic development, youth programs, etc.
 - Housing stock has decreased with foreclosures and Sandy.
 - Safer streets – more lights – are needed. Some streets are very dark. Solar lights for homes was a great project, but it would be great to see throughout Canarsie. When people feel safe, there can be more visitors and provide a better atmosphere for people to enjoy the community.
 - Concern exists about lack of youth programs and youth participation. Many programs are not getting youth involved.
 - Canarsie desperately needs a community center as there are no meeting places for organizations such as block associations. Some organizations meet outside the community due to a lack of space.
 - Nature preserve that runs along 108th Street and Fresh Creek has low quality infrastructure. Was in a poor state before Sandy and has worsened since. If this had been handled before Sandy, it would not have been as bad. The preserve needs both coastal and environmental protection – replanting of trees, bioswales, and bulkheads.
 - Fixing the flooding and drainage issues are priority number one.
 - Canarsie lost a lot of businesses after the storm. Most business owners do not live in Canarsie and many owners don't know about the businesses that are there. Need to improve the mutual understanding and relationships between the businesses and community. Many people drive out of community to shop.
 - Community work was undertaken to understand why resources were not reaching Canarsie. Even when people wanted to help and donate items, there was no place to store these items. Both receiving and distribution was not possible.
 - Outreach to international community has been ongoing, including students from Tokyo University.
 - Prior community has been from the bottom up, which required a lot of coordination and getting people to work together. Block Associations were started with the help of Bridge Street.
 - Food issues rose to the surface with Sandy and need to build capacity for people to grow their own food and have their own water supplies. Lots of places want to help, but Canarsie is not that far along yet. Herbology classes have happened, nature walks ensuring people know what plants can eat. Some projects have started within the schools and the Canarsie Blooms project. Soils have to be tested. Water quality, food quality issues need to be addressed. Could create public orchards on MTA vacant site on 105th Street, other community gardens could be placed.

- Canarsie used to be 60% marsh. Need to reclaim more of the land and pull back away from water.
- Need to be prepared for disaster and be able to be self-sufficient, distribute information. Having access to healthy food and water and help people understand how to improve day-to-day life, which has a co-benefit for disasters.
- Chicken coops, beehives, goats, could all be incorporated into community life. Electricity and energy – solar panels on homes, wireless energy.
- Land taxes are high. Block associations sent signatures into Department of Finance who met with community to discuss the issues.
- Critical for everyone in community to collaborate. No one entity can be successful at having positive change on their own. Need community center, jobs training, business incubator, and microfinancing. Satellite centers for smaller community spaces to address lack of space. Looking holistically at different disciplines, the ones that function well collaborate with many agencies.
- 82nd Street houses are physically underwater still from the rain over the last week. Catch basins are needed down 103rd and Avenue K. Need to fast track these projects.
- Leverage the pier, park, and other neighborhood assets to expand economic development, attract more people to the neighborhood and create an “x-factor.”
- Everyone is trying to do something, but there is a lot of protection around turf, exacerbating the fragmentation of the community.
- Some schools have started gardening, could be expanded.
- Large undocumented population here, that makes getting resources to these populations difficult. Post-Sandy, many people were renting to undocumented people, so they were reluctant to work within the official channels.
- A lot of home businesses were affected that must be included in discussion alongside brick and mortar businesses.
- Committee members were encouraged to share previous work with each other in advance of future meetings via email list
- Question about work between technical experts and committee members
 - Sub committees existed by topic in other committees, which then could bring issues to the whole committee
 - Issue became that committee did not agree with some of what was proposed in subcommittee, so ideas had to be fully rehashed with the full committee
 - Committee could benefit from additional members with experience in housing. It is a major issue within the community.
- Chelsea to follow up with ethics form via email
- Outreach to be discussed in next meeting, committee members to come to next meeting with ideas about the ways that work best for Canarsie
 - Flyer to be circulated via email, if we get it before June 28th, then we can get it into backpacks of children
- Outreach coordinators

- Debbie, Joy and David to lead outreach efforts
- Discussion to follow over email regarding outreach for Public Engagement #1

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