



# Meeting Notes

## Gravesend and Bensonhurst Planning Committee Meeting #2

July 8, 2014, 6:00pm – 8:00pm  
Block Institute, 376 Bay 44th St, Brooklyn, NY 11214

### Attendance:

**Community Reconstruction (CR) Planning Committee Members:** Ligia Gualpa, Executive Director, Worker's Justice Project (WJP); Marnee Elias-Pavia, District Manager, Community Board 11; Scott Barkin, Executive Director, Block Institute; Rocco Brescia, President, Friends of Kaiser Park & Alliance of Calvert Vaux Park; Mel Wolfson, Homeowner; Butch Moran, District Manager, Community Board 13; Pamela Pettyjohn, Coney Island Beautification Project; Eddie Mark, Community Board 13.

**NY State Representatives:** Alex Zablocki, NYC Regional Lead, Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR).

**Firm Representatives:** Eric Fang, Perkins Eastman Architects (PEA); Ayo Yusuf, PEA; Niek Veraart, Louis Berger Group (LBG); Jennifer Gonzalez, LBG; Bethany Bearmore, LBG; Noah Levine, BFJ Planning (BFJ), David Kirk, PACO Group; Todd Poole, 4Ward Planning; Amy Spivak, 4Ward Planning.

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> Community Reconstruction Plan Committee meeting began at approximately 6:15 p.m. Eric Fang (PEA) began the presentation with a summary of what happened during Superstorm Sandy and why. The consultant team explained the Asset Categories and presented a preliminary list of identified assets in the planning area. The consultant team then led a group discussion about the vision for the Gravesend-Bensonhurst NYRCR area. At the conclusion of the discussion, there was a discussion about logistics and outreach for the upcoming public engagement event and the next planning committee meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m. The following was noted:*

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### Agenda Item: **Presentation of "What Happened and Why"**

Presenter: **Eric Fang**

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#### Summary of Discussion:

- Discussion of description of storm, surge flooding, storm drainage flooding and recurrent flooding.
- Explanation of differences between what happened during Superstorm Sandy and Hurricane Irene.

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#### Discussion/Consensus:

- Additional reason for flooding: the water table is very close to surface so there is no place for water to go.
- Flooding from stormwater is more significant during "microbursts" where significant rainfall occurs in a short period of time. Flooding is not as common during long steady rain events. Marnee Elias-Pavia

presented a photo of flooding on May 12, 2013 during a heavy rain storm, “any heavy rain the Belt gets flooded.”

- Discussion about sewer system’s ability to handle “microburst” events. Maintenance and cleaning of pipes may be an issue.
- Lack of permeability upstream leading to runoff that sits in low-lying areas (bowl).
- Lost bulkheads and coastal protections since Sandy
- Transportation infrastructure disrupted with many trains out of service. Many residents rely on mass transit, many walk or bike to work as well.
- 86<sup>th</sup> Street / 10<sup>th</sup> Ave pump station was rehabilitated but is not online yet, should help prevent flooding at west 12/13<sup>th</sup> Ave. Repair to 83” sewer main.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Due Date
Research conditions on May 12, 2013 that led to severe flooding (photo from committee member)	LBG	8/1/14
Research status of 86th Street / 10th Ave pump station		
Research average Tidal datum levels		
Create LIDAR map of street cover (impermeable surfaces)		

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**Agenda Item: Asset Identification**

Presenter: **Noah Levine (BFJ)**

Summary of presentation:

- Preliminary assets maps were presented for each of the six (6) reconstruction strategies: Infrastructure, Economics, Natural and Cultural Resources, Health and Social Services, Housing, and Socially Vulnerable Populations.
- Planning committee members were asked to review maps and highlight (1) locally significant assets, and (2) any assets that may be missing from list.

Discussion/Consensus

- Infrastructure
- Economics
  - Big box stores along coast were hit hard by Sandy. Kohls was closed for months (bussed workers to other stores). Bank still closed.
  - Many workers live in the community, so workforce and economy are closely tied together.
- Natural and Cultural Resources
  - Promenade is a major asset
- Health and Social Services
- Housing
  - Marlboro Houses were not significantly flooded during Sandy.
- Socially Vulnerable Populations
  - There are a lot of low-wage workers in the community that were directly impacted. They need to be represented in the included in narrative: seniors, high concentration of immigrant

workers, low-income workers, non-English speaking, renters, naturally aging retirement community

- Many low-income workers in the neighborhood served in the cleanup effort before sanitation services and transportation services were restored. Many of these workers are immigrants, who couldn't apply for assistance. This workforce can be seen as an asset.
- Southwest Brooklyn has highest senior population in New York. The community has an officially recognized Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC). Consultant team will locate and identify this NORC.
- Bensonhurst also has a large population of Chinese immigrants, many are merchants in the community.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Due Date
Planning committee members to mark up maps	Planning Committee	7/20/14
Edit asset list and revise map	Jennifer Gonzalez	7/16/14

- Economic assets: work with 4Ward for Clustering
- Housing assets: Co-op where Mel lives, apartments next to 43rd on N. Side of Shore pkwy,
- Infrastructure: Transportation structures, bike lanes on shell road
- Natural and cultural: Consolidate green streets, Dreier Offerman park on Cropsey
- Health and social services: Lydia's nonprofit, senior daycares

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Agenda Item **Vision Statement Discussion** Presenter: **Eric Fang (PEA)**

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Summary of Discussion:

Discussion of qualities that are important in Gravesend-Bensonhurst, what should be preserved and what should be improved upon.

Discussion/Consensus:

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- Community Assets:
  - People work and live in the community
  - The community is home to a number of socially vulnerable populations including elderly (NORC) and low wage workers.
  - The Gravesend-Bensonhurst community should be thought of as a connected community with Coney Island in terms of the labor market, shopping, health facilities, etc.
  - The promenade is a major asset. Some people go to the beach, but most just use the promenade.
  - The community has "something for everyone," including waterfront parks, stores, food, etc.
  - Strengths:
    - Diversity
    - Live-work
    - Recreation areas
    - Varying shoreline
    - Local businesses
    - Local workforces
    - Neighbor support

- Community Weaknesses
  - Cropsey Avenue and areas below the Belt Parkway are disconnected from the upland community.
  - Development along the water is industrial and there is no access to the water
  - There is no opportunity to have connection to the water, this presents an issue in emergency situations.
  - Access to park.
  - Lack of wayfinding.
- Other comments:
  - The word “resilient” is not a commonly used word and it should be better explained in NYRCR materials (e.g. flyers, handouts)
  - Emily Dooley, a reporter from AP and Journalism Fellow at the University of Chicago is doing a study on the Gravesend Community post-Sandy. Consultant team should follow up on this.
  - A study at Baruch College collected surveys in the Gravesend area. Consultant team to follow up with Ligia for contact.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Due Date
Planning Committee “homework:” Send consultant team three (3) words that describe their vision for the community	Planning Committee	7/16/14
Create first draft of Vision Statement with Comments from Committee	Noah Levine	7/16/14

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Agenda Item **Upcoming Public Engagement Event (#1)** Presenter: **Eric Fang (PEA)**

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Summary of Discussion:

- The 1<sup>st</sup> Public Engagement Event will be held on Sunday, July 20<sup>th</sup> at Bensonhurst Park across from Ceasar’s Bay Bazaar.
  - The workshop will have a brief presentation followed by an open house with tables set up by asset category
- Public outreach – planning committee members given flyers to distribute
- Translation needs (i.e. Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Arabic)
  - Noah Levine/Alex Zablocki to coordinate translation of materials with Ligia and Eddie.
- Format for meeting and presentation materials
  - Consultant team will have presentation boards and vision questionnaires to distribute
  - Planning committee members expected to attend for a short time during the day
- Logistics
  - Alex has secured a permit from the Parks Department
  - Butch Moran will provide 2 tents

Action Items	Person Responsible	Due Date
Distribute electronic version of flyer/handout to committee	Alex/Noah	7/10/14
Provide materials to Ligia/Eddie to translate to Russian, Chines and Arabic.	Alex/Noah	7/10/14

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Agenda Item: **Scheduling - Upcoming Planning Committee Meeting Date**

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Discussion

- It was agreed that the 3rd Planning Committee Meeting will be held on August 5<sup>th</sup> @ the Block Institute (376 Bay 44<sup>th</sup> Street).
- The 4<sup>th</sup> Planning Committee Meeting will be held in September, date TBD.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Due Date
Confirm a date for 4 <sup>th</sup> Planning Committee Meeting	Alex Zablocki	8/5

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