



# Meeting Notes

## Gravesend and Bensonhurst Planning Committee Meeting #4

September 3, 2014, 6:00pm – 8:00pm  
Magen David Yeshivah, 2132 McDonald Ave, Brooklyn, NY

### Attendance:

**Community Reconstruction (CR) Planning Committee Members:** Marnee Elias-Pavia, District Manager, Community Board 11; Mel Wolfson, Homeowner; Pamela Pettyjohn, Coney Island Beautification Project; Peter Consolo, Homeowner; Dr. Tim Law, Homeowner.

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

**Firm Representatives:** Eric Fang, Perkins Eastman Architects (PEA); Ayo Yusuf, PEA; Ari Daman, PEA; Frank Fish BFJ Planning (BFJ), Noah Levine, BFJ; Bethany Bearmore, Louis Berger Group (LBG).

**Guests:** Eddie Mark; Justin Brannan, representative from NYS District 43 Council Member, Vincent Gentile.

*The 4<sup>th</sup> Community Reconstruction Plan Committee meeting began at approximately 6:05 p.m. Eric Fang (PEA) began the presentation with a summary of what we’ve learned since the previous meeting. The consultant team then presented the major themes from the Needs and Opportunities portion of the Plan. The majority of the meeting involved a discussion of the reconstruction strategies for the Community. Following the discussion, the Planning Committee discussed the format for the upcoming public engagement event and set the date for the next planning committee meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m. The following was noted:*

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Agenda Item: **Agenda and summary of what we learned from last meeting**

Presenter: **Eric Fang**

### Summary of Discussion:

- Where we are in the process (2 month look ahead).
- Summary of meeting with NYC Parks Department and Community Board 11, 13, and 15 District Managers.

Discussion/Consensus:

- Discussion of major themes from Needs and Opportunities section of report
  - Flooding in low lying areas
  - Health, social services and critical facilities needs
  - Community planning and capacity building needs
  - Housing needs
  - Area affected by the new FEMA Preliminary FIRM map
  - Economic development needs
  - Infrastructure needs
  - Natural and cultural resource needs

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Agenda Item **Recovery Strategy Discussion**

Summary of Discussion:

- **Maintenance of Infrastructure (sewer system)**
  - Sewer system:
    - One strategy could address maintenance of sewer system.
    - Sewer maintenance is a major issue but it is a municipal responsibility. How do we apply leverage to get government to devote resources to sewer upgrades and maintenance?
  - There should be a different strategy that addresses rain events from on that addresses coastal surge.
    - Potential strategy 1: Protect community from typical rain event.
    - Potential strategy 2: Protect community from storm surge.
  - Green Infrastructure
    - Public spaces should be more green to absorb more water (Pamela Pettyjohn).
  - Hardening infrastructure systems such as sewer, electrical and telephone networks was identified as a priority and potential strategy.
  - Communication: When power goes out, walkie-talkies and radio works better than a cell phone.
- **Shoreline Protection Strategy**
  - EDC is studying gate at mouth of creek, the results of which will have implications on other strategies.
  - Do we protect businesses along the coastline with bulkhead improvements or focus energies on protecting Belt Parkway?
    - Protecting the Belt Parkway is first and foremost, as it is an important corridor to move people, goods and equipment. The highway needs to be open and protecting the Belt will also protect the upland community.
    - Protecting the Parkway is the #1 priority for CB 11, and solutions could involve revetments and green infrastructure (Marnee Elias-Pavia).
    - The Belt could be protected with concrete barriers that prevent flooding from the coast.
  - There is the potential for an integrated coastal defense strategy that addresses more issues than just storm surge (i.e. transportation, green infrastructure, economic development).
- **Resiliency Education Strategy**

- Many properties are unaware of FEMA FIRM changes so education is a major issue
  - Education could be a strategy – work with elected officials, workshops, education in multiple languages.
  - Technical assistance could be provided to homeowners and business owners.
  - Assistance to let people know where they can get funding/loans for resiliency improvements.
  - Every structure in community should be evaluated to identify vulnerabilities (Mel Wolfson).
- NYRCR Public meetings can be utilized as an opportunity to explain flood insurance changes (Pamela). Maps should show areas added to 100-year floodplain (“Did you know that if you live here....”).
  - Representatives from FEMA and NYC Office of Housing Recovery Operations (HRO) or Build it Back will be in attendance at the public meeting (Alex Zablicki).
- Should Marlboro Houses be singled out as a strategy
  - No, everyone in the community deserves equal protection from flooding. Opportunities for improvements should be investigated with NYCHA but they may have their own plans.
- **Vulnerable Populations Strategy**
  - We need a system to identify and track vulnerable populations.
  - Resource centers are needed.
- **Coordinated Community Emergency Response Strategy**
  - There is need to improve communication network - residents couldn’t call 911 and 311.
  - There is the potential to form a regional CERT team that could help out a wider area and would build up regional response capability.
    - NJ has a regional CERT team.
    - How big would the region be?
  - There is little coordination between CBOs.
    - There are many CBOs that would contribute if needed, but there is currently little coordination between them. CBOs could be coordinated through the local CERT.
    - Look at model of Occupy Wall Street and Occupy Sandy (system to train people who can receive goods, distribute goods and distribute information).
    - This is a new OEM COAD model and is a potential idea for a project.
- **Access to Critical Services and Businesses**
  - Shore Parkway employees thousands of residents and provides goods and services. Getting those businesses up and running is a significant need.
  - Plan should also look at smaller stores on other corridors such as 86<sup>th</sup> Street.
  - Businesses along Shore Parkway have resources to protect their properties, resources should not be devoted to them but access should be ensured and maintained in event of storm.
  - Power resiliency could be a strategy.
    - People lost power due to downed power lines from trees (not from flooding)

## Reconstruction Strategies

*The conversation above led to the development of the seven reconstruction strategies listed below. These strategies were agreed upon by the Planning Committee. It was understood that the final wording of the strategies may be slightly changed to best represent the themes and issues discussed.*

- **Strategy 1: Protect the Community from flooding from:**
  - Coastal surge events, and
  - Typical rainfall events
- **Strategy 2: Provide technical assistance and education for homeowners, renters and business owners.**  
*Note: Includes “proactively engage vulnerable populations” concept discussed by the committee.*
- **Strategy 3: Develop coordinated community response network.**  
*Note: Includes “proactively engage vulnerable populations” concept discussed by the committee.*
- **Strategy 4: Upgrade and maintain energy, telecommunication and sewer infrastructure.**
- **Strategy 5: Develop a comprehensive approach to the waterfront.**  
*Note: Strategy 5 combined two concepts discussed by the Committee: (1) maintain access to large and small commercial areas, and (2) have an integrated waterfront strategy that considers access, recreational improvements, and economic development.*

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Agenda Item: **Scheduling - Upcoming Meetings**

Presenter: **Frank Fish (BFJ)**

Summary of Discussion:

- The format for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Engagement Meeting was discussed.
- Planning Committee responsibilities at the Public Engagement meeting were discussed.
- Flyers and posters in English, Chinese, Russian and Spanish were given to the Planning Committee to distribute
- Postcards for the online mapping tool were presented and discussed.
- The Committee agreed to hold the 5<sup>th</sup> Planning Committee Meeting on Tuesday, September 30 @ 6:00. Location TBD.