



Meeting Minutes for May 23, 2017 Ridgewood Reservoir Community Listening Meeting at PS 68Q

33 people attended, list of attendees below

1. Matt Malina, Director NYC H2O, welcomed the participants and explained how NYC H2O became involved with the Ridgewood Reservoir through its active field trip program. The Reservoir is an ecological and cultural treasure that students from Queens and Brooklyn are discovering through H2O field trips. H2O will bring 40 classes reaching over 1,000 students to the Reservoir this spring. Since 2014, H2O has brought 3,000 students to the site.

2. Kate Mooney, Deputy Chief of Staff to City Council Member Elizabeth Crowley, shared with us that she is a birder and echoed the value of the Reservoir as an ecological resource. She also mentioned her appreciation for the historical significance of the reservoir, citing a visit to the Croton Reservoir and the role of Irish immigrants in building the aqueduct.

3. Queens Parks Commissioner Dorothy Lewandowski explained that NYC Parks will designate the Reservoir as a Critical Environmental Area (CEA) and will hold a public hearing on June 21 at 6pm at St Pancras School 68-20 Myrtle Ave, Glendale, NY 11385.

The CEA application can be [linked to here](#).

Comments are being accepted by the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation and should be submitted to Owen.Wells@parks.nyc.gov.

At 7pm, immediately following the CEA hearing another meeting will be held by NYC Parks' Capital Division to discuss recycling plans from 2013 (something about the ten year mark, beginning phase 1 in 2007, she also expressed excitement at seeing the new classification of low hazard dam designation come to fruition) that NYC Parks had for the basins. She mentioned that there is 9 million in funds for the project. Additional 13-15 million from Brooklyn Councilman Espinal, going into the Highland Park. Parks will make these plans available on their website.

4. Steve Nanz, from the Brooklyn Bird Club, made the point that there is very little freshwater wetland within the five boroughs so that protecting the reservoir is essential for a diverse ecology.

5. Joe Nocarino, from the Queens Borough President's Office, offered the Borough President's support for the reservoir.

6. Evelyn Cruz, from Congressman Nydia Velazquez's office told us how she grew up close to the reservoir and that she and Congressman Velazquez repelled into the reservoir (basin 3?). Elissa,



mentioned later looking for photographs of that event, and possibly looking into opening the reservoir up for something like that again.

7. Jason Banrey, Deputy Commissioner Queens DOT gave a detailed update about the DOT's investigation into the traffic and safety issues at the park. They have installed Leading Pedestrian Intervals at the intersection of Highland Blvd & Vermont Place. In June, there will be pedestrian counts taken at Vermont Place at the parking lot crossing followed by more studies. Once the results of those studies are in, they will determine if a pedestrian activated signal can be installed. It has to sink with the traffic lights adjacent to it as well.

The intersection Highland Blvd & Vermont Place has been identified as a site for Street Improvement Project by DOT in 2018 and will examine the entire area in a holistic way to solve traffic and safety issues. Initially temporary materials will be installed and then the traffic flows will be studied., Then if successful concrete will follow. This improvement project is pending funding being secured from the Mayor's Office and their own budget. He also mentioned that updates from a speed hump study are forthcoming.

8. Charles Monaco, a local resident, and others mentioned their concerns about speeding in the area and Banrey encouraged notifying NYPD whenever speeding is witnessed. He then offered his email address for further questions and comments, as he had to leave. jbanrey@dot.nyc.gov

9. Vincent Arcuri, Chairman of Community Board 5 Queens, mentioned that Dept Design & Construction confirmed in Nov 2016 that all pipes leading in and out of the reservoirs are all sealed now. So the question of whether water was leaking into the basins causing wetland habitat was moot. He also gave the phrase, "safety, scenery, symbolism", in mentioning the importance of Ridgewood as a bridge uniting Brooklyn and Queens.

10. Molly Kerker, a Bushwick Resident, mentioned her interest in wanting to help out in some way with conservation. People present also mentioned their interest in working to mitigate invasive species, and in the public health aspect of the reservoir. Many local residents mentioned the importance of the site for runners and parents.

11. Jean Lascalzo, a member of the Queens County Bird Club, told the group about a bird monitoring project that she worked on at the Reservoir.

12. Zulmilena Then, who started the organization Preserving East New York, was present and very excited about the reservoir and making it more accessible to local residents. www.preservingeny.org

13. Ken Scarletelli, Natural Resource Manage for NY State Dept of Environmental Conservation was meeting with Parks, Wednesday, May 24th, about a plan to manage invasive species.



14. The request to the MTA to alter the B13 bus route to include stops at Ridgewood, was mentioned.
15. Concern was raised about the proliferation of invasive species as well as poison ivy (a native plant) at the site.
16. The critical importance of the Reservoir as a location to absorb stormwater thereby reducing Combined Sewage Overflow events was mentioned.
17. There was an idea put forward to include either a hawkwatch, a tree house, or some other form of viewing platform at the site, in order to both look down into the basins.
18. Tom Dowd, a Ridgewood resident, gave a folder of papers to NYC H2O that documents the advocacy work that he and the Highland Park Ridgewood Reservoir Association had archived dating back to 2004.

	Name	Affiliation
1	David Renz	Assemblymember Cathy Nolan's office
2	Mary Ann Sell	Community member
3	Dawn Kuras	Community member
4	Donna Dowd	Community member
5	Tom Dowd	Community member
6	Simon Peralta-Sanha	Community member
7	Jacob Fiss-Hobart	Community member
8	Kristy Rar	Community member
9	Dorothy Morehead	Water advocate CB2
10	Charles Manaco	Community member
11	Matt Malina	NYC H2O
12	Joe Nocarino	Queens Borough President's office
13	Steven Fiedler	CB5Q
14	Steve Nanz	Brooklyn Bird Club
15	Sue Reuter	Community member
16	Rob Jett	Highland Park Ridgewood Reservoir Association
17	Debby Kuha	NYC Parks
18	Margaret Carrillo Rosas	NYC Parks



19	Vincent Arcuri	CB5Q
20	Kate Mooney	City Council Member Elizabeth Crowley's Office
21	Evelyn Cruz	Congressmember Nydia Velazquez's office
22	Dorothy Lewandowsky	NYC Parks
23	Molly Kerker	Community member
24	Hendrick Gerrits	Community member
25	Zumilmena Then	Community member
26	Jean Lascalzo	Community member
27	Elissa Sampson	Community member
28	David Cunningham	DCAP
29	Veronica Rivas	DCAP
30	Berenice Melis	DCAP
31	Gnaomi Siemens	NYC H2O
32	Jason Banrey	NYC DOT
33	Jonathan Turer	NYC H2O