



## NYC Parks Department Meeting for the Ridgewood Reservoir

St. Pancras School, Glendale, NY, June 21, 2017, 6pm and 7pm

The meeting went well. 50 people attended, 70% from Queens. The highlights were:

- Owen Wells from Parks, who drafted the Critical Environmental Area application, said to the audience that, "the CEA can be used as leverage with the DEC to encourage them to map the wetlands in Basin 3." Vinnie Cirrito from Parks Capital Division confirmed this in a side conversation.
- Owen indicated that the wetland map in the CEA application would be updated to reflect the wetlands in Basin 3.
- It was brought up that there are additional wetlands in Highland Park, outside the Reservoir Basins, to the west near the newly restored stone bridge
- Dorothy Lewandowski, Queens Deputy Commission for Parks stated that Parks will put out an RFP for a consultant to manage the new planning at the reservoir. We will find out when this gets published.
- The majority of the people at the meeting support boardwalks that descend into the basins and repurposing the gatehouses as an interpretive center.
- CB5 Queens does not support boardwalks. We will need the support of CB5K and everyone else to persuade Parks to create a plan that includes boardwalks. CB5Q carries a lot of weight with Parks as well as with others in Queens. We will need to continue to talk with CB5Q, Queens Borough President Melinda Katz and CM Crowley.
  - NYC H2O will schedule a time to give a presentation to CB5Q's Parks Committee and explain our vision. We will also request that Brooklyn voices be heard at the same time. CB5Q members are strong stewards of the environment and are being cautious in order to protect the basins which is understandable.
  - NYC H2O will explain that the limited building of ecologically sensitive learning paths in the basins can serve to foster advocacy and attract new stewards for the Reservoir in regard to its upkeep and safety. This has been a successful strategy and best practice as seen in many ecologically sensitive areas, e.g., Costa Rica, Fire Island, etc... Such stewards already exist mostly from CB5K who regularly visit the Reservoir. In NYS, there are examples of this working within the NYC Watershed. In 2012, the DEP opened up the reservoirs to paddling with strict, enforced guidelines for access. Since then, paddlers have helped the DEP improve stewardship and safety at reservoirs by reporting illegal dumping and unsafe behaviors.
- The representative from CB5 Brooklyn Parks was absent due to family health reasons. There were however many Brooklyn community members present.
- Parks will call another planning/feedback meeting in the fall
- H2O was acknowledged for its work on the Historic Register Nomination and on convening successful community meetings on the Reservoir
- Jonathan Turer, Ken Chaya, Melinda Alfano, David Cunningham, Berenice Melis and Matt Malina represented H2O at the meeting
- Kate Mooney represented CM Crowley, David Renz represented Assemblymember Cathy Nolan and Jeff Kohn represented Assemblymember Mike Miller