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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Environment Committee
Thursday, April 27, 2023 – 6:30pm
This meeting was conducted via Zoom

Please note: The resolutions contained in the committee minutes are recommendations submitted by the committee co-chairs to the Community Board. At the monthly full board meeting, the resolutions are discussed and voted upon by all members of Community Board 8 Manhattan.

Minutes

CB8 Attendance: Sahar Husain, Wilma Johnson, Barbara Rudder, Rami Sigal, and Marco Tamayo

Resolutions For Approval:

Resolution 1: Proposal of New Waterfront Agency

Resolution 2: Tree Canopy Increase

1. Discussion on proposals and policies of Manhattan Borough President to combat Climate Change

To discuss Climate Policies, Community Board 8 Manhattan hosted Tomi Vest, General Counsel and environment expert at the office of Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine. She presented to the committee the various initiatives and policies to combat climate change.

She detailed how prolonged extreme summer heat leads to approximately 350 deaths in NYC yearly. Additionally, the impact of climate change leads to coastal storm surge due to extreme rainfall as we saw during Hurricane Ida and Hurricane Sandy, and the chronic flooding that we encounter frequently. She mentioned that climate change is an equity issue that needs to be addressed as communities that are most vulnerable are most impacted by the environmental issues. Additionally, it impacts city services, further deepening the impact of these natural disasters on New Yorkers.

What are the proposals and policies of the Manhattan Borough President to combat climate change?

1. Working for the **‘Million More Trees’** Initiative as trees mitigate against heat, help manage stormwater and reduce carbon footprint. This will help in achieving the 30% canopy goal. It is proposed to leverage available federal and state budgets, fund tree maintenance with NYCHA and fund parks at 1% of the budget. It is important to note that CB8 Full Board supported the Million More Trees initiative in its resolution in the past
2. Proposing a climate ready and well managed new **‘Waterfront Agency’** that would have jurisdiction over the waterfront assets and be accountable to the public. Tomi Vest mentioned that they are hoping to have legislation on this. It would be a single agency responsible for protecting communities from coastal storms or rising sea levels. However, waterfront permits should be with DOB, so they need to develop a waterfront code.
3. Advocating for a dedicated **‘9A Bike Lane’** on the West Side Highway to minimize collisions between pedestrians, cyclists and e-bikes/ delivery workers.
4. Working for an **‘E-Commerce Blueprint’** to reduce air pollution, greenhouse emissions and congestion because of online deliveries. He is proposing to repurpose parking garages as e-commerce fulfillment

centers, utilize water ways to allow cargo deliveries and make loading zones better equipped in residential areas, to have green parking zones, have cargo bikes of 48 inches in width and to build more charging stations for e-bikes. Lastly, to enforce traffic laws better and consequently to have cameras installed for those who are double and triple parked. However, there is no separate budget for this right now. The Community Board discussed that e-bikes have great potential, however the need for safer battery charging options is essential.

5. Advocating for ‘**Curbside Composting**’ and ‘**Circularity Day**’. Composting bins will probably be given to each building by October 2024.
6. Supporting ‘**Local Law 97**’ and ‘**NYC Accelerator**’ The hope is that the buildings will move toward its implementation and that the cost of doing so would be recovered over the years with much lower maintenance and rebates. There are many benefits and ways to support buildings through NYC Accelerator.
7. Convened the **FiDi Seaport Climate Coalition of Lower Manhattan** that will work on the East River with many stakeholders from the community. The zoning regulations for the East River Park Project were asked in relation to guidelines and moratorium on buildings being built around the perimeter of Manhattan. Attendees asked that trees have been cut over so time so what policies are being taken to protect that. The presenter informed us that zoning regulations have been increased and the plan is to replant the trees. In general, the building code has stricter regulations for any new buildings constructed or for buildings undergoing huge renovations in the flood zone. Buildings need to be taller so they can remain elevated for flood protection.

Additionally, neighbors were informed that the NYC Panel on Climate Change (NPCC) provides projections and data and is a good source for such purposes. In return, it was requested that kindly respond to natural disasters like Hurricane Sandy more promptly in the future and to improve the public transportation service. We were told that the city has invested extensively in storm hardening upgrades.

Furthermore, it was noted that for our CB8 community, inland flooding is an issue for East End 96th, and outland flooding on East River Drive on 79th and 60th Street and how do we protect the communities who are around these flooding points, especially since there are vulnerable communities around 96th Street. It was suggested that neighbors flag this constantly and report this to the city agencies and the Borough President’s office to heighten the issue.

Also, it was emphasized to have net zero emissions and climate sustainability resilience guidelines in the ULURP Proposal that the Manhattan Borough President’s Office is involved in. Lastly, it was requested to always support the East River Ferry and East River Esplanade as they provide many benefits to the community.

Resolutions

Resolution 1

WHEREAS there is no single agency responsible for protecting our waterfronts against coastal storms or rising sea levels; and

WHEREAS delays to current coastal protection projects can cause monumental damage; and

WHEREAS there is little motivation amongst agencies to take on new coastal projects causing neglect of traditional waterfront assets;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED Community Board 8 Manhattan supports Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine’s proposal to establish a new waterfront agency that will have jurisdiction over waterfront assets and will be responsible for maintaining marine structures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Community Board 8 Manhattan supports Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine’s proposal to move waterfront permitting to the Department of Buildings.

Approved 4-0-0

For: Sahar Husain, Wilma Johnson, Barbara Rudder, and Marco Tamayo

Resolution 2

WHEREAS New York City’s Parks Departments aims to increase the tree canopy by thirty percent citywide to help combat the effects of climate change;

WHEREAS Community Board 8 has previously voted to support Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine’s proposal to plant a million more trees throughout New York City; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED Community Board 8 Manhattan urges the city to fund the Parks Department at one percent of the city’s budget; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan urges the city, state and federal governments to increase funds to NYCHA’s budget to support the maintenance of trees and green space on NYCHA properties

Approved 4-0-0

For: Sahar Husain, Wilma Johnson, Barbara Rudder, and Marco Tamayo

2. Old Business – None discussed

2 New Business – None discussed

Sahar Husain, Barbara Rudder, and Lynne Strong-Shinozaki, Co-Chairs