

Valerie S. Mason
Chair

Will Brightbill
District Manager



505 Park Avenue, Suite 620
New York, N.Y. 10022-1106
(212) 758-4340
(212) 758-4616 (Fax)
www.cb8m.com – Website
info@cb8m.com – E-Mail

**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Environment Committee
Tuesday, January 23, 2024 – 6:30pm
This meeting was conducted via Zoom**

Minutes

CB8 Attendance: Bill Angelos, Alida Camp, Sahar Husain, Addeson Lehv, Valerie Mason, and Barbara Rudder.

Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 25

1. Co-Chair Sahar Husain called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm. She introduced Andrew Darrell, a Senior Advisor at the Environmental Defense Fund (“EDF”) to provide an overview of the various global initiatives and work done in the field of environmental sustainability and climate change in other countries, and other cities & suburbs of the US and then to take questions from members of the public and the Community Board:

Mr. Darrell spoke on the following subjects:

- EDF is a global non-profit which focuses on practical solutions to climate change. The organization began on Long Island after its founders observed that fish hawks (a type of bird) were dying. After research, the founders realized it was due to DDT being sprayed on crops. They advocated for a ban on DDT and, over time, the adverse impacts on fish hawks reduced drastically. This began the organization’s efforts to combat climate change. Today, the organization is in China, India, Puerto Rico, and the European Union. Most recently, they helped establish solar power in lower income communities in Puerto Rico.
- He explained that in the past, scientists considered the long term impact of continued carbon dioxide release into the atmosphere but possible alternatives like solar power and wind power were expensive, and public awareness and understanding of the issue was very limited. However, now the issue is in the forefront, science is clear and alternative power solutions are less expensive. The price of solar modules is 85% lower than in 2010 and the cost of wind power has been reduced by 75%.
- It has been observed that electricity generation and transportation are the biggest producers of greenhouse emissions. So globally, electric vehicles are being adopted by many companies, especially for city transportation and delivery vehicles. It was suggested to have special curbside availability and timings for electric delivery trucks in NYC.
- Mr. Darrell then highlighted areas with potential for new inventions, namely in the field of heavy industry. People are experimenting with nuclear fusion to support it. Also forest conservation is being closely monitored. Additionally, many countries in the world produce electricity by burning diesel fuel or coal. It is important to move them towards clean energy.
- He noted that several years ago at the ‘Conference of the Parties’ (COP), held in Paris, all of the attending countries agreed to lower their emissions’ to certain target levels for the first time. This year, at the COP, held in the Middle East, the COP focused its attention on methane gas. He noted that methane leaks during its transportation from the gas fields in Texas to the stove in every

home. Over a 20 year time frame, this methane leakage can be 84% more powerful as a global warming agent than any other. At this conference, all the countries agreed to abide by methane targets.

- (6:48 PM) In NYC, Mr. Darrell noted that the per capita climate footprint is generally good since New Yorkers mainly use public transportation and tend to live in smaller apartments. However, globally, urban areas and cities are producers of 70% of world's climate problems. While New York City's per capita climate outlook is good, we are still a very large city and in that regard, NYC is number one in terms of global climate emissions in the US and third in the world. Energy use by buildings accounts for over 67% of the problem, followed by fossil fueled trucks and cars, in second place accounting for roughly 30% of the emissions. Buildings represent more emissions than trucks and cars combined. While NY has been leading the way in regulations to reduce emissions. EDF has been working with policy makers, engineers and banks to provide financing to buildings to upgrade to cleaner systems in order to reduce their negative emissions.
- (6:52 PM) Mr. Darrell addressed Local Law 97 with respect to existing buildings and explained the flexibility in the law, as greenhouse emissions footprint is calculated by each building and various options are given to improve it. Columbia University, for example, is building a Geo-thermal system and offshore wind energy sites are being identified on Long Island. However, it's not simple to do for each building. He mentioned we should make an overall effort to have green roofs on all the buildings and increased greenery on our sidewalks can positively contribute. He suggested that rooftop solar would be beneficial on top of a warehouse or a house in the suburbs. He suggested that in Manhattan, our most practical and best approach would be to conserve our energy use and reinforce windows of our apartments. Tax credits are available for solar and wind energy for buildings. Individuals may also receive benefits for an electric car purchase.
- (6:54 PM) He noted that our public transportation is the best in the nation, though it may be quicker to walk through the park than take the bus through the park. He mentioned that congestion pricing would provide a \$15 billion infusion into the capital projects for the system. Congestion pricing won't solve the problems but it will help.

At 6:58 PM he took questions from public and board on many of the topics he covered in his presentation, including questions regarding solar, wind energy, Local Law 97 and Congestion Pricing.

2. **Old Business** - None discussed.
3. **New Business** - Alida Camp requested if the Environment Committee could have a joint meeting with the Zoning and Development Committee focused on reviewing the 'City of Yes' proposal to review the adverse environmental impact of the proposal.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:14pm.

Sahar Husain, Addeson Lehv, and Barbara Rudder, Co-Chairs