

Gowanus Canal Community Advisory Group
July 26, 2011 – Meeting Summary

Attending: See Appendix

Jeff Edelstein opened the meeting with a brief agenda outline:

- 1) Committee updates & announcements
- 2) TASC support
- 3) Other business

Announcements

A list of TASC example projects with links to fact sheets was circulated along with brief summaries of current committee discussions including drafted mission statements.

A CAG member distributed copies of the Guide to Green Infrastructure, prepared by the Environmental Finance Center at Syracuse University (efc.syracusecoe.org).

It was announced that the Fortune Society will be administering EPA brownfield redevelopment grants.

A member of FROGG reminded the group of the National Trust for Historic Preservation matching grant that was awarded to advance the creating an Urban Industrial Historic District. The National Register Historic District may be the first Urban Industrial district in the nation. The group has one year to fundraise \$10K and to complete the survey of approximately 400 buildings, features and viewsheds located within the proposed district boundaries.

Committee Updates

Mission Statements

There was a brief discussion of the new requirement that each committee provide a mission statement. The Charter requires the committees to define roles and to describe what a committee does, both internally and externally. The mission statement will help clarify boundaries, to delineate the purviews of each committee for current and future issues. The Water Quality, Administrative and Outreach Committees have formally adopted mission statements, while the Technical Committee and Archeology Committee have draft mission statements. The Real Estate Committee has not yet discussed its mission statement.

There was a motion made to suspend quorum in order to vote on adopting the mission statements of the Water Quality, Admin and Outreach Committees. To suspend quorum a vote of 4/5 was required. With 19 members present, there was a unanimous vote to

suspend quorum, followed by a unanimous vote to adopt the following mission statements:

Administrative: The goal of the Administrative Committee is to ensure that CAG functions efficiently under the rules of the CAG Charter, maintains the appropriate records and reports to and advises the CAG on other administrative issues.

Water Quality: Mission is to identify the community's goals for improving the water quality in the canal and to develop and implement strategies, such as education, advocacy, research, reclassification, and other measures, to achieve those goals.

Outreach: To facilitate the internal and external communications of the CAG.

Administrative Committee

The Administrative Committee is still finalizing the CAG membership list. To date, 43 members have returned the required form, 3 have verbally agreed to do so, and 10 members have not responded. Members of the Administrative Committee reminded the group that there was a 50% participation/attendance requirement for meetings of both the full CAG and at least one committee.

Water Quality Committee

A proposal by the WQ Committee to develop a fact sheet with information pertaining to reclassification of the waterway was introduced. There was some debate regarding whether boat use on the canal should be included. One member pointed to the fact that there may be a need for many different fact sheets – for the different committees or issues. Another member pointed out that the committee may need to formally propose the fact sheet to the full-CAG, as the Charter requires the approval of motions to generate new data.

There was some discussion as to whether the WQ Committee would address active uses, both industrial and recreational along the water, and if so, whether the name of the committee is too limited. Many environmental issues, like air quality, have been picked up by the Technical Committee. However, water quality has been separated as an issue, to allow for more detailed discussion or advocacy. One member suggested forming a use committee, but a hand poll indicated a lack of interest. It was generally agreed that use spans every category and every committee.

Outreach Committee

The need for an Outreach fact sheet was introduced. One member of the Outreach Committee would like this tool for school outreach and curriculum development.

There was a brief introduction to the pilot project that EPA is developing that provides a color-coded chart to explain risk associated with activity along the canal.

Archeology Committee

The walking tour that John Vetter of EPA requested will take place in September, as a meeting of the Archeology Committee. As part of the Feasibility Study (FS), EPA will be examining historic resources that may be impacted by the cleanup activities. The tour will allow the Archeology Committee to identify known historic features and buildings located on land along the canal and to share local expertise with EPA and the contractor hired for this work. CAG members and the public are asked to RSVP if interested in attending, though the committee expects to cap attendance in order for the walking tour to be manageable. Though this tour is land-based, the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance may be able to offer a discounted Working Harbor Tour that explores the waterway for interested CAG members.

Technical Committee

The Technical Committee has not met since June, since the TASC application is uncertain, and the group is also awaiting the September release of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) report. The ATSDR is a federal agency that works with EPA on Superfund sites to create a Human Health Assessment report. In the case of the Gowanus, the report is being prepared by the New York State Department of Health on behalf of the ATSDR. After some discussion about the data collected and the methodology of the agency, Jeff agreed to invite the ATSDR to present to the CAG, once the report is released.

Some questions that came up:

- What methodology was used? What data was collected or analyzed?
- Does the data include pathogens, or is the study only SF-related?

CAG Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP) Sites Resolution

The discussion turned to the EPA review of the DEC remediation plans for the MGPs. Most CAG members at the table expressed little confidence in the DEC plans and began to discuss the jurisdiction that EPA may have over the sites. One member of the CAG asked, can EPA reject the DEC plan if EPA finds it to be insufficient? The group began to contemplate whether to bring a motion forward requesting that the EPA extend the boundaries of the SF site to include the MGPs.

Support for the motion:

- Cleanup will be inadequate if the MGPs are not addressed at this stage
- The remedies proposed by DEC have not changed in 8 years, despite the understanding that earlier cleanups (Lowe's) along the canal have proven inadequate
- In the past the interaction between agencies has failed this community and there is a desire for a single agency to control the entire cleanup

- There is one shot to clean the canal, why have 3 agencies and not one doing the job?
- The community has experienced much better public engagement by EPA and is increasingly frustrated by DEC and DEP
- Having the full weight of a single agency behind the cleanup may streamline the process, which would benefit all.

Issues/Questions that came up:

- EPA's review of proposed plans by DEC may be more rigorous and better oversight might bring a satisfactory outcome. Given that, what is EPA's plan (timing, etc) to back up the promise to enforce the better outcome?
- The MGPs are part of the State SF program. Is this a delegated program? Does EPA have oversight? Can EPA enforce any recommendations made?
- What degree of jurisdiction does EPA currently have?

The group decided to advance a motion from the CAG in support of EPA taking control of the MGP sites.

Two members of the CAG recused themselves (Michelle de la Uz, Andrew Jackson) from voting due to a direct conflict of interest, based on the future development of specific properties. There were 22 CAG members present, and thus 20 were eligible to vote. The group voted unanimously to suspend quorum. The following motion carried with 18 affirmative votes, 1 abstention, 1 opposed:

The Gowanus Canal Community Advisory Group asks EPA to include the upland portions of the 3 Manufactured Gas Plant sites in its Superfund purview.

In discussion following the vote, the member who opposed the motion said they were not prepared to ask EPA to include upland sites without knowing more about what the EPA's review of the DEC clean-up plans would be and the abstention was because the member was concerned that the member organization may not be up to speed on the issue.

Next Steps

A representative of DEC will bring questions regarding the status of the proposed remediation plan for Public Place to Gardiner Cross. He also reported that the agency plans to send a representative to every other meeting of the CAG.

Jeff will convey the MGP motion to EPA. The CAG would like a written response from EPA as well as having Christos Tsiamos attend the September meeting to give a verbal response.

There will be no August meeting of the CAG. The September meeting will include a short presentation by DEP regarding water quality and CSOs, followed by a longer period for open discussion with the CAG.

Natalie Loney of EPA has been provided with the request for TASC support and the EPA will develop a mechanism by which the entire group can weigh in on the type of work that the TASC will complete.

The Administrative Committee is working on a spreadsheet with updated member contact information. Once completed, the social networking tool will go live. This site is not public, but for internal communication only. Rita Miller from the Admin Committee did request that any CAG member concerned with privacy regarding membership and internal communications please email her at this time.

There was a suggestion that the CAG change its name to Argos, the watchdog of Greek mythology.

Appendix 1.

Organizational Members (attendance is indicated by “x”)		
Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce	Lori Raphael, Director of Real Estate and Development	x
Carroll Gardens Coalition for Respectful Development (CORD)	Rita Miller	x
Carroll Gardens Neighborhood Association	Maria Pagano, President	x
Center for Urban Pedagogy	Christine Gaspar, Executive Director	
Citizens of Pozzallo	John Heyer II, Chair, Public Relations Committee	
Cobble Hill Association	Elizabeth O. Velikonja, Executive Board member	
Community Board 6	Craig Hammerman, District Mgr.	
Fifth Avenue Committee	Michelle de la Uz	x
Friends and Residents of Greater Gowanus (FROGG)	Marlene Donnelly	x
Friends of Douglass/Greene Park, Inc.	Maria Pagano, Treasurer	x
Gowanus Canal Community Development Corporation	David Z. Krieger	
Gowanus Canal Conservancy	Hans Hesselein	
Gowanus Dredgers Canoe Club	Ray Howell, Board member	
Gowanus Houses Tenants Association	Marguerite Scott, President	
Gowanus Neighborhood Association/Gowanus-4-Life	Betty Lester	
Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance	Louis Kleinman	x
Park Slope Civic Council	Eric McClure, Trustee	
Park Slope Neighbors	Eric McClure, Campaign Coordinator	
Pratt Center for Community Development	Eve Baron, Senior Fellow for Planning and Policy	
Proteus Gowanus	Angela Kramer Murphy	
Red Hook Civic Association	John McGettrick, Co-chair	x
Red Hook East Tenants Association	Dorothy Shields, President	
Red Hook West Tenants Association	Lillie Marshall, President	
Riverkeeper	Josh Verleun, Staff Attorney	x
Sierra Club	Diane Buxbaum, Chair, Gowanus Canal Committee	x
South Brooklyn Local Development Corporation	Bette Stoltz, Executive Director	x
Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation	Elizabeth Demetriou	x
Urban Divers Estuary Conservancy	Ludger K. Balan, Executive Director	
Wyckoff Gardens Tenants Association/Public Housing Communities, Inc.	Charlene Nimmons, President	

At-Large Members (Attendance is indicated by “x”)			
Brendan Aguayo	Aguayo & Huebener Realty Group	Park Slope	
Jerry Armer	President, 76 th Precinct Community Council, various past affiliations	Cobble Hill	x
Sabine Aronowsky	Videographer, Public Policy student	Boerum Hill	
Lauren Elvers Collins	Former Executive Director, Gowanus Canal Conservancy	Windsor Terrace	
Lucy DeCarlo	CORD	Carroll Gardens	
Anthony Deen	Gowanus by Design	Carroll Gardens	
Eymund Diegel	Various	Gowanus	
Stefan Doering		Gowanus	x
Nathan Elbogen	XO Projects, The Old American Can Factory	Gowanus	x
Lou Femenella	76 th Precinct Community Council attendee	Carroll Gardens	
Emily Guyer	The ELM Group	Park Slope	x
Victoria Hagman	Realty Collective, LLC	Red Hook	
Andrew Jackson	Hudson Company	Gowanus	x
Katia Kelly	Local blog, FROGG, CORD	Carroll Gardens	
Linda LaViolette	Abutting property owner/business/resident, Nicholas Cabrini, Inc.	Gowanus	
Alex Lechich	US Coast Guard	Cobble Hill	
Alphonse Lembo	Monadnock Construction	Gowanus	
Linda Mariano	FROGG	Gowanus	x
Margaret Maugenest	FROGG	Gowanus	
Steve Miller	CB6 committee member, FROGG, CORD, CGNA, Block by Block	Gowanus/Carroll Gardens	x
Linda Mariano	FROGG	Gowanus	x
Abe Naparstek	Homeowner, various	Carroll Gardens	x
Lizzie Olesker	Friends of Bond, FROGG	Carroll Gardens/Gowanus	
Bryan Quinn	Great Ecology and Environment	Park Slope	
Gary Reilly	CB6 Environmental Chair	Carroll Gardens	
Triada Samaras	CORD	Carroll Gardens	
Buddy Scotto	Various	Carroll Gardens	x
Deb Scotto	Clemente Realty	Carroll Gardens	x

Facilitator: Jeff Edelstein

Facilitation Assistant: Beth Bingham