

HRPAC meeting notes
12.13.22
Michael Wiggins

6:02

Tammy asks Dan to start the meeting

Dan lets start with attendance form

- o Thanks to our guests William and Ana
- o Thanks to Michael Wiggins for putting together meeting with Ana
- o Dan hands off to Tammy

Tammy called the meeting to order at 6:04

- o Sign in
- o Any changes to the minutes?
- o Motion to approve the minutes - Tom Fox
- o Seconded by Andrew Zelter
- o Motion passes
- o Agenda items for this evening
- o We have summary from William B. about NY/NJ Army Corps of Engineers Resiliency Study

William Benesch: I am the chair of Environmental Cmte. Community Board 2

- o Many may be deeply familiar with this study
- o Points that are germane to the West Side of Manhattan
- o Relevant points for our region and neighborhood
- o William B. shared screen for presentation
- o Word Doc
- o Background:
- o Study is an Obama administration initiative
- o Study has been going on for 6 years
- o Study was paused during Trump admin and restarted during Biden
- o Links shared in the chat:
- o In water measures
- o \$53 Billion dollar project
- o \$23 Billion non-federal outlay
- o Cost does not include maintenance
- o Resiliency plan goes all the way down to Battery Park
- o Plan includes Flood Walls stretching from Battery Park/Chambers up to 34th Street
- o With deployable barriers along the way that allow for pedestrian and vehicular access
- o Levees are in the plan
- o <https://www.nan.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Projects-in-New-York/New-York-New-Jersey-Harbor-Tributaries-Focus-Area-Feasibility-Study/>
- o https://www.nan.usace.army.mil/Portals/37/Appendix%20B3_TSPPlanSet_HATS.pdf
- o 20 foot flood walls are being proposed
- o For the deployable gates there are few options that allow for pedestrian and vehicular access
- o In terms of the timeline: it was just announced that the public comment period has been extended to March 7th , 2023 (originally it was January 6th)

- Army Corps of engineers is coming to CB 1 on Monday.
- Chief of engineers report and design phase will start in 2024
- Then they will go into the specifics.
- That phase is 6 years – 2030
- Construction Phase 2030-34

Isaac Daniel: “How much did Sandy cost us?”

Noreen: “\$34 million”

Noreen: Your question is apples and oranges because we don’t know how much the inland cost was and this system does not protect Hudson River Park

Isaac D: Not looking forward to 20 foot walls along the park

Dan: There will be a public comment period

Noreen:

We were not consulted.

- William, thank you for doing a fantastic job recapping this.
- Our board is aware.
- It is worth repeating that none of this is engineered yet, none of this is funded yet. Federal funding must be identified for every stage of the project.
- The Corps has to look at the entire issue comprehensively in order to do a proper environmental review.
- We had a conversation with the Mayor’s office, climate Office, which as been listening in the CB2 and CB4 meetings. They encouraged us to include specific things in a comment letter. HRPT is listening (Rashid) has reached out to the Army Corps for our own kind of meeting.
- A park is not just a park, it’s the people who use it and all the other uses, including municipal uses.
- If someone at a high level was looking at a map, it’s our job to provide context for the the wide usage of this area as planning proceeds.

Dan:

- What’s your process?
- What do you see the future look like in terms of HRPT’s participation?

Noreen:

- We will be tracking what all of our Community Boards and businesses feel.
- I don’t think you should expect the trust to come out opposed to this, but we will be asking a lot of questions.
- We understand that respect to something as macro as climate change, we cannot be parochial about our comments.
- Policy makers may decide that the park is sacrificial in some way.
- We will have some questions
- Curious about the carve out for Gansevoort
- We think our job is to make sure decision makers understand what this would do or change in Hudson River Park

William B:

- What we have elected to do at this stage is compile a list of things we think they should be thinking about.

- In terms of process, in terms of engagement, we are trying to list and get it all down. The considerations.
- It's really too early to take a position right now.

Erica Bates: Where would this wall actually live?

William: They have not decided yet. (unclear)

Erica Bates: How do you get through?

William B: Gates. And Rolling gates to come in ahead of a storm event.

Erica Bates: If you build a wall, where does the water go? It's gotta go somewhere.

William B: The Army Corps calls this induced flooding. Water has to go elsewhere. They don't seem to have put an induced flooding measure along the West side, but the Army Corps has looked into it.

Erica Bates: On the west side, when it floods it overwhelms the sewage system. Someone should flag that for them.

Graham:

- I was going to ask about the CSOs
- I don't think pumping would work.
- Concerned about the barrier being higher for Gansevoort. Weird. Noreen, do you have any info on that?

Noreen: We have the same questions.

Graham: Not a lot of space on the West Side. (image of barrier projected on screen) "That's quite a barrier!"

Katy B:

- 32 of my neighbors and I were homeless for a year, after Sandy.
- It cost our coop \$33 million dollars.
- There is a lot of economic need on the inboard side and a lot of need for this protection.
- I want people to understand that it (Hurricane Sandy) affected many people.

Tom Fox:

- Is this an opportunity to bundle a few issues:
- The Estuary
- Resiliency – Future design of the piers, to host marine organisms to
- CSOs – Investment in sewage solutions
- Route 9A – Micro mobility
- Is this an opportunity to put these issues together.
- Maximizing economies of scale working across agencies

Tammy:

- I think that question is unanswerable at this point, and I agree that this is an important conversation.
- And if you ask anyone who lives on Worth street it would be great to get those agencies to work together (street ripped up 3 time by 3 different agencies, same street)
- Army Corps of Engineers will be at the Coast Guard building Thursday 2-4pm and Thursday 6-8pm

Michael Wiggins introduced Ana T fo the High Line Network

Daniel: This is not a one off.

Ana shared her screen to present the High Line Network Equity Toolkits

- I hope the experience we bring to the table will be useful.
- There is no right or wrong way
- Ana has been working in cities for her entire career.
- An intrinsic part of cities are public spaces
- They mean so much to you.
- As fascinating as cities can be, they can generate a real opportunity to come together
- Public spaces have some inequalities
- Access to parks can be unequal
- Decisions made in the past affect public spaces well into the future
- How can we grapple with this fact?
- What you about to see, is our latest research.
- Community Engagement is messy
- We can work around that
- You all know the High Line
- Ana has been with the High Line for 5 years.
- The network is a program of the High Line – A community of infrastructure reuse projects and the staff that make these spaces real.
- The High Line Network represents 36 members and 37 projects
- Not all organizations are well-funded, but all of these are awesome opportunities
- These orgs are redefining public space
- Over the years, the leaders have been convening to share their successes and challenges
- Promoting peer to peer learning
- Over time these leaders realized they were doing innovative work, but they were all having trouble conveying the real impact of the work.
- There was something missing
- They didn't know how to talk about their projects
- So they decided to focus on impacts with an equity lens
- We did it, and realized something was missing.
- We decided to partner with Harvard to help them go deeper into measuring impact.
- Piloted a two year program with the early version of the equity framework
- We learned that there were two things that affected all of us:
- Infrastructural Racism affects our work. Where infrastructure has been built and why it has been put there.
- It's all about the process. This work is too massive to be done alone. We need everyone to be involved.
- How do you get started?
- The Toolkit presents:

- Four areas of work (suggested)
- 18 Tools in 5 sections
- Centering Equity
- You cannot center equity if you don't know your history
- Crafting a theory of change (vision)
- Who do you need to partner with in order to get from point A to point B
- Being strategic about how we partner
- Being strategic about how we outreach
- Maximizing impact
- Empowering Partners
- Creating a workplan
- Identifying a metric for success
- Tracking your work
- Information you are collecting can be used to measure impact
- Tell your story – The challenge and what you are doing to overcome that challenge
- Putting people first
- Serving the needs of the people
- Vision a process that serves the needs of the people
- Partnership is the way to expand

Graham:

- Downtown Boathouse – One of the constraints is physical.
- If everyone wanted to go boating they'd have to wait a thousand years.
- Where in your equity plan do you deal with physical environments.
- We don't want to charge and we don't just want tourists.

Ana:

- There are limitations on the High Line in terms of staff.
- We are always balancing.
- Who do we prioritize?
- Being very laser focused on how you define community and who your immediate stakeholders are is critical.
- What are the needs of the people.
- It's going to require dialogue within your organization.
- Once you understand your connections, it will be easier to make these decisions.
- Opportunities will arise through the dialogue you start to address this question.
- Thinking about engagement as the centerpiece of what you do. If you don't do it well, it will come back. Must figure it out as soon as possible.

Richard Corman:

- Thank you for this.
- An extraordinary amount of work and care and output from the work you have done.
- Shared screen to show photo of the High Line that his brother took decades ago.
- Submitted it to the GVPS and they have that photo and a lot of that documentation.
- Two questions: Of all of this work you have done, can you give us an example?

Ana:

- Yes. Since 2020, the Network has done equity audits.

- Some of these are on our website (resources page)
- The biggest motivation for our members, when we were starting was how to tap into the impact. And if we could do equitable economic development measurement, that would be fantastic.
- Equity based work is context based. (Equal distribution of resources)
- The work should be about the context you are in.
- On the website you will see case studies of orgs that have used the toolkit.
- For instance, in Houston, they did an equity task force of the staff.
- The questions they addressed: “How can we make our processes, and our decision making more transparent?” Are we making these processes transparent enough.
- In some cases, some advisory boards have a specific approach to budgeting that is participatory budgeting.
- Enabling conversations within the community.
- How are we documenting the process so we can look back and reflect.
- Another example, thinking about creating a specific art committee to decide what art work will go into a specific area.
- Organizations can feel fearful about what kind of response they get.
- We are talking about who gets to decide.
- There is no better way of doing any of this work, then talking and asking people what they want. Not being fearful of feedback.

Richard Corman: Have any of your partners/members been at the concept stage for public space development and have these tools been useful for them.

Ana:

- We have a few that are at an earlier stage.
- Most of the tools are tools we tested over the course of a two year pilot.
- We partnered with Harvard and Urban Institute.
- Phase One: Harvard would produce a report on their equitable gap areas, exploring the capacity of the organization.
- Phase Two: Coaching with the Urban Institute.
- We started being more laser focused on the specific challenge each organization had.
- Mostly they wanted to focus on *engagement*, democratizing internal decision making. We were able to start crafting a specific challenge.
- All of the tools came through Harvard’s recommendations or as a reflective output from coaching sessions led by Urban Institute.
- The toolkit was created out of that work and is intended for organizations who don’t have Harvard and the Urban Institute as partners.
- Difficult dialogues. Hard for everybody. Hard for staff.
- It’s a very...it’s always going to be a charged conversation.
- Our biggest question is how can we do this in a way that we can help other orgs do this on their own?

Hector V:

- I am a member of Friends of the High Line.
- It’s been a rich experience. It’s not just me, it’s people from all walks of life.
- They do have a rotating membership.
- They really accept a lot of our input.
- A lot of ideas that you see on the High Line come from Friends of the High Line.

- Outreach to artists will be implemented through the friends.
- It's actively out there and growing every day.
- The High Line has been one of the most powerful neighbors.

Ana: Thank you. It's a lot of work and it takes a lot of people.

Dan Miller: Wrapping up. This is something we will be working on. Maybe dedicating 20 minutes every meeting. I look forward to getting us to a place.

Ana:

- We are going to start a learning program. More info to come. Check out the website and the case studies. <https://toolkit.highlinenetwork.org>
- The Network will be accepting applications for new members:
- https://friendsofthehighline.formstack.com/forms/network_membership_application_2023

7:37 PM

Robert A: Trust Report.

- Highlight Pumpkin Smash was a great event!
- Met with our research and habitat, joined by others including River Keeper. Talked about CSO discharging. Heard from Con Ed and Doctor Wade Gillis. ‘
- Talked about some next steps.
- Water quality dashboard
- Scientific work
- River Project team joined BMCC division of research to talk about research projects and continue building partnership with BMCC and CUNY.
- Working on building similar connections at John Jay.
- On design and construction: Opened Chelsea Waterside Dog Run. Some problems with handles. Please read the report. Tuffy was the first dog to cross the threshold.
- The field should be ready for the spring season.
- Gansevoort is coming along.
- Great view from Little Island and the Whitney
- Tennis courts – waiting for a stretch of good weather to do some striping.
- Science Play area groundbreaking tomorrow (Wednesday 12.14)
- Big step forward with Estuarium
- December 20th presentation to CB 1 Waterfront Parks & Environment
- November 3rd sexual assault in the park

Chris McGann:

- Update
- There was a sexual assault on November 3rd at Pier 45, 5:30 in the morning.
- NYPD has the video footage.
- Early that afternoon, the person was apprehended as he was waiting for a bus out of town.
- Carl Thaner(?)
- March 27th suspect. And also another one in October.
- Cases are being prosecuted by Manhattan Distric Attorney.
- He is apprehended and doesn't look like he will be getting out anytime soon.

- Common Sense Steps for Runners to Follow was posted. Got a lot of positive comments from park visitors.

Robert A:

- 3 horrific incidents in the park, but overall we know the park is safe.
- We joined lower Manhattan's security initiative which gives NYPD access to HRPT cameras. Remember that cameras do not necessarily prevent crime, but they can be very helpful afterward.
- We are talking to experts and identifying places where we can improve lighting in the park.
- Approved an expansion of our camera network.
- Shout out to Safety Committee for November social media runner safety campaign.
- Already marked the calendar for next year, so we can be more on top of it.
- We are preparing our comments on the Battery Park proposal.
- Resiliency Study: Only additional piece I would note: People are the highest priority. The Hudson River Park Act would require an amendment for the plan.
- Boathouse RFP – We have issued an RFP. We have one of the densest free boating programs. We are proud of it.
- We bring in partners to provide these services and we have to have competitive procurement processes

Graham (in the chat): More free boating than every other park in New York City combined.

Robert:

- 7 responses to the boathouse RFP.
- We should have done a better job giving people an opportunity to feedback on the RFP.
- We followed the 2013 process; we would certainly engage folks if we thought there was something we really needed additional comment on.

Tammy says the floor is open for questions.

JLF: How many responses? 20?

Robert A: Seven.

JLF: That's a lot of work for 7 proposals.

Tammy: Any further questions?

None

Tammy: Committees?

Nothing

Dan: We might have some new business.

Tom Fox:

Old business.

DEC and Con Ed discharges.

Wanted to let everyone know that City Club and I are really grateful that the advisory council and community boards weighed in on the issue.

We are satisfied that we have raised public consciousness on the issue and we will not litigate on the issue.

Rob (?):

- Internet is out in the neighborhood.
- Want to talk about the boathouse RFP.
- I am interested in the park defining policy around the launches.
- I know that the friends group received a grant to do some signage, but I think we need a more consistent policy.
- The park is mostly water and it is worth time and thought.
- Now is the time to do this. It's winter. Robert I am really confused about who you work for, the Friends or the Trust. I think there has to be an agreement that we are going to do this. Talk about it...how other parks do it...

Noreen:

- Happy to do that.
- We have had this discussion before.
- We are not ignoring it.
- I'm happy to engage in this conversation, again.
- The water trail idea and the greenway trail ideas are bigger than Hudson River Park.

Rob(?): I want a date for when we are going to talk about it.

Robert A: All of our boat launches are designated as public boat launches.

Rob (?): Under fairly restrictive conditions

Tammy: We will get a date for this conversation.

Rob Pirani: Is there a plan to present those plans to this committee?

Noreen: There are no plans.

Robert A: We will introduce our design team to Community Board 1. Robust process. Talking about hopes and dreams. We just signed the contract. We have had one meeting.

8:03 PM Tammy moves to adjourn

Dan seconds the motion to adjourn.

Meeting called at 8:03 PM

