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PUBLIC HEARING

On the

JAMAICA BAY WATERSHED

PROTECTION PLAN

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94-20 Guy R. Brewer Blvd.  
Jamaica, New York

February 9, 2006  
6:15 p.m.

Reported by: DAWN ANATRA

## A P P E A R A N C E S:

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION and JAMAICA  
BAY WATERSHED PROTECTION PLAN  
COMMITTEE

BY: ANGELA LICATA, Deputy

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT of  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

BY: JOHN McLAUGHLIN

JAMAICA BAY WATERSHED PROTECTION  
PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BY: BRAD SEWELL

1 **MS. LICATA:**

2 My name is Angela Licata. I'm a Deputy  
3 Commissioner for New York City  
4 Department of Environmental Protection  
5 and we are working very diligently on  
6 what we came to present to you tonight,  
7 the beginning of our Watershed  
8 Protection Plan for Jamaica Bay. And we  
9 are going to have a number of presenters  
10 tonight to explain the purpose of the  
11 meeting, so I don't want to detract from  
12 any of that, but I would like to simply  
13 open by stating that it is very  
14 important to me and to my colleagues at  
15 the department, as well as to our  
16 Commissioner, Emily Lloyd, that we make  
17 this process for watershed planning a  
18 very collaborative effort. And that's  
19 why very early on in the process, we've  
20 come to the community to get your input  
21 into this planning process.

22

23 Now, we don't expect that all of you  
24 will be, at this juncture in time, ready

1 and willing to provide us with comments  
2 that we asked about the process. So  
3 what we intend to do is to come back to  
4 you a few times, then have an iterative  
5 responsive planning process where we can  
6 incorporate your concerns as we all  
7 learn more together about the  
8 impairments or the concerns and issues  
9 that are affecting Jamaica Bay. And  
10 that is truly the intent of tonight's  
11 meeting as the underlying intent of the  
12 Watershed Protection Plan which is to  
13 ensure the productivity and  
14 sustainability of Jamaica Bay and to  
15 speak about what issues and what sort of  
16 a purchase we can take, maintenance,  
17 watershed to ensure its brighter future.

18  
19 Jamaica Bay obviously is truly a  
20 crowning jewel in New York City's  
21 environment and its protection is a  
22 really worthy effort. So, at the  
23 current time I'd like to -- oh, remind  
24 you of a few housekeeping items.

1

2 If people would just sign in on the  
3 attendance sheet or if they would like  
4 to speak, on the speaker's sheet, then  
5 we will ensure that we get you a  
6 transcript of tonight's meeting so that  
7 you'll have a record of the proceedings.

8

9 John McLaughlin is going to take us  
10 through a little bit more in terms of  
11 introduction.

12

13 **MR. McLAUGHLIN:**

14 I guess we should just introduce some  
15 people at the table over here. It's  
16 Doug Rely (phonetic), he's the Deputy  
17 Commissioner for Water and Sewer  
18 Operations. And Brad Sewell from NRDC  
19 is a member of the advisory committee.  
20 Also I'll introduce the rest of the  
21 advisory committee. Doug Adamo from  
22 National Park Service, Manny Caughman,  
23 Chris Zeppie, Dan Mundy, and Len  
24 Houston.

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I just hope you've had a chance to look at some of the posters in the back before going through this and if you also had a chance to go over the local law in some detail. We will try to give you a very quick summary of it now.

Primarily what it does is it establishes a pathway towards restoring and maintaining the water quality and the ecological integrity of the bay, something that's been long overdue. And that local law then charges DEP to develop a comprehensive watershed protection plan in consultation with the advisory committee.

I just want to say why Jamaica Bay is important. It's a very critical ecological habitat and I just want to give a couple of reasons why I think it's important. It provides an important ecological, cultural,

1 recreational asset in a highly urbanized  
2 area, even though it's relatively small  
3 geographically, it has many diverse  
4 habitats. It contains salt marsh, also  
5 grasslands, woodlands, maritime shrub  
6 lands, and brackish and freshwater  
7 wetlands.

8  
9 There's sufficient nursery for about 81  
10 different fish species. It's a prime  
11 migratory route along the Atlantic  
12 Coastal flyway and it's a renowned  
13 herding location with 325 bird species  
14 recorded and about 62 confirmed breeds.

15  
16 It's also a dry habitat for reptiles and  
17 amphibians, and small butterflies.

18 There's actually 54 species of  
19 butterflies that utilize some portion of  
20 the bay.

21  
22 Other reasons why it's important: it  
23 provides local marine research and acts  
24 as an outdoor classroom, provides --

1 perhaps this is the engineering side,  
2 provides flood control and protection  
3 against storm surges and protects the  
4 infrastructure. It's also a national  
5 pollution attenuator. And throughout  
6 the watershed it supports populations of  
7 about 214 threatened rare or endangered  
8 species, both flora and fauna.

9  
10 Let's go through some quick summaries of  
11 local law. One of the tenants of it is  
12 restore and maintain the water quality  
13 and ecological integrity of the bay, and  
14 to do that, we'll assess the technical,  
15 legal environmental economic feasibility  
16 of the following: We will look at some  
17 BMP's within the watershed to minimize  
18 soil erosion, control saltwater runoff  
19 and also check on non-point and point  
20 source pollution, addressing threats to  
21 the aquatic habitat. Part of the things  
22 we will also be looking at is land  
23 acquisition. There is a map at the back  
24 that lists vacant property that's both



1 public and privately held. The scale of  
2 the map makes it very difficult to see  
3 how much is available. But there's a  
4 small window we'll show you that some of  
5 the parcels are very close together, and  
6 with those closer parcels perhaps  
7 something can be done.

8

9 Greater coordination between regulatory  
10 agencies that have control over the bay  
11 is needed. There are many federal,  
12 state, local entities that have some  
13 jurisdiction over the bay, but sometimes  
14 we don't really work very well together.

15

16 Develop a protocol for coordination with  
17 the New York City Offices of  
18 Environmental Coordination, develop a  
19 public education and environmental  
20 awareness program and a program to talk  
21 about existing regulations or modify  
22 those to make those more efficient. And  
23 then there are some problems that occur  
24 in the bay. We have seasonal low

1 dissolving oxygen levels at select  
2 locations. That's primarily in the back  
3 of the bay closest to the airport. The  
4 shoreline contains degraded and  
5 disturbed public habitats. And the key  
6 factor, the reason for local law is the  
7 loss of wetlands within the bay.

8 Historically there are about maybe  
9 16,000 acres, Dan maybe you can confirm  
10 that. Of that 16,000, about 14,000 has  
11 been failing over the past 200 years.

12

13 I mentioned that agency jurisdictional  
14 coordination. Part of the problem with  
15 the bay also is limited public access.  
16 We'd like to look at that. The Belt  
17 Parkway in effect may as well be a fence  
18 or a wall because you can't get to the  
19 bay. And also there's been limited  
20 promotion and public education about the  
21 bay. We'd like to increase that.

22 That's all things we can look at. The  
23 obvious one is public restoration. Look  
24 at some shoreline and habitat

1 preservation. I mentioned land  
2 acquisition. A key thing is major  
3 species control, large portions of the  
4 bay, since it does have construction  
5 filters on soils, it may have a model  
6 stand for either fragmities or above-  
7 water Japanese knotweed which can spread  
8 to other regions of the bay. Slow water  
9 management support, it's important to  
10 mention that. Maybe Doug could talk to  
11 you a little about some of the capital  
12 improvements being done to the sewer  
13 system within the watershed and also  
14 construction of CS sub tanks is going to  
15 be built at Padigan.

16

17 Some things we're looking at is if  
18 there's ways to increase circulation  
19 within the bay. We're kind of limited  
20 with that, since that may require  
21 substantial effort to try to increase  
22 that and eventually the greater  
23 regulatory intervention and interagency  
24 coordination and substantial public

1 education program.

2

3 Some of the things we are doing now,  
4 comprehensive water quality plan to  
5 reduce nitrogen at the four plants have  
6 discharged into the bay. Two are being  
7 upgraded 26th Ward and Jamaica. I  
8 mentioned combined sewer overflow, at  
9 basin tank. I believe that's a 45  
10 million gallon tank that will ease some  
11 CSO vents. We have a floodables  
12 program, catch status; the catch basins  
13 within the watershed will have a hood to  
14 prevent that from getting into the water  
15 body in the first place. And then we're  
16 also a cost-sharing partner with the  
17 Army Corps on some large projects within  
18 the bay under a program called JPER.

19 It's not just us doing work in the  
20 bay, there's many other entities  
21 evaluating, restoring and looking at  
22 various things within the bay. They  
23 include the Army Corps, the National  
24 Park Service, Department of City

1 Planning, and Department of City Parks &  
2 Recreation. There's also Jamaica Bay  
3 Task Force, local elected officials and  
4 others. I don't know if Barbara Brown  
5 is here. She's from Queens Alliance,  
6 this evening, but she's also very key in  
7 this. Her group is trying to restore a  
8 portion of Ottawa Park which is the  
9 headwaters of the bay, which are  
10 extremely critical to the overall health  
11 of the bay.

12

13 This is a repeat of what I just  
14 mentioned, but there are other agencies,  
15 Department of Health & Mental Hygiene,  
16 Department of State, DEC and other  
17 environmental agencies having  
18 jurisdiction of the bay, EPA, Official  
19 Wildlife Service, and the National  
20 Marines Fishery Service. That's a quick  
21 summary. I'll turn it over to Brad.

22

23 **MR. SEWELL:**

24 Thanks, John.

1  
2 I've got the honor of being up here  
3 representing the advisory committee for  
4 the Jamaica Bay Watershed Protection  
5 Plan. This advisory committee is  
6 creature of the local law that is  
7 requiring this plan to be developed. It  
8 set this advisory committee to do  
9 exactly what it suggests, to advise and  
10 consult with DEP for the purposes of  
11 developing the best possible plan and  
12 one that really came out of that  
13 consisted of public involvement in the  
14 maximum range and depth of the expertise  
15 as possible. So, who's on the Jamaica  
16 Bay Advisory Committee, we're going to  
17 talk about? What will the Jamaica Bay  
18 Advisory Committee do? What's our work  
19 plan? That is how you all can get  
20 involved in this effort, right now on an  
21 ongoing basis, through the next few  
22 months and then in the months and years  
23 after that. So first, who's on the  
24 advisory committee? I actually want to

1 ask the committee members to introduce  
2 themselves again. We have someone come  
3 in, everyone has to  
4 identify who they're with and then  
5 there's additional information, far too  
6 much information, I'm sure, in the back  
7 in a handout with some background  
8 information on who each of us are and  
9 who we work for. I think it's what our  
10 background is that's relevant to this  
11 effort.

12

13 So, Doug, want to kick it off?

14

15 **MR. ADAMO:**

16 I'm Doug Adamo, Chief of National  
17 Resources at Gateway National Recreation  
18 Area, National Park Service.

19

20 **MR. CAUGHMAN:**

21 Manny Caughman, Community Board 12,  
22 community activist.

23

24 **MR. ZEPPIE:**

1 I'm Chris Zeppie, Director of  
2 Environmental Focus for the Port  
3 Authority of New York/New Jersey.

4  
5 **MR. MUNDY:**

6 Dan Mundy from Jamaica Bay Eco Watchers.

7  
8 **MR. HOUSTON:**

9 Hi, my name is Len Houston. I am Chief  
10 of the Environmental Analysis branch at  
11 the US Army Corps of Engineers, New York  
12 District office.

13  
14 **MR. SWANSON:**

15 Larry Swanson, Associate Dean of the  
16 Marine Sciences Research Center, Stony  
17 Brook University.

18  
19 **MR. SEWELL:**

20 As I said, the local law is what set up  
21 the advisory committee, and pursuant to  
22 the local law we have some very specific  
23 facts, and again, as I noted a few  
24 minutes ago, we're to provide advice on



1 an ongoing basis and we're also  
2 specifically to provide recommendations  
3 for what's to begin, the final plans  
4 developed by DEP, and that's submitted  
5 to the council. So, again, then the  
6 plan, it's a requirement again under the  
7 local law to include a DEP response to  
8 the advisory committee's  
9 recommendations, and then our term ends  
10 three months after the plan is  
11 completed.

12  
13 So, areas for committee recommendations  
14 pretty much track what is supposed to be  
15 in the plan and what's already been gone  
16 over. We are supposed to provide  
17 recommendations on specific goals for  
18 restoring and maintaining the bay. The  
19 boundaries for the plan, then the  
20 measures to include in the plan, and  
21 John ran through these, and it's  
22 everything from different ways of  
23 controlling storm water -- storm water  
24 and problems associated with storm

1 water, together with effluent from the  
2 storm water treatment plants are primary  
3 problems in terms of the bay's water  
4 quality and some different ways of  
5 dealing with storm water and different  
6 ways of dealing with development  
7 planning, including land acquisition and  
8 then a number of processes ranging from  
9 public education to different  
10 coordination and enforcement protocols.  
11 And then we would have to look at the  
12 feasibility of these measures and  
13 actually inform our recommendations and  
14 then finally, to provide a schedule,  
15 give recommendations concerning the  
16 schedule for the plan, everything from  
17 interim to final milestones for what the  
18 plan should accomplish to schedules for  
19 implementation of specific measures and  
20 then finally some way of recommendations  
21 concerning how to figure out if we're  
22 making progress or not, so, sort of  
23 monitoring methodology.  
24

1 Now, you want a goal as being obviously  
2 cooperative, but also independent from  
3 DEP. We would like to think that we are  
4 going to try to promote new approaches  
5 in areas that maybe fall outside the  
6 traditional things that DEP and the  
7 other agencies have been able to do,  
8 such as, sewage reduction and  
9 development of environmental controls.  
10 Would represent the views of multiple  
11 agencies, such as those that John  
12 mentioned and that are represented at  
13 the table, and then also the members of  
14 the public, and to serve you and then  
15 also serve in addition as sort of a  
16 larger resource for you in terms of  
17 questions about the plan and obviously  
18 provide input into the plan. Now,  
19 important dates coming up, in addition  
20 to this round of public meetings that  
21 we've concluded tonight, we're going to  
22 have additional public meetings  
23 significantly later in the process once  
24 we have a draft put together. Then

1 July, July 1st, under the local law, we  
2 submit our recommendations to DEP and  
3 the City Council. And then DEP will  
4 take those recommendations from there.  
5 Obviously there's going to be a lot of  
6 back and forth before that, but -- then  
7 DEP takes a final step in September and  
8 they submit their plan and then on an  
9 ongoing basis after that, there is  
10 reporting requirements by the local laws  
11 to see how the plan is doing. Now,  
12 what's our work plan, we're doing public  
13 outreach meetings now, were developing a  
14 preliminary draft of our various  
15 recommendations and identifying  
16 outstanding information needs and then  
17 in March, April we'll conduct some  
18 workshops to try to fill these  
19 outstanding information needs and then  
20 in May we're going to complete our draft  
21 recommendations, take more public  
22 comments and then finalize the  
23 recommendations in June and wrap it up  
24 by July 1.

1  
2 And how you all can get involved is the  
3 most important part. Fill out a comment  
4 sheet tonight and anytime you want to  
5 submit a comment, suggestion,  
6 recommendation, issue, concern, you can  
7 get it to us. There's a web site that  
8 we have set up, which is listed here.  
9 And there are copies of this  
10 presentation in the back of the web  
11 site. That way, so you can get updates  
12 and meeting announcements along with  
13 contact information. By going to the  
14 web site you can attend public outreach  
15 meetings that will come later on.  
16 Encourage others to get involved. And  
17 if you want to send any specific plan  
18 suggestions, you can use me as a point  
19 of contact for the whole advisory  
20 committee and my address is listed. And  
21 that's it. So, thank you all for coming  
22 out again. And I think we're now going  
23 to take a couple of comments.  
24

1 Dan, do you want to run this part?

2

3 **MR. MUNDY:**

4 Thanks, Brad.

5

6 First, I'd like to acknowledge that some  
7 elected officials or representatives  
8 that are elected officials are here  
9 today and we thank them for attending.  
10 We have representatives from the State  
11 Senate in Malcolm Smith's office,  
12 Senator Maltese, a council member from  
13 William Lloyd Comrie's office, from  
14 Assemblywoman Cook's office and from  
15 Councilman Jim Gennaro's office, and  
16 Queensboro President Helen Marshall's  
17 office. We thank you for attending.  
18 If anybody else came in after the sign-  
19 in sheet, I'm sorry I didn't have them,  
20 but you come up to me, I will get your  
21 announcement in before the end of the  
22 meeting. Thank you.

23

24

1 **MR. MUNDY:**

2 We have nine sign-ins and we would like  
3 to limit the talk to about approximately  
4 three minutes for each individual, so  
5 that everybody has an opportunity to  
6 speak tonight. So we would like you to  
7 close up when I walk up to the podium if  
8 your time is nearing.

9

10 There are four different sign-in sheets.  
11 I don't remember which one was first.  
12 I'm just going to take them in the order  
13 in which the sheets were given to me.

14

15 We have William Nelson.

16

17 **WILLIAM NELSON:**

18 Good evening everyone. My name is  
19 William Nelson. I actually had prepared  
20 some testimony and I'll hand this to the  
21 committee for a record, but I just want  
22 to touch on certain points. In looking  
23 at the presentation, I noticed that  
24 there were certain priority issues that

1 are established by the committee, one  
2 being, providing some access to the bay  
3 and some educational opportunities of  
4 the bay. Manny Caughman, who actually  
5 sits on Southern Queens Park  
6 Association's advisory board, knows that  
7 we've been working for several years,  
8 about five years through a Department of  
9 State grant to put together a study on  
10 how we can provide access on the bay.  
11 For years, Southern Queens Park  
12 Association, through a summer day camp  
13 has thousands of youngsters to the bay  
14 and you know, we found that to our  
15 dismay, you know, garbage being dumped  
16 in the bay and a whole lot of problems  
17 and issues here, and obviously we  
18 believe that if we opened up the bay and  
19 acquire some of those sites for, you  
20 know, for public use and park use, that  
21 we become sort of an ecological buffer  
22 and it would enable us to teach  
23 youngsters and adults about the beauty  
24 of the bay and not just, you know, what



1 we see there now and all the dumping  
2 that's occurring. So, I'm actually not  
3 going to take up too much time because I  
4 do have another engagement, but more  
5 detailed statements are what I handed to  
6 the committee and actually we are  
7 releasing our draft plan within the next  
8 few weeks and we want to share that with  
9 everyone when it comes out. So, thank  
10 you and I appreciate the time.

11

12 **MR. MUNDY:**

13 Thank you. I also have been handed a  
14 sheet saying that we have a  
15 representative of Senator Ada Smith in  
16 the audience, and we again thank you for  
17 attendance and participation in this  
18 event.

19

20 The next speaker we have is Michael --  
21 it looks like it says, Michael Greene;  
22 is it? I might be pronouncing it wrong.

23 **MICHAEL GREENE:**

24 I really did not expect to be speaking

1 so early. I made sure to sign up kind  
2 of late on the list but then it got  
3 shuffled. I didn't have it all  
4 prepared. I guess there are a couple of  
5 things that came to mind that I would  
6 like to say to this group. First of  
7 all, what a great turnout. This is a  
8 lot of people. I was very impressed  
9 with the information in the back that  
10 was displayed for the public. I thought  
11 that was really a good clear job. I  
12 learned I didn't know about the issue  
13 and was able to learn quite a lot about  
14 it just by being in the back looking at  
15 the maps and talking with people. So  
16 that was really also good. I appreciate  
17 the tone. It's really nice when a  
18 government organization gets up there  
19 and shows you that they really do want  
20 input. I mean, for me, that's what I'm  
21 getting from this whole experience. I'm  
22 very happy about that.

23

24 All those are great things. It looks

1 like a very exciting project beyond -- I  
2 mean, both for the protection of Jamaica  
3 Bay and for the possibilities of being  
4 kind of a broader impact within the  
5 neighboring communities. I thought that  
6 one of the most exciting things was  
7 about the vacant land that you were  
8 identifying and how that could be  
9 integrated in some general ecological  
10 matter to support the work that we're  
11 doing. We are looking at it as an  
12 ecosystem in New York City. I mean, in  
13 a part of New York City, this is the  
14 very advance concept. So that's  
15 exciting.

16  
17 One of the other ideas also was about  
18 how storm water, for example, one of the  
19 things perhaps that people might not  
20 know, is that with our sewer system --  
21 excuse me, the reason I know this is I'm  
22 the chair of a different DEP citizens  
23 advisory committee which looks at the  
24 sewer plants and the sewer systems that

1 tries to reduce pollution that goes into  
2 those plants, therefore, having a good  
3 impact on the waterway. And, what it's  
4 very nice to see as well, is people  
5 looking at what can be done here to  
6 reduce the amount of runoff, rainwater  
7 runoff that goes into the sewer system  
8 and causes it to overflow, and instead  
9 perhaps, be able to bring it into the  
10 bay, perhaps directly or you know, not  
11 having to join the sewer system  
12 essentially. That was one of the ideas.

13

14 What this also means, in order to do  
15 that was, is you want to have a plan  
16 whereby pollution is not getting into  
17 the storm water that easily, through the  
18 ground, stuff that people leave around.  
19 I mean, for example a used car or cars  
20 or just anything, that oil is getting in  
21 or different types of pollution. So it  
22 also brings to mind other issues that  
23 are of an environmental nature with the  
24 whole community. So that was something

1 that would seem to me that there's going  
2 to have to be a lot of efforts like  
3 that. That the DEP or different  
4 committees, we are working on that right  
5 now, so hopefully, we will be able to  
6 work with you and assist that.

7  
8 The other thing that struck me was that  
9 I think I saw 10 or 12 different  
10 government agencies that were listed as  
11 far as where there was some  
12 jurisdiction. That's a tremendous  
13 amount and I would wish you good luck to  
14 working with all those agencies because  
15 that would be, as we know, one of the  
16 most difficult parts of the project. I  
17 would suggest early-on to have, perhaps  
18 a group with the agencies. Kind of an  
19 early task force trying to get people so  
20 that they start getting to know each  
21 other, who are the principal players  
22 from the agencies, and just open lines  
23 of communication, so that could be a  
24 little smoother as we move forward. So

1 that's it.

2

3 And the only other thing I didn't see  
4 with the CAC and it looks like a very  
5 strong CAC, I didn't see anything about  
6 if people want to join the CAC on a more  
7 regular basis, and I was hoping that  
8 perhaps, I don't know if you have  
9 elections every year or two years or  
10 anything like that, but I would imagine  
11 this is going to be a long-term project  
12 and then you're going to want people  
13 involved on that kind of a level. So, I  
14 hope that's true too. Thank you.

15

16 **MR. MUNDY:**

17 Next on the list we have Erik Baard.  
18 Erik.

19

20 **ERIK BAARD:**

21 I'll just hit four things in kind of a  
22 bullet point fashion and if any of them  
23 appeal to you, just come up to me  
24 afterwards.

1  
2 I'm with the Citizens for New York City  
3 and we're a neighborhood improvement  
4 organization since '75 with the  
5 environmental program. We had a few  
6 things. The first thing is we're making  
7 Jamaica Bay a priority area for the  
8 summer of 2006 and hopefully for a few  
9 more years. And what that means is we  
10 will be trying to steer grants towards  
11 that area. There are small grants for  
12 little volunteer organizations on the  
13 neighborhood level. But one of our  
14 priorities is water access, getting  
15 paddle boats or rowboats onto the water  
16 in Jamaica Bay, and therefore building  
17 an environmental constituency, getting  
18 them on the water then they start caring  
19 about it through that connection.  
20 Towards the end, we're looking at maybe  
21 trying to coordinate an event on  
22 September 9th with kayakers, bikers, and  
23 hikers all converging on the greenhouse  
24 at Floyd Bennett Field. so you have all

1 these people arriving through the bay,  
2 working and doing volunteer work in the  
3 greenhouse, and those plants themselves  
4 may be planted in the bay and also in  
5 public spaces throughout the City. So,  
6 September 9, we're going for, it just  
7 happens to be that's when the water  
8 temperatures are good, the air  
9 temperatures aren't too brutal, and the  
10 current works so that the people from  
11 the Canoe Club don't have to work so  
12 hard to get there.

13

14 The last thing for the citizens is that  
15 we're working maybe to create a thing  
16 called naturecalendar.org. We bought  
17 the domain and we're looking to build an  
18 online kind of a seasonal rhythms for  
19 New York, so that anyone can look at a  
20 calendar online and know what's going on  
21 in nature within the five boroughs that  
22 weekend or you put your ZIP code in and  
23 find out what's going on in your  
24 neighborhood, put in birds, you know as



1 a category, see what's going on with  
2 birds or just pick a day and see what's  
3 happening anywhere in the City on that  
4 day, that might be interesting for you  
5 if you just want to go out. So, our  
6 goal is that things that are going on in  
7 nature would be as reliably listed as,  
8 you know, Opera and baseball seasons.

9  
10 So, those are the three things I wanted  
11 to let you guys know about and you can  
12 always come up to me afterwards and I'll  
13 give you my card and propagandize you  
14 further. And then just as a volunteer,  
15 I got into this by starting a community  
16 boathouse on the East River, so I do  
17 have some experience in this matter for  
18 people who would want to start boating  
19 programs in Jamaica Bay. I've got my  
20 little cards out there about the Long  
21 Island City Community Boathouse, if  
22 you're curious about that. And so,  
23 there are some firsthand practical  
24 experiences so you don't make my

1 mistakes. Thank you.

2

3 **MR. MUNDY:**

4 Number five, we have Paul Maukiewg.

5

6 **PAUL MAUKIEWG:**

7 Thanks, Dan.

8

9 I just wanted to talk about a plan  
10 because unless you plan for a watershed,  
11 you can't possibly maintain or protect  
12 the resource. And this is one of the  
13 most important resources on the earth.  
14 It's the stopping place for hundreds of  
15 species, literally multiple thousands of  
16 birds and literally connects the tropics  
17 with the far North with habitat;  
18 otherwise it would not be here. It was  
19 like really even Nassau County. But  
20 then, I just wanted to say, in  
21 protecting the watershed and attempting  
22 to look at the whole bay, we have really  
23 a spectacular opportunity because, as  
24 you know, in some parts of Brooklyn and

1 Queens you have flooding. In other  
2 areas we have trees dying when you've  
3 had droughts. The vegetation literally  
4 regulates the water table. That's what  
5 makes it go up and down, and it's the  
6 soil that actually is able to hold it,  
7 and DEP has a great structure, 45  
8 million gallons that it can capture.  
9 It's about an inch of water over two and  
10 a half square miles, but really, there's  
11 about 50 times that much space in the  
12 sands and the glacial material right  
13 under the top three feet of the  
14 watershed. And the cost of catching  
15 water and putting it into the ground, as  
16 the Parks Department has showed in  
17 Seattle, it's very much lower than  
18 pouring concrete. And if you remember  
19 the hot summer days, the main coolant  
20 here is water. A tree can evaporate  
21 literally thousands of gallons of water  
22 a day and every gram of water takes with  
23 it 500 calories and basically cools the  
24 landscape. So, my encouragement to this

1 process is only to try to literally make  
2 the properties much more valuable by  
3 catching water on the streets like  
4 they've done in the Seattle Sea Street  
5 program, by literally making green  
6 street parks and park land throughout  
7 the landscapes. In areas where there's  
8 flooding, it will actually get rid of  
9 the water. If you have good maples or  
10 pine trees that can actually do that  
11 kind of work. In other areas you can  
12 capture sometimes literally tens of  
13 gallons of water for 2 square feet of  
14 land.

15  
16 Another side that I just want to address  
17 quickly is, the bay itself is a great  
18 resource because it works to filter and  
19 I think we need to see how the bay is  
20 being made to behave like it did really  
21 a relatively short time ago before they  
22 dug the deep holes to create Kennedy  
23 Airport and Floyd Bennett Field. The  
24 bay probably filtered itself with

1 oysters, with muscles, with clams, about  
2 once a day or once every few days. I  
3 know this is one thing that DEP is  
4 looking into with this process that  
5 would be made to encourage this  
6 altogether. Because those creatures  
7 actually cost virtually nothing. But  
8 literally an acre of salt marsh can take  
9 out literally hundreds of pounds of --  
10 40 pounds of nitrate each year and  
11 hundreds, if you count what's stored  
12 below the marsh itself. So the uplands  
13 catches the water and the marshes  
14 itself, the oysters, the muscles, the  
15 clams can actually do the filter work  
16 and I hope that besides the -- I know  
17 that besides the concrete  
18 infrastructure, we'll look at the  
19 natural systems that have the method of  
20 supporting the rest of us as well.  
21 Thank you.

22

23

24 **MR. MUNDY:**

1 Thank you, Paul.

2

3 I could go on at this time, but if I  
4 didn't introduce and have him come up  
5 and say a few words, the gentleman that  
6 is responsible for us being here. The  
7 councilman who held the public hearings  
8 for the last four years from his  
9 oversight committee environmental chair,  
10 and introduce Local Law Number 71 and  
11 had it to follow-through till it was  
12 passed and that's the reason why we're  
13 sitting here tonight. James F. Gennaro,  
14 Councilman, would you please come up  
15 here, sir?

16

17 **COUNCILMAN JAMES F. GENNARO:**

18 Good evening. Thank you for being here  
19 in such great numbers to work on what we  
20 all know is a very important thing, to  
21 bring this bay back to health. I thank  
22 Dan for his gracious introduction and  
23 for your 40, 50 years or whatever of  
24 advocacy for the bay, whatever, and

1 everyone who has been so involved in  
2 representing all these great  
3 organizations that are going to come  
4 together to do the great work that has  
5 to be done. I'm the chairman. I get  
6 some of the credit or whatever, but I've  
7 been really inspired by people like, you  
8 know, Larry Swanson, who taught me when  
9 I was undergraduate at Stony Brook in  
10 the environmental community, Paul  
11 Maukiewicz, another great friend and all  
12 the great folks at DEP that really, you  
13 know, got me going on this issue, so I  
14 thank you. I thank all of you. This is  
15 a great opportunity to orchestrate a  
16 very, very special plan. Not just  
17 another plan, but a very, very special  
18 plan that would be the blueprint for the  
19 saving of this bay. And also it's my  
20 hope, a paradigm for other threatened  
21 waterways. I don't want to take away  
22 from the substance of the evening by  
23 going on to all the political blather  
24 and you know, gushing, whatever. But I

1 am very exciting about the fact that so  
2 many people are coming together for this  
3 process and I'm very confident that we  
4 are going to have a really excellent  
5 plan that I promise to find the money  
6 for, okay. So, I do have something to  
7 do with DEP's capital budget, don't I  
8 Doug? Isn't that my job? And I'll  
9 quote from Emily Lloyd right here on  
10 paper. Look at this. What does she  
11 say, right here? I'm very thankful for  
12 the DEP. In particular, Emily Lloyd for  
13 embracing the plan and the advisory  
14 committee and it's a critical role in  
15 crafting this plan. It's particularly  
16 encouraging that Emily Lloyd has stated  
17 that creation of this plan, this  
18 watershed plan, is one of DEP's most  
19 urgent and important projects. That's a  
20 good thing that the Commissioner thinks  
21 that. And I want to thank the Mayor in  
22 a special way for signing this  
23 legislation and having these good folks  
24 from DEP work with us, to the council's



1 appointees, Dan Mundy, Larry Swanson,  
2 one of my early mentors, Brad Sewell,  
3 representing the good folks from NRDC,  
4 and of course, you know the members that  
5 have been put forward by the committee -  
6 - by the Mayor. I don't know them and  
7 I'll -- you know, first name is Doug,  
8 and Len, and Chris and me, my guys. And  
9 so, thank you so much for participating  
10 in this -- in this great work. And one  
11 person also that I really want to thank  
12 in a very, very special way who works  
13 day in and day out on all the great  
14 environmental issues for the committee,  
15 for the council, is my own excellent and  
16 wonderful Chief of Staff, Peter  
17 Washburn. I think we have to give him a  
18 round of applause. He works under the  
19 radar, but I am a success because of him  
20 and all the good work that he comes  
21 forward and does. He's a great  
22 environmentalist in his own right and he  
23 really helped to forge what happened in  
24 the committee, and I owe him a real debt

1 of gratitude as of all of us do for the  
2 wonderful work that's going on here.

3

4 I actually snuck out of an event at  
5 Anton's. Do you know Anton's in Queens  
6 Village, a big political event and  
7 everything, so, so about 20 minutes ago  
8 I said, could you hold my drink for a  
9 minute, I just have to step outside.  
10 The ice cubes are probably melted by  
11 now. Hopefully this person has put the  
12 drink on some table some place. But I  
13 am expected back there, but I really  
14 couldn't miss this wonderful opportunity  
15 to come by and wish this process well  
16 and thank you all in a special way for  
17 all that you're doing, so thank you from  
18 the bottom of my heart.

19

20 Once upon a time I had an environmental  
21 job. I was an environmental policy  
22 advisor to the City Council. It was a  
23 great job. It was wonderful. I got to  
24 go to things like this all the time. I

1 did you know, environmental stuff you  
2 know, twenty-four/seven and now that I'm  
3 Chairman of the committee, I'm running  
4 around to this and that, so I really do  
5 relish the free moments that I actually  
6 get to sort of be an environmentalist  
7 and participate in forums like this.  
8 But I got to go back. Duty calls.  
9 Thank you all, very much. God bless you  
10 all.

11

12 **MR. MUNDY:**

13 Thank you, Councilman Gennaro for those  
14 inspirational words. The DEP, you know,  
15 can't very well get up here and say it,  
16 but I'll reiterate what Jim said, and  
17 that was that the Commissioner, Emily  
18 Lloyd, has been very active with us our  
19 very first meeting on the boat ride that  
20 she attended. It was about four or five  
21 hours, very lengthy. She went all  
22 around the bay with us. She listened to  
23 things that we had to say and she has  
24 been very closely watching this on her

1 end, and we've heard from her a good  
2 number of times and we want to thank her  
3 for that input, and myself, on the  
4 opinion that because of this we're going  
5 to have great cooperation and good team  
6 work on this.

7  
8 The next speaker that we have is  
9 Mickey Cohen. Mickey, would you please  
10 come up here.

11

12 **MICKEY COHEN:**

13 Thank you, Dan.

14 So, I followed Councilman Gennaro up  
15 here this evening and what an honor that  
16 is. Follow him any place, any time,  
17 wherever you want to take me,  
18 Councilman.

19

20 I was present at the September 11 --  
21 January 11th meeting of this advisory  
22 council and there was a young man who  
23 made a comment during this open mic  
24 session and he really stirred up my

1 imagination, as he did the imagination  
2 of many other people present, but he's a  
3 local fishermen and a boatsman, and he  
4 fishes year-round. He reported to this  
5 group, at that time, that he had  
6 observed the Asian Shore crab in Jamaica  
7 Bay sometimes in accumulations in  
8 gatherings of hundreds of crabs and he  
9 was extremely concerned about that  
10 phenomenon. He thought that they might  
11 actually be one of the causative agents  
12 in one of the greatest crisis we are  
13 experiencing in Jamaica Bay. That is  
14 the destruction of the salt marsh and  
15 grass. And as you are very much aware  
16 of, I'm sure various agencies have been  
17 attacking the problem trying to find out  
18 what might be a cause of the depletion  
19 of the salt marsh grasses, not only in  
20 Jamaica Bay, but in salt marshes around  
21 the East Coast. His thought that they  
22 might be eating the marsh grasses is an  
23 extremely important item. Now, there's  
24 no -- he didn't have any proof of that,

1 but this was a suspicion. And I came  
2 home and I immediately got to work  
3 following up on various reports about  
4 Asian Shore crab activities. Would you  
5 believe that there were some 25,000  
6 references to Asian Shore crab on the  
7 web? Now, I can't tell you that I read  
8 all 25,000 of those reports, but I did  
9 spend an inordinate amount of time going  
10 through the reports on various  
11 observations of Shore crab activities,  
12 and I summarized them as best I could.  
13 A summary along with a rather  
14 descriptive illustration is waiting for  
15 you on the back table. If it happens at  
16 all, the issues that I put together for  
17 you, it's just an information sheet. If  
18 they've run out, you can find copies on  
19 this on the American Literal Society web  
20 site, as well as the web site for the  
21 Jamaica Bay Task Force. What I'm hoping  
22 for, is that I'll be able to gather  
23 together a volunteer's group who will be  
24 able to follow some distinct protocols

1 for coming out into the shore of Jamaica  
2 Bay at low tide and counting and  
3 measuring the Shore crab so we can get  
4 an idea of the population.

5  
6 Any kind of information that we gather  
7 is going to be helpful, but we must find  
8 out whether the Shore crabs are indeed  
9 eating the grass. And this could be  
10 done in one of the many local school  
11 laboratories. I went out -- I should  
12 note those of you who live in Howard  
13 Beach or Broad Channel of the Rockaways,  
14 any place around Jamaica Bay, two weeks  
15 ago we had several days of extraordinary  
16 low tide, and I went out on one of those  
17 particularly low tide days to perform a  
18 rather long -- very particularly  
19 transecting right on the spurs that you  
20 walk collecting Green crabs and Asian  
21 Shore crabs. The Shore crabs are out  
22 there at the ratio of about -- the way I  
23 counted them -- it was six Shore crabs  
24 for every four Green crabs. So, many of

1 the references that I've read, mentioned  
2 that the Shore crabs are replacing the  
3 green crabs in their ecological niche.  
4 So there's one little observation that I  
5 made, at least to verify that  
6 information.

7  
8 Will you all please keep an eye on those  
9 web sites? They're mentioned again in  
10 the brochure that's in the back and keep  
11 in touch with me. There's a web site, I  
12 mean an e-mail number that I have.  
13 Please call me if you think that you'd  
14 like to get started with us in the  
15 springtime. This is not going to be  
16 directed completely by me. I hope only  
17 to organize it through the auspices of  
18 the Jamaica Bay Guardian, but I'd like  
19 to get together with those in the  
20 academic circles as well, to figure out  
21 really good sites protocol. Thanks very  
22 much for your time.

23

24 **MR. MUNDY:**



1 Thank you, Mickey. And out of those  
2 25,000, I think about 24,000 and  
3 something, there's a recipe for the  
4 Asian crab for eating them in a soup; am  
5 I right, Mickey?

6

7 **MR. COHEN:**

8 Actually, that's what I thought was the  
9 case. I was looking through these  
10 recipes for Asian Shore crab, didn't  
11 realize that I was looking not through  
12 recipes for Asian Shore crab but an  
13 Asian recipe for crab.

14

15 **MR. MUNDY:**

16 The next speaker we have is Dr. Frans  
17 Vedhagen.

18

19 **DR. FRANS VEDHAGEN:**

20 My name is Dr. Frans Vedhagen. I'm an  
21 environmental or sustained ability  
22 sociologist, and I am speaking here  
23 tonight as the president of SAFE Inc.,  
24 which stands for Sane Aviation for

1 Everyone, which is a coalition of about  
2 24 separate groups around in the  
3 metropolitan area and we are working for  
4 a sustainable, equitable and accountable  
5 aviation industry. And so, I am also  
6 teaching sustainable aviation at the  
7 College of Aeronautics at LaGuardia and  
8 I'm affiliated with the Aviation  
9 Institute here at your college. My  
10 comments are threefold.

11

12 First of all, I want to congratulate the  
13 DEP and the city government for the  
14 process that is being followed here, the  
15 iterative process from the very  
16 beginning because what often happens is  
17 that the scoping process of a project  
18 like this is being done by so-called  
19 technical experts without input from the  
20 community and other stakeholders. So,  
21 congratulations. I'm also very pleased  
22 to see that the DEP takes this very  
23 seriously. They sent two deputy  
24 commissioners to be here, so many people

1 of the staff of the DEP, so I did feel  
2 this is very serious and I congratulate  
3 the DEP and also the Bloomberg  
4 administration for this kind of  
5 initiative.

6  
7 My second comment is a couple of  
8 questions, particularly in terms of the  
9 impact of the airport on Jamaica Bay  
10 watershed. I would like to see that the  
11 project compares the health of Jamaica  
12 Bay with a similar bay, namely, Peconic  
13 Bay, to see in terms of pH levels and  
14 other things. Probably the pH may be  
15 somewhat similar because generally  
16 speaking, saltwater -- I would really  
17 like to see a comparison made in that  
18 regard.

19  
20 The second point, of course, in terms of  
21 the airport, there is the runoff,  
22 particularly, the deicing and the  
23 glycol. I don't know to what extent  
24 there are studies there, but I think

1 it's very important that these studies  
2 are being done and maybe the City may  
3 consider having a deicing shed, like  
4 they have in Paris and other airports,  
5 where they have infrared heat deicing  
6 planes. So, that's an important part.

7  
8 The third one in terms of the airport is  
9 the fuel allowance of the oil depots to  
10 the airport. From a friend of mine in  
11 the National Park Service Headquarters,  
12 I learned that some of those lines are  
13 leaking, and I wondered to what extent  
14 that's true and what kind of studies are  
15 done. So, I think it's very important  
16 that also the health of lines is going  
17 to be included.

18  
19 My last point deals with actually an  
20 increase into the whole process.  
21 Generally I don't volunteer other people  
22 in my organization, but I have one  
23 particular gentleman called John Vasio  
24 (phonetic) who lives near Jamaica Bay

1 and who has been involved for decades in  
2 all kinds of committees in that regard,  
3 that I would like to see that he might  
4 become a part of the advisory committee.  
5 He knows the bay very well. As a matter  
6 of fact, I also know the bay a little  
7 bit out of practical experience because  
8 I used John's place as storage for my  
9 windsurfing board when I was windsurfing  
10 around the whole bay for a year. Not  
11 for the whole year, but during one  
12 particular year.

13

14 And the last point is, in terms of the  
15 planning process, I would like to see  
16 that the whole project is based within  
17 the framework of a value base planning  
18 approach. And what I mean by this, I  
19 can't exactly explain now because time  
20 is not there, but what I can say is  
21 this, I'm heading up a steering  
22 committee in the City to get 100 leaders  
23 in government, business and civil  
24 society together in a consultation where

1 they are going to work on building  
2 sustainable communities, so that is the  
3 whole concept. Some people call it  
4 smart growth, other people, they call it  
5 local attempt 21, and I think I'm going  
6 to input into the planning process of  
7 the project, as a sustainable  
8 sociologist, this particular framework  
9 for consideration of the advisory  
10 committee and also of the DEP.

11

12 So once again, many congratulations. I  
13 think this is an excellent way to start  
14 to have people making input and really  
15 use the resources and the creativity of  
16 people in Queens. Thank you.

17

18 **MR. MUNDY:** Next we have David Burg,  
19 please.

20

21 **DAVID BURG:**

22 Thank you, Dan. Thank you to the  
23 advisory board for heading this  
24 wonderful hearing.

1  
2 I want to say my name is David Burg.  
3 I'm the president of Wild Metro. We are  
4 a nonprofit organization interested in  
5 protecting nature where people live,  
6 protecting nature in metropolitan  
7 regions around the world. With a  
8 headquarters in Manhattan, we're fairly  
9 new. I have a lot of experience in  
10 Jamaica Bay going back for 20 years. I  
11 was president of New York City Audubon  
12 and created a lot of Jamaica Bay  
13 programs. Picked up some of the torch  
14 from the former DEP Commissioner Al  
15 Appleton, who before he was DEP  
16 commissioner, created for the bay  
17 programs for Jamaica Bay when he was  
18 president of the Audubon Society. And,  
19 even before that, my own background with  
20 the bay, my dad grew up in Brooklyn. I  
21 had an aunt who lived in Laurelton, who  
22 I did visit all the time. So, we got to  
23 know the watershed area of the bay from  
24 an early age. It is as people have said

1 today, a very special place and it's a  
2 place that many of us have seen in our  
3 lifetime, lots of change. We don't know  
4 all the courses for the degradation or  
5 the loss of marshes. That's the reason  
6 it's hard to know because you've heard  
7 some of those things tonight. We've  
8 seen the growth of housing, and the  
9 growth of roads, and the growth of  
10 airports, and the change of airports, so  
11 we have a lot of things going on at once  
12 in the bay. I was a professional  
13 naturalist. I also worked in the real  
14 estate field. It's sort of an odd  
15 combination. I think that we need to  
16 have plans. This is the part that I  
17 would really urge the committee, I think  
18 you're very fortunate in having a lot of  
19 people I've worked in a lot of different  
20 capacities, Chris and Len in the harbor  
21 restoration program. I've been  
22 privileged, working in Metro, done some  
23 research and I'm very privileged to work  
24 with Brad on some protection issues in



1 Staten Island. We have a terrific team  
2 here. But I think your hardest part of  
3 this is going to be that you don't want  
4 to do another report. You want to do  
5 something that will have some practical  
6 measures. If you would look and cut to  
7 the chase of what's going to be the most  
8 controversial, it's going to be  
9 development control. And as a former  
10 real estate person, I would like to urge  
11 you to take the position that can try to  
12 reach out to both sides on this issue.  
13 Wild Metro survives on the good graces  
14 of very formidable, very successful real  
15 estate people involved in this  
16 organization. They have proven that you  
17 can protect the environment and have  
18 economic and real estate growth. The  
19 challenge is, you want to do that with  
20 leaving open space, so that means  
21 increasing neighborhood densities. You  
22 get into a lot of other issues that  
23 other New Yorkers know about, the  
24 important traditions, the small

1 distribution of income between  
2 neighborhoods, the racial segregation in  
3 neighborhoods, which I faced as a real  
4 estate person and tried to overcome  
5 without much success. You're going to  
6 have to see it connected to series of  
7 issues that are attacked. One of the  
8 things I've done with Audubon is we  
9 initiated a lawsuit to try to stop the  
10 Gateway Shopping Center. I believe the  
11 best example is the mall opened sprawled  
12 within the City, I think the Audubon  
13 project is a mistake.

14 51 percent of the subsidized housing for  
15 Queens is located in the Rockaways, for  
16 example and I think it was kind of out  
17 of sight, out of mind. I think we need  
18 a more comprehensive approach. How  
19 could you do a combination of regulatory  
20 and economic incentives to get the kind  
21 of city we all want and need? I think  
22 that's going to be a big challenge. And  
23 if I may, one plug. Wild Metro working  
24 with Long Island University is

1 sponsoring a conference on urban ecology  
2 and remodeling. We have one of the  
3 presentations that Russell Burke is  
4 working on is the ecology of Jamaica  
5 Bay. I have brochures here. There's a  
6 little minor e-mail glitch  
7 unfortunately. You have to insert  
8 Brooklyn before LIU. But if you're  
9 interested I'll put this in the back.  
10 Thank you.

11  
12 **MR. MUNDY:** Next we have Carter Craft.

13  
14 **CARTER CRAFT:**

15 Good evening. My name is Carter Craft.  
16 I'm director of the Metropolitan  
17 Waterfront Alliance. We're a coalition  
18 of community based groups in New York  
19 and New Jersey working together for a  
20 better waterfront. I just want to make  
21 a few points.

22  
23 In such a big place as Jamaica Bay, I  
24 think number 1, we should also at the

1 same time think small. And in thinking  
2 small, something I think the task force  
3 should advocate for and does on the  
4 ground level so they keep doing, is to  
5 continue the marsh restoration processes  
6 ongoing and keep working to reduce the  
7 nitrogen. I think we should keep  
8 looking at the runoff from JFK Airport  
9 and how to minimize it. I think we need  
10 out to look at doing small and local  
11 things like introducing oyster colonies,  
12 eelgrass and maybe some underwater reefs  
13 because these sort of small-scale  
14 projects can be great educational  
15 opportunities for young people, for  
16 school groups, for classes; and that's  
17 the constituency that really needs to  
18 get engaged in this process.

19  
20 We also have to recognize, you know, in  
21 the big picture we are the problem with  
22 Jamaica Bay. We eat, we drink, we  
23 flush, we drive, it's our runoff, it's  
24 out litter, it's our consumer

1 preferences and habits. We can't just  
2 find alternative methods for dispersing  
3 the effluent and the runoff. We have to  
4 stop the storm water runoff. If there's  
5 one agency that can look ahead down the  
6 road, just as they looked back 180 years  
7 from the creation of the Manhattan Water  
8 Company, its DEP that can look ahead 180  
9 years from now and maybe this watershed  
10 and sewer shed plant and come up with a  
11 comprehensive green building, porous  
12 painting surfaces throughout the  
13 watershed and sewer shed, so that we  
14 reduce the runoff before it ever becomes  
15 runoff. My feeling is that we can't  
16 engineer in the traditional sense with  
17 concrete and steel our way out of the  
18 problem because the problem being  
19 created is a product of concrete and  
20 steel and runoff and asphalt and  
21 imperfect surfaces. In terms of how the  
22 group is structured, I'd say outreach  
23 involvement also needs to be made  
24 immediately to the Department of

1 Transportation and the Department of  
2 Buildings because it's their agency  
3 processes which widen streets, which  
4 require that parking lots be paved,  
5 which require that buildings have roof  
6 surfaces or allow building surfaces to  
7 have roofs that just run the water off.  
8 As taxpayers we are paying for buildings  
9 and DEP to create and allow all these  
10 new infrastructures that we then expect  
11 DEP to then solve through all the runoff  
12 that we've created through these other  
13 agencies. So, we're using our tax money  
14 on one hand to solve the problem that we  
15 are causing on the other, and that's the  
16 cycle that needs to be broken.

17

18 In looking at transferring City owned  
19 vacant water from parcels, you know, I  
20 say extend that to vacant and City owned  
21 parcels within the whole watershed and  
22 sewer shed or community gardens can be  
23 created in the public parks and empty  
24 spaces.

1  
2 Just sort of the last two points. I  
3 think public access and education is  
4 absolutely critical. Our organization  
5 and in collaboration with the park  
6 restoration program has been doing  
7 inventory of access points in and around  
8 New York City. We found about, I think  
9 between four and 450 thus far, and per  
10 square mile or per linear mile on the  
11 waterfront. Jamaica Bay, I think,  
12 actually has less than a lot of the  
13 other stretches of waterfront in the  
14 City, in terms of places that allow you  
15 to go right down and into the water. In  
16 terms of creating more access to the bay  
17 and getting more young people involved,  
18 we've also got to find ways to create  
19 access that protect and enhance the  
20 natural habitat which is so sensitive.  
21 We have to look at those two things  
22 together.

23

24 My last point really is to, in getting

1 about this planning process which we see  
2 as kind of revolutionary for how the  
3 City is attempting to do business, we  
4 should look at other places and learn  
5 from other places. Talking to Dan,  
6 communicating with Dan recently he's  
7 mentioned some technologies in Europe  
8 and Japan that can help to reduce  
9 nitrogen. There are also examples right  
10 across the Hudson River and New Jersey,  
11 where about five years ago they created  
12 a statewide watershed management area  
13 program. Took the whole state, broke it  
14 up into watershed Management areas.  
15 Some of those grids worked better than  
16 others, passing on contact and  
17 background information to the advisory  
18 committee on some of the programs that  
19 worked.

20

21 And just as a last point, I think we've  
22 all got to be aware and I'm also  
23 encouraged by the leadership that so  
24 many national environmental



1 organizations, as well as local  
2 involvement and agency attention, but we  
3 have to remember that the plan is really  
4 only the beginning. While we've got the  
5 commitment from the chair of the  
6 Environmental Protection Committee  
7 tonight to help find the money to make  
8 that plan a reality, we can't just take  
9 him at his word. We've got to make it  
10 stick. And in solving the problems  
11 which we've all created in and around  
12 Jamaica Bay, is going to last through  
13 the next mayoral administration, so  
14 let's continue to work together and help  
15 make Jamaica Bay the great resource that  
16 it once was and can be again in the  
17 future. Thank you, very much.

18

19 **MR. MUNDY:** Barbara Brown. Barbara,  
20 please come.

21

22 **BARBARA BROWN:**

23 Good evening. I'm Barbara Brown. I'm  
24 the Chairperson of Eastern Queens

1 Alliance and Idlewild Park Preservation  
2 Committee. A couple of my remarks, I'm  
3 going to start by talking about Idlewild  
4 Park, because until, let's say the last  
5 year, Idlewild Park was not on the  
6 Jamaica Bay map. Idlewild Park is the  
7 head of the bay. For those of you who  
8 don't know where it is, it's tucked away  
9 just north of JFK and it's all that  
10 green space on either side of what  
11 people who live in the area call Snake  
12 Road. But it is the head of the bay.  
13 It is the major source of freshwater to  
14 the bay and it needs attention just as  
15 other parts of the bay need attention.

16  
17 One of the things that we are asking for  
18 is that there be no further intrusions  
19 upon construction, upon or demapping of  
20 the wetlands in Idlewild Park. Some of  
21 you may know that several years, I think  
22 in 2003, they -- we call it raping of  
23 the park. They put in an international  
24 air cargo center. They alienated 25

1 acres of land out of that park and  
2 constructed an international air cargo  
3 center. We're calling for no further  
4 intrusions. And part of that is, that  
5 if you look at a map of Idlewild Park,  
6 an official map, you see red striated  
7 lines going through the park, and we're  
8 told that that's the mapped Nassau  
9 Expressway. We're asking that that  
10 Expressway be demapped. We have been  
11 told that there are attempts to do that,  
12 but thus far those lines are still there  
13 going through Idlewild, and if Nassau  
14 Expressway ever goes through Idlewild,  
15 you're destroying probably at least a  
16 hundred acres of the marsh and plants in  
17 that park.

18

19 The other thing is that there is a plan  
20 for Brookville Boulevard to be  
21 redirected or they call it straightening  
22 it out. Brookville Boulevard which  
23 probably just stopped in the middle of  
24 the marshland years ago with no

1 consideration for the flow of the water  
2 coming from one side to the other, it  
3 doesn't need to be straightened out.  
4 What needs to be straightened out is the  
5 culverts under it need to be opened up  
6 so there is more of a flow of water from  
7 one side of the park to the other. The  
8 other things that need to be done, we  
9 call on the state really to enforce  
10 wetland regulations. We find that  
11 people are building houses well within  
12 the 150 feet of so-called controlled  
13 areas within the wetlands and that the  
14 people who buy these homes are  
15 unsuspecting and they end up with  
16 basements that are filled with water,  
17 when really DEC is supposed to be  
18 protecting those wetlands. We've also  
19 been calling on the City to turn over  
20 its city-owned parkland to -- its city-  
21 owned wetlands to parks. There's a  
22 parcel of land just south of -- on the  
23 south side of Rockaway Boulevard  
24 bordering Thurston Basin, and that's

1 under the control of EDC. Now, EDC  
2 wants to put -- they want some kind of  
3 industrial commercial use of it. We  
4 were successful in stopping a Brookville  
5 -- they call it a Brookville Mall, strip  
6 mall, we were successful in stopping  
7 that, but up until now, although we have  
8 petitioned the mayor, that land is still  
9 under EDC control and there's still a  
10 sign out there saying that they're  
11 looking for people to acquire that land.  
12 We're also asking -- privately owned  
13 parcels along that track, and we are  
14 asking that the City either issue  
15 conservation easements to the owners so  
16 they don't keep trying to develop those  
17 properties or that they purchase the  
18 property outright, if at all possible  
19 and attach it to the park. Because if  
20 you look at a map of the park, there's a  
21 lot of green space that you think is a  
22 part of the park but it really isn't  
23 because it's still privately owned.  
24

1 We are also calling for the replacement  
2 -- restoration and replacement of  
3 structural and functional aspects of  
4 wetlands in the park. And that calls  
5 for money. DEP and NRG have been doing  
6 quite a bit of mitigation there, but  
7 they're dependent upon mitigation money.  
8 There aren't monies being appropriated  
9 just for Idlewild's sake, an important  
10 place that needs to be preserved and  
11 restored.

12  
13 In terms of stewardship, we are doing  
14 quite a bit with the little bit of money  
15 in terms of stewardship, trying to reach  
16 out to youngsters in schools. This past  
17 year we served over 50 different classes  
18 in Districts 28, 27, and 29, but we are  
19 looking for a dedicated Idlewild Park  
20 salt marsh and science learning center  
21 which Parks tells me is going to cost  
22 about 4.6 million in order to put such a  
23 structure in the park. But it's  
24 important because our kids -- first of

1 all, our kids need to be turned on to  
2 science. And secondly, if we want  
3 children to grow up to be adults who  
4 respect and value the environment, then  
5 we need to start that education now.  
6 And not enough of it is going on in the  
7 schools and we find that what we're  
8 doing is very valuable. The teachers  
9 are looking for our interns going to the  
10 schools and educate them, but much more  
11 money is needed.

12  
13 We also need access to the larger bay.  
14 Right now we have access to the salt  
15 marsh and we are in the process of  
16 putting in a kayak launch in Idlewild  
17 Park so people will be able to get out  
18 and launch. But there is a need for  
19 people to be able to get access to the  
20 bay. And in Southeast Queens, Thurston  
21 Basin is a major point where that can  
22 happen, and that goes back to that  
23 parcel that's owned by DTC that needs to  
24 be turned over to Parks and developed

1 into an open recreational space for  
2 people to enjoy it and also a place  
3 where they can launch boats.

4

5 Other watershed issues, we know that in  
6 Southeast Queens the water table has  
7 been rising since they stopped pumping  
8 the wells that belong to the Jamaica  
9 Water Co. And those of us who live over  
10 there were happy to hear that we were  
11 not going to be drinking all that  
12 Jamaica Water because it was not good  
13 when water kind of bleaches your  
14 stockings, you know. That's an issue.  
15 But there needs to be some other uses  
16 for some of that groundwater because the  
17 water table is very, very high and  
18 Southeast Queens is sitting -- a lot of  
19 it was filled in land anyway. So,  
20 nondrinking water uses need to be found  
21 for the groundwater in the Southeast  
22 Queens area.

23

24 In addition, there needs to be



1 appropriate technology for getting some  
2 of that water into the storm sewers, and  
3 I understand that DEP is working on  
4 that. Because of that, there is no  
5 place for the water to go. In terms of  
6 flooding from storm water runoff, there  
7 needs to be some sort of requirement  
8 about porosity and the ratio of porous  
9 versus non-porous surfaces. A lot of  
10 people, we find in the community, they  
11 have driveways and backyards and they're  
12 paving them over and it seems like there  
13 should be some kind of regulation about  
14 that because the more pavement you add,  
15 the less place there is for water to go  
16 and that's an issue. There needs to be  
17 some development of other places for the  
18 water to go. I know there's an idea  
19 floating around about the development of  
20 wetland areas in other parts of the  
21 watershed and we applaud that. And some  
22 of that, a possible place for that to  
23 happen is in some school yards. There  
24 are a lot of schools that have so-called

1 gardens but they're not developed or not  
2 used for anything and those would be  
3 perfect areas to create school wetland  
4 areas and the children could learn about  
5 wetlands, as well as serve as a purpose,  
6 a place for some of that runoff to go.

7

8 An increase, someone mentioned before,  
9 an increase in the number of green  
10 streets. There are a lot of concrete  
11 medians throughout our area and we don't  
12 have enough green streets in Southeast  
13 Queens.

14

15 And finally, all the industrial projects  
16 that sprout up in our area. We have  
17 large warehouse districts and so forth.  
18 There needs to be a requirement that  
19 they incorporate open landscaped areas  
20 to serve, not only to serve as buffers  
21 between the community and themselves,  
22 but also to provide some places for  
23 water. Right now, they're just concrete  
24 and steel.

1

2 And my last comment is, that there are a  
3 number of industrial places around the  
4 Idlewild area. There are concrete  
5 factories there and water runs -- I  
6 don't know what they are producing  
7 that's running off into the wetlands,  
8 but I think there needs to be some  
9 looking at that. Some of those are  
10 actually in the Five Towns area, but  
11 there are also some on the City side,  
12 and some of that needs to be looked  
13 into. Thank you.

14

15 **MR. MUNDY:**

16 Thank you, Barbara. I'd like you to get  
17 some of those maps of the area to us,  
18 Barbara. Some of those maps that were  
19 talked about in the past, if you can get  
20 them to our committee, please, of your  
21 area that we're talking about and other  
22 stuff that has to be done. Get us  
23 something in writing.

24

1 Now, we're back to the first speaker,  
2 Rich Spadlla, come up here.

3

4 **RICHARD SPADLLA:**

5 Good evening and thank you for allowing  
6 me to be here. I have lived in  
7 Rosedale for about 50 years and spent a  
8 lot of the years fishing, hunting, and  
9 scuba diving through those channels that  
10 Mrs. Brown is talking about. I use the  
11 currents to take me through these canals  
12 in the back behind the factories and  
13 then when the current changes, I come  
14 back out and catch crabs and eels and  
15 things like that. But I have a love for  
16 the Jamaica Bay in its whole and its  
17 entirety. What I am interested in at  
18 this time was not brought up yet, but it  
19 has to do with the environment around us  
20 and our own well-being. I'll start with  
21 political leaders unknowingly or  
22 knowingly allowing a deadly pesticide  
23 called Malathion to be sprayed over the  
24 five boroughs in the past years,

1 disregarding the after effects and the  
2 complaints. Now, the statistics are  
3 over 3.4 million pounds and 238,000  
4 gallons of lethal pesticide, namely  
5 Malathion were used in only one year.  
6 What I believe is that a lot of this has  
7 to do with our environment as far as  
8 affecting it and our health. Because it  
9 was two years ago what happened was,  
10 Malathion was sprayed from the air and  
11 what happened is that the hospitals in  
12 Queens and a lot of other areas were  
13 overwhelmed by medical problems. The  
14 doctors knew nothing about them because  
15 they weren't attuned to what they called  
16 chemical warfare so-to-speak, and what  
17 happened was, during this September, the  
18 temperatures varied from 71° to 87°  
19 changing the chemistry of the pesticide,  
20 Malathion into an extremely toxic  
21 illegal nerve gas. Now, they were  
22 spraying nerve gas on communities, on  
23 our environment, and many people were  
24 ending up in the hospital with symptoms

1 that the doctors couldn't comprehend and  
2 they weren't aware of where it came  
3 from. At the same time, look at the  
4 concept that if this Malathion can  
5 affect us, what it does to small  
6 creatures and fish, and so forth. There  
7 was one statement that was out about two  
8 years ago in reference that they sprayed  
9 a lake in Staten Island and within two  
10 days, thousands of fish came up dead.  
11 This gives you incite on what's going on  
12 with the spraying every summer. What  
13 I'm asking is that this whole group here  
14 look in to something like this, maybe  
15 that its part of the problem. Thank  
16 you.

17 **MR. MUNDY:** I thought we were at the  
18 end, but Ellen Hartig are you here? I  
19 didn't see you come in.

20  
21 **ELLEN HARTIG:**  
22 Hello. Thank you for still including  
23 me, Mr. Mundy. My name is Ellen  
24 Hartig. I'm a former researcher at

1 Columbia University and I now do  
2 environmental consulting. I'm a  
3 professional wetland scientist. I just  
4 want to say what a pleasure it is to be  
5 here at this point, I think early on  
6 involved in the finding and  
7 documentation of the marsh loss at  
8 Jamaica Bay, I remember when I first  
9 ordered aerial photographs and I ordered  
10 a series from 1959, 1974, 1994 and took  
11 a look at these and was astonished that  
12 there was -- you just looked at the  
13 photos and you could see dramatic loss  
14 over time of the marshes and it was too  
15 dramatic. It was not a matter of just  
16 changing the tidal flow. I could trace  
17 the timing of the tides. And there  
18 really was this loss and we took it to  
19 the agencies and about the same time,  
20 the communities, very active, knowing  
21 something was wrong with the marshes,  
22 and that was Dan Mundy. And to think  
23 now, that there was work going on in  
24 academia, there was work going on by the

1 community. There was work going on by  
2 advocacy groups and all brought this  
3 information to government agencies. And  
4 now, government agencies are working and  
5 using this information and are moving  
6 forward, and so it's just, I think, the  
7 best of all possible worlds when these  
8 often disparate groups are able to come  
9 together and then really move the  
10 science forward and go from the science  
11 to changes in policy. And it's also a  
12 matter here where initially with  
13 National Park Service where the approach  
14 was, what uses were appropriate, that  
15 there was a preservation approach, that  
16 if we can not build on those weapons and  
17 not to construction, then we're doing  
18 preservation and the marshes will be  
19 here forever. But it turns out, as we  
20 found out, that that's not enough and  
21 that you need to manage the marshes, you  
22 need to monitor, you need to do other  
23 things in the watershed to protect the  
24 marshes, and that's really, I think,



1 what we're moving towards here, and it's  
2 great to see this happen. Jim Gennaro  
3 had to go to a party, and it was very  
4 much his doing to take this information  
5 that was being made available to him and  
6 move it forward to a change in  
7 government policy and New York City DEP  
8 is going to take this on and work it  
9 into their water supply and wastewater  
10 agency. So, I just wanted to say that  
11 and I look forward to continuing along  
12 this avenue in cooperation with the  
13 community here. So, thank you.

14

15 **MR. SEWELL:**

16 Thank you. That concludes the speaker  
17 list that I have in front of me. I'll  
18 turn the microphone back over to the  
19 DEP.

20

21 **MS. LICATA:**

22 In closing, I guess, I would just like  
23 to applaud all of you that came out  
24 tonight. This was really an amazing

1 meeting and a wonderful start, and I  
2 don't want to detract from all of the  
3 wonderful input that you gave. I just  
4 would again, on behalf of all of us  
5 here, like to thank you for your  
6 participation and we would look forward  
7 to the future of this endeavor. Thank  
8 you.

9

10 **MR. SEWELL:**

11 Also just to echo this on behalf of the  
12 Advisory Committee, thank you very much  
13 for coming out on the cold evening.

14

15 (Time noted: 8:13 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Dawn Anatra, a court reporter and Notary Public within and for the State of New York, do hereby certify:

That the foregoing transcript is a true record of the proceedings.

I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

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DAWN ANATRA