

Sanitation and Environment Committee meeting, February 22, 2022

Agenda items: presentations by NYC DEP regarding green infrastructure projects, DSNY regarding resumption of organics collection.

Adriana Kocovic and Roopesh Joshi, on behalf of DEP, appeared before the committee to update the community on the DEP's current program to reduce sewer inundation, ponding and flooding. DEP has decided that installing porous pavement is a more effective tool to address excessive runoff from heavy rainfall than building rain gardens. Potentially, permeable pavement can cover a greater surface area than sidewalk bio-swales. What the DEP plans for our community is to install precast porous concrete panels in the parking lane of the roadway. They can be removed to access below surface infrastructure. And there will be no loss of parking. At this juncture the DEP is in the process of determining which blocks in the district are suitable for this kind of green infrastructure. Several blocks in Windsor Terrace and Sunset Park east (the upland area) are currently being surveyed. DEP will return to the committee to inform the community about site selection. To learn more please visit:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dep/downloads/pdf/water/stormwater/green-infrastructure/porous-pavement-in-nyc-brochure.pdf>

DSNY spokesperson, Richard Day updated the committee on the state of the department's current organics collection program, which had been suspended during the pandemic due to budget constraints. The program is now voluntary, and limited to just 7 community board districts in the entire city. BKCB7 is one of those districts. If you want to participate in the program you have to visit the DSNY website to opt in. Pickup is once a week and happens on a non-trash or recycling day. The bins are rodent proof, can be lined with plastic and passersby putting non compostable trash in the bins is not a problem as the non-compostable elements will be removed at the processing center. Again, you have to opt in. After doing so, in about 4 weeks, you should receive a text message informing you that you are now enrolled, and letting you know when to put out the bin for collection.

The committee heard from many residents and committee members expressing frustration with the program and disappointment at the limited scope of the current iteration. It was pointed out that DSNY outreach to encourage community participation is undermined by the Mayor not making Zero Waste a priority. This is absolutely something that has to be scaled up and made compulsory city wide. 1/3 of all trash is compostable and methane emissions from trash are a significant contributor to climate change. Methane is a more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. This is low hanging fruit and in a broad multi-pronged strategy to deal with reducing GHG emissions this is a relatively easy thing to do and would allow greater time flexibility addressing more difficult to implement aspects of de-carbonization. It's truly a failure of local leadership. Many other cities and towns in the US are well on the way to meeting zero

waste goals. We are one the wealthiest cities in the US and the world. The complacency here is inexcusable.

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/site/services/food-scraps-and-yard-waste-page/overview-residents-organics>