



# MEETING MINUTES

Jersey City Environmental Commission  
City Hall – 280 Grove Street, Jersey City NJ 07302

Alison Cucco, Chair

**Meeting:** Jersey City Environmental Commission Public Meeting  
**Date / Location:** 14 May 2019 – 6:30 p.m.  
Council Caucus, City Hall, 280 Grove Street, Jersey City, NJ 07302

<b>Attendees:</b>	<b>Commissioners/City Representatives</b>	<b>Members of the Public:</b>
	Scott Mittman Mario Verdibello Alison Cucco Matt Trump Ashley Metius  Kate Lawrence, Sustainability Carolina Ramos, Sustainability	Peg Bonaker Telly Giouzelis Maria Kaouris Bob Cavanaugh Steve Krinsky Wynnie-Fred V. Hinds Trevor Anderson Luz Guzman Ricardo Pereira Raphael Wakefield Alex Mossawir

**Prepared By:** Alison Cucco, Carolina Ramos  
**Date Prepared:** June 6, 2019

## ROLL CALL

Chair Cucco called the Commission to order at 6:40. Six of eight active commissioners were present; four constitutes quorum. Commissioners Solowsky and Mirescu was absent.

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Secretary Ramos announced that meeting notice was sent on May 10 to the Jersey Journal, Hudson Reporter, and the City Clerk.

## APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Meeting minutes for April 16th were approved unanimously.

## COMMUNICATIONS TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Communications regarding development projects were provided to the Commissioners. They will be attached to the meeting minutes.

## SCHEDULED SPEAKERS

### 1. Honeywell Chromium

Peg Bonaker, Wood Environment and Infrastructure Solutions, Inc.  
Telly Giouzelis, Wood Environment and Infrastructure Solutions, Inc.  
Maria Kaouris, Honeywell

Bob Cavanaugh, Waters, McPherson, McNeill, P.C.

- Since 1993, many contaminated sites throughout Jersey City have been remediated. In 2011, the DEP divided and added an additional 32 contaminated sites to those already managed by Honeywell, resulting in a total of 54 sites. At least half of the 54 sites have been remediated. These last sewer sites are some of the last few sites that they need to be remediated.
- Chromium was processed on Route 440 where Home Depot is now located. The manufacturing by-product chrome ore processing residue was used as backfill to make a stable surface for sewer lines/sites when Jersey City updated its sewer system and interceptors in the 1950's.
- Contamination requires a deed notice which formally lets parties know that there is contamination there.
- In 2008 Honeywell and City of Jersey City came to an agreement to record deed notices for sites that the City owns.
- 3 out of 4 sewer sites are shared with PPG. When DEP assigned the sites, they gave responsibility to two parties. The three sites are the following: (all are on the east side of City, basically downtown)
  - Site 189 Henderson St.
    - 15 ft below grade
    - Efforts have focused on sampling 2-3 ft above pipe
    - Chromium is only found above the 20ppm criteria (above the pipe which is unusual). It's an active pipe so they can't go beneath to verify if chromium material was used as fill. They established restrictive area as per DEP. DEP requires that if you can't go under sewer line (which is always) you must do a deed notice. So if anything will be done to this site, the public must be notified.
  - Site 197 Grand St.
    - During construction of sewer pipe, contaminated fill was used when updating pipe system as per City records.
    - Investigation was concluded as of January 2019.
    - Detected some high standards of hexavalent chromium
  - Site 188 Sussex St.
    - Chromium material was used during construction of this site.
    - Samples were taken as far west as possible within the right of way, and all were contaminated.
    - Moving forward, additional samples will be taken on private property to verify how far contamination goes.
- Chair Cucco questioned whether chromium was found in shallow regions.
  - Mr. Giouzelis stated that it's possible when they were backfilling they continued to use chromium fill to bring it up to the asphalt.
- Commissioner Verdibello asked if there is contact with groundwater.
  - Mr. Giouzelis stated yes, some is of the chromium is in contact.
  - Ms. Bonaker explained that groundwater impact closely ties to soil impact. Once groundwater moves away from soil contaminants, the contamination decreases. "Preferential pathway" (aka path of least resistance because of the fill used).



There's a lot of these pathways along the utility lines because the historic fill is very coarse and was used to backfill.

- Commissioner Metius inquired about the nature of chrome itself: are trace levels over 20 PPM the standard?
  - Ms. Kaouris stated that 20 PPM is the criteria set by DEP for soil. As long as there's no physical contact with chromium, there's no concern. 70 PPB is for the standard for groundwater.
- Commissioner Verdibello inquired about whether chromium can enter a basement through floodwaters. When flooding occurs, some recedes, a powder remains left behind, and dry chromium is left behind.
  - Ms. Kaouris stated that sampling was performed via temporary well points around the Site 188 at Sussex St, and visual inspections were also performed. The range at this location was high, 20-100s PPM and gets drastically greater as you get closer to sewer.
- Commissioner Metius asked why these sites were chosen and what differentiates them from others?
  - Mr. Giouzelis stated that testimonies from trucking companies/truckers stated they were using material from a site and dumping there. The DEP opened this investigation and data provided by PSE&G confirmed contamination was present.
- Commissioner Mittman asked when testing stops. Since 20 PPM is only the threshold, how do you know you're just not testing one site that just happens to measure 20 PPM?
  - Mr. Giouzelis stated that they test in all directions and they test on and/or by manholes. At Site 188, they looked at cutouts in the sidewalk, in tree bedding, and the top 2 feet of soil to see if there's anything above 20 ppm. The concentration was a little above 20 ppm in that area; however, in order to impact groundwater the numbers have to be elevated in hexavalent chromium (more than 20 or 50 ppm).
- Commissioner Metius asked how repairs are made in designated high-contaminated areas?
  - Mr. Giouzelis stated that when data is present indicating there's high chromium concentration, it is ensured that the impacted soil is removed offsite correctly. Honeywell will receive a deed notice from the City that the City of Jersey City is doing upgrades or work for the City. Honeywell will receive the contact information for the construction companies to verify where they will be excavating and how deep, and Honeywell can oversee the work if needed.
- The DEP states that remediation must be centered around the area of work (whatever MUA works on, Honeywell has to remediate). They cannot replace the entire sewer, but they will follow JCMUA's guidance.
- Commissioner Metius asked what residents can do if they're concerned with chromium in their home?
  - Ms. Kaouris suggested residents go to the Honeywell website for general information, yet she assured the Commissioners that there's no reason to worry about chromium in your home because they have taken samples inside homes. There's no way of it getting inside your home. When they do remediation, they



monitor and have stringent limits. Only if there's intrusive activity going on it may pose a risk. Chromium is not volatile.

- Commissioner Verdibello stated that the concern is not that it's volatile, it's the hexavalent chromium dust that dries up in basements after flooding. People live in these areas with these concerns.
- Ms. Kaouris indicated that Honeywell has not been involved in the remediation of homes, as there have not been concentrations that warrant concern based on groundwater investigation. Most of the work has been done on commercial sites and private property. Since residential properties have not been a major area where contamination has been seen, Honeywell has not come across the basement issue.
- Chair Cucco confirmed that the JCEC would love to have more information on the other sites, not just the sewer sites.
  - Commissioner Verdibello agreed, especially for residents with basements.
  - Bob Cavanaugh asked if the JCEC would like a list of the remaining sites.
  - Ms. Kaouris stated that the investigations will be complete by end of this year, and that Honeywell would be happy to provide further information.

## 2. Skyway Park Conservancy, Steve Krinsky

- The open land, which would be the Skyway Park, is located along Route 1&9, about 100 yards from Lincoln Park West and along the Hackensack River.
- The vision is to connect an 8-mile "Hackensack River Walkway" consisting of 32 acres of open space dedicated to passive recreation.
- History of the site - In the 90s, after being on fire for over 15 years, it was declared a superfund site. Commissioner Verdibello oversaw the remediation.
- The site is currently still listed as a superfund site, and creating a passive park would require a great deal of money, but Jersey City is eligible to receive \$800,000 from Green Acres if Jersey City matches the \$800k. If the City does not match the funds it risks losing the Green Acres funding. As of yet, the City has not delivered on its promise to commit the funding. Funding that was previously set aside for Skyway Park was allocated to build Berry Lane Park instead.
- Mr. Krinsky asked the JCEC to consider writing a letter of support for the park in order to garner support.
- Commissioner Cucco asked when the Green Acres funding commitment expires.
  - Mr. Krinsky indicated that the money has been allocated by the State, yet Green Acres needs a letter of intent from the City. Mayor Fulop stated in the Spring of 2018 that the City will match the funds, yet the money was not there at the time.
- Commissioner Trump asked if there will be restrictions on the park.
  - Mr. Krinsky stated that the recreation must be passive (not a lot of movement, no playgrounds, ball playing) because there is contamination underneath and too much movement could disturb it.
- A member of the public asked if 1.6 million would be enough to build the park.
  - Mr. Krinsky stated it would not be enough, but it would be a start. And we must build the grassroots effort to get the initiative moving.



## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- Wynnies Fred Hinds from ANJEC announced that on Saturday, May 18th there will be an environmental commission workshop, “Fundamentals for Effective Environmental Commissions.”
  - 9 AM – 1:30 pm in Ridgefield, \$45 for nonmembers, free for JCEC because they are members.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **PPG Chromium Clean Up**

- Chair Cucco tabled this for the next meeting. There is a need to have larger conversation on all of this (based off of the last meeting and this one).

### **Hudson County Climate Town Hall, Follow-up**

- Chair Cucco updated the JCEC about the movement to form a Hudson Climate Coalition
- Next steps: invite people who attended the Town Hall to get involved with local and regional climate policy.
  - June 4th was the date selected for the first meeting, yet it’s probably not feasible to execute such an event in the next 3 weeks.
- Does the JCEC want to get more involved and what does that involvement look like? The JCEC will further discuss during the June meeting.

### **Boonton Reservoir Update**

- Chair Cucco will be planning a separate meeting to invite the environmental consultants working with the Open Space Institute to discuss the Boonton Reservoir trail development with the JCEC. This meeting will be open to the public, and would be an additional meeting to the regular schedule.

### **Sewage Free Streets & Rivers**

- Director Lawrence and Commissioners Luebke and Mirescu met with Mayor Fulop and the rest of the Sewage Free Streets and Rivers partners. The Mayor is receptive to seeing how the City can move forward with a storm water ordinance while having the START team take a more active role in engaging the public in the City’s long-term control plan.

### **Resolution to Commit to 100% Renewable Energy**

- The draft resolution still requires editing.
- This agenda item was carried to the June meeting.

### **JCEC Ordinance and Bylaws Update**

- Director Lawrence is waiting for clarification from the Legal Department in order to determine if language can be changed to “planning designee” instead of member of “Planning Board.”
- This agenda item was carried to the June meeting.



## NEW BUSINESS

### **Green Business Recognition Program Application**

- CTO To Go submitted an application for Green Business designation.
  - The Commission unanimously voted to approve the application.
- Green Business Certification Program:
  - Secretary Ramos and Director Lawrence will draft ideas on how to make new tiers and discuss inspections.

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 PM.

## NEXT MEETING

The next Environmental Commission meeting is scheduled for June 18, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers, City Hall, Jersey City, NJ 07302.



Jersey City Environmental Commission  
May 2019 Correspondence

<b>DATE</b>	<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>NOTIFICATION FROM</b>	<b>NOTIFICATION TYPE</b>	<b>PERMIT/ CERTIFICATION</b>	<b>PERMITTING/ CERTIFYING BODY</b>
4/23/2019	Phase 2A Combined Sewer Rehabilitation	Remington and Vernick Engineers	Notice of Submission	Form TWA-1 – Treatment Works Application	NJ DEP, Div. of Water Quality
4/23/2019	Phase 5A Combined Sewer Rehabilitation	Remington and Vernick Engineers	Notice of Submission	Form TWA-1 – Treatment Works Application	NJ DEP, Div. of Water Quality
4/5/2019	Van Winkle Avenue CSO Improvements Van Winkle Avenue ROW & Block 7402,	Remington and Vernick Engineers	Notice of Submission	Waterfront In-Water Individual Permit (IP) Application	NJ DEP, Div of Land Use Regulation