

THE BRONX COUNCIL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

May 26, 2009, 4:00 p.m., DeWitt Clinton High School.

I. ATTENDANCE

Evan Camp, Guillermo Castro, Yolanda Gonzalez, Steve Ritz, Anne-Marie Runfola, Mark Stern, Betsy Ukeritis, Chuck Vasser

The meeting took place in two parts: first, acting-chair Runfola met with Camp, Stern and Ritz to discuss previous committee workings and BCEQ environmental education awards nominations; second, meeting with teachers/educators to plan committee's future activities and process.

Winners of the Helen Reel environmental education awards for 2009 are:

Teacher: Edwin Alexander, CUNY Prep Transitional H.S.

Student: Sergio Ramirez, Millennium Arts Academy

Citizen Educator: Damian Griffin, Bronx River Alliance

Awards will be presented at BCEQ's annual BBQ meeting on City Island, June 10, 6:00 p.m. Some discussion followed on whether awardees would be able to attend. Griffin would likely be at camping trip on Bronx River at Concrete Plant Park. Runfola and Camp agreed to make effort to take award to be presented to him after meeting. Ritz agreed to make a school presentation for Alexander if he could not attend. Camp agreed to put together a press release for local media.

The agenda for the second part of the meeting included asking what BCEQ can do to help educators in the Bronx. A number of ideas were tossed around with several identified as priorities. Main among them was: BCEQ Ed. Comm can be a resource for teachers, students, parents and environmental groups for information about environmental education and career programs. Other ideas included providing information and opportunities for lab hours and community or civic service for student requirements, doing a workshop at Staff Development training days for DOE and other orgs., creating and presenting lesson plans on Bronx environmental orgs. and issues, updating website to serve as compendium, clearinghouse and resource/info exchange, identify existing programs and resources and gaps in such program opportunities, connecting dots between existing networks.

Resources for committee outreach include lists from DOE science teachers/coordinators, UFT green school committee, Bronx River Alliance.

Betsy Ukeritis mentioned that NYS Parks has 150 temporary positions for summer parks work as well as space in some of DEC summer camp programs, as examples of resource and information sharing.

Discussion then moved to ways to communicate within the committee and to do outreach in the community. Links to partner websites, conference calls, Google Groups, Doodle and other means were mentioned. People would need to commit to be moderators/editors for such networking. Whether to hold monthly meetings or less frequently was questioned and while committee leadership may meet monthly, larger meetings with planned activities could be less frequent. Runfola and Ritz emphasized that meetings should be more activity than sitting and being talked at and that they should be held at different venues throughout the borough. Gonzalez brought up issue of environmental justice and specifically mentioned asthma as something committee could work on. Other raised issues of toxic school sites

A quick review laid out priorities, a To Do list and plans for the next meeting:

Runfola -- work on getting web access and creating content for ed.comm. page on BCEQ site.

Camp -- minutes and press release

Ritz -- mission statement draft and outreach to EE award winners

Stern -- order plaques; deliver to Ritz or Runfola

All -- get Google G-mail accounts and join group

Part of the agenda for the next meeting will be to plan a Sept. event, a "Green Drinks Mixer" and to plan BCEQ's presence at citywide environmental ed. expo in Sept.

Next meeting of the committee will be July 14, 4:30 p.m. at Nos Quedamos offices in Melrose, The Bronx.

Respectfully submitted: Evan Camp, Committee Secretary, June 10, 2008