



RIVERDALE NATURE PRESERVANCY

Annual Report 2009

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The Riverdale Nature Preservancy is a non-profit 501(c)3 membership organization in Community District 8 in the northwest Bronx, New York City. We are organized for the purpose of protecting the natural and historic features and the neighborhood character of this unique part of New York City. Our neighborhood has retained much of the steep topography and treed landscape, and the rustic features of the area's first roads and settlements, because of visionary protections of earlier generations of residents, because of our low-density and Special Natural Area District (SNAD) zoning and because of the landmarking of historic districts and individual buildings in the area.

Activities

The Preservancy **monitors local development** projects to ensure full compliance with zoning and historic preservation regulations. We **initiate and participate in long-term planning and preservation** projects, to ensure that community needs are heard and met, and to protect and enhance Riverdale's superb natural environment and community character. We also **provide information**, through community meetings, written materials and our website, to enable local residents to be active and engaged in environmental and planning issues.

Monitor Local Development

PRESERVANCY SUPPORTS STRONGER FINES FOR REMOVING PROTECTED TREES

In 2005, zoning regulations in the Special Natural Area District were changed to increase protection of existing trees in the District. However Riverdale continued to lose trees.

The Preservancy Board of Directors recognized that arborists and landscaping companies that work within the SNAD need to understand and

follow the SNAD regulations pertaining to trees and vegetation, and be held accountable for their actions in the SNAD. The board approached the City Council with this issue and also opened discussion with residents of the Special Natural Area District in Staten Island, who were having similar experiences with continued tree loss. Staten Island activists had also begun discussion with their elected officials about compliance with the 2005 zoning laws, and new tree protection legislation that would strengthen compliance with the 2005 zoning laws was being discussed. The Preservancy gave strong support to this effort.

In June of 2009, the NY City Council passed legislation that increased fines for removing healthy, protected trees, and made it possible for the first time to impose the fines on the tree removal companies.

Initiate and participate in long-term planning and preservation

PRESERVANCY INCREASES PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN HUDSON RIVER VALLEY GREENWAY PLANNING

The Preservancy initiated in 2009 a dramatic increase in public participation in planning for the Hudson River Valley Greenway through the Bronx.

As a member of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to the greenway planners, the Preservancy has attended every planning meeting and workshop organized by the consultants during this multi-year process. Preservancy input is guided by a set of principles and values that was developed by the board, with community input, during a previous greenway planning effort in the late 1990s and revisited at the beginning of this new effort.

Attendance at TAC meetings is always open to all interested parties, however most attendees are community leaders. The Preservancy board felt that more residents should be involved.

The Preservancy worked with the Friends of the Hudson River Valley Greenway in the Bronx to hold a public meeting in November 2009 in the heart of Riverdale. Some 70 local residents turned out to hear presentations from the greenway planners and the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation and for the chance to ask questions and hold a discussion on the scope and impacts of the greenway. The event resulted in comprehensive coverage of the issues in the local weekly newspaper.

HENRY HUDSON PARKWAY IS DETERMINED ELIGIBLE FOR NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The Preservancy achieved a significant milestone in its effort to preserve the Henry Hudson Parkway when, in February 2009, the entire Henry Hudson Parkway – from West 72nd Street

in Manhattan to the city line at Yonkers – was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This determination protects the Parkway's roadway, service roads, parks, bridges, tunnels, and landscape – some 1,000 acres in all.

The Henry Hudson Parkway is the first state road (and first parkway built by Robert Moses) in New York City to receive this distinction. The parkway below 125th Street was listed in the Register as well as designated a NYC Scenic Landmark as part of Riverside Park in the 1980s. This new determination recognizes the parkway in its own right and its entirety.

A determination of eligibility means that all projects using federal or state funds must be scrutinized for their impact on the Parkway's natural and built features. In addition, the determination makes available to the city new sources of funding for greenways, landscapes and infrastructure. Most important of all, it awakens the city to the value of this incredible asset in its midst. The Preservancy director responsible for this achievement was invited to Bronx Community Board 8 and Manhattan Community Board 9 to discuss ways the designation might benefit the neighborhoods and communities within the Parkway corridor.

Provide information

PRESERVANCY PLANS DEMONSTRATION NATIVE PLANT GARDEN

In early 2009 the Preservancy brought together representatives of the local branch public library, the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation Greenstreets program, and the Riverdale Neighborhood House to develop a garden that would serve several purposes.

It would:

- Demonstrate for property owners the use of native plants in the garden,
- Augment existing environmental education programs at the library,
- Teach environmental principles and gardening to teens in Neighborhood House programs,
- Provide community assistance in the maintenance of a large and innovative Greenstreets site,
- Provide habitat for birds and pollinators, and
- Include educational signage on the benefits of planting native species.

In late spring, technical problems with the site and uncertain budgets caused DPR and the library to suspend action on the project. The Preservancy board agreed to work with DPR to try to identify other community groups that might be able to help maintain a garden at other sites in the area. Several sites were scheduled by DPR to be evaluated for suitability as rain gardens, a new focus of the Greenstreets program. By fall of 2009, the evaluations had been postponed.

Annual Financial Statement – 2009

REVENUE (\$)

Contributions/Membership dues
Interest/Other
TOTAL REVENUE

EXPENSES (\$)

Accounting Fees
Consulting Fees
Administrative Expenses
Project Expenses
TOTAL EXPENSES

Surplus/Deficit
Starting Fund Balance

Ending Fund Balance