



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**CHRISTINE BERTHET**  
Chair

**ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.**  
District Manager

January 15, 2014

Anthony Borelli  
Vice President, Planning & Development  
Edison Properties  
100 Washington Street  
Newark, New Jersey 07102

**Re: HLP Properties remediation of a brownfield in Chelsea**

Dear Mr. Borelli:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) appreciates HLP Properties presentations to both the full board and to the Waterfront Parks and Environment Committee informing us of its site remediation plan for the 1.75 acre parcel it owns surrounded by Tenth Avenue and West 17<sup>th</sup> Street, and Eleventh Avenue and West 18<sup>th</sup> Street. Clearly, remediation of a brownfield is a good thing. Nevertheless, we express several concerns below.

The property which is currently repaved to serve as a parking lot was in the late 1800s through the early 1900s one part of a larger parcel housing a Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP). Coal was the primary ingredient of manufactured gas and the site remains contaminated with the byproducts of the MGP process, primarily coal tar. Indeed, the properties stretching between West 20<sup>th</sup> Street and West 16<sup>th</sup> Street, West of Tenth Avenue all have some coal tar contamination. Con Edison seems to be the primary organization responsible for the remediation of these properties. HLP Properties has taken on the remediation site.

HLP Properties told the Waterfront Parks and Environment Committee a geophysical survey, at least 50 test borings, and survey using ground penetrating x-ray has been completed on this property. The site remediation monitoring plan includes: a perimeter construction fence, with Jersey barriers to protect pedestrian walkways; air quality monitoring; optical surveying and vibration monitoring of adjacent buildings and the High Line; and protection of the High Line columns.

As coal tar is too difficult to remove HLP Properties has instituted a two-phase remediation/containment plan. Phase 1 is all but complete. Three feet of topsoil have been removed from underneath the high line and replaced with clean soil. A community board member's observation on December 17, 2013 confirms that this part of the project has already been topped with an asphalt surface.

Phase 2 of the project includes an in situ stabilization area in which contaminants are combined with concrete down to the clay layer. A second area will be surrounded by a containment wall down to the clay layer. The site is being remediated under the New York State Brownfield Cleanup Program. The committee was told the remediation design meets the goals of the remediation objectives set by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. When the remediation work is completed, the site will be suitable for restricted residential and commercial use. Any future activities (including any future development) at the site that would disturb residual contamination will be subject to protocols set forth in a Site Management Plan approved by NYSDEC, in order to limit the potential for exposure and ensure that the remedy remains protective of human health and the environment.

CB4 is pleased that HRP Properties is doing desperately needed work to remediate this site. Even with all the information we received we have some ongoing concerns:

While the property in question is being remediated we remain concerned that coal tar and other contaminants are properly contained, not only on the specific piece of property, but on the properties between West 16<sup>th</sup> Street and West 20<sup>th</sup> Street as well. We have no sense of the remediation plan for the entire area.

This concern is informed by the 2005 rezoning that permits the construction of residential buildings of 290 and 380 feet on this property.

While HRP properties was clear that they would be monitoring for the motion of nearby buildings as well as air monitoring during the remediation program we are concerned that there is no monitoring for water both during the remediation process and after it. HRP Properties did not explain how the remediation would prevent contamination of our neighborhood by a future storm Sandy. Nor did they indicate how the movement of tides would affect this nearly waterfront property.

We look forward to continuing conversations about this ongoing remediation project with the hope that you will also address our concerns.

Sincerely,



Christine Berthet  
Chair



Maarten de Kadt  
Co-Chair, Waterfront, Parks  
& Environment Committee

[signed 1/14/14]

Delores Rubin  
Co-Chair, Waterfront, Parks  
& Environment Committee

cc:

NYC DEP  
NYS DEC  
Mayor Bill de Blasio  
Councilmember Corey Johnson  
Councilmember Helen Rosenthal

Assemblymember Richard Gottfried  
Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal  
NYS Senator Brad Hoylman  
Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer  
Con Edison