



RIVERDALE NATURE PRESERVANCY

Directors and Officers

PAUL J. ELSTON
Honorary Chairman

ERIC A. SEIFF
Chairman

PETER KOHLMANN
FRANZ PAASCHE
Co-Presidents

SANDY SHALLECK
Treasurer

MARY BANDZIUKAS
Secretary

MARCIA ALLINA
NADA MARIE ASSAF-
ANID
JODIE COLON
ELIZABETH HAASE
STEVE HAMMER
LORANCE J.
HOCKERT
PETER JOSEPH
HILARY KITASEI
ROBERT LYNCH
BARBARA R.
MICHAELS
AARON MITTMAN
SUSAN
MORGENTHAU
SHERIDA E. PAULSEN
JOYCE M. PILSNER
DART WESTPHAL
BARRY WILLNER

MARY BANDZIUKAS,
AICP
Program Director

GILBERT KERLIN
Founding Chairman

December 6, 2010

Mr. Damian McShane, Chair
Bronx Community Board 8
5676 Riverdale Avenue
Bronx, NY 10471

RE: Borough of the Bronx, Block 5819, Lots 2167, 2168, 2175
LPC Docket # 096026
CPC Application # N100377ZAX

Dear Chairman McShane,

The Riverdale Nature Preservancy is a non-profit 501c3 group dedicated to the preservation of the natural and historic features in the Riverdale area through environmental conservation measures. As you may know, we were active in the development of amended Special Natural Area District (SNAD) regulations in 2004, and vocal supporters of the designation of the Fieldston Historic District in 2005, and we continually work for compliance with the requirements of both pieces of design and development oversight.

We wish to comment on the proposed development of three houses at 4680 Fieldston Road, as it represents both the most significant new additions to the historic district since its designation in 2006, and implementation of the amended SNAD regulations since they were approved by the New York City Council in 2005. The historic district designation combined with the SNAD regulations is the city's effort to preserve and protect the unique development of Fieldston as an intact example of a romantic planned suburban community that has evolved over time (LPC report 1/10/06), and the outstanding natural features such as rock outcrops, steep slopes, ponds, natural springs, botanic environments and mature trees. The combination of the Landmarks Preservation Commission's review of any changes to the existing and proposed buildings within the district, and under the SNAD provisions the modification of these significant natural features only at the discretion of the City Planning Commission, provides a powerful and positive effort to maintain the value and character of this notable Bronx neighborhood.

We have concerns about the number of new buildings proposed for the sites, and about the scale of the structures. The Fieldston Historic District is largely developed with houses that appear to be two-story structures, using the

c/o Riverdale Neighborhood House
5521 Mosholu Avenue, Bronx, NY 10471
718-884-5903
www.RiverdaleNature.org

December 6, 2010

sloped roofs and changes in grade to mask the third story and basement levels of large homes; we ask that the new buildings conform to that design strategy. We also are concerned about the number of new structures proposed for a small area of the district, especially in relationship to the landscape of the area, which we will address in our comments related to the SNAD-related proposals.

We have significant concerns about the degree to which the natural environment is proposed to be modified by this development. For example:

1. It is not clear exactly how much rock will be removed from the rock outcroppings on the property and how it will be removed.
2. It is not clear how removal of rock and soil will change drainage and storm water run-off into the pond between Livingston Avenue and West 246th Street, locally known as Indian Pond.
3. We are concerned that the developer is representing that run-off will flow towards Fieldston Road, while residents believe that the pond is at a lower elevation than the road and will receive the runoff.
4. There are plans for removal of many (over 50, we believe) large, mature trees which provide critical habitat for wildlife and larger birds such as the black-crowned night heron who are unable to use smaller trees.
5. It is not clear how the root structure of the remaining trees will be affected, and what changes in the botanic environment of the pond area will emerge as a result.

We are concerned that this development will have a significant negative impact on a precious resource. Indian Pond is a natural source of fresh water for wildlife, and is visited by dozens of residents and local school children daily, possibly totaling over 10,000 visitors each year.

We ask that the Board pay special attention to this project. We request that:

- the drainage plan and soil report required by the SNAD clearly illustrate storm water management during and after construction.
- the required landscaping and revegetation plan clearly identify the botanic environment(s) that will be removed, and make it the highest priority to select trees, shrubs, vines, ferns, grasses, herbs, annuals, biennials, perennials, mosses and other associated vegetation (SNAD Section 105-32, (b) that will reestablish the lost botanic environment(s) as rapidly as is reasonable, as required by the SNAD.
- the construction plan indicate how all requirements in the SNAD for equipment staging and erosion control will be met to ensure maximum protection of topsoils,

**c/o Riverdale Neighborhood House
5521 Mosholu Avenue, Bronx, NY 10471
718-884-5903
www.RiverdaleNature.org**

December 6, 2010

water quality in the pond, and vegetation including low-growing species and roots of larger species.

We hope that the Board will obtain all environmental impact studies before making any determination on its decision for advice to the City Planning Commission, and will also assist the community to carefully oversee and monitor any removal of trees, soil, or rock that occurs both during and after any development that is authorized.

We also believe that the current level of development is beyond what can be tolerated by the environment and ask for a reduction in the development burden on the natural resources of the property. We will, of course, offer any assistance or expertise in support of such goals that we are able.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric A. Seiff". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "E".

Eric A. Seiff, Chair
Riverdale Nature Preservancy

**c/o Riverdale Neighborhood House
5521 Mosholu Avenue, Bronx, NY 10471
718-884-5903
www.RiverdaleNature.org**