



City of New York Parks & Recreation



Hearing before the City Council Committee on Parks & Recreation

Oversight: The Department of Parks and Recreation's Lifeguard Program

November 13, 2007

Testimony by First Deputy Commissioner Liam Kavanagh

Every summer the Parks Department opens 14 miles of beaches and 52 outdoor pools to millions of patrons. In 2007, we estimate that over 15 million people visited those facilities from Memorial Day through Labor Day to keep fit, cool off or have fun with family and friends, activities made possible by a large and dedicated lifeguard corps. Thanks to a record number of lifeguards last summer, we were able to expand programming at our pools and have more beaches open on a consistent basis during the height of the summer. Being a New York City lifeguard requires a strong sense of personal responsibility and a commitment to public service. It is a job that teaches important skills that can yield life-long benefits, develops teamwork and discipline and provides a solid foundation for future careers. Many lifeguards have continued in public service as police officers, firefighters, teachers and even commissioners of City agencies or pursued professions as lawyers and doctors, including the former United States Surgeon General.

While it is a truly admirable form of public service, that's not the only reason to do it. Lifeguarding is a very good summer job that helps support hundreds of students through high school and college. We offer a starting salary of \$12.55 an hour for first year lifeguards, a second-year rate of \$13.40 an hour, and lifeguards who work three or more seasons earn \$15.17 an hour, salaries that are competitive with surrounding jurisdictions. Recruiting and training qualified applicants for these jobs are the building blocks of a successful season and the focus of our efforts as we prepare for the summer of 2008.

Recruitment remains the biggest challenge we face each year when it comes to putting together a quality corps of lifeguards to keep New Yorkers safe during the summer. We have responded to this challenge by expanding our reach and employing new methods for spreading our message to prospective lifeguards. Each year we mail thousands of posters and brochures to every public,

private and parochial high school and college in the city, and all elected officials, community boards, libraries and non-profit organizations that provide services to teens and young adults. We make extensive use of the World Wide Web, electronically mailing promotional material to every NCAA College in the country that has a swimming program and making extensive use of on-line job search services.

Last year, we began using "viral marketing" for the first time, an approach that taps into the burgeoning social networking phenomenon. In conjunction with NYC and Company, we also developed the Whistle Worthy campaign to kick-off the recruitment season. Lifeguard chairs with Whistle Worthy banners were on display at eight high-traffic locations throughout the five boroughs at the start of the campaign. "Whistle Worthy" advertisements were displayed on 2,000 city buses, and on 80 bus stop shelters. Press events were held in Union Square Park, and in the Staten Island Ferry Terminal at St. George to attract attention to the campaign. We used a marketing team to visit 26 colleges with NCAA swimming teams in the NY metro area and to put up over 14,000 Whistle Worthy posters throughout the campuses. The marketers visited each campus 3 to 4 times over 6 to 8 weeks to ensure that the posters remained up, and to add posters to additional locations where they were likely to be seen by students.

We continue to recruit overseas as well, using organizations like the International YMCA and summer employment services to refer qualified candidates. However, given the standards and training requirements, it is unlikely that the number of foreign lifeguards will grow beyond the 4% or so we currently employ. The vast majority of lifeguards are New York City high school and college students. We also employ more traditional methods, using classified ads in citywide, neighborhood and ethnic newspapers. Locally, Parks staff attended PSAL, CUNY and NCAA swim meets to personally recruit competitive swimmers. Among our most effective recruiters are our lifeguard trainers and supervisors, who use their extensive contacts in the school system and the world of competitive swimming to attract new candidates to the program. All of these efforts appear to be bearing fruit. Last year we employed a record 1,092 lifeguards, surpassing the previous high of 1,060 set in 2006.

While recruitment is one of the key ingredients to a successful program, effective training remains the essential element in providing safe beaches and pools. The Municipal Lifeguard Training Program, which is authorized by the New York State Department of Health to certify lifeguards for beach and pool assignments, provides that essential element. To qualify for the Municipal Lifeguard Training Program, candidates must be 16 years of age by the start of employment, have at least 20/30 vision in one eye and 20/40 in the other (without corrective lenses), and be able to swim 50 yards in 35 seconds or less with proper form. Candidates who pass the exam are enrolled in Parks' free, 40-hour training course, which is consistent with industry standards. Lifeguard trainees learn CPR, basic first aid, freestyle, sidestroke, inverted scissor kicks, the cross-chest carry, and other life-saving methods. Training is conducted

primarily at the 59th Street Recreation Center, where access to public transportation and our ability to offer flexible schedules make it appealing to many of our trainees. We continue to offer satellite testing and training. Last year, we tested at 10 different facilities and conducted training in Rockaway and on Staten Island. We are open to adding more satellite training locations if there are a sufficient number of candidates willing to commit to a specific schedule and location.

Upon completion of the training course, candidates must pass a written exam, a swimming test in which they must swim 440 yards in 6 minutes and 40 seconds to qualify for a beach assignment, or 7 minutes and 40 seconds for a pool assignment and successfully demonstrate a number of lifesaving techniques. Beach lifeguards must also complete a 300-yard ocean swim and perform simulated rescues at the facility to which they are assigned prior to assuming their duties. Lifeguards are expected to work up to six days a week, including weekends and holidays. Candidates who successfully complete the course and pass the tests are virtually guaranteed a job for the summer and will be paid for the time spent in training once they are employed as a New York City lifeguard.

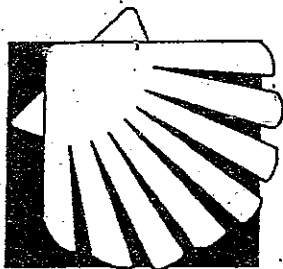
In 2007 we received over 5,000 requests for information about lifeguard job opportunities. Every person who inquired was invited to try out by taking the lifeguard qualifying test. Of approximately 1,300 who took the initial test, 359 passed and were accepted into the training program. Of those, approximately 230 successfully completed the training and were hired as NYC Lifeguards.

Clearly, we cannot rely solely on new recruits to staff the beaches and pools. The majority of the lifeguards who serve in any given year are returnees from the prior season. Each summer approximately 75% of the previous year's lifeguards return to work another season and having a higher base to build from gets us off to better start each year. Certainly, a higher salary for second and third year guards helps bring them back, as does the seniority they earn which may allow them to move to a more desirable assignment. But lifeguarding remains a seasonal occupation attracting primarily students, who often work summers through high school and college before embarking on other careers. The average age of a lifeguard is 22, and 82% of all lifeguards are less than 24 years old. Over 66% of our lifeguards in a given year have between 2 and 8 years of service. The heavy reliance on students creates some predictable staffing patterns which are common to lifeguarding programs throughout the region. In June, when students are still in school and at the end of August when many colleges open, staffing is lower than during the heart of the summer. Returning lifeguards are required to complete a recertification process each year, in which they must pass swimming tests and renew their CPR certification.

Though lifeguarding is a great summer job it is a serious business. These young women and men, many of them teenagers, are charged with a very serious task – ensuring the safety of beach and pool patrons. This is a charge that we at Parks take very seriously, and it is instilled in the members of the lifeguard corps through our training program and re-enforced by lifeguard

supervisors throughout the summer. Every year, lifeguards save many lives whether by rescuing a swimmer in distress, or by recognizing potential problems, and heading them off before an incident occurs. And they often go to extraordinary lengths on behalf of the public. Late in the day this past July 4th, a man approached a lifeguard at Coney Island, placed a gun under his chin and shot himself. A team of lifeguards immediately responded and made a valiant effort to save the man's life by performing CPR and rescue breathing until EMS arrived. While the man unfortunately did not survive, the actions of the lifeguard crew were truly heroic, a testament to their personal character and reflective of the training they received.

We are extremely proud of the work that has been done over the years by our lifeguards. We are fortunate to live in such close proximity to the natural beauty of the ocean and to have so many large pools in neighborhoods around the five boroughs. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our almost 1,100 lifeguards and supervisors, millions of New Yorkers are able to take advantage of these wonderful resources. We look forward to working with the Council, other agencies of government and community partners to continue to build the lifeguard program and reach our ultimate goal of 1,200 lifeguards serving at public beaches and pools.



**COMMUNITY
BOARD ♦ 14**

COMMUNITY BOARD 14
City of New York
Borough of Queens

DOLORES ORR
Chairperson

JONATHAN L. GASKA
District Manager

March 31, 2006

Mr. Adrian Benepe, Commissioner
NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation
The Arsenal
Central Park
New York, NY 10021

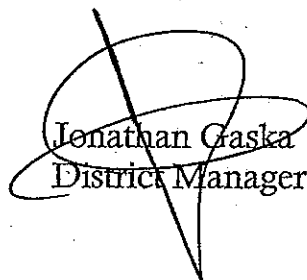
Dear Commissioner Benepe:

I am writing this letter to reaffirm Community Board #14's support for the hiring of part time lifeguards. Our district has dozens of firefighters, police officers, teachers, etc. that were former lifeguards in their youth and because of their flexible work schedules, would be able to work part time as a lifeguard.

It is our belief that the hiring of part timers would be a sensible solution to the yearly shortage of lifeguards. Please give serious consideration to this request.

I thank you, in advance, for your efforts in this matter.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Gaska
District Manager

JG/rm

Cc: Hon. Helen Marshall
Hon. Helen D. Foster
Hon. Malcolm Smith
Hon. Audrey Pheffer
Hon. Michele Titus
Hon. Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.
Hon. James Sanders, Jr.
Belle Harbor Property Owners Assoc.
Neponsit Property Owners Assoc.
Rockaway Beach Civic Assoc.



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Far Rockaway, NY 11691
Tel. (718) 471-7300
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QUEENS CIVIC CONGRESS, INC.

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ASSOCIATION OF OLD FOREST HILLS
BAYSIDE HILLS CIVIC ASSOC.
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BELLE ROSE COMMONWEALTH CIVIC ASSOC.
BELLE ROSE HILLSIDE CIVIC ASSOC.
BELJ. PARK MANOR-TERRACE COMMUNITY ASSOC.
BOWNE PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION
BRIARWOOD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
CAMERON HEIGHTS CIVIC ASSOCIATION
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DOUG-BAY MANOR ASSOC.
DOUGLASTON CIVIC ASSOC.
DOUGLAS MANOR ASSOCIATION
DUTTON KILLS CIVIC ASSOC.
EAST FLUSHING CIVIC ASSOC.
FEDERATED BLOCKS OF LAURELTON
FLORAL PARK COMMUNITY COUNCIL
FLUSHING HEIGHTS CIVIC ASSOC.
FLUSHING SUBURBAN CIVIC ASSOC.
FLUSHING ON THE HILL
FOREST HILLS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
FOREST HILLS CRESCENTS ASSOC.
FOREST HILLS - VAN COURT ASSOC.
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HOLLIS PARK GARDENS CIVIC ASSOC.
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HUNTERS POINT COMMUNITY COALITION
HYDE PARK GARDENS
JACKSON HEIGHTS BEAUTIFICATION GROUP
JAMAICA ESTATES CIVIC ASSOC.
JAMAICA HILL COMMUNITY ASSOC.
JAMAICA VILLAGE CIVIC ASSOC.
JUNIPER PARK CIVIC ASSOC.
KEW FOREST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
KEW GARDENS CIVIC ASSOCIATION
KEW GARDENS HILLS CIVIC ASSOCIATION
KISSENA PARK CIVIC ASSOC.
LITTLE NECK BAY CIVIC ASSOCIATION
LITTLE NECK COMMUNITY ASSOC.
LITTLE NECK PINES ASSOC.
LOST COMMUNITY CIVIC ASSOC.
MALBA CIVIC ASSOC.
MEADOW LARK GARDENS OWNERS
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ROYAL RANCH ASSOC.
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SOUTH OZONE PARK COALITION OF BLOCK ASSOC.
SOUTH OZONE PARK WEST CIVIC ASSOC.
SOUTHEAST QUEENS COALITION OF CONCERNED NEIGHBORS
SUNNYSIDE GARDENS HARRISON PLACE
SURREY ESTATES HOMEOWNERS ASSOC.
THE FEDERATION OF CIVIC ASSOC. OF S E QUEENS
"THE PROPERTY" CIVIC ASSOC.
UNION TURNPIKE MERCHANTS ASSOC.
UNITED FORTIES CIVIC ASSOC.
UNITED NEIGHBORS CIVIC ASSOC. OF JAMAICA
UTOPIA ESTATES CIVIC ASSOC.
VILLAGE HALL AT HILLCREST CONDOMINIUM
WALDEN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOC.
WAYNDA CIVIC ASSOCIATION
WEST CUNNINGHAM PARK CIVIC ASSOC.
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February 27, 2006

Hon. Adrian Benepe
Commissioner of Parks
The Arsenal
Central Park
New York, NY 10021

Dear Commissioner Benepe:

I am writing you in support of the Belle Harbor Property Owners regarding the shortage of lifeguards. Belle Harbor's initiation of a recruitment program is to be commended, and we urge you to support it 100%. As a former lifeguard, I do not understand why you do not permit part time lifeguards. Many summer students could work weekend or late shifts to supplement a full time staff. Rockaway Beach is a priority for the QCC and all of Queens County. We hope to hear from you shortly on your plans to increase the lifeguard coverage.

Very truly yours,


Sean M. Walsh
President

Please know that the entire Queens Coalition stands with them and their request to remedy this situation. We fully support their position and the proposal to hire part time lifeguards as suggested by Assemblyperson Audrey Pheffer referenced in her Sept. 1, 2005 letter to you.

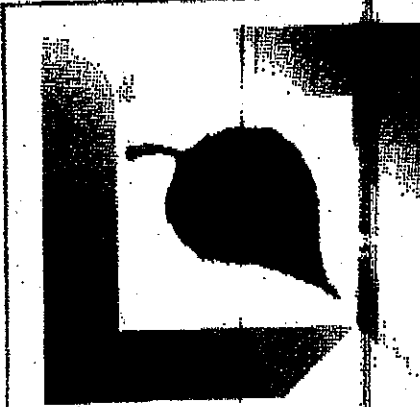
I hope you will continue to work with the Belle Harbor residents to remedy this very serious situation before the next beach season begins.

We need safe beaches all over New York City for all our residents !

Sincerely,


Frederick J. Kress

**CC: Mayor Bloomberg, Borough President Helen Marshall,
Councilmember Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., Congressman Anthony Weiner
State Senator Malcolm Smith, Sean Walsh, Queens Civic Congress**



Queens Coalition for Parks and Green Spaces

416 member groups strong and still growing!
300050 JFK AIRPORT
JAMAICA NY 11430

March 2, 2006

Dear Commissioner Benepe:

I am in receipt of a copy of your letter to the Belle Harbor Property Owners' Association regarding the issue of lack of lifeguard coverage on the beaches of New York City.

Please know that the entire Queens Coalition stands with them and their request to remedy this situation. We fully support their position and the proposal to hire part time lifeguards as suggested by Assemblyperson Audrey Pheffer referenced in her Sept. 1, 2005 letter to you.

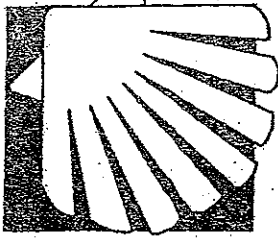
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We need safe beaches all over New York City for all our residents!

Sincerely,


Frederick J. Kress

**CC: Mayor Bloomberg, Borough President Helen Marshall,
Councilmember Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., Congressman Anthony Weiner
State Senator Malcolm Smith, Sean Walsh, Queens Civic Congress**



**COMMUNITY
BOARD ♦ 14**

September 14, 2006

COMMUNITY BOARD 14
City of New York
Borough of Queens

DOLORES ORR
Chairperson

JONATHAN L. GASKA
District Manager

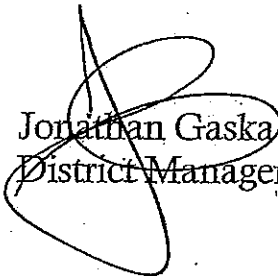
Liam Kavanagh
Deputy Commissioner, Operations
NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation
The Arsenal
Central Park
New York, NY 10021

Dear Deputy Commissioner Kavanagh:

As you might know, our Parks Committee is reviewing a number of issues related to lifeguards in our district. I have enclosed a copy of a number of requests that the committee has made regarding information your agency has on file. Please send this information as soon as possible.

I thank you, in advance, for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Jonathan Gaska
District Manager

JG/rm
Enclosures

cc: Hon. Helen Marshall
Hon. Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.
Hon. Audrey Pheffer



September 10, 2006

To: Community Board 14

From: Ad- Hoc Lifeguard/Beach Committee

RE: INFORMATION needed to complete our recommendations

The Department of Parks and Recreation should have many of documents for the following requests however for #10, the Beach Safety Plan, The Department of Health is the agency that requires parks to file one.

1. A break down for the 65 students that attended the DOE LDP program specifically: how many became city pool lifeguards, how many became ocean lifeguards ; how many passed the course but elected not to work for the city . How many received some type of lifeguard certification irregardless of employment with the City of New York .
2. Total Budget for DPR Lifeguards
3. Copy of City of New York 's Lifeguard training manual
4. Curriculum materials used for training for new candidates and in service training manuals
5. Written rules and procedures for Lifeguards
6. Lifeguard Union Contract
7. Peter Stein -- Department Role specific title and duties.
8. During the summer of 2006 breakdown of each week's total amount of beaches that were closed and which beaches were closed.
9. Written policy on qualifications for Lifeguard Training Instructors
10. The Department of Health's Beach Safety Plan for the Rockaways as submitted by the Department of Parks and Recreation
11. How are supervisors chosen? How are the rank and file made aware of available supervisor jobs?
12. Copy of the Public Advocate's (Mark Green) 1994 report on Lifeguard issues

TRANSMISSION VERIFICATION REPORT

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COMMUNITY BOARD #14

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Name: JONATHAN GASKA

Fax Number: 212-360-1347

Date: SEPTEMBER 20, 2006

Company/Dept: NYC DEPT. OF PARKS & RECREATION

Total # of Pages Including Cover: 2

Phone Number: 212-360-1307

Urgent

Re: LIFEGUARDS

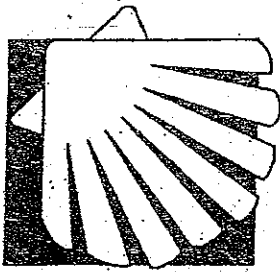
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MESSAGE:



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COMMUNITY BOARD 14
City of New York
Borough of Queens

DOLORES ORR
Chairperson

JONATHAN L. GASKA
District Manager

February 9, 2007

Mr. Adrian Benepe, Commissioner
NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation
The Arsenal
Central Park
New York, NY 10021

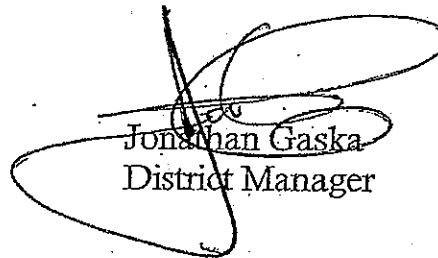
Dear Commissioner Benepe:

On September 14, 2006 I wrote to Deputy Commissioner Liam Kavanaugh on behalf of the Community Board requesting some specific information that our Parks committee needed to help it complete its recommendations regarding the lifeguard issue.

As of the date of this letter, we have not received a response in ANY form. I have included a copy of our original letter for your review. I think you would agree that five months waiting for any type of response from your agency is more than patient on our part and it appears intentionally uncooperative on your agency's part.

I thank you, in advance, for your efforts in this matter.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Gaska
District Manager

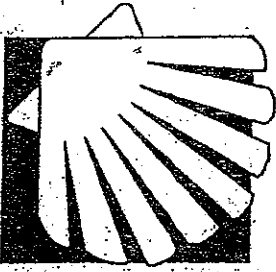
JG/rm

Enclosure

cc: Deputy Mayor Doctoroff
Hon. Christine Quinn
Hon. Helen Marshall
Hon. Malcolm Smith
Hon. Audrey Pheffer
Hon. Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.
Hon. James Sanders, Jr.



1931 Moit Avenue
Far Rockaway, NY 11691
Tel. (718) 471-7300
Fax (718) 868-2657



**COMMUNITY
BOARD ♦ 14**

COMMUNITY BOARD 14
City of New York
Borough of Queens

DOLORES ORR
Chairperson

JONATHAN L. GASKA
District Manager

April 2, 2007

Mr. Liam Kavanagh
Deputy Commissioner, Operations
NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation
The Arsenal
830 Fifth Avenue, Room 308
New York, NY 10021

Dear Deputy Commissioner Kavanagh:

On behalf of the membership of Community Board #14, I would like to thank you for meeting with us on Friday, March 23, 2007 regarding lifeguard training and testing. It is our belief that this meeting is an important first step in restoring our confidence in your agency regarding this matter. I thought it prudent to memorialize some of the issues we had a level of agreement on:

1. There is a commitment from your agency that beginning with the 2007 testing season, there will be competitive timing/clock plainly visible to those being tested as well as those on the deck so they can see their final time in the swim portion of the testing. To keep in line with your comment that all candidates be tested under the same conditions, if a malfunction of the new visible timing system occurs, we also request that a redundant timing system be put in place and that any candidate that was not tested under the new timing system shall be noted and sent to your office.
2. There will be a meeting between you and Council Members Helen Foster and Joseph Addabbo, Jr. to reach an agreement on having a suitable independent person/monitor at each and every testing session in lieu of allowing a parent or guardian present during testing.

We further ask for your consideration and implementation of the other items listed in our committee report.

1. A report card be given to each person who had taken the test which would include swim time, and score on holds, etc.



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Far Rockaway, NY 11691
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Page 2

Deputy Commissioner Kavanagh

April 2, 2007

2. Beach hours for lifeguards during weekdays in the summer should be from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Weekend hours for beach lifeguards should be set from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
3. Make use of part-time lifeguards throughout the season (Police, Fire and Education personnel). The Department of Parks and Recreation permits this in May and June but refuses to continue through July and August even when shortages clearly exist.
4. Our adjoining ocean communities have implemented a lifeguard response truck for after hours. We recommend that a minimum of 3 such trucks be deployed in the Rockaway's between the hours of 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. The response vehicles would be used to respond to water emergencies on the shores when the beaches are closed. A posting for the job would be posted in each shack and hiring would be based on ocean rescue experience.
5. Upgrade and improve the lifeguard beach "shack" facilities.
6. Ocean lifeguard training should be certified by the U.S.L.A., the nationally recognized standards for ocean rescue operations. Each lifeguard would be issued an open water-training manual and if the City of New York's program receives the U.S.L.A. certification then it would be nationally recognized as a bona fide ocean rescue-training program.
7. Job Postings: All promotional opportunities need to be posted to allow for qualified individual to apply. A fair and equitable selection process must be established to select individuals for a promotional position. Presently, promotions are through word of mouth and are not advertised.
8. Develop fair promotional test for lifeguard supervisors.
9. The City of New York should publish the various aspects of their test for lifeguards and send out publications citywide to the high schools. Riis Park and Nassau County each provided us with a written explanation of their test.

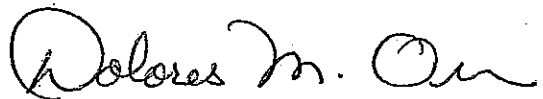
Page 3
Deputy Commissioner Kavanagh
April 2, 2007

10. Long-range plan to determine feasibility of having the NYC Fire Department take over all aspects of recruitment, training and certification of lifeguards for ocean, bay and pools.
11. Improve/streamline the paperwork process.

We also respectfully request that for 2008 you implement a pilot program to hold training, as well as testing, in a pool in the Borough of Queens.

We look forward to continuing this dialogue on this important issue. I thank you for your time and patience.

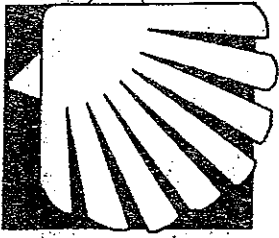
Sincerely,



Dolores M. Orr
Chairperson

JG/rm

cc: Queens Borough President Helen Marshall
Council Member Joseph Addabbo, Jr.
Council Member James Sanders, Jr.
Council Member Helen Foster
Assembly Member Audrey Pheffer
Assembly Member Michele Titus
State Senator Malcolm Smith
Commissioner Patrick J. Brennan, CAU



COMMUNITY
BOARD ♦ 14

June 8, 2007

COMMUNITY BOARD 14
City of New York
Borough of Queens

DOLORES ORR
Chairperson

JONATHAN L. GASKA
District Manager

Mr. Adrian Benepe, Commissioner
NYC Department of Parks and Recreation
The Arsenal
Central Park
New York, NY 10021

Dear Commissioner Benepe:

Our office has written to you and your Deputy Commissioner, Liam Kavanagh, three letters starting with the date of September 14, 2006 and our last letter dated April 2, 2007 regarding the lifeguard training issue. As of the date of this letter, neither you nor your agency has given the board the courtesy of a response to any of these letters.

In the June 8 edition of The Wave, your Deputy Commissioner, Liam Kavanagh, when asked about one of the letters dated April 2, 2007, claimed he was just handed the letter on June 1. In response to your agencies specious claims of not receiving our letters, we have decided that in the future, all letters to you or your staff will be sent return receipt requested and faxed with us keeping a file of confirmation of the fax being received by your office. Hopefully, this will resolve the problem of your agency not receiving our letters and will allow for a timely response to our concerns and requests.

Our community and the community board has always enjoyed an excellent working relationship with the Parks Department and we feel that your agency does a wonderful job in our district maintaining our parks and beaches.



193J Mott Avenue
Far Rockaway, NY 11691
Tel. (718) 471-7300
Fax (718) 868-2657

Page 2
Commissioner Benepe
June 8, 2007

We are, however, surprised and disappointed in how your agency has responded to our concerns regarding the lifeguard issue. It is our hope that these issues can be resolved and allow us to move forward together in making our district a great place to recreate.

For your review and response, I have enclosed copies of the four letters we have written to your agency over the last year.

I thank you, in advance, for your efforts in this matter.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Gaska
District Manager

JG/rm

cc: Mayor Michael Bloomberg

Queens Borough President Helen Marshall

Council Speaker Christine Quinn

Council Member Helen Foster

Council Member Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.

Council Member James Sanders, Jr.

Commissioner Nazli Parvizi, CAU

Assembly Member Audrey Pheffer

Assembly Member Michele Titus

State Senator Malcolm Smith

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<p>1. Article Addressed to:</p> <p><i>Adrian Benepe, Commissioner NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation The Arsenal Central Park New York, NY 10021</i></p>	<p>D. Is delivery address different from item 1? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If YES, enter delivery address below:</p>
<p>2. Article Number (Transfer from service label)</p>	<p>3. Service Type</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certified Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Express Mail</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Registered <input type="checkbox"/> Return Receipt for Merchandise</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Insured Mail <input type="checkbox"/> C.O.D.</p>
<p>PS Form 3811, February 2004</p>	<p>4. Restricted Delivery? (Extra Fee) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p>7006 2760 0001 2850 7582</p> <p>Domestic Return Receipt 702595-02-M-1540</p>

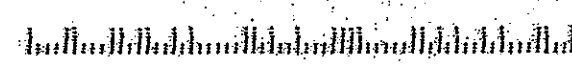
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NEW YORK NY 100

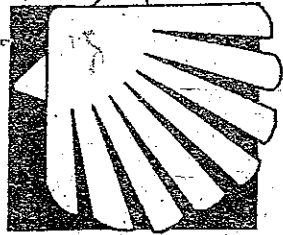
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*Community Board #14 Q
1931 Mott Avenue, Rm. 311
Far Rockaway, NY 11691*





**COMMUNITY
BOARD ♦ 14**

COMMUNITY BOARD 14
City of New York
Borough of Queens

DOLORES ORR
Chairperson

JONATHAN L. GASKA
District Manager

August 16, 2007

Mr. Liam Kavanagh
Deputy Commissioner
NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation
The Arsenal
830 Fifth Avenue, Room 308
New York, NY 10021

Dear Deputy Commissioner Kavanagh:

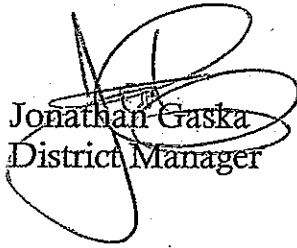
I have been asked by our Parks committee to request from you the following information:

- 1) The total number of "active" lifeguards assigned to Rockaway Beach at this time.
- 2) The total number of lifeguards assigned to each of the lifeguard "shacks" (please list each shack and the number active working personnel in each shack).
- 3) The number of lifeguards "shipped in" to Rockaway from Coney Island each day, what hours they are working, and do these hours include overtime?

Note:

1. Active-meaning those actually working, not on leaves
2. Assigned and working, not on leaves.

Sincerely,


Jonathan Gaska
District Manager

JG/rm

cc: Mayor Michael Bloomberg
Queens Borough President Helen Marshall
Councilman Joseph Addabbo, Jr.
Councilman James Sanders, Jr.
Assemblywoman Audrey Pheffer
Chairperson Dolores Orr



1931 Mott Avenue
Far Rockaway, NY 11691
Tel. (718) 471-7300
Fax (718) 868-2657

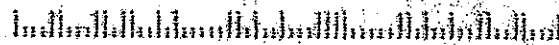
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Jonathan Gaska
Community Board #14 Q
1931 Mott Ave., Room 311
Brooklyn, NY 11241



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1. Article Addressed to:
Mr. Liam Kavanagh
NYC Dept of Parks & Recreation
The Arsenal
830 Fifth Ave.
Room 308
New York, NY 10021

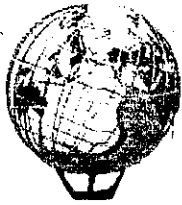
2. Article Number
(Transfer from service label)

COMPLETION ON DELIVERY

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 Jonathan Gaska Agent
 Addressee
 B. Received by (Printed Name) C. Date of Delivery
Jonathan Gaska 6-27
 D. Is delivery address different from item 1? Yes
 If YES, enter delivery address below: No

3. Service Type
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4. Restricted Delivery? (Extra Fee) Yes



Queens Civic Congress

P.O. Box 238, Flushing, NY 11363 (718) 343-6779 fax: (718) 225-2818
www.queensciviccongress.org

President:
Corey Bearak

Executive Vice President:
Patricia Dolan

Secretary:
Seymour Schwartz

Treasurer:
James Trent

Vice Presidents:
Tyler Cassell Richard Hellenbrecht Paul Kerzner David Kulick
Barbara Larkin Audrey Lucas Kathy Masi Nagassar Ramgarib
Harbachan Singh Edwin Westley Dorothy Woo

Founders:
President *Emeritus* Sean Walsh
Albert Greenblatt
Robert Harris

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2007

Contact:
Corey Bearak
(718) 343-6779

Testimony to the City Council Parks and Recreation Committee
on the
City's Lifeguards Program
by

Barbara Larkin, Vice President, Queens Civic Congress and
President, Belle Harbor Property Owners Association

Thank you, Chairwoman Foster, and members of the Committee for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the Queens Civic Congress and my own Belle Harbor Property Owners Association (BHPOA) concerning the City's Lifeguards program. I am Barbara Larkin; I serve not only as a Vice President of the Queens Civic Congress but also as President of the BHPOA. The QCC, an umbrella organization of more than 110 neighborhood based civic organizations representing property owners, and tenants who reside in Queens, the 1300 households in Belle Harbor, a coastal community in the Rockaways, and the residents of our neighboring communities all share an interest ensuring the safety of beachgoers -- whether they live near or visit our City beaches. In particular, we advocate for the hundreds of thousands of visitors from other parts of Queens County, as well as other beach-goers who flock to the Rockaway peninsula during the summer months for the sole purpose of having the pleasure of swimming in the ocean along Rockaway's seven mile shoreline.

Last week, while watching Wheel of Fortune which was telecast from Historic Radio City Music Hall in New York City, all contestants, when asked what they enjoyed doing most, stated without hesitation that they loved "going to the beach." Why? Because of New York's fabulous shoreline -- where memorable moments are cherished for a lifetime! Unfortunately, every summer, red flags assault Rockaway residents and visiting beachgoers where they ought to find well-trained lifeguards. In their place, individuals hired by the Department of Parks & Recreation ride along the shore in Urban Vehicles emitting gaseous fumes --- reminding good citizens to either - STAY OUT OF THE WATER because there no lifeguard covers that section of the beach - or to drag all belongings to a "covered" beach? Could the lifeguard shortage be due to less than stellar recruiting practices?

Could the lifeguard shortage exist because of unfair training and testing procedures of lifeguards? Could mediocrity have become an acceptable term at the Department of Parks & Recreation when it comes to beach coverage? As a retired teacher in the NYC School system I can report that when a teacher was not able to report for duty, the NYC Department of Education made certain the class was covered by a substitute.

-over, please -

Can you imagine the public outcry if a flag, red or otherwise, was put at the entrance of a classroom indicating no teacher coverage was available for the day – forcing each student to find a seat “in another area of the school? Indeed, with your help, I am certain responsibility will once again reign from Memorial Day through Labor Day when qualified lifeguards will guard every beach in New York City.

As a responsible citizen and community activist for over three decades, I respectfully request that this committee share the following suggestions with the full City Council and press City Hall and the Parks and Recreation Department to support their implementation – all in an effort to ensure adequate lifeguard coverage throughout the summer season:

- Allow hundreds of former lifeguards who are now members of the FDNY, NYPD Dept. of Sanitation, Dept. of Education, as well as other city agencies, to work as lifeguards on a part time basis. This suggestion, alone, would solve the lifeguard shortage.....
- Create a Junior Lifeguard Program which will help train future lifeguards...
- Open more training sites. With a new YMCA slated to open in the near future in the Rockaways, let's ensure a 6-lane pool is built. Queens (not to mention the city) needs more swimming programs to offer the young people who could be doing these jobs the critical skill to get employed. There exists no reason not to nurture qualified youth who could serve as quality lifeguards without reliance of recruits from abroad...
- Adopt training and testing programs similar to that of the Nation Parks Service. Their system allows for a point system which assists administrators better identify qualified lifeguards...
- Open the doors. If testing is being done in a fair manner, there is no reason why parents/guardians should be shut out of the testing...
- Provide feedback. Pass or fail, everybody should know what skills they need to work on...
- Keep lifeguards close to home to increase likelihood of emergency availability should it become necessary to lengthen the lifeguard's hours on a day when the ocean is rough, or extreme temperatures dictate beaches should remain open to the public...

Thank you.

Francesco A. Pia, Ph.D
3 Boulder on Brae Lane
Larchmont, NY 10538-1105
(914) 834-7536
frankpia@optonline.net

November 12, 2007

The City of New York
City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
250 Broadway
New York, NY

Re: New York City Municipal Lifeguard Training School

Credentials.

My name is Francesco A. Pia Ph.D. I worked for the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation as a lifeguard, Lt. lifeguard, and chief lifeguard at Orchard Beach from 1959 until 1979. In 1979, I also was the first Bronx borough coordinator for lifeguard services.

Subsequent to my 21 years of lifeguard service for the City of New York, I served as a volunteer technical adviser for the American Red Cross' 1983, 1995, 2001, and 2007 lifeguard programs. I was also the technical adviser for this organization's Guard Start Head Lifeguard, and Lifeguard Manager programs. Currently I am the lifeguard subject matter expert on the American National Red Cross' Advisory Council for First Aid, Aquatics, Safety, and Preparedness (ACFAS).

The research I conducted on water crisis recognition training, drowning person versus distress swimmer recognition, the instinctive drowning response, and the RID Factor has been incorporated in nearly all of the lifeguard training manuals in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Australia. My research on surveillance concepts has been utilized by the New York State Health Department in formulating sections 6-1, 6-2, and 7-2 of the State Sanitary Code.

New York City Municipal Lifeguard Training Curriculum

From the 1950's through the 1970's the municipal lifeguard training school had an excellent lifeguard training curriculum. New York City lifeguards always had a reputation of being part of one of the best trained lifeguard services in the United States. The pre-service swimming competency standards for pool and open water lifeguards have traditionally been among the most rigorous pool and open water lifeguard swimming requirements in the United States.

However, three years ago I reviewed the municipal lifeguard training school's curriculum and a facility safety plan. This review was part of my expert witness testimony preparation for the Brooklyn Corporation counsel's office.

At that time, I realized the curriculum and testing protocols needed substantial improvements. Unfortunately the New York City municipal lifeguard training program had not kept pace with the injury prevention and control and the aquatic supervision concepts found in contemporary pool, open water, and surf lifeguard programs.

Administration of Municipal Lifeguard Training School's Swim Competencies

Recently the administration of the municipal lifeguard training program's entrance and exit timed swim competencies has become controversial. Before entering the municipal lifeguard training program, candidates are required to swim 50 yards in 35 seconds or less. This translates to 17.5 seconds per lap in a 25 yard pool.

New York City pool lifeguard exit standards require that an individual swim 440 yards in under 7 minutes and 40 seconds. If the candidate must swim 17 laps in a 25 yard pool, he or she must maintain a 27.6 second per lap pace. If the candidate has to swim 18 laps, a 23 second per lap pace is required to meet the exit requirement.

New York City ocean lifeguard exit standards require that a person swim 440 yards in under 6 minutes and 40 seconds. If the candidate is required to swim 17 laps in a 25 yard pool, he or she must maintain a 23.5 second per lap pace. If the person is required to swim 18 laps in a 25 yard pool, a 22 second per lap pace must be maintained.

One of the tasks of a lifeguard examiner is to provide feedback to candidates during and after their exit swim competency test. It is therefore quite important that the examiner be able to provide data to the candidates regarding their pace during the 440 yard swim. If the lifeguard shortage facing New York City is to be remedied, this information must be conveyed to lifeguard candidates so they can undertake remedial measures.

Municipal Lifeguard Training Curriculum and Certification.

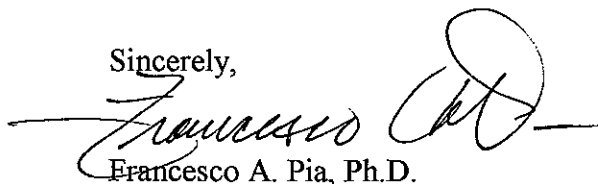
The majority of the lifeguard training programs in the United States for pool and open water lifeguards range between 31 and 40 hours. The curriculum covers injury prevention and control, patron surveillance, rescue skills, first aid, breathing and cardiac emergencies, and oxygen and AED administration.

CPR and first aid instructors and instructor trainers provide the training, testing, and certification necessary to satisfy the requirements of the New York State Sanitary Code. Certificates for the completion of CPR and AED administration are given each year by agencies such as the American Red Cross.

The water competency skills such as rescues with various pieces of equipment, boat rescues, and understanding the dynamics of the surf environment are topics that are first introduced at the municipal lifeguard training school and then supplemented through in-service training provided by New York City lifeguard supervisors.

In my expert opinion, the New York City Municipal Lifeguard Training School's curriculum and test administration can benefit from substantial revisions.

Sincerely,



Francesco A. Pia, Ph.D.

Pia Consulting Services

a division of Water Safety Films, Inc
3 Boulder Brae Lane
Larchmont, N.Y. 10538-1105

Francesco A. Pia, President
BA, MA, MS, ACC, Ph.D.

Telephone
(914 834-7536

RESUME

Summary: Originator of the Distress vs. Drowning person classification

Conducted the original research on the Instinctive Drowning Response

Copyright author of the four characteristics of an actively struggling drowning person

Instituted the first lifeguard and water safety training program for teaching drowning victim recognition concepts in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Australia

Conceived the "Pia Carry" a non-equipment swimming rescue currently taught by the Lifesaving Society of Canada and formerly described as the modified cross chest carry by the American Red Cross

Conducted a two year research study into the causes of swimming related drowning fatalities in the United States from 1910 to 1980 in areas where lifeguards were on duty

Formulated the RID Factor as a Cause of Drowning

39 years experience in drowning accident causation and reconstruction for public and private aquatic agencies

34 years experience lecturing to federal, state, county, and local agencies on the causes and solutions to swimming, nonswimming, and boating related drowning fatalities

21 years experience as a lifeguard and chief lifeguard at Orchard Beach, Bronx, NY, where approximately 2,000 near drownings and rescues occurred each summer

September President, Pia Consulting Services
1979-2004

Responsibilities: provide consultation services to educational and governmental agencies involved in aquatics and to plaintiffs' and defendants' attorneys engaged in litigation

Authored two legal articles on drowning accident causation:

"Establishing Causation in Unobserved Drownings"
Personal Injury Deskbook
Matthew Bender & Co., September, 1984.

"Unobserved Drownings: The Unnoticed Struggle"
Trial Magazine
Association of Trial Lawyers of America, November, 1982.

Injury Prevention Publications:

"Guarding Against Misconceptions"
Aquatics International
May, 2006

Handbook on Drowning: Prevention, Rescue, and Treatment
Bierens, J.J.L. (Ed) Springer (2002), NY

1. Section 3.9.9 *The Reasons People Drown*. Pia, F.
2. Section 5.5 *Lifeguard Surveillance and Scanning: past, present and future*": Fenner, Griffiths, Oosterman & Pia
3. Section 5.19. *Management of Physical and Psychological responses during administration of CPR to drowned persons*. Pia, F.

Lifeguard Effectiveness: A Report of the Working Group

"Patron Surveillance: A Key Component of Lifeguarding Services"
Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control: 2001. Branche, CM & Stewart, S. (Ed.)

"Reflections on Lifeguard Surveillance Programs"
New Science of Drowning: Prevention & Intervention
CRC Press: 1999

"Proposing a New Safety Collaboration"
Pool & Spa News
June 15, 1994

Lead writer for three chapters in Lifeguarding Today:
(Aquatic Injury Prevention, Patron Surveillance and Facility Surveillance)
American Red Cross 1994

Preventing Swimming Related Fatalities"
Pennsylvania Parks & Recreation Society
Spring 1991 Volume 22, No. 3

"The RID Factor as a Cause of Drowning"
Parks & Recreation
National Parks & Recreation Society, June, 1984.

"Reduce Swimming Pool Diving Accidents

and Millions of Dollars in Liability Costs"
Crawford Educational Newsletter
Crawford & Company, Nov. /Dec. 1982.

"Observations on the Drowning of Nonswimmers"
Journal of Physical Education
The YMCA Society of North America, July, 1974.
Reprinted in:
Lifeguarding, 1st. Edition (1980)
American Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation.

Produced and directed the following training films and videotapes:

On Drowning, 1970, a 13-minute lifeguard film which contains actual, *not staged*, film footage of 12 near drownings and rescues which range from single victims through a group of four.

Drowning: Facts & Myths, 1976, a 10-minute general audience film which examines the causes and solutions of swimming, nonswimming, and boating related drowning fatalities.

The Reasons People Drown, 1988, 22-minute drowning prevention videotape

Lifeguard Experience

May 1969 Chief Lifeguard, Orchard Beach, Bronx, NY:
to supervised 50 lifeguards and 3 Lieutenant lifeguards, and
Sept. 1979 conducted in service lifeguard and CPR training at Orchard Beach
and 12 New York City pools.

May 1964 Lieutenant Lifeguard, Orchard Beach, Bronx NY.
to
Sept. 1968

June, 1959 Lifeguard, Orchard Beach, Bronx, NY.
to
Sept. 1963

American Red Cross Volunteer Positions

- Advisory Committee for First Aid and Safety
- National Technical Advisor for Lifeguard Training

Aquatic Committee Membership

1981 - 1983 American Red Cross National Advisory Committee
Lifeguard Training

1993 American Red Cross National Advisory Committee
Lifeguard Training & Community Water Safety

- 1995 American Red Cross National Advisory Committee
Head Lifeguard
- 1997 Chairman: Health and Safety Advisory Committee
Westchester County American Red Cross
- 1999 American Red Cross National Advisory Committee
Guard Start/Lifeguarding Tomorrow
- 2001 American Red Cross National Advisory Committee
Lifeguard Training
- 2001 American Red Cross National Advisory Committee
Lifeguard Manager
- 2004 American Red Cross National Advisory Committee
Lifeguard Training

Awards

- 2005 Who's Who in Aquatic Leadership in the USA
- 2004 Who's Who in Aquatic Leadership in the USA
- 2003 American National Red Cross
Special Citation for Exceptional Volunteer Service
- 2000 American Red Cross in Westchester County, NY
Volunteer of the Year

Invited Lecturer at Aquatic Conferences

- 1970 Council for National Cooperation in Aquatics (CNCA) Ft. Lauderdale, FL
- 1971 American Red Cross National Staff Training Conference Cincinnati, OH
- 1972 National Water Safety Congress Dallas, TX
- 1975 National Women's Aquatic Forum Ft. Lauderdale, FL
- 1976 American Red Cross Regional Aquatic School Brookline, MA
- 1977 American Red Cross Regional Aquatic School Mountain Lakes, NY
- 1978 U.S. Coast Guard Second Coast Guard District Springfield, IL
Des Moines, IA

Boating Safety Seminars

- | | | |
|------|---|----------------------------|
| 1979 | University of Rhode Island
First Northeast Conference in Cold Water Survival | Kingston, RI |
| | American Red Cross
Regional Aquatic School | Mountain Lakes, NY |
| | Columbia College
Water Rescue '79 | Sonoma, CA |
| 1980 | Westchester County Department of Health
Pool Safety Seminar | White Plains, NY |
| | American Red Cross
Regional Aquatic School | Mountain Lakes, NY |
| | American Red Cross &
Westchester County Department of Health
Hypothermia Conference | White Plains, NY |
| | American Association of Health,
Physical Education and Recreation (AAHPER)
Aquatic School | Indiana University, PA |
| | National Safety Council
Water Safety Awareness Program | Chicago, IL |
| | Council for National Cooperation in Aquatics | Atlanta, GA |
| | National Park Service
Swimming Related Fatalities Seminar | Falls River, NY |
| 1981 | Royal Lifesaving Society of Canada
University of Victoria | Victoria, British Columbia |
| | Northeastern University
YMCA Aquatic Institute
Middle Atlantic Region | Berwyn, PA |
| | American Red Cross
Regional Aquatic School | Mountain Lakes, NY |
| | Westchester County
Dept. of Parks and Recreation
Swimming Pool Operators Course | White Plains, NY |
| | National Safety Council
Eastern Region Safety Conference | Philadelphia, PA |

1982	Council for National Cooperation in Aquatics	Columbus, OH
	American Red Cross Regional Aquatic School	Mountain Lakes, NY
1983	Rutgers University Aquatics Management Program	New Brunswick, NJ
	American Camping Association New Jersey Section	Lebanon, NJ
	American Red Cross Regional Aquatic School	Mountain Lakes, NY
1984	Advanced Lifeguard Training Conference University of Victoria	Victoria, British Columbia
	American Camping Association Eastern Camping Association NY, NJ & PA Sections	Teaneck, NJ
	YMCA Aquatic School - Northeast Region Springfield College	Springfield, MA
	American Red Cross Regional Aquatic School	Mountain Lakes, NY
1985	American Camping Association Eastern Camping Association	Teaneck, NJ
1985	Rutgers University Aquatic Management Conference	New Brunswick, NJ
	New Jersey Pool Managers Association	Tenafly, NJ
1986	National Spa and Pool Institute 1986 Aquatic Symposium	Indianapolis, IN
	American Camping Association Eastern Camping Association	Teaneck, NJ
	NJ Department of Environmental Protection Aquatic Managers Seminar	Trenton, NJ
1986	Royal Lifesaving Society of Canada Rescue '86	Vancouver, British Columbia
1987	National Safety Council 75th Annual Congress	Chicago, IL

1988	National Water Safety Congress National Conference	Scottsdale, AZ
	Army Corps of Engineers Staff Training Conference	Pittsburgh, PA
	Ohio Division of Watercraft Statewide Conference	Columbus, OH
1989	United States Boating Law Administrators National Conference	San Diego, CA
	The Royal Lifesaving Society of Canada National Conference	Quebec, Canada
	Council for National Cooperation in Aquatics	Indianapolis, IN
1990	Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association Northeast Aquatics Seminar	Windsor Locks, CT
1991	State of Maryland Natural Resources Police Outdoor Education Seminar	Ocean City, MD
1992	Westchester County Department of Health Children's Summer Camp Workshop	White Plains, NY
	Westchester County Recreation and Parks Assoc. Aquatics Workshop	White Plains, NY
	Council for National Cooperation in Aquatics	Cincinnati, OH
	Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association 32nd Annual State Conference	North Haven, CT
1996	New York State Recreation and Park Society	Syracuse, NY
1996	International Swimming Pool Hall of Fame Drowning Symposia	Ft. Lauderdale, FL
1997	International Lifesaving Federation Medical Rescue Conference	San Diego, CA
1998	Centers for Disease Control Lifeguard Effectiveness Workgroup	Atlanta, GA
	PRO Aquatics Conference	Haliburton, Ontario
2002	World Congress on Drowning	Amsterdam, Netherlands

	Westchester County Department of Health Children's Summer Camp Workshop	White Plains, NY
2003	AAHPERD National Conference	New Orleans, LA
	Minnesota Recreation & Parks Conference	Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN
2004	International ECCU/CPR Conference Emergency Cardiac Care Union "Beyond CPR: The Physiology and Psychology of the Inexperienced First Responder"	New Orleans, LA
2005	World Waterpark Association National Convention	Las Vegas, NV
2005	New York State Department of Health Bureau of Community Environmental Health Training Workshops for Bathing and Children's Camps Inspectors	Erie, Ontario, Oneida, Suffolk, Saratoga, Ulster, Counties New York City
2006	National Recreation & Park Association <i>"A Human Information Processing Perspective of Lifeguard Surveillance Protocols"</i>	Austin, TX
2006	Westchester County Department of Health Children's Summer Camp Workshop	White Plains, NY
2006	International ECCU/CPR Conference Emergency Cardiac Care Union "Current Issues in Lay CPR Instruction"	Orlando, FL
2006	World Aquatic Health Conference National Swimming Pool Foundation <i>"What Does Science Teach Us about Guarding and Drowning Prevention?"</i>	Austin, TX
2007	World Water Safety Conference International Lifesaving Society Patron Surveillance: A Human Information Processing Perspective	Porto, Portugal
2007	California Aquatic Management School <u>Keynote Address:</u> "Educational, Psychological, and Social Perspectives for Recruiting, Training, and Supervising Millennium Generation Lifeguards" <u>Conference Session</u> "Current Controversies in Lifeguard Surveillance Concepts and Patron Surveillance Strategies.	Monterey, CA

Education:

**August
2004** Doctor of Philosophy
Interdisciplinary Studies:
Psychology, Human Factors & Public Health
Union Institute and University

**January
1977** Advanced Certificate
Clinical School Psychology
The City College
The City University of New York

**June
1976** Master of Science in Education
The City College
The City University of New York

**June
1973** Master of Arts in Speech and Theater Arts
Long Island University
Greenvale, New York

**June
1968** Bachelor of Arts in Speech
Long Island University
Greenvale, New York

**Professional
Certificates:** School Psychologist
Permanent Certification
New York State Department of Education

Teacher of English
Permanent Certification
New York State Department of Education

Work Experience - Education

1970 - 1975 Morris High School, Bronx, NY
1970 - 1972
Teacher of Speech
Duties: taught emotionally disturbed classes of non-English speaking students, beginning and intermediate classes in English as a second language, 11th and 12th grade classes in basic and advanced public speaking

1973 - 1975
Coordinator of Student Affairs
Duties: Ombudsman for students, faculty advisor to student organizations, liaison to community, & coordinator for co-curricular and extra curricular activities

1976 - 1977

School Psychologist Intern
Mamaroneck Avenue Elementary School
Mamaroneck Public Schools, Mamaroneck, NY
Hommocks Middle School
Mamaroneck Public Schools, Mamaroneck, NY

1977

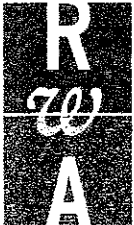
Graduate Teaching Assistant: The City College of New York
Graduate School of Education

1977-1998

Mamaroneck High School
Teacher of English & School Psychologist
Duties: taught English in a self-contained alternative
educational program for academic underachievers
for grades 9 - 12 and provided psycho-educational
consultation to students and staff

ROCKAWAY WATERFRONT ALLIANCE

152 Beach 25th Street
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Testimony for City Council hearings on: NYCDPR Lifeguard Program

November 13, 2007

My name is Jeanne DuPont and I am the Director of Rockaway Waterfront Alliance a community group that advocates for public waterfront access, education and youth programming in the Rockaways.

The past few years I have worked very hard to bring education on water safety, and swimming to the public but it has been more than a challenge.

NYC public waterfront is legally open (in areas with lifeguards) for only 3 months out of the entire year. A tremendous amount of tax dollars, training, and marketing goes into this 3 month service.

In the Rockaways, as with all NYC beaches, beaches are officially closed unless a lifeguard is present. Unless legislation is changed to allow the public "to swim at your own risk", this will continue to be the situation, leaving the public blocked from legally entering the beach for more than 9 months of the year; directly affecting public access to NYC waterfront.

Lifeguard Training

Another big issue however, is the training standards by which NYC lifeguards are presently trained. Most of the public would assume that NYC lifeguards assigned to beaches receive training in ocean swimming and open water rescue. But they are not.

Unlike New Jersey, Massachusetts, Maine, California and other parts of New York State, NYC does not use US lifeguard Association (USLA) standards. This would also require legislation to be passed in order make this change.

Rip tides and strong currents off the coast are a challenge to any swimmer but the fact that Local 461 does not use these standards jeopardizes not only the competence of NYC lifeguards but also public safety.

Public Swim Training Programs

Not enough is being done to train the public to swim. Commissioner Adrian Benepe wrote in his "Parks Dept Pledge to the Rockaways", of the Parks Dept "Learn to Swim" and "Swim to Safety" program in partnership with the DOE, but ironically none of these programs exist anywhere in the Rockaway peninsula; a peninsula surrounded by water with no outreach to the Rockaway community.

We need to do more to establish public swim programs. If we have beaches why not train the public there? In some parts of the US, people send their kids to camp to learn to swim but in places like the Rockaways there is not one summer swim programming for the public.

I have attached a document from another swim programs, conducted by lifeguards on California beaches. I would recommend the committee take a look at this as a possible solution for future NYC public swim programs.

Public Education

NYC lifeguards are trained to protect the public through emergency swim rescue, but they should also be required to educate the public about the dangers of the waters they are supervising.

The most efficient way to recruit is by word of mouth. Requiring lifeguards to go into schools, and meet with the public to hand out these brochures and talk about the perks of being a lifeguards are by far the best way to reach local youth.

Lifeguards need to be required to do public education as part of the their job. But once again this has become an issue the NYCDPR and Local 461 cannot agree on and refuse to have their lifeguards take part in.

Just this year our organization contacted Mr. Sher's office for a four month period requesting their participation in a workshop we were conducting for one day with 250 kids on water safety at the Rockaway public schools. The American Red Cross and DOE agreed to attend and showed their water safety videos but no lifeguard attended nor did we receive any response from either Local 461 or the NYCDPR.

As it stands now the Parks Dept and Local 461 keep valuable education and information from the public simply because the information may come from another source; such as the American Red Cross. Yet over 85% of the NYC lifeguards have received their water safety training from the ARC.

I would ask this committee to require Local 461 to work in the public schools as a courtesy to the local community, for recruitment and to help alleviate future drownings.

The committee should also work with DOE to pass legislation requiring water safety information in the public schools.

NYCDPR and Local 461 need to come to an agreement to disseminate and print basic water safety information to give to the public. This is a chance to save lives by having more educated people present on all NYC beaches and pools. I have attached a sheet of information that the San Diego beaches use, as an example.

Lifeguard Recruitment Process

More students come to NYC each summer than any other city in the world and these students could potentially serve the supposed "shortage" of lifeguards if they were aware of the training process in time to take the tests.

NYCDPR needs to recruit at college job fairs, and universities where they could reach the thousands of foreign and domestic youth, many already trained as lifeguards, to work on our beaches. The Parks committee should ask that the NYCDPR document the schools they have recruited, to ensure this is done.

"Shortage of Lifeguards"

According to the Parks Dept and Local 461, there is a drastic shortage of lifeguards. Yet in past years, Local 461 said they would NOT put part time lifeguards on the beaches as a principle. However for at least the past seven years, there have been many part time

lifeguards on the Rockaway beaches from Memorial Day to the 4th of July, at which time they are required resign to let full time lifeguards take over.

If lifeguards are being required to resign, how can there be a shortage of lifeguards?? Let's set the record straight, openly agree to hire full time and part time lifeguards and have plenty of lifeguards for all NYC beaches!

"Shortage of lifeguards" means beaches are "closed to the public". And the bottom line is the Rockaway peninsula has only a small percentage of it's beaches open as a result.

Location of Lifeguard Stations

Anyone in the Rockaways know that 119th Street gets most of the "down for the day" swimmers coming by subway. But if more beaches were open and we had more lifeguards along the entire stretch of the rockaway peninsula, all the beaches would be less crowded, and a more even number of people attending the beaches; making it safer for the lifeguards to patrol and beachgoers themselves.

Lifeguards should be put on beaches that are the most crowded and in accordance with the density and population that lives in a specific area. But they are not in the Rockaways.

Some areas have lifeguards every 100 yards while other areas have no lifeguards for miles of open public waterfront.

I have attached the population/statistics from the 2000 census records, along with the number of chairs in each area along the Rockaway Peninsula. You will find an obvious difference in where chairs are put along the beaches, and the populations they are serving.

Last summer, there were:

- over 60 chairs, 1 every 100 yards, from Beach 76th St. to Beach 149th St.
- 1 chair from Beach 32nd Street to Beach 19th Street
- 1 chair at Beach 59th Street with a stretch of open waterfront on either side for miles. This is not safe for the public or the lifeguards themselves, with no back up.

It is no coincidence in the areas with few or no chairs, that more than 98% of these populations were minorities and yet in the past 10 years, almost all of the people who have drowned off of Rockaway beaches have been minorities.

The Parks Dept is not assigning lifeguard stations in these areas nearly enough, as they do more affluent communities, and this is an issue of environmental justice.

Conclusions

I have included here a letter I had sent to Commissioner Benepe recommending measures for a better waterfront management plan. The issues I mentioned here today are key factors to improving public safety. I would ask that the Parks committee to use this information to update legislation and improve the relationship between Local 461 and NYCDPR with more concern for the publics safety as it pertains to the NYC waterfront.



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

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Beach & Water Safety



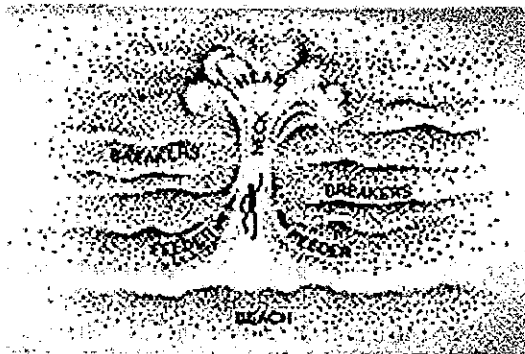
Tragic water accidents happen quickly. The most common reason for aquatic mishaps is a lack of safety knowledge. San Diego lifeguards recommend the following safety tips:

- Learn to swim
- Swim near a lifeguard
- Never swim alone
- Supervise children closely, even when lifeguards are present
- Don't rely on flotation devices, such as rafts, you may lose them in the water
- If caught in a rip current, swim sideways until free, don't swim against the current's pull
- Alcohol and swimming don't mix
- Protect your head, neck, and spine -- don't dive into unfamiliar waters -- feet first, first time
- If you are in trouble, call or wave for help
- Follow regulations and lifeguard directions
- Swim parallel to shore if you wish to swim long distances
- Scuba dive only if trained and certified -- and within the limits of your training
- No glass containers at the beach -- broken glass and bare feet don't mix
- No beach fires except in designated areas -- fire residue and superheated sand can severely burn bare feet -- use a barbeque that is elevated off the sand
- Report hazardous conditions to lifeguards or other beach management personnel
- Stay clear of coastal bluffs, they can collapse and cause injury
- Never turn your back to the ocean -- you may be swept off coastal bluffs or tide pool areas and into the water by waves that can come without warning

Rip Currents

Rip currents are the most threatening natural hazard along our coast. They pull victims away from the beach. The [United States Lifesaving Association](#) has found that 80% of the rescues effected by ocean lifeguards involve saving those caught in rip currents.

A rip current is a seaward moving current that circulates



water back to sea after it is pushed ashore by waves. Each wave accumulates water on shore creating seaward pressure. This pressure is released in an area with the least amount of resistance which is usually the deepest point along the ocean floor. Rip currents also exist in areas where the strength of the waves are weakened by objects such as rock jetties, piers, natural reefs, and even large groups of bathers. Rip currents often look like muddy rivers flowing away from shore.

Rip currents are sometimes mistakenly called "rip tides" or "undertows." These are misnomers. Rip currents are not directly associated with tides and they do not pull people under.

Try to avoid swimming where rip currents are present, but if you become caught in a one, swim parallel to the shore until the pull stops and then swim back to shore. If you are unable to return to the beach, tread water and wave for lifeguard assistance.

Stay at least 100 feet away from piers and jetties. Rip currents often exist along the side of fixed objects in the water.

Be aware of ocean conditions. Lifeguards are trained to identify potential hazards. Ask a lifeguard about the conditions before entering the water.

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Lifeguard Stand Count for Rockaway Peninsula on NYC Dept of Parks & Recreation

Neponsit: 7 chairs from beach 142nd to beach 149th Street x 3 lifeguards/chair= 21 lifeguards for 2,206 residents (less than 3% minorities).

Belle Harbor: 12 chairs from beach 130 street to beach 142^{nds} street= 36 lifeguards for 3,440 residents (less than 3% minorities)

14 chairs from 116th Street to beach 130th Street = 42 lifeguards for 8,000 residents

We counted more than 70 chairs (100 ft apart) from Beach 76th Street to Beach 149th Street x 3 lifeguards/chair= 210 lifeguards

Yet on the eastern end of the peninsula the count was a dramatic decrease in the number of chairs/lifeguards on the beaches where the population was much larger.

1 chair from Beach 76th Street to beach 59th Street x 3 lifeguards/chair= 3 lifeguards for 4,649 residents (9% Caucasian/ 91% minorities).

Piping Plover Sanctuary from Beach 59th Street to Beach 38th Street= 0 chairs/0 lifeguards for 3,000 residents. (99.5% are minorities).

4 chairs from Beach 38th Street to Beach 9th Street x 3 lifeguards/chair= 12 lifeguards for 24,188 residents (75% minorities).

In the Rockaway Peninsula over 98% of the people who have drowned off the rockaways have been minorities. If we do not work to educate and expand our outreach this will continue to be a problem.

Statistical Data on the Rockaways generated from the NYC Dept of City Planning/ 2000 census

Mott Creek/ Census Tract 1010 - Beach 9th Street to Beach 19th Street

Total Population: 9,400

White 20%

Black 50%

Hispanic 25%

Far Rockaway /Census Tract 998 -Beach 32nd Street to Beach 19th Street

Total Population: 12,000

White 17%

Black 60%

Hispanic 20%

Edgemere /Census Tract 992 -Beach 38th Street to Beach 32nd Street

Total Population: 2,788

White: 17%

Black: 50%

Hispanic: 25%

Census Tract 972 -Beach 59th Street to Beach 38th Street

Total Population: 3,270
White: .7%
Black: 82%
Hispanic: 15% Hispanic

Arverne East Census tract 964 - Beach 67th Street to Beach 59th Street
Total Population: 3,732
White: 9% white
Black: 65%
Hispanic: 17%

Arverne By the Sea/ Census Tract 952 Beach 73rd Street to Beach 67th Street
Total Population: 917
White: 10%
Black: 66%
Hispanic: 17%

Census 942 - Beach 97th Street to Beach 74th Street
Total Population: 5,441
White: 54%
Black: 24%
Hispanic: 15%

Rockaway Beach/ Census Tract 938 - 116th Street to beach 97th Street
Total Population: 4,340
White: 76%
Black: 7%
Hispanic: 11%

Census tract 934 - Beach 116th Street to Beach 130th Street
Total Population: 7,900
White: 85%
Black: 2%
Hispanic: 7%

Belle Harbor/ Census tract 928 - Beach 130th Street to Beach 142nd Street
Total Population: 3,440
White: 96%
Black: .3% (less than 1%)
Hispanic: 2%

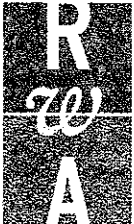
Neponsit Census Tract 922 Beach 142nd Street to Beach 149th Street
Total Population: 2,206
White: 95%
Black: .3% (less than 1%)
Hispanic: 2% Hispanic

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Action Plan for Enhanced Waterfront Park Management

August 1, 2007



Background

The Rockaway Peninsula is seven miles of open waterfront; making it New York City's longest public beach. But issues over lack of lifeguards, public education, swim/water safety and maintenance along the Rockaway shoreline have prompted concern amongst the community that there is a need for a conservancy/trust to establish better management practice for the entire Rockaway waterfront.

The Rockaway waterfront is presently managed and operated under the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation. But due to lack of funding, there is little consistency along the entire stretch of the Rockaway Peninsula.

- Beaches are regularly closed and access to the waterfront blocked.
- Illegal dumping of trash is a constant and rarely are offenders fined for these offenses.
- Specific areas are generously supplied with trash cans, lifeguards and clean beaches, while most of the Rockaways are left with long stretches of blocked public beach access, no public facilities and entire communities with little more than the view of the waterfront.

There is a clear need for a community-led conservancy trust that would keep a watchful eye on protecting the public rights and raising funds to ensure the entire Rockaway Peninsula has adequate public safety, maintenance, and public programming.

The planning and development of the Rockaway Waterfront Park as a public park is a matter of state concern and in the interest of the people of the state. It would enhance the ability of New Yorkers to enjoy and protect the NYC shoreline, one of the state's great natural resources; promote the health, safety and welfare of the people of the state; help alleviate the blighted, and dangerous conditions that characterize much of the area; and stimulate the local Rockaway economy.

Action Plan

The Rockaway Waterfront Alliance (RWA) has reached out to the local community, park officials and water safety personnel to gather input for a plan of action for improving the present maintenance, operations and programming along the Atlantic Ocean side of the Rockaway Peninsula.

This plan has recommendations, prioritized by need, as well as short-time vs. long-term achievement, and could be used to improve present conditions along the waterfront and/or as guidelines for legislation required to establish a conservancy/trust to oversee the Rockaway Waterfront.

Recommendations

1. Public Access

- Maintain all public walkways/ramps open to the public all year long.
- Remove all BEACH CLOSED signs.
- Establish NYC Legislation for "swim at your own risk" liability, making the public responsible for their actions and allowing more people to enjoy their public beaches.

2. Water Safety

- Distribute water safety information to the public through the NYC Parks Department website, public school programs and lifeguards; including information on NYC public swim programs and lifeguard training.
- Create American Red Cross water safety incentive program in NYC public schools requiring all students to view ARC video materials.
- Establish basic water safety program on NYC public beaches to get basic emergency water safety information to the local population through lifeguards or designated Parks officers.

3. Parks Enforcement Patrol Officers (PEP)

- Require all PEP employees to receive ARC training; putting more educated, trained staff on our beaches.
- Require all PEP employees to patrol by bicycle for easier mobility and more active security along the boardwalk.

4. Maintenance & Operations

- Require all public pathways be clear of obstacles to the waterfront.
- Require trash cans along boardwalk at all public pathways.
- Give fines for illegal dumping of trash, or construction debris on public waterfront.
- Establish volunteer certificate programs in horticulture, carpentry, boardwalk repair, welding, machinery, and stewardship within the community to establish a core group of volunteers within the community to work under a certified Parks employee; in order to identify valuable personnel for future staff positions and to establish community stewardship in people from a broad mix of ages and skill level.

5. Lifeguards

- Address the NYC Dept of Health on regulations for number of lifeguards required per chair/every 100'. Establish specific regulation for appropriate open water/beach coverage.
- Require public documentation of people who have gone through lifeguard training, test results and positions they have been offered to ensure fairness.
- Require all NYC lifeguards to be trained under USLA regulations; requiring open water training. (Presently NYC lifeguards are only trained in pools). Will also create more competitive swimmers and friendly competition for NYC lifeguards with other local beaches.
- Review census/population documents to require lifeguards be posted in correlation to population specific to an adjacent beach, to ensure more populated areas receive an appropriate number of lifeguards.
- Encourage lifeguards to inform the public about rip tides, water safety and concerns surrounding the waterfront and to report dangerous situations to their superiors in order to improve community relations.
- Establish consistent green and red flag system on beaches to distinguish swim beaches from non-swimming beaches and to conserve on lifeguard posts and allow better use of limited lifeguard personnel.
- Establish part-time lifeguard program to supplement the limited full-time lifeguard staff on weekends when public attendance is at it's peak.
- Equip all lifeguard stations with defibrillators, and flags to indicate water conditions and chalk boards indicating water/air temperature for public safety.
- Establish jr. program for young recruits to work in tandem with established lifeguards to improve their skills directly on beach. For recruits under 16 this gives them incentive to train for future years and gain valuable experience under the supervision of experienced lifeguards.
- Publicly document locations recruited for lifeguards. Thousands of students come to NYC to study and each summer there are hundreds of trained swimmers who spend their summers in NYC and need jobs. We are losing out on a large number of new recruits if we are not recruiting at these universities and high schools and publicly documenting this information will help to ensure all NYC schools are getting the appropriate information about the NYC lifeguard training program in time to test for the summer.

6. Public Swim Program

- Establish incentive program with ARC to ensure all NYC public schools and the NYC community receive valuable ARC water safety information.
- Establish program for the public to learn to swim from certified swim instructors directly off the beach.

7. Junior Ranger Program

- Establish a training certificate course for young adults and community members to learn about water testing, indigenous plant and wildlife identification and environmental education program under the Urban Parks Ranger Program. These people could qualify for jobs each summer as monitors for the piping plover preserve and other programs presently being established with the Urban Rangers in the Rockaway Peninsula.

In Closing

The shoreline of the Rockaway Peninsula is regulated under the New York City Waterfront Revitalization Program (WRP) which is developed and approved by New York State Department of State with Congressional funding to implement the Coastal Zone Management Act. The WRP establishes a priority with the public's right of access to the beach and foreshore and navigable waters that include the Atlantic Ocean.

New York City's Waterfront Revitalization Program is the primary responsibility for implementing the States Coastal Policies and NYC Department of City Planning, acting as the City Coastal Commission, responsible for enforcing the coastal policies along with NYC Parks Department.

Under this program, the public is encouraged to participate in their waterfront through conservation efforts, education and recreation. The Rockaway Waterfront Alliance works to protect these rights through programs in the local community and the public schools.

Our hope is that these recommendations will be useful in strategizing with the local Rockaway community, New York City, and State agencies to draft legislation essential to public safety and better public use of the Rockaway waterfront.

To support this action plan and give input, please email: info@rwalliance.org



**New York City Council Parks and Recreation Committee
Oversight Hearing on Department of Parks and Recreation Lifeguard Program**

**New Yorkers for Parks Testimony
November 13, 2007**

Good morning. My name is Sheelah Feinberg and I am Director of Government and Community Relations at New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P), the only independent watchdog for all the city's parks, beaches, and playgrounds.

Many people visit our 14 miles of City beaches, but cannot fully enjoy them because they are not able to swim due to a lifeguard shortage. This past summer, New Yorkers for Parks released "Raising the Tide: Strategies for New York City Beaches," the report provides recommendations to improve the lifeguard program. Some of the factors that contribute to a lifeguard shortage include training, hours & wages, and recruitment challenges.

Lifeguard Training:

While the City has many athletic programs, no significant emphasis is placed on youth swimming. Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Education and many CBO's offer swimming programs, but still many minority youth populations lack basic swimming skills and are five times more likely to drown than white children. The Parks Department has successfully partnered with local YMCA branches that have swimming pools to ensure that all children are learning how to swim. Still, the pipeline of new lifeguards is shrinking.

Wages and hours:

Lifeguards simply do not get paid enough. They also work 48 hours a week. The starting salary for 2007 for both beach and pool lifeguards was \$11.72 per hour, a rise over the previous year's salary of \$10.71 an hour. Staff members who return are awarded a salary increase. But the current salary is not competitive and must be to recruit lifeguards. The State pays entry

level lifeguards at Jones Beach \$12.56 an hour—almost a dollar more. For many being a lifeguard is their first job, and therefore look forward to their first paycheck.

Recruitment Challenges:

As already stated, the City faces a lifeguard shortage. Some creative ways of recruiting lifeguards overseas has resulted in modest gains. Unfortunately, Department of Parks and Recreation has yet to meet the stated goal of hiring 1,200 lifeguards. This leads to beach closures that greatly affect communities. However, some new ways should be incorporated.

New Yorkers for Parks recommends that the Department of Parks and Recreation improve recruitment by administering training where there is demand—in beach communities to avoid the long commute to the one training site in Manhattan. In addition DPR should accept lifesaving certification from other organizations including the Red Cross, YMCA aquatics or the U.S. Lifesaving Association.

Lifeguard salaries should be doubled for underserved beaches. Private pools and state lifeguards earn on average at one dollar more than city lifeguards.

Finally, DPR should consider expanding youth swimming opportunities with the Department of Education.

With these recommendations implemented more New Yorkers will be able to enjoy all 14 miles of New York City's beaches.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED BY
DANIEL F. MUNDY
CHAIRPERSON OF COMMUNITY BOARD # 14 PARKS,
SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEES
BEFORE A HEARING OF THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION
ON OVERSIGHT -THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND
RECREATION'S LIFEGUARD PROGRAM

NOVEMBER 13, 2007

GOOD MORNING CHAIRMAN FOSTER AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE. MY NAME IS DAN MUNDY SR. AND I AM THE CHAIRPERSON OF COMMUNITY BOARD # 14 PARKS, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEES. I THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT TESTIMONY ON THESE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES WHICH EFFECT NOT ONLY THE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE WHO FREQUENT NEW YORK CITY'S BEACHES AND POOLS BUT ALSO THE SAFETY OF OUR LIFEGUARDS WHO PROTECT THESE PEOPLE.

FOR DECADES THERE HAS BEEN REPORTED SHORTAGES OF LIFEGUARDS FOR OUR POOLS AND BEACHES IN NEW YORK. IN FACT ABOUT FIVE YEARS AGO AN EFFORT WAS MADE TO RECRUIT LIFEGUARDS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES. IT WAS A MYSTERY WHY THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION COULD NOT FILL THE BUDGET LINES THAT WERE ALLOTTED TO THEM. IN 2006 A NEW EFFORT WAS MADE INVOLVING THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN A RECRUITMENT AND PRE-TRAINING PROGRAM AND THAT BROUGHT OUT THE REAL REASONS WHY WE WERE SHORT OF LIFEGUARDS.

PAST HISTORY:

THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION (DPR) OPERATES ONE OF THE BIGGEST LIFEGUARD PROGRAMS IN THE COUNTRY, EMPLOYING 800 TO 1000 BEACH AND POOL LIFEGUARDS EACH SUMMER.

A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION CONDUCTED PURSUANT TO NYC CHARTER SECTION 24(G) HAS IDENTIFIED SERIOUS DEFICIENCIES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THIS PROGRAM AND IN THE WAY LIFEGUARDS ARE RECRUITED, TRAINED, CERTIFIED AND SUPERVISED.

SPECIFICALLY, THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE HAS RECEIVED COMPLAINTS ABOUT FAVORITISM IN HIRING AND PROMOTION, INADEQUATE SUPERVISION, INADEQUATE LIFEGUARD PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES, POOR RECORD KEEPING AND POTENTIAL SAFETY LAPSES.

THE COMPLAINTS CENTER ON PARKS COORDINATOR PETER STEIN, THE PRINCIPAL MANAGER OF THE PROGRAM.

WHAT I HAVE JUST READ TO YOU IS A QUOTE FROM PAGE ONE " SUMMARY OF PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION" CONDUCTED BY MARK GREEN WHO WAS THE

PUBLIC ADVOCATE IN 1994. THIS REPORT ADDRESSES THESE ISSUES WHICH GO

BACK INTO THE MIDDLE 1980'S . EVERYONE SHOULD READ THIS REPORT. I DON'T HAVE THE ALLOTTED TIME TO READ THE ENTIRE REPORT SO I WILL ENTER THIS ENTIRE DOCUMENT AS PART OF MY TESTIMONY.

RECENT HISTORY:

DURING THE WINTER OF 2005 AND SPRING OF 2006 COMMUNITY BOARD # 14 BEGAN RECEIVING COMPLAINTS FROM INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE GOING THRU THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION TRAINING AND TESTING PROGRAM.

TO ADDRESS THESE ALLEGATIONS AN AD-HOC LIFEGUARD/BEACH COMMITTEE WAS FORMED CONSISTING OF MEMBERS OF CB 14 PARKS AND SAFETY COMMITTEE AS WELL AS OTHER COMMUNITY INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE IN THESE MATTERS AND I WAS APPOINTED CHAIRPERSON.

I WILL NOW QUOTE A PARAGRAPH FROM THE OCTOBER TENTH TWO THOUSAND SEVEN REPORT FROM THE AD-HOC COMMITTEE TO THE PARKS AND SAFETY COMMITTEE.

“THE PRELIMINARY RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY THE AD-HOC LIFEGUARD/BEACH COMMITTEE THRU IT’S OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS HAS REVEALED THAT THE CURRENT LIFEGUARD HIRING PRACTICE ALONG WITH THE TRAINING, TESTING AND QUALIFYING PROGRAM HAS BEEN A CLOSED DOOR CLANDESTINE OPERATION FILLED WITH POLITICAL PATRONAGE, HARASSEMENT AND CORRUPTION AND MUST BE CHANGED. THE COMMITTEE WAS INUNDATED WITH COUNTLESS NEGATIVE FEEDBACK FROM INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD GONE THRU THE DPR TRAINING AND TESTING PROGRAM. THEY INSISTED THAT THE CITY IMMEDIATELY ADDRESS AND GIVE PROPER ATTENTION TO THESE PRIORTIES”.

THIS SOUNDS VERY SIMILAR TO WHAT IS IN THE MARK GREEN REPORT FROM 14 YEARS AGO.

THIS REPORT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS WAS ADOPTED BY THE CB AND FORWARDED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION. I WILL ALSO ENTER THIS FULL REPORT INTO THE RECORD.

ON NOVEMBER 28, 2006 OUR COMMITTEE MET WITH YOU AND YOUR COMMITTEE MS. FOSTER AND YOU HEARD OUR CONCERNS AND A REQUEST TO HOLD OVERSIGHT HEARINGS ON THE LIFEGUARD PROGRAM.

WE MET AGAIN IN SPEAKER QUINN’S OFFICE ON MARCH 23,2007 AND ALTHOUGH WE WERE LED TO BELIEVE THAT IMPORTANT CHANGES WOULD OCCUR BEFORE THE TESTING PHASE STARTED WE ARE VERY DISAPPOINTED AND DISILLUSIONED THAT EVEN THESE FIRST STEPS DID NOT PROGRESS.

SO AGAIN IN 2007 VERY LITTLE WAS CHANGED IN THE WAY THE LIFEGUARD PROGRAM WAS MANAGED. THEY STILL HELD SECRETIVE CLOSED DOOR TESTING OF LIFEGUARD CANDIDATES RAISING QUESTIONS AS TO THE FITNESS OF THOSE BEING PASSED.

THEY IGNORED THE ROCKAWAY COMMUNITY BOARD # 14 REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION.

PROMISES MADE AT THE 3/23/07 MEETING AT THE SPEAKER’S OFFICE WERE NOT FULFILLED.

DPR CONTINUED TO ALLOW “CRONISM” TO CONTINUE IN THEIR LIFEGUARD PROGRAM WHICH LEADS MANY TO ASK WHO REALLY RUNS THIS PROGRAM.

PUBLIC SAFETY WAS COMPROMISED AND WE STILL HAD NUMEROUS BEACH CLOSINGS BECAUSE OF LIFEGUARD SHORTAGES AND UNFORTUNATELY THERE WAS A DROWNING WHICH SUBSEQUENTLY WAS REPORTED TO US AS BEING EFFECTED BY STAFING CHANGES THAT DAY DUE TO LIFEGUARD SHORTAGES. WHO DOES DPR SERVE? WHEN ARE WE GOING TO GET A CHANGE IN TOP LEVEL SUPERVISION SO THAT WE CAN GET LEADERS WHO WILL WORK WITH THE COMMUNITY TO IMPROVE THE LIFEGUARD PROGRAM?

I STRONGLY URGE THIS COMMITTEE TO ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY BOARD WHICH I AM ATTACHING AS PART OF MY TESTIMONY. I REALIZE IT IS DIFFICULT TO MAKE CHANGES IN AN INSTITUTION THAT HAS BEEN SET IN IT'S WAYS FOR THIRTY YEARS, BUT NOW IS THE TIME.

THE FIRST TWO MOST IMPORTANT STEPS ARE TO:

1. HAVE AN INDEPENDENT MONITOR PRESENT DURING ALL PHASES OF THE PROGRAM TO INSURE THERE IS NO HARASSEMENT AND THAT ALL CANDIDATES ARE TREATED EQUALLY AND THAT TEST TIMES ARE VERIFIED AND NUMBER TWO, THAT THE DIGITAL COMPETITIVE CLOCKS WHICH WERE PURCHASED LAST YEAR BE USED TO TEST EACH AND EVERY CANDIDATE IN A FAIR AND EQUAL WAY FROM THIS MOMENT ON.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS ALSO HAVE TO BE INCORPORATED AND APPROPRIATELY PHASED IN.

THIS IS THE CHALLENGE AND YOUR COMMITTEE CAN MAKE THE RECOMMENDATED CHANGES NECESSARY TO BRING THE NYC LIFEGUARD PROGRAM INTO THE TWENTY FIRST CENTUARY. WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR LEADERSHIP AND ACTION.

THANK YOU

Hank Iori

Testimony for City Council 11/13/07 - DOP&R Lifeguard Training Program

Thank you, Chairwoman Foster, and members of the Committee, for allowing me to speak. My name is Hank Iori, I am a retired educator from the New York City Department of Education. I served for 36 years with the DOE. As an administrator in Region 5, I helped coordinate the Lifeguard Development Program for Region 5 in the fall of 2005. Based on my first hand experience with the Department of Parks and Recreation's, Lifeguard Training Program I felt compelled to come here today.

The Department of Parks And Recreation's Lifeguard Training Program needs to be completely revamped. The current leadership needs to be removed. The chronic lifeguard shortages year after year, the lack of accountability and unwillingness to provide adequate services to the public are clear evidence that they have failed to do their job. Running their program with a 1950 mentality just doesn't work in today's world. The programs focus needs to be providing quality services for the residents of this city. We need the best qualified lifeguards covering our pools and beaches, without that many lives are put at risk.

Currently the Lifeguard Training Program is run as a private enterprise with a focus on protecting a few individuals ensconced for many years at the top. Their practices have been in question for many years. In 1994 a report by Mark Green, the Public Advocate for the City of New York sited the DOPR, Lifeguard Training Program. Some of the issues sited then still exist today, such as:

- **Negligent administration and inadequate training** and supervision of lifeguards
- Consistently **failing to cooperate** with the New York City Health Department in conducting investigations required after each drowning or resuscitation.
- There is **widespread favoritism** in the testing and hiring of lifeguards and lifeguard supervisors and coordinators.
- Parks Department officials responsible for the lifeguard program have only a **vague knowledge of much of its operation.**
- The lifeguard program maintains virtually **no records** at all.
- The NYC **lifeguard training program is less extensive and less rigorous than the program in many other jurisdictions.**
- The **final exam** for new NYC lifeguards is less comprehensive than the exam in other major jurisdictions. It is also very **informally administered.**
- Lifeguard Coordinator Peter Stein is both the top manager of the DPR Lifeguard Division, personal responsibility for City lifeguard policy, procedures and personnel and the president of the lifeguard supervisors union, Local 508 of the AFSCME District Council 37. His dual role prevents him from serving the best interests of either the city or the labor union.
- **Lifeguard recruitment efforts are inadequate.**
- **The Parks Department should ensure that the officers of the lifeguard supervisor's union are not also managers of the lifeguard program.**

September of 2006 many residents of the Rockaway Community were angered by the Parks Departments treatment of individuals who came through their Program. Jonathan Gaska, District Manager of Community Board 14 wrote to Liam Kavanagh, Deputy Commissioner of Operations asking for answers to 12 questions that were developed by an Ad-Hoc Lifeguard/Beach Committee for Board 14, see attached. To this day those questions have never been answered. The Department of Parks and Recreation has not been forthright with information to the Rockaway Community.

The Community Board 14, Ad-Hoc Committee in October of 2006 developed recommendations for Lifeguard and Beach Operation Improvements. These recommendations were widely distributed to the Parks Department and all elected officials. Again the community was ignored by the Parks Department. No attempt was made to meet with the Ad-Hoc committee to discuss their recommendations.

It is inconceivable to me in our democracy the Parks Department could ignore a request from a Community Board representing 130, 000 residents of the Rockaway's. It is disrespectful and insulting to the citizens in the Rockaway's who have made every effort to work collaboratively with the Parks Department.

The "ghost" management of the Lifeguard Training Program refuses to discuss with anyone their operation of the program. They are masters of deceit, hiding behind the DOP&R or DC 37. They are afraid that in the light of day their inept management skills will be clearly uncovered.

In closing, I ask that all of you on this City Council Parks Committee see that corrective actions are taken immediately. Simply put, the citizens of the City of New York deserve better.



**COMMUNITY
BOARD ♦ 14**

September 14, 2006

COMMUNITY BOARD 14
City of New York
Borough of Queens

DOLORES ORR
Chairperson

JONATHAN L. GASKA
District Manager


Liam Kavanagh
Deputy Commissioner, Operations
NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation
The Arsenal
Central Park
New York, NY 10021

Dear Deputy Commissioner Kavanagh:

As you might know, our Parks Committee is reviewing a number of issues related to lifeguards in our district. I have enclosed a copy of a number of requests that the committee has made regarding information your agency has on file. Please send this information as soon as possible.

I thank you, in advance, for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Jonathan Gaska
District Manager

JG/rm
Enclosures

cc: Hon. Helen Marshall
Hon. Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.
Hon. Audrey Pheffer



1931 Mott Avenue
Far Rockaway, NY 11691
Tel. (718) 471-7300
Fax (718) 868-2657

September 10, 2006

To: Community Board 14

From: Ad-Hoc Lifeguard/Beach Committee

RE: INFORMATION needed to complete our recommendations

The Department of Parks and Recreation should have many of documents for the following requests however for #10, the Beach Safety Plan, The Department of Health is the agency that requires parks to file one.

1. A break down for the 65 students that attended the DOE LDP program specifically: how many became city pool lifeguards, how many became ocean lifeguards; how many passed the course but elected not to work for the city. How many received some type of lifeguard certification regardless of employment with the City of New York.
2. Total Budget for DPR Lifeguards
3. Copy of City of New York 's Lifeguard training manual
4. Curriculum materials used for training for new candidates and in service training manuals
5. Written rules and procedures for Lifeguards
6. Lifeguard Union Contract
7. Peter Stein -- Department Role specific title and duties.
8. During the summer of 2006 breakdown of each week's total amount of beaches that were closed and which beaches were closed.
9. Written policy on qualifications for Lifeguard Training Instructors
10. The Department of Health's Beach Safety Plan for the Rockaways as submitted by the Department of Parks and Recreation
11. How are supervisors chosen? How are the rank and file made aware of available supervisor jobs?
12. Copy of the Public Advocate's (Mark Green) 1994 report on Lifeguard issues

450 Beach 123 St
Rkwy N.Y. 11694

Nov 14, 07

Please accept the following as written testimony re: lifeguard training and testing.

I would like to address the issue of training in the use of defibrillators (AED's). It is my understanding that there are, at this time, boxes installed at each shack to hold AED's. They have been empty for 2 years. The life guards have not been trained.

The guards are to be to call for help, sit the suspected heart attack victim down and administer oxygen.

It is a given that there will be heart attacks among beach goers. The city is therefore liable in that they have not taken appropriate measures. The award from one lawsuit would pay for AED's + training. (AED's are @ \$1,200 each)

During a visit to Coney Island this summer I noticed EMT's on all terrain vehicles. Why doesn't Rockaway have them considering the large beach area to patrol. Thank You
belowdecks1@hotmail.com/9178461588 / WOTool