

MAYOR'S COLUMN

In preparation for a new review of the Village's flooding issues, the Trustees and I researched the archives to educate ourselves. The result was a real awareness of how long flooding has been a problem in our Village.

Starting in 1922, Village officials commissioned a sewer design in anticipation of the school's construction in 1924, given that topographical maps showed a stream actually traversing the property. Complicating this, the Bronx River itself was actually "moved" and rechanneled to make way for the Bronx River Parkway in the 1920's.

Since then, no fewer than 15 reports have been generated on the topic of flooding in the last 50 years, with many offering quite contradictory solutions.

1942 – Army Corps of Engineers did a preliminary study of the conditions at the river and determined that Federal funding would not be forthcoming because cost exceeded the benefits.

1945 – Westchester County report determined that flooding around the school could not be controlled unless the water level in the river was lowered. The solution was an 18,000 foot diversion tunnel to the Hudson River or in the alternative a system of levees and dykes at a 1945 cost of \$1 million.

1959 – Former Elementary School Principal, Julia Markham, discussed the flooding problem at the school in the Review Press Reporter, noting that the lower floor sometimes had water a foot deep and the playground was rendered unusable for months.

1961 – Westchester County Parks Commission studied the problem and recommended clearing all blockages in the Bronx River and the construction of cement berms.

1979 – the Army Corps of Engineers studied the problem yet again and recommended a series of levees and flood walls at the river’s edge.

1999 – Frasier Engineering recommended a pumping station scenario.

2000 – Parsons Brinckerhoff Engineers concluded the pumping option suggested by Frasier Engineering should be considered only if other alternatives such as detention basins and pipe diameter increases proved infeasible.

Many of the studies also advocated a coordinated dredging of the Bronx River though noting the lengthy time frame and environmental approvals involved.

2007 – Folchetti & Associates Engineering just released a final report recommending a combination of collection basins and pumping at a cost of \$6 - \$8 million. (A copy of the study is available for review at Village Hall and the Bronxville Library)

Any adoption of the Folchetti & Associates recommendation would require a backwater study of the effect of increased pumping on those living upstream and downstream of the pump discharge site. The Village would not consider any plan that remediated one site in the Village to the detriment of other village neighborhoods. Also, given the cost of such a plan, the Village would require at least one “second opinion” to weigh the capital, construction and operations and maintenance costs for any alternatives to determine what is the most economically feasible and viable solution.

The replacement of green space with pavement and building, combined with the naturally occurring changes to the Bronx River such as

sedimentation, has only exacerbated the flooding problems. In addition, to the areas such as the School property, Garden Avenue and Paxton Avenue and Parkway Road that see flooding on a regular basis, other areas have become flood prone including Sherman Avenue, Alder Lane, Field Court and Bolton Gardens.

The Board of Trustees is committed to finding a workable solution as it is quite evident the flooding problem is only getting worse and inaction is now simply not an option.