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Today's news:



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Coney candy confrontation: Big sweets chain opens near candy-apple Mecca



ATLANTIC YARDS:

Hey Bruce! Build! Mayoral wannabes push Ratner on housing



CLEANING OUR

WATERWAYS: Tank battle: City defies feds, says it won't build Gowanus sewage storage

May 8, 2013 / Brooklyn news / Gowanus Canal Zone / Cleaning Our Waterways

Save our pool! Residents battle feds Double-D closure plan

By Natalie Musumeci
The Brooklyn Paper

The city isn't the only entity that doesn't want to see a public park and pool ripped up so a giant wastewater holding tank can be buried beneath it as part of a so-called Gowanus Canal "Superfund" cleanup — a group of locals say the park-and-pool-related closure would be a major blow to the community that relies on the amenities, and have collected more than 700 signatures on an online petition to stop it from happening.

The suggestion to place one of the eight-million-gallon tanks directly under parkland has drawn the ire from Gowanus neighbors and activists because the plan calls for the excavation of the Thomas Greene Playground and adjoining "Double-D" pool, and would close the space for an estimated two to three years.

"Make the polluters pay — not our children, not our community," said Friends of Douglass-Greene Park board member and Gowanus resident Sabine Aronowsky. "It will destroy one spot that has always been provided for us — there is nothing else for us to go to."



Community Newspaper Group / Gary Buiso

POOL CUE: Some residents don't want the Double-D temporarily pool closed and ripped out so sewage storage tanks can be buried beneath it.

But because the park and pool sits directly above a plot of contaminated land where the former Fulton Manufactured Gas Plant functioned from 1879 to 1929, it will likely have to be torn up and cleaned up even if the tanks don't go in, say federal officials.

Superfund project manager Christos Tsiamis said that one of the reasons the feds chose the park and pool as the place to bury the sewage holding tank is because it would kill two birds with one stone, since the site will have to be cleaned by energy giant National Grid.

"We are of the opinion that there will be some work required to be done by National Grid and the state that would require some kind of excavation so we thought since New York City owns the park it would be best," said Tsiamis. "If [the state] were to excavate there National Grid would have to pay for the cost for the excavation and the city would install the tanks — it would be cheaper for the city and there would be shared costs."

The federal government's Superfund strategy, where it identifies culprits and demands fixes and payments, is in its planning stage and will be finalized this summer. Once that happens, cleanup in and around the canal will last until about 2020, the feds claim. The dredging of contaminated sludge at the canal floor could begin by 2015.

It's not the first time residents have rallied behind the Double-D. Back in June of 2010, the city planned to close the pool for the summer due to budget cuts, but rallies by residents and politicians, including Borough President Markowitz, kept it open.

Reach reporter Natalie Musumeci at nmusumeci@cnglocal.com or by calling (718) 260-4505. Follow her at twitter.com/souledout.

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READER FEEDBACK

View discussion (10)

Margaret Maugenest from Gowanus says:

Oh pleaz! Give me a break. That pool, that park, is on toxic land, and the plume of toxicity is migrating. I live a block away and I stopped going to the pool after I read the environmental report on that site. No one in their right mind would not want that land cleaned up. All this talk about wanting a park - I want one, too, but not on toxic land! This save the pool campaign is a big ruse!

Yesterday, 9:35 am

Sabine Aronowsky from Gowanus says:

This article and the New York Times article are only sensationalizing opposition to frame their story. The truth is that Friends of the Park SUPPORT the EPA's plan to clean up the canal, our petition clearly states this. Quite simply we are asking that our community and children's needs be considered and provided for DURING and AFTER the cleanup! In addition to the petition, Friends of the Park also submitted comments to the EPA asking them to review National Grid's findings to ensure the health and safety of our community in regards to that

parcel of land where the Park & Pool sit. The comments should be public record soon, but happy to share if anyone is interested.

Yesterday, 12:55 pm

no toxic swimming from Brooklyn says:

Ms. Aronowsky was in Red Hook claiming that the CDF would create unacceptable risk to park users a blocks away from the totally-confined toxins.

And now she's saying it's better for kids in this park to play directly over uncontrolled toxins then for them to go without this toxic experience for a few years to allow a cleanup?

If she was right in Red Hook then she can only be very wrong here. Our kids have far too many avenues to collect toxins and using this park land shouldn't be one of them, however much the need for summer water play.

Yesterday, 1:13 pm

Clean Canal Keep Pool from Gowanus says:

Yes, everybody agrees the canal needs to be cleaned up! The CSO problem, which is the city's problem, must be fixed. If you suggests, however, that a replacement pool should not be available to the community during the cleanup, that's very racist, paranoid, and sensationalistic. The cleanup must be done. There is no debate on that. The city is trying to shirk. They must be forced to do the cleanup of the CSO problem. And, at the same time, a pool must be provided for the local residents during the cleanup. This is not hard to understand. But people like Margaret M want to pretend they can't understand that a replacement pool does not mean No cleanup. It means a fair cleanup for people who aren't her or people who don't look like her. Apparently Ms. Margaret doesn't like the people who use the pool. But let's not pretend anymore, Ms. Margaret, that people who want a replacement pool want to stop your cleanup plans. That is an out right lie, sensationalistic, and unfairly misleading. Get with reality and stop bothering us.

Yesterday, 1:30 pm

Clean Canal Keep Pool from Gowanus says:

In response to "no toxic" this is ridiculous. A replacement pool is a different pool. If there are toxins in the original pool, how will the toxins get into the replacement pool? Please stop being a sensationalistic, misleading, nonsense sayer. The replacement pool will have clean water and will avoid toxins for the children. What the heck is wrong with you? Are you suggesting that they bring the water from the old pool into the replaceable? That is about as idiotic as I can imagine. What you're saying makes no sense. Please stop bothering the people with your silly ideas. Replacement pools have new water And no toxins. So what the heck are you talking about?

Yesterday, 1:36 pm

Toxic Playground? from Park Slope says:

How is it that a beloved park and pool has been built upon a former manufactured gas plant? Can we trust any of these agencies to protect our health and environment?

Yesterday, 1:38 pm

Sabine Aronowsky from Gowanus says:

To whomever no toxic swimming from Brooklyn is, I did attend the Red Hook meeting, but never spoke publicly about the CDF, so you may have me confused with somebody else. I

support the Red Hook communities right to know and voice their acceptance / non-acceptance on the EPA's proposal, the same way I support Gowanus' right to know. My family and neighbors recreate at the Thomas Greene Park and Double D pool and of course public health and safety is of the utmost concern to us, my comments have always come from this perspective, so please do not mischaracterize that.

----- Yesterday, 1:52 pm

Sabine Aronowsky from Make the Polluters Pay says:

Also, we don't want our community's concern to save our pool to be a "pawn" in the fight between the city, state and feds to properly address the longstanding contamination and sewage problems in the area. But we also need to raise these important issues during the remediation planning; otherwise we suffer the burdens of cleanup without any community benefits. I urge everyone to read the comments on the petition; the Thomas Greene Park and Double D pool is our one local public asset that serves a large community of low to moderate income residents. We have no library, no community centers, and no affordable daycare, even the B37 (3rd avenue) bus line service was ended in 2010. It is clear that our constituencies needs have been ignored and it is most important that all the agencies responsible for this cleanup listen to our community now and work together to provide for our health and future. Otherwise, we have to ask who this cleanup really for, just more big developer Real Estate interests?

----- Yesterday, 2:30 pm

Real Community Benifit from Gowanus says:

A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT, one without toxins and yuck always about everywhere you go, wafting in the air, is a major community benefit FOR ALL.

----- Yesterday, 5:36 pm

big developer Real Estate interests? from here says:

There are only two big Real Estate developments proposed for Gowanus, Lightstone and Public Place, both of which FAC are highly involved. So who's interest is being looked out for here?

Today, 9:43 am