

Following are some of my thoughts on the proposed work at the Jerome Park Reservoir (JPR) in connection with the filtration plant being erected on Gun Hill Road.

First, a supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) must be prepared by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) so that the community can respond meaningfully: It shouldn't be shoved down our throats as a fait accompli. Robert Moses couldn't do what he got away with doing a generation ago.

Things to be considered include: the effect on the affected community on proposed blasting; ditto drilling; and the 45 truckloads per week of dirt, rock and debris excavated. Have they forgotten that a major reason that the filtration plant was sited on the golf course was to avoid these very same problems of blasting & drilling and removal of truckloads of debris from the area around the JPR, especially the Bronx High School of Science, one of the premier high schools in the nation (not to mention M.S. 95, De Witt Clinton H.S., Lehman College and Walton H.S.)? What effect will it have on the health of our children and the elderly, particularly those with breathing disorders, such as asthma, which is a major health problem?

If asked whether I would prefer blasting or drilling. My answer would be neither. I live across the street from the JPR. Recently, a developer did drilling on a Saturday for a few hours. I couldn't nap. How are the students to learn with drilling and/or blasting right across the street from them? What about the dangers of blasting: when it was first proposed over a decade ago, we were told that blasting might blow out a few windows at Amalgamated.

In view of the gargantuan cost over runs and the blown schedules, the unexpected problem caused by the underground stream, which necessitates the removal of a million gallons of water per day (probably undermining the foundations of the pipes at the filtration plant) and the effect it is having on water bills, it's time to rethink the concept. The filtration plant at the golf course should be capped, closed down, and moved to Eastview, where it should have been sited originally.

In the long run, it will probably be cheaper. Remember the Second Avenue subway project has been stopped any number of times. Also, in view of the burst bubble in real estate, this might be an opportune time for the City to purchase land in the watershed to protect it from run off of pollutants and try to get the Federal government to give Croton a waiver from the filtration obligations of the Clean Water Act.

Too, they should use more modern means of filtration (e.g. membrane instead of chlorine - remember Bhopal, India).

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