

October 13, 2009

Honorable Commissioners
Public Design Commission of the City of New York
City Hall, Third Floor
New York, NY 10007
Phone: (212) 788-3071
Fax: (212) 788-3086

Re: October 5, 2009 23692: Construction of
aboveground components of the Croton Water
Treatment Plant, Phase I, Mosholu Golf Course,
Van Cortlandt Park, 3701 Jerome Avenue, Bronx.
(Final) (CC 11, CB 7) DEP/DPR

Dear Commissioners:

Below is a statement from local stakeholders who have been involved in the above mentioned project for many years. Thank you for accepting these comments.

It is our understanding that the parking lot for the new golf house to be sited in conjunction with the roof/driving range of the Croton Water Filtration Plant, will require utilization of a portion of the Sachkerah woods area now used by the general public as a playground and passive recreational use. This part of the design is outside the lines of alienation.

Constructing a turn around for a parking lot so close to a playground would appear to be unreasonable. But we cannot know whether this use of a playground for a parking lot turn around is reasonable because we do not know the eventual configuration of the Mosholu Golf Course itself. Spokes people have gone so far as to suggest that the course will have to be shortened to eight holes if the parking situation is not solved.

This is confusing because we have been told by people at the golf course that the plan is still to add additional tees to the course so it will play like an 18-hole course. Such a plan would satisfy the requirement of the City Council in the resolution siting of the Filtration Plant, that the course be restored to 18 holes.

There are a number of concerns that will need to be addressed in the planning of the course, all of which bear onto the question of whether the parking lot needs to take any space from the Sachkerh and playground area. They include:

1. What will be done with the space that is now the current temporary driving range?
2. Will all of that current practice space remain?
3. How many trees will be sacrificed for the new 18 tee configuration and where will the mitigating trees be planted?

4. Can the connection between the Old Croton Aqueduct Trail and the Sachkerah Woods area be improved? This request has been discussed for over 10 years. The current situation cuts the neighborhood off from the amazing resource that is the Old Croton Aqueduct Trail.
5. Will any of the water features around the new driving range be incorporated into any of the new fairways?

It would seem to us that deciding the configuration of the parking lot before anyone has decided on the configuration of the golf course is putting the cart before the horse. The public has asked repeatedly for information about the golf course design to no avail and it would appear that these decisions have not yet been made. In order to fully understand the parking lot design and golf house design one has to see it in relation to the overall design of the golf course.

Three Community Boards in the joint interest area of Van Cortlandt Park participate on the Croton Facilities Monitoring Committee (CFMC), which has the responsibility of public oversight for the project. The golf course parking lot turn around was presented to the CFMC in June, and the committee was awaiting further details before making a final decision on the design and the issue. The Design Commission should postpone any review until such time as the DEP responds to the committee's inquiries, at which time it is expected the committee will pass a resolution either opposing or accepting this proposal. The Committee's opinion should be factored in the Design Commission's evaluation.

Please respond with your comments to Dart Westphal, 3400 Reservoir Oval, Bronx, NY 10467 or call 718-324-4461.

Sincerely,

/s/

Dart Westphal, Bronx Council for Environmental Quality (BCEQ) and Friends of Van Cortlandt Park (FVCP)

Jane Sokolow, Bronx Council for Environmental Quality (BCEQ)

Karen Argenti, BCEQ

Christina Taylor, Friends of Van Cortlandt Park (FVCP)

Father Richard Gorman, Bronx Community Board 12 Chair *

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, 81st AD, NYS

Damian McShane, Bronx Community Board 8 Chair *

Council Member G. Oliver Koppell, 11th CD, NYC *

* Member of the CFMC