



GOWANUS CANAL COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP (CAG)

your local voice for Superfund

For more information: www.GowanusCAG.org

The following CAG resolution requests formal consideration by the indicated parties to conduct activities related to the Gowanus Canal Cleanup with regard to the concerns and interests of the Gowanus community.

TITLE: Protecting Historic S.W. Bowne Grain Storehouse and Preventing Navigational Hazards from Impacting the Cleanup

TO: NYC Department of Buildings
United States Coast Guard

DATE: January 22, 2019, FINAL Revised Version

Resolved:

The Gowanus Canal Community Advisory Group (CAG) requests that the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) take enforcement action to the full extent permitted by law against the owner of the historic S.W. Bowne Grain Storehouse building at 595 Smith Street along the Gowanus Canal, given that the owner is in violation of a posted DOB order following a fire in the summer of 2018. The CAG also requests that DOB present to the CAG's Archaeology Committee in February 2019 regarding what enforcement action has been taken, as well as actions taken to ensure that the building does not collapse and create a navigational hazard near the mouth of the Gowanus Canal.

Be it further Resolved:

The Gowanus Canal Community Advisory Group (CAG) requests that the United States Coast Guard take enforcement action to the full extent permitted by law against the owner of the historic S.W. Bowne Grain Storehouse building at 595 Smith Street along the Gowanus Canal, given that the owner has not shored up the bulkhead on the property that partially collapsed in 2017. Additional collapses have occurred since and are likely to continue, posing the threat of hazards to navigation near the mouth of the Gowanus Canal. These hazards could limit the ability of vessels associated with the superfund cleanup from accessing the Canal as needed.

Background:

The S.W. Bowne Grain Storehouse was constructed in the 1880s and is one of the few remaining structures associated with maritime commerce on the Gowanus Canal that remains standing in its original location. It has been proposed for designation as an individual city landmark by various civic groups several times over the course of the past ten years, in part because of its unique design among the other warehouses found along the Brooklyn waterfront. The building is also associated with key developments in New York labor laws regarding worker compensation.



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The building burnt partially during a fire in the summer of 2018, a fire that FDNY has officially deemed “incendiary”, meaning it was intentionally set. As Council Member Carlos Menchaca noted publicly in the aftermath of the blaze, the owner of the property “has willfully neglected [the property] and created a local nuisance for many years.”

Cc:

The Fire Department of the City of New York
NYC Councilmember Carlos Menchaca, District 38
Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams
Sarah Carroll, Chair, NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
Walter Mugdan, Superfund Division Director, USEPA
Christos Tsiamis, Gowanus Canal RPM, USEPA
Natalie Loney, Gowanus Canal CIC, USEPA

Please direct responses and inquiries to gowanuscag@gmail.com.