March 3, 2017

Commissioner Rose Harvey  
NY State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation  
Peebles Island State Park  
P.O. Box 189  
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Dear Commissioner Harvey,

We write to urge you to list the Ridgewood Reservoir on the State and National Register of Historic Places. This engineering landmark, which straddles parts of Brooklyn and Queens, is not only an important example of 19th century urban infrastructure, but a unique ecological environment that deserves the protections afforded by inclusion in the Register of Historic Places.

The Ridgewood Reservoir, built between 1856 and 1858, is the last remaining piece of the water supply system of the City of Brooklyn. It was an engineering marvel at the time, and continues to be an asset to Highland Park. It helps provide flood protection by temporarily holding water and slowing storm water runoff. The reservoir also offers invaluable insight into the environmental history of Brooklyn, Queens and Nassau County.

Since being decommissioned in 1989, the three reservoir basins have evolved into distinct ecological environments, from woodlands to wetlands. The special wetland conditions provide unique habitat for species that cannot survive elsewhere. Migratory birds depend on wetlands, and many endangered and threatened animal species require wetlands during part of their life cycle. This evolution is unique in the city and affords an unequaled opportunity to study nature. Today, local schools organize trail walk educational tours of the reservoir, teaching students about the rare flora and fauna the wetland supports. With a new-found appreciation for this unique habitat, students have become some of the most vocal advocates for its protection.

As you know, community leaders, environmental organizations and elected officials have spent years working together to preserve the reservoir. We strongly believe the Ridgewood Reservoir merits landmark designation with the New York State Register of Historic Places and the National Register for its urban, engineering and environmental significance and urge you to exercise your authority and make this designation.
Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. If we can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact Evelyn Cruz, with the office of Congressman Nydia Velázquez, at 718-599-3658 and Anthony Lemma, with the office of Congresswoman Grace Meng at 718-358-6364.

Sincerely,

Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress, 7th C.D.

Grace Meng  
Member of Congress, 6th C.D.

cc:  Ruth Pierpont, Director, Division for Historic Preservation  
NYC H2O  
Queens Borough Parks Commissioner Dotty Lewandowski  
Liam Kavanagh, Deputy Parks Commissioner  
Steve Zahn, Acting Director NY State DEC Region 2  
Ken Scarlatelli, Natural Resource Manager for NY State DEC Region 2;  
Salema Davis, CB5 Brooklyn Parks Committee Chairwoman
March 2, 2017

Commissioner Rose Harvey,
NY State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Peebles Island State Park
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Commissioner Harvey:

I wholeheartedly support the listing of the Ridgewood Reservoir on the State and National Register of Historic Places. This landmark in engineering history is the most important example of 19th century urban infrastructure in the City of New York, and it certainly merits recognition.

Built between 1856 and 1858, the Ridgewood Reservoir is the last remaining piece of the water supply system of the City of Brooklyn. It was an engineering marvel at the time, and today it is an important feature of Highland Park. The reservoir offers insight into the environmental history of Brooklyn, Queens and Nassau County, and as such is invaluable.

Since being decommissioned in 1989, the three reservoir basins have evolved into distinct ecological environments, from woodlands to wetlands. This evolution is unique in the city and affords an unequaled opportunity to study nature.

The Ridgewood Reservoir merits recognition as a landmark in urban history, engineering history, and environmental history, and we urge you to list this site on the New York State Register of Historic Places and the National Register.

Sincerely,

Mike Miller
Member of Assembly
District 38

MGM:jk
February 27, 2017

Commissioner Rose Harvey
NY State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Peebles Island State Park
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Dear Commissioner Harvey:

It has come to my attention that the non-profit group NYC H2O is applying to have the Ridgewood Reservoir be placed on the State and National Register of Historic Places. I support and strongly endorse their application.

Built between 1856 and 1858, the Ridgewood Reservoir is the last remaining piece of the water supply system of the City of Brooklyn. An important feature of Highland Park, the reservoir offers insight into the environmental history of Brooklyn, Queens and Nassau County. Since being decommissioned in 1989, the three reservoir basins have evolved from woodlands to wetlands.

I have a long history of advocacy of working to preserve the Ridgewood Reservoir. Due to these reasons and many more, I urge you to add this wonderful reservoir to the site on the New York State Register of Historic Places and the National Register. Thank you for your attention on this matter and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Catherine Nolan

cc: Ruth Pierpont, Director, Division for Historic Preservation, NYS State Parks
    Gary Giordano, District Manager, Queens Community Board 5

da
Commissioner Rose Harvey  
NY State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation  
Peebles Island State Park  
P.O. Box 189  
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

February 14, 2017

Dear Commissioner Harvey:

I write to share my support for the listing of the Ridgewood Reservoir on the State and National Register of Historic Places. This benchmark in engineering history is the most important example of 19th century urban infrastructure, in the City of New York, and it certainly merits recognition.

Built between 1856 and 1858, the Ridgewood Reservoir is the last remaining piece of the water supply system of the City of Brooklyn. It was an engineering marvel at the time, and today it is an important feature of Highland Park. The reservoir offers insight into the environmental history of Brooklyn, Queens and Nassau County, and as such is invaluable.

Since being decommissioned in 1989, the three reservoir basins have evolved into distinct ecological environments, from woodlands to wetlands. This evolution is unique in the city and affords an unequaled opportunity to study nature.

The Ridgewood Reservoir merits recognition as a landmark in urban history, engineering history, and environmental history, for these reasons I urge you to list this site on the New York State Register of Historic Places and the National Register.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Melinda Katz  
President  
Borough of Queens

cc: Dorothy Lewandowski, Queens Borough Parks Commissioner; Vincent Arcuri, Chairman, CB 5 Queens;  
Steve Fiedler, Chairman, CB 5 Parks Committee
February 27, 2017

Honorable Rose Harvey
Commissioner
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Peebles Island State Park
PO Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Re: Letter from Borough President Adams in support of listing of the Ridgewood Reservoir on the State and National Register of Historic Places

Dear Commissioner Harvey:

As Brooklyn’s borough president, I have always believed that it is so important to protect our freshwater wetland ecosystems. Without a clean environment, our communities would not be the great places to live, work, and recreate that they are. That is why I support the listing of the Ridgewood Reservoir — built between 1856 and 1858 by the City of Brooklyn prior to its 1898 annexation into the City of Greater New York — on the State and National Register of Historic Places.

Situated between the Jackie Robinson Parkway and Brooklyn’s Cypress Hills neighborhood on the Brooklyn-Queens border, the Ridgewood Reservoir — the most important example of 19th century urban infrastructure in the City of New York — is a landmark in engineering history. It is the last remaining remnant of the City of Brooklyn’s water supply system. Ridgewood Reservoir, part of Highland Park, offers a glimpse into the environmental history of Brooklyn, Queens, and Nassau County, and as such is invaluable.

Since being decommissioned in 1989, the three reservoir basins have evolved into distinct ecological environments, from woodlands to wetlands. This evolution is unique in the city and affords an unequaled opportunity to study nature. The Ridgewood Reservoir merits recognition as a landmark in engineering, environmental, and urban history. I urge you to list this site on the New York State Register of Historic Places and the National Register.

Sincerely,

Eric L. Adams
Brooklyn Borough President

ELA/es
Commissioner Rose Harvey,
NY State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Rose.Harvey@parks.ny.gov
Peebles Island State Park
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Commissioner Harvey:

I am writing to support the listing of the Ridgewood Reservoir on the State and National Register of Historic Places. This landmark in engineering history is the most important example of 19th century urban infrastructure in the City of New York, and it certainly merits recognition.

Built between 1856 and 1858, the Ridgewood Reservoir is the last remaining piece of the water supply system of the City of Brooklyn. It was an engineering marvel at the time, and today it is an important feature of Highland Park. The reservoir offers insight into the environmental history of Brooklyn, Queens and Nassau County, and as such is invaluable.

Since being decommissioned in 1989, the three reservoir basins have evolved into distinct ecological environments, from woodlands to wetlands. This evolution is unique in the city and affords an unequaled opportunity to study nature. The Ridgewood Reservoir merits recognition as a landmark in urban history, engineering history, and environmental history, and we urge you to list this site on the New York State Register of Historic Places and the National Register.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
ELIZABETH S. CROWLEY
Council Member, 30th District

cc: Ruth Pierpont, Director, Division for Historic Preservation
    NYC H2O
    Queens Borough Parks Commissioner Dotty Lewandowski
    Liam Kavanagh, Deputy Parks Commissioner
    Steve Zahn, Acting Director NY State DEC Region 2
    Ken Scarlatelli, Natural Resource Manager for NY State DEC Region 2
    Salema Davis, CB5 Brooklyn Parks Committee Chair
    Steve Fiedler, CB5 Queens Parks Committee Chair
April 19, 2017

Commissioner Rose Harvey
NY State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Peebles Island State Park
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Dear Commissioner Rose Harvey;

I am writing to express my support for the listing of the Ridgewood Reservoir on the State and National Register of Historic Places. This landmark in engineering history is the most important example of 19th century urban infrastructure in the City of New York, and it certainly merits recognition.

Built between 1856 and 1858, the Ridgewood Reservoir is the last remaining piece of the water supply system of the City of Brooklyn. It was an engineering marvel at the time, and today it is an important feature of Highland Park. The reservoir offers insight into the environmental history of Brooklyn, Queens and Nassau County, and as such is invaluable.

Since being decommissioned in 1989, the three reservoir basins have evolved into distinct ecological environments, from woodlands to wetlands. This evolution is unique in the city and affords an unequaled opportunity to study nature. The Ridgewood Reservoir merits recognition as a landmark in urban history, engineering history, and environmental history, and I respectfully request you to list this site on the New York State Register of Historic Places and the National Register.

I know that my voice is one of many in favor of listing the Ridgewood Reservoir on the State and National Register of Historic Places. Preservation of this site and the resulting wildlife conservation will ensure that nature will be around for future generations to enjoy and Ridgewood Reservoir will be recognized for the importance of wildlife and wilderness for the people of New York City.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 718-642-8664 if you have any questions or wish to discuss further.

Sincerely,

Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.
Council Member, 37th District
March 15, 2017

Commissioner Rose Harvey,
NY State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Rose.Harvey@parks.ny.gov
Peebles Island State Park
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Dear Commissioner Harvey,

As someone who deeply cares about green infrastructure, I wholeheartedly support the listing of the Ridgewood Reservoir on the State and National Register of Historic Places.

Built between 1856 and 1858, the Ridgewood Reservoir is the last remaining piece of the water supply system of the City of Brooklyn. It was an engineering marvel at the time, and today it is an important feature of Highland Park. The reservoir offers insight into the environmental history of Brooklyn, Queens and Nassau County, and as such is invaluable.

Since being decommissioned in 1989, the three reservoir basins have evolved into distinct ecological environments, from woodlands to wetlands. This evolution is unique in the city and affords an unequaled opportunity to study nature.

The Ridgewood Reservoir merits recognition as a landmark in urban history, engineering history, and environmental history, and we urge you to list this site on the New York State Register of Historic Places and the National Register.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Antonio Reynoso
Council Member
34th District, Brooklyn & Queens

cc:
Michael Lynch, Director, Division for Historic Preservation; Michael.Lynch@parks.ny.gov
NYC H2O; info@nych2o.org
Queens Borough Parks Commissioner Dotty Lewandowski; dorothy.lewandowski@parks.nyc.gov
Liam Kavanagh, Deputy Parks Commissioner; liam.kavanagh@parks.nyc.gov
Steve Zahn, Acting Director NY State DEC Region 2; steve.zahn@dec.ny.gov
Ken Scarlatelli, Natural Resource Manager for NY State DEC Region 2;
  kenneth.scarlatelli@dec.ny.gov
Salema Davis, CB5 Brooklyn Parks Committee Chairwoman; Salemabuf@yahoo.com
February 27, 2017

Ms. Jennifer Betsworth
National Register Unit
New York State Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, New York 12188-0189

Re: Owner Consent Letter for Nomination of the Ridgewood Reservoir to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Ms. Betsworth:

The City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation (NYC Parks) is pleased to provide a letter of support for the nomination of the Ridgewood Reservoir (the Reservoir), Highland Park, to the National and State Registers of Historic Places. It is NYC Parks’ intention that the site boundary be defined by the embankment and pathway that encircles the three basins, consistent with NYC Parks’ proposed Critical Environmental Area boundary reflected in the attached map.

The Reservoir was a key component of the first central public water supply system for Brooklyn. Shortly after its incorporation as a City in 1834, Brooklyn initiated a search for a reliable public water supply to supplant the system of shallow wells, cisterns and springs that served its neighborhoods. After many years of public deliberation and investigation, groundbreaking for the Ridgewood Aqueduct and Reservoir System was on July 11, 1856 and water was first raised on November 18, 1858. Over time, the supply system was expanded to incorporate additional streams and groundwater wells, and the distribution system was enlarged in 1891.

In 1898, Brooklyn merged with the City of New York and gained access to the New York City water supply system. With the completion of the Catskill Aqueduct and City Tunnel No. 1 in 1917, a high-quality water source from the Catskills became available and the Ridgewood System was placed on standby status. The system was used as necessary to supplement the Catskill water during the first half of the 20th century, but the eventual development of additional upstate reservoirs and City Tunnel No. 2 increased availability to Brooklyn and ended the need for water from the Ridgewood System. The Reservoir became a backup reservoir in 1959, and was last used during a drought period in the 1960s.

The Reservoir was finally decommissioned in 1989. The original pump station has been removed, but historic structural elements remain, including the reservoir structure itself, a small section of original perimeter fencing, and a brick pump house and gate house along the northern edge of the west and central basins, providing a tangible physical connection to the Reservoir’s prior role as an important public works that was integral to the development and public health of the City.
In 2004, the Reservoir was officially turned over from the New York City Department of Environmental Protection to NYC Parks, by which time the site had been reclaimed by both native and non-native vegetation, upland forest and freshwater wetlands. In response to public support for maintaining the three basins in their current state as naturalized open space, NYC Parks pursued a dam hazard reclassification with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), such that the dam would be rated low-hazard instead of its Class C high-hazard rating. Prior to any approval, DEC required that the Reservoir be fully disconnected from the public water system, a critical step that was achieved in 2016 through a water main project managed by the New York City Department of Design & Construction.

In the interim, NYC Parks successfully completed the construction of a joint bicycle and pedestrian pathway around the Reservoir, which is heavily used throughout the year and provides a benefit to human health, just as it did when it was first constructed and provided a clean, reliable water supply to a rapidly growing population.

The Reservoir is a site with unique historic value and exceptional character. NYC Parks is committed to sustaining and, in direct coordination with the local community, exploring the expansion of the vision for the property in a manner that is sensitive to and serves to enhance its history and character. NYC Parks fully supports the inclusion of the Ridgewood Reservoir in the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Meredith Griffin directly at (718) 393-7305 or meredith.griffin@parks.nyc.gov.

Sincerely,

[Handwritten Signature]

Therese Braddock
February 9, 2017

Commissioner Rose Harvey,
NY State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Rose.Harvey@parks.ny.gov
Peebles Island State Park
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Commissioner Harvey:

We wholeheartedly support the listing of the Ridgewood Reservoir on the State and National Register of Historic Places. This landmark in engineering history is the most important example of 19th century urban infrastructure in the City of New York, and it certainly merits recognition.

Built between 1856 and 1858, the Ridgewood Reservoir is the last remaining piece of the water supply system of the City of Brooklyn. It was an engineering marvel at the time, and today it is an important feature of Highland Park. The reservoir offers insight into the environmental history of Brooklyn, Queens and Nassau County, and as such is invaluable.

Since being decommissioned in 1989, the three reservoir basins have evolved into distinct ecological environments, from woodlands to wetlands. This evolution is unique in the city and affords an unequaled opportunity to study nature.

The Ridgewood Reservoir merits recognition as a landmark in urban history, engineering history, and environmental history, and we urge you to list this site on the New York State Register of Historic Places and the National Register.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

President, Brooklyn Historical Society
cc: Ruth Pierpont, Director, Division for Historic Preservation;
Ruth.Pierpont@parks.ny.gov
NYC H2O; info@nych2o.org
February 15, 2017

Commissioner Rose Harvey,
NY State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Rose.Harvey@parks.ny.gov
Peebles Island State Park
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Dear Commissioner Harvey:

We wholeheartedly support the listing of the Ridgewood Reservoir on the State and National Register of Historic Places. This landmark in engineering history is the most important example of 19th century urban infrastructure in the City of New York, and it certainly merits recognition.

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The Ridgewood Reservoir merits recognition as a landmark in urban history, engineering history, and environmental history, and we urge you to list this site on the New York State Register of Historic Places and the National Register.

Sincerely,

Michelle Neugebauer
Executive Director
Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation

cc: Michael Lynch, Director, Division for Historic Preservation
NYC H2O
Queens Borough Parks Commissioner Dotty Lewandowski
Liam Kavanagh, Deputy Parks Commissioner
Steve Zahn, Acting Director NY State DEC Region 2
Ken Scarlaticelli, Natural Resource Manager for NY State DEC Region 2
Salema Davis, CB5 Brooklyn Parks Committee Chairwoman
March 3, 2017

Commissioner Rose Harvey,
NY State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Rose.Harvey@parks.ny.gov
Peebles Island State Park
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Commissioner Harvey:

We wholeheartedly support the listing of the Ridgewood Reservoir on the State and National Register of Historic Places. This landmark in engineering history is the most important example of 19th century urban infrastructure in the City of New York, and it certainly merits recognition.

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The Ridgewood Reservoir merits recognition as a landmark in urban history, engineering history, and environmental history, and we urge you to list this site on the New York State Register of Historic Places and the National Register.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Marjorie Jean-Jacques
Interim Executive Director

cc: Michael Lynch, Director, Division for Historic Preservation; Michael.Lynch@parks.ny.gov
NYC H2O; info@nych2o.org
Queens Borough Parks Commissioner Dotty Lewandowski; dorothy.lewandowski@parks.nyc.gov
Liam Kavanagh, Deputy Parks Commissioner; liam.kavanagh@parks.nyc.gov
Steve Zahn, Acting Director NY State DEC Region 2; steve.zahn@dec.ny.gov
Ken Scarlatelli, Natural Resource Manager for NY State DEC Region 2; kenneth.scarlatelli@dec.ny.gov
Salema Davis, CB5 Brooklyn Parks Committee Chairwoman; Salemafabu@yahoo.com
April 12, 2017

Commissioner Rose Harvey,
NY State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Rose.Harvey@parks.ny.gov
Peebles Island State Park
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Re: Ridgewood Reservoir
Highland Park
Glendale, Queens

Dear Commissioner Harvey:

At this time, we have concern about the condition of our nation’s vital infrastructure, roads, bridges, airports, highways and water resources, to name only a few. We believe that for the health and well-being of our nation, pure, safe, potable water is one of the most important, and if more people knew how the water resources are designed, managed and maintained they will understand the need to protect the environment that supports it.

Listing the Reservoir on the State and National Register of Historic Places will surely help to inform the public of the story of the growth of the New York City’s water infrastructure which began with the Ridgewood Reservoir.

The Brooklyn Chapter of the American Institute of Architects is in full support of naming the Ridgewood Reservoir to the Historic Register. And going forward, beyond recognition of the reservoir as a Historic Landmark, buildings on the site are also worthy of landmark status. They could be renovated to become visitor information and learning centers as resources to introduce school groups through models and exhibits the rich history of New York City’s water supply and systems.

Sincerely yours,

Jane McGroarty AIA, Chair Urban Design Committee
Anthony Marchese, AIA

cc: Michael Lynch, Director, Division for Historic Preservation:
Michael.Lynch@parks.ny.gov
NYC H20: info@nych2o.org