

I came to the Board this summer with comments about conserving the land at 453 and 501 Pine Street. Since then, I have read carefully through the draft of your Open Space Addendum about Nature-Based Climate Solutions. In the light of the goals expressed in that document, it seems logical that the Conservation Board would make every effort, would push the city to use all available resources — now and in the future — to conserve this land. Not because this is in any way pristine, wild land. On the contrary, this piece of land has been devastated by historical industrial development, treated for years as a waste dump, as worthless except for its value to the coal gasification process. Now the real estate agent selling the property is touting it as “desirable land,” made all the more so by being declared an “opportunity zone” for development.

If we are supporting Nature-Based Solutions -- and I say “we” because I want to believe we’re on the same team in this -- we should do all we can to allow Nature to do her work in reclaiming this land. Despite the projects of the Army Corps of Engineers, it’s Nature that will allow this land to recover from industrial devastation, but she needs time. Let’s grant her the time and support she needs to do her work. This should be true for **both** private parcels of land in question and for the publicly-owned Barge Canal site. If there is a conflict between the private owner’s need to profit from the sale of this land and the greater good of conserving it, then that is where the negotiations can begin. The Conservation Board should be the voice of Nature and of climate solutions and, as such, should work to give this land time to recover.

I am looking forward to hearing what BPRW will be proposing about conservation of this area. I would also call your attention to an email by Jess Rubin, sent to you today via Scott, reiterating remediation strategies and approaches that might be used to help this land.