

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 – June 27, 2006

Attendance

Rev. Reuben Akinfime	Shawn Lewis (A)
David Alexander	Deborah Mack
Joyce Anderson	James Mack (A)
Josephine Blakeley	Rev. Thelma Martin (E)
Patricia Boone	Yolanda Matthews (A)
James A. Bowens	Sadie McNamara
Esther Cobb (A)	Joseph Norton (E)
Adrainer Kim Coleman	Marie Pierre
Gregory Cord	Elder Devon Ponds (E)
Bonnie Crump (A)	Mattie Pusey
Essie Duggan	Isaiah Simmons (E)
Sam Gardner (A)	Ernestine Turner
Shirley Gonsalves (A)	Rev. Miran Ukaegbu (E)
Daniel Goodine (A)	Marcus Victory
Sarah Hall	Alice Vines (E)
Henry Hill	Annie Walkes
Kofi Hormeku	Dr. Merrill White
Michael Howard	Herman Winston (E)
Hattie Hunt (E)	Hazel Younger
Allene Ingram	Viola D. Greene-Walker, DM
Daisy Jackson	E. Jane Coleman, ADM
Wordell Johnson	Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
Dr. Cade Jones, III	Zo Mpofu for Congressman Major Owens
Eula Key	Senator Velmanette Montgomery
Danny King	W. Mosley for Assemblyman Wm. F. Boyland, Jr.
Bettie Kollock-Wallace	K. Baine for Councilmember Darlene Mealy

MEETING HELD AT BROWNSVILLE MULTI-SERVICE CENTER, 444 THOMAS S. BOYLAND STREET, BROOKLYN

Chairperson Hazel Younger officially called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.. An invocation was said by Dr. Cade Jones, III.

Chairperson Younger read a list of newly appointed members of Community Board #16. The following persons were present and recognized by the Chairperson: Ms. Patricia Boone, Mr. Gregory Cord, Ms. Daisy Jackson, Ms. Marie Pierre, and Dr. Merrill White. Ms. Bonnie Crump, Mr. Daniel Goodine, and Mr. Shawn Lewis were not present.

Chairperson Younger recognized State Senator Velmanette Montgomery who, after offering a message of commendation and her gratitude to the appointees for their desire to serve, administered the Oath of Office.

Chairperson Younger presented the new members with membership packets and stated that there will be a meeting in September to help familiarize the members with each other and determine committee assignments.

Senator Montgomery reported that she has been working on a bill that was approved by the Assembly and Senate which will allow former inmates to become licensed barbers or cosmetologists. She has also been working on a bill that will allow community boards to participate and compete with the City and other entities in some State Department programs. This bill has also been approved by the Assembly and Senate.

A motion was made by Ms. Sarah Hall, seconded by Dr. Cade Jones, III and carried to dispense with the reading of last month's minutes.

A motion was made by Ms. Mattie Pusey, seconded by Ms. Annie Walkes and carried to dispense with the reading of the District Manager's report.

Chairperson Younger encouraged the membership to read the minutes and the District Manager's Report at their leisure and thanked District Manager Greene-Walker and her staff for compiling the documents.

She recognized Ms. Allison Benjamin of the Brooklyn Aids Task Force.

Ms. Benjamin stated that she is the Coordinator of the Substance Abuse Treatment Program operated by the Brooklyn AIDS Task Force (BATF).

BATF has been in existence since 1986 and the agency was the first to provide comprehensive HIV and Aids service in the borough of Brooklyn.

Many people in Brooklyn have never been tested for HIV or have recently been exposed to the virus and do not know that they are HIV positive. One of the agency's goals is to locate mobile units at various places in Brooklyn to reach this population. She asked the audience to contact her if they know of a location that would benefit by the placement of a mobile unit.

They offer many types of care services for people who are HIV positive such as medical services, nutritional counseling, food pantries, and substance abuse treatment programs. BATF also offers services to persons returning from incarceration.

Someone stated that at one time it was being said that it takes five to ten years after being infected to show up positive. Is that still the case?

Ms. Benjamin stated that it usually takes about eight to ten years for a person infected with HIV to develop AIDS. They can detect if a person has been in contact with the virus almost immediately after testing. This is an important reason why one should be tested and receive treatment as soon as possible.

Ms. Annie Walkes asked if they provide housing assistance?

Ms. Benjamin stated that they do. They work with local landlords to help their clients find permanent housing. Caseworkers may also reach out to local shelters, transitional housing, supportive housing, and SROs in order to assist the clients.

Chairperson Younger thanked Ms. Benjamin for her presentation and recognized the Site Supervisor and Coordinator for the Partnership for the Homeless Family Resource Center, Ms. Denise Jones.

Ms. Jones stated that the Center is operated in collaboration with United Way, the Coalition Against Hunger, the Food Exchange, and the Urban Justice Center.

She is here tonight to speak about the Food Card, the government's first answer to hunger. Through the Family Resource Center, located at 100 Pennsylvania Avenue, they are attempting to discern the needs of the community. There are many working people and seniors with fixed incomes in the community who are struggling to put food on their tables. There are many people who are eligible for the Food Card and do not know it.

The Food Card is the new name for Food Stamps. Renamed in part to remove the negative stereotype associated with Food Stamps. You do not have to be on Public Assistance to benefit from the Food Card program. You can be a student, a single working parent, or a retired senior citizen. These are your tax dollars coming back to you.

They are reaching out to community-based organizations to help them spread the word about the availability of the program. At no charge, they will come in and set up a table at community events and inform the public as well as sign up individuals who are interested. She can be reached at (718) 875-0027 Ext. 211.

Chairperson Younger thanked Ms. Jones for her presentation.

Ms. Sadie McNamara, Chairperson of the Health and Human Resources Committee, reported that the Committee met on June 15, 2006 with Bishop Gregory Martin, Executive Director/CEO of Faith, Hope and Charity Community Services, and Mr. Manuel Rosa who are planning to establish a new entity known as Exodus Life Enhancement Services for the purpose of operating a drug free outpatient chemical dependence program for individuals and families in the 11212 and 11233 zip codes who have, or are at risk of abusing alcohol or other substances.

The program will provide the following services:

- Group and individual counseling
- Relapse prevention
- Domestic Violence counseling
- Conflict/anger management
- Nutrition counseling /obesity
- HIV/AIDS counseling
- After care counseling
- Emotion management
- Vocational assessment and referral
- 12 Step Program-referrals.

Their clients will primarily be the parents or guardians of children enrolled in the Faith, Hope and Charity Day Care Center who are involved with the Administration for Children Services. They will also take referrals from Probation and Parole, and from Traffic Court (DUI and DWI).

They have not identified a specific address to operate the program.

They are requesting a letter of support from Community Board #16 to proceed with their proposal.

Bishop Martin and Mr. Rosa are here tonight to respond to questions from the Board.

Bishop Martin stated that their current program lacks supportive services for the families who they serve. The caregivers of 144 children who they serve have been identified as being at risk of, or are abusing alcohol or other substances. The state and federal governments have identified zip codes 11212 and 11233 as having high rates of drug abuse problems.

Exodus Life Enhancement Services will provide in-house services to those families that are in need of them, meaning that they will not need to leave the community to receive the services. If approved, they will provide a drug-free support system at their facilities which will help keep families together. They expect to start with 35 families.

Ms. Essie Duggan asked what is the success rate of the agency?

Bishop Martin stated that the program is new and has not established a record of accomplishment.

District Manager Greene-Walker added that Faith, Hope, and Charity operates two day care facilities within the District, one at Livonia and Saratoga Avenues, and the other at 382 Sutter Avenue. They are looking to bring a new program into the community to service clients who they already have within the Faith, Hope, and Charity day care system. They are seeking a letter of support from the Community Board to accompany their application to the State.

A motion was made by Ms. Essie Duggan, seconded by Dr. Cade Jones, III and carried to accept the Committee's report and to issue a letter of support to Exodus Life Enhancement Services for the purpose of operating a drug free outpatient chemical dependence program for individuals and families in the 11212 and 11233 zip codes who have, or are at risk of abusing alcohol or other substances.

Ms. Annie Walkes, member of the Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committee, reported that the Committee met on June 13, 2006 with a representative from MTI Residential Services, Inc., which is proposing to construct 62 units of permanent housing and supportive services for persons who are psychiatrically challenged. The proposed site is 397, 399 and 403 Howard Avenue between St. Mark's Avenue and Bergen Street.

Each unit will consist of a living room, bedroom, bathroom, and kitchenette. There will also be an apartment for an on site superintendent. Ten percent of the units will be available for Community District #16 residents.

There will be staff on-site 24 hours, 7 days a week.

The Committee recommends that the Board support this proposal with a stipulation that at least 20% of the apartments go to Community District #16 residents because of the need in this community.

Mr. Wendell Knight, CEO and Founder of MTI Residential Services, Inc., is here to make a brief presentation and respond to questions from the Board.

Mr. Knight stated that MTI Residential Services, Inc. has been in existence since 1993. They currently operate in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island as well as Nassau and Suffolk, counties.

He stated that all 62 units will target residents of this community. The jobs created by the project will also be targeted to the community.

They are here this evening to seek community support and advice for developing the permanent housing.

Someone asked if the housing was being developed for people with psychiatric challenges?

Mr. Knight stated that they are.

Someone asked for a clarification on the ten percent of the units being offered to the community.

Mr. Steven DiBrienza stated that ten percent of the units are being made available to members of the community, regardless of their psychiatric need. The remaining ninety percent will be for persons who are psychiatrically challenged and may well be from the community.

Mr. David Alexander asked if there will be supervision at the site?

Mr. Knight stated that there will be 24 hours a day, 7 days a week supervision by professional and para-professional staffing consisting of social workers, case managers, nutritionist, and security personnel.

Mr. Alexander asked if the clients are capable of independent living?

Mr. Knight stated that they are and that MTI is noted for their job readiness programs. They currently serve about 400 individuals and many are employed at one of the many jobs that MTI has developed.

Someone asked if the site is in the vicinity of another facility of this type?

Mr. Knight stated that there is a state operated facility nearby. However, MTI's proposed project is not a facility, but permanent housing.

Mr. Alexander asked if there are any concerns with mixing the population of those who are psychiatrically challenged with those who are not?

Mr. Knight stated that historically there have been no issues. There are probably persons present here tonight who have people in their lives who are afflicted with some type of psychiatric illness. He himself has suffered from mental depression all of his life. Many people afflicted with psychiatric illnesses are able to maintain fully functional lives. He can be contacted at (718) 492-1733 for further information about MTI and its services.

A motion was made by Ms. Mattie Pusey, seconded by Mr. Henry Hill and carried to accept the report of the Committee and its recommendation to support MTI, Inc.'s proposal with the stipulation that at least 20% of the apartments go to Community District #16 residents because of the need in this community.

Ms. Hattie Hunt, Chairperson of the Youth Services Planning Committee, reported that The Youth Services Planning Committee of Community Board #16, in collaboration with the PAL-Brownsville Beacon Center at the Kappa V Middle School, located at 985 Rockaway Avenue, sponsored a youth conference on Saturday, June 17th.

The following workshops were offered:

- 1) Know Your Rights
- 2) Domestic Violence/Peer Pressure
- 3) HIV/AIDS
- 4) Job Development
- 5) Construction and Engineering
- 6) Entrepreneurship
- 7) Gang Violence.

Approximately 150 young people were in attendance. The participants were inspired and informed by the wealth of information shared by the presenters.

The Committee will be planning follow-up conferences.

Ms. Hunt thanked the members of her Committee, District Manager Viola Greene-Walker, and Assistant District Manager Jane Coleman for their hard work and efforts in bringing the conference to fruition.

A motion was made by Mr. David Alexander, seconded by Dr. Cade Jones, III and carried to accept the Committee's report.

Mr. Henry Hill, member of the Senior Citizens Affairs Committee, reported that the Committee met on June 23, 2006 with Ms. Henni Fisher, Director and Founder of the Alzheimer's and Aging Resource Center of Brooklyn, Inc., who shared information about resources available for persons who have Alzheimer's and their caregivers.

The Alzheimer's and Aging Resource Center of Brooklyn provides information, referrals, education, individual and family counseling, home visits, telephone advice and reassurance. The Center also runs support groups for caregivers, Personal Care Assistants, as well as for people with early and mid-stage Alzheimer's and related dementia.

Ms. Fisher suggested that individuals who are experiencing memory problems get a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation for memory impairment. Memory problems can result from many different medical conditions, including Alzheimer's disease and mild cognitive impairment, or can be a result of normal aging.

Ms. Fisher emphasized the importance of older people having a will, power of attorney, health care proxy, and a living will.

For additional information about Alzheimer's resources, you can contact the Alzheimer's Association of New York at (212) 983-0700, the New York City Department for the Aging's Long Term Care Unit at (212) 788-4942 or Mrs. Fisher at (718) 646-7001.

Chairperson Younger emphasized the need for persons of all ages with memory problems to be properly tested.

A motion was made by Ms. Essie Duggan, seconded by Mr. Marcus Victory and carried to accept the Committee's report.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Walter Mosley of Assemblyman William F. Boyland's office.

Mr. Mosley reported that a fatal case of meningitis was reported in the Bed-Stuy area and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has issued a health alert for the following zip codes: 11206, 11216, 11221, and 11233. Persons living in the affected areas with hampered immune systems or questions concerning the disease should call the Department of Health at 1-866-NYCDOH1 or 3-1-1.

The Assemblyman will host his monthly Advisory meeting on July 8th at 10:00 a.m. to discuss community concerns.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Zo Mpofo of Congressman Major Owens' office.

Ms. Mpofo stated that copies of the Congressman's latest newsletter can be found on tonight's distribution table. She highlighted an article pertaining to the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Expansion Act (H.R. 2931) which expands the eligibility requirement to include Predominately Black Institutions of higher learning to colleges such as Medger Evers to receive regular annual appropriations of federal funds. She also called attention to an article discussing the Congressman's plans to develop legislation for a Homeland Security Community Mobilization Program to target the high unemployment rate amongst black males. Jobs that deal with disaster preparations will be allocated based on poverty rates in each neighborhood.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Christine Larkin of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Ms. Larkin stated that concerning Mr. Moseley's notice about meningitis, concerned parties should keep their eyes and ears open for updates in the coming weeks.

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will apply for the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance's National Responsible Fatherhood Capacity-Building Initiative Grant to supplement their Healthy Start program that is mentioned in the District Manager's report. The Department is seeking a letter of support from the Board to submit with their application.

Chairperson Younger thanked Ms. Larkin for the information she provided and recognized Police Officer Dean Elmore, Community Affairs Officer for the 73rd Precinct.

Police Officer Elmore invited the audience to pick-up and read flyers on the distribution table regarding firecrackers. Many people, both young and old, were injured by illegal fireworks last year. Anyone seeking to report a crime in progress (such as the illegal discharge of fireworks) should call 9-1-1. Persons seeking to report information (such as locations where illegal activities may take place) should call 3-1-1.

Volunteers are being sought to help in removing graffiti throughout the Precinct. Persons who wish to volunteer may call the Community Affairs Office of the 73rd Precinct at (718) 495-5422.

This year's National Night Out Against Crime will be on Tuesday, August 1st. Locally, the 73rd Precinct, the 73rd Precinct Clergy Council, and the 73rd Precinct Community Council have organized events at Betsy Head Playground and ballfield (area bounded by Thomas S. Boyland and Strauss Streets, and Dumont and Livonia Avenues). The entire community is invited to join in the festivities.

Illegal guns are killing children and adults in our neighborhood. People are aware of the guns but are not reporting them. The Police Department is offering \$1,000 rewards for information leading to the arrest of anyone who possesses an illegal handgun (the arrested person does not have to be indicted or convicted for the reward to be collected). To anonymously report someone who is carrying, selling, or using an illegal handgun call 1-866-GUN-STOP (1-866-486-7867).

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Rick Van Arkin of the Brooklyn Baseball Project.

Mr. Van Arkin stated that the Brooklyn Baseball Project is a job development project for local Brooklyn baseball players. They have tried various funding sources in the past and have now designed a line of baseball caps for each of the eighteen community districts in Brooklyn to raise revenue. Their line consists of 36 different caps – each district has two designs. Each cap features a "Did You Know" tag that describes some interesting information about that particular community.

Ms. Patricia Murray asked if there is any limitation on the number of group homes that can be placed in a particular area?

District Manager Greene-Walker stated that as far as the Community Board goes, unless the group home receives government funding, the Board does not necessarily know of plans to establish a group home in the community. We are beginning to see a pattern of privately-owned properties being sold and new owners of these properties bringing in group homes. Oftentimes the Board is unaware of the existence of the group homes until it is brought to our attention. The Board relies on the community to be its eyes and ears and will work with the community to help resolve problems that may arise because of the group homes.

There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Ms. Sadie McNamara, seconded by Ms. Sarah Hall and carried to adjourn the meeting.