

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 – September 25, 2007

Attendance

David Alexander	James Mack (A)
Joyce Anderson (E)	Yolanda Matthews
Renee Archer (A)	Sadie McNamara (E)
Octavius Bamberg	Rev. Joseph Norton
Sissi Benitez (A)	Edna Petty (A)
Josephine Blakeley (E)	Marie Pierre
Patricia Boone (A)	Elder Devon Ponds (E)
James A. Bowens (E)	Mattie Pusey
Gregory Coad (A)	Lashon Segar (A)
Bonnie Crump (A)	Ernestine Turner
Essie Duggan	Rev. Miran Ukaegbu (E)
Samantha Dunn (A)	Alice Vines
Ivory Ellison (A)	Dr. Merrill White
Helen Giles (A)	Herman Winston
Shirley Gonsalves	Hazel Younger
Daniel Goodine (A)	Viola D. Greene-Walker, DM
Sarah Hall (E)	E. Jane Coleman-Assistant ADM
Henry Hill	Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
Kofi Hormeku	Hon. William F. Boyland, Jr.
Michael Howard	Hon. Betsy Gotbaum
Allene Ingram (A)	Latrice Walker for Hon. Yvette Clark
Daisy Jackson (E)	Essie Duggan for Hon. Velmanette Montgomery
Javonn Johnson (A)	Brandon Bloomfield for Hon. John Sampson
Troy Johnson (A)	James Tilmon for Hon. Dianne Gordon
Dr. Cade Jones, III	Carolyn Sanders-James for Hon. Mike Bloomberg
Pamela Junior	L. Joy Mitchell for Hon. William C. Thompson, Jr.
Eula Key (E)	Kevin McCall for Hon. Charles Barron
Danny King	Maurice Phillips for Hon. Darlene Mealy
Bettie Kollock-Wallace	William Whitaker for Hon. Marty Markowitz
Shawn Lewis	Rev. Joseph Jones for Hon. Charles Hynes
Deborah Mack (E)	

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

Chairperson Hazel Younger called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. and an invocation was said by Dr. Cade Jones, III.

A motion was made by Ms. Pamela Junior, seconded by Ms. Mattie Pusey and carried to dispense with the reading of the minutes.

District Manager Viola Greene-Walker stated that there is time sensitive information contained in her report, including job postings that end tomorrow. She urged the membership to read the report as soon as possible.

A motion was made by Ms. Marie Pierre, seconded by Mr. Kofi Hormeku and carried to accept the District Manager's Report.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Derrick Slaughter of the New York City Commission on Human Rights.

Mr. Slaughter stated that the Commission on Human Rights is a civil rights law enforcement agency that protects all New Yorkers against discrimination in the areas of housing, employment, and public accommodations. One of the issues they are currently involved with is predatory lending. In order for them to assist a possible victim of predatory lending, the person must contact their office and provide documentation so that they can determine if the person is in fact a victim.

The Commission offers many other services as well. Their Immigrants Employment Rights Program speaks to immigrants about their rights under the law. Project Equal Access advocates in behalf of people with mobility challenges to help them gain access to their apartments, stores,

supermarkets, etc.. They also facilitate workshops on issues such as sexual harassment, human rights training, and youth rights. The workshops are held at churches, schools, or just about anywhere the public gathers. Literature about their programs is available on tonight's distribution table.

Ms. Bettie Kollock-Wallace, Chairperson of the Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committee, reported that the Committee met on September 10, 2007. There was a presentation by developers who were selected by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to construct small homes under the New Foundations Program on several HPD vacant land sites.

Highland Builders, LLC. and Shelter Rock Builders, LLC. will construct 10 houses, consisting of 30 units at the following locations:

1. 332, 334 and 336 Saratoga Avenue – 3-family
2. 1411 St. Mark's Avenue – 3-family
3. 1471 and 1473 St. Mark's Avenue – 3-family
4. 1465 and 1467 St. Mark's Avenue – 3-family
5. 1436 St. Mark's Avenue – 3-family
6. 1687 Prospect Place – 3-family

Selling prices will range from \$422,000 to \$450,000.

Dabar Development will construct 8 buildings for a total of 23 units at the following locations:

1. 283 Mother Gaston Boulevard – 3-family
2. 273 Mother Gaston Boulevard – 3-family
3. 299 Mother Gaston Boulevard – 2-family
4. 38 Liberty Avenue – 3-family
5. 1915 Bergen Street – 3-family
6. 2164 Dean Street – 3-family
7. 2178 Dean Street – 3-family
8. 1633 St. Mark's Avenue – 3-family

The selling prices will range from \$300,936 to \$528,647.

All of the houses will be sold through a lottery process. As information becomes available to the Committee, it will be shared with the community.

A motion was made by Ms. Mattie Pusey, seconded by Ms. Alice Vines and carried to accept the report of the Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committee.

Dr. Merrill White, Chairperson of the Women's Committee, reported that the Women's Committee met on Monday, September 17, 2007. The Health Forum which was held on May 24, 2007 was discussed and all committee members agreed that measures should be taken to insure better attendance at the next forum.

Plans to sponsor forums monthly were revised and the Committee decided to sponsor three forums annually. The first forum is expected to be held in March in accordance with Women's History month. At this event community women will be honored. An education forum will be held to make parents aware of how to navigate the school system. The Committee has strong feelings about assisting parents who have expressed concerns that they do not receive help from the parent coordinators and other school personnel.

Plans to enlist a presenter to speak about women's prison issues at a general Board meeting were discussed. The Women's Prison Association and The Correctional Association of New York were mentioned as two resources for this project.

The Committee looked over agendas for Borough Consultations and discussed which agencies may impact the lives of women more.

The Women's Committee is charged with responding to issues relating to the needs/available resources for the female population of the District and encourages more Board members to join this committee.

A motion was made by Mr. Kofi Hormeku, seconded by Dr. Cade Jones, III and carried to accept the report of the Women's Committee.

District Manager Viola Greene-Walker, in behalf of Ms. Essie Duggan, Chairperson of the Economic Development Committee, reported that there was a joint meeting of the Economic Development and Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committees on August 20, 2007 with representatives from the Department of Housing Preservation and Development and AKRF Consultants. The purpose of the meeting was to hear comments on the draft of the Livonia Avenue Retail Market Study. The Study area covered Livonia Avenue between East 98th Street and New Lots Avenue (which covers both Brownsville and East New York, also known as Community Districts #16 and #5). The study area in Community District #16 is on Livonia Avenue between East 98th Street and Van Sinderen Avenue.

There are approximately one hundred and eleven retail storefronts in the study area and 50% of the establishments are convenience goods and neighborhood services.

Two hundred and seventy-five consumer surveys were completed. Sixty-five percent of the consumers said that they shopped on Livonia Avenue at deli/grocery stores and supermarkets. Also, Livonia Avenue lacked variety and quality goods. Shoppers stated that they would like to see more clothing stores, banks, supermarkets, and dining options.

Merchants were also surveyed and they expressed similar needs for a sit-down restaurant, bank, clothing and shoe stores.

Committee members expressed the need to upgrade lighting along Livonia Avenue. They agreed that a bank and better quality stores are needed.

The majority of the commercial activity along Livonia Avenue is near the subway stations. They are looking at ways to expand commercial growth in the other areas of Livonia Avenue.

AKRF Consultants will conduct community meetings to get shoppers' reaction to the survey. A presentation will be made to the Community Board in the fall.

Once it is determined what types of stores are needed in the community, a Request for Proposal will be issued to developers. It will take approximately three years before actual construction begins.

A motion was made by Ms. Alice Vines, seconded by Dr. Cade Jones, III and carried to accept the report of the Economic Development Committee.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Maurice L. Phillips of Councilmember Darlene Mealy's office.

Mr. Phillips stated that Councilmember Mealy has introduced a bill that will require the City to repair street defects within three days of them being reported to the Department of Transportation. She also introduced a resolution to ban symbolically the use of the "B" and "H" words in New York City. She particularly calls upon the music industry to stop disrespecting the women of our community with the use of these denigrating words.

She continues to march against the violence that plagues our community.

She is requesting that the people of the City speak out and make known to the elected officials that they will not tolerate the rate increases that are being proposed by Con Ed, New York City Department of Environmental Protection, and the Metropolitan Transit Authority without valid justifications.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Latrice Walker of Congresswoman Yvette Clarke's office.

Ms. Walker stated that she grew-up and currently resides in the Brownsville / Ocean Hill community. She joined Congresswoman Clarke's office only two weeks ago and she is looking forward to serving the community.

As much of the work that she is responsible for deals with legislation, she wants to hear from the community about their ideas concerning the development of the community. Earlier tonight,

someone spoke of affordable housing. She wants to get involved with this issue. Homes priced at \$350,000 to \$500,000 are being marketed as being “affordable”. As a young attorney, she finds that at those prices the properties are not affordable. She wants to work on bringing homes into the community at a truly affordable rate.

Congresswoman Clarke’s office is located at 123 Linden Boulevard between Bedford and Rogers Avenues. They currently work on a host of immigration issues because that is an issue of great concern to the residents of that neighborhood. She encourages everyone from the Brownsville community to come in and make their concerns known. She can be contacted at (718) 287-1142.

Congresswoman Clarke has a new initiative in Congress regarding gun violence. She is proposing legislation that would require that local law enforcement agencies have access to information that will allow them to trace weapons to their original points of sale. This legislation affects her on a personal level as her current automobile has a bullet hole in it. She keeps it that way, not because she cannot have it repaired, but rather to act as a constant reminder of just how serious we need to take this issue. We need to support our youth with employment opportunities. It is imperative that we encourage our youth to get an education as the baseline requirement for these jobs will be a high school diploma.

Chairperson Younger recognized Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum.

Ms. Gotbaum stated that she represents the entire city and as such it is difficult to get to all of the Community Board meetings around the city. Ms. Natasha Richardson is this community’s liaison to her office and her office is there to serve the community.

The Public Advocate’s job is to first be the Ombudsperson of the City of New York. If you have a problem regarding city services that you are having difficulty resolving, please call her office at (212) 669-7200, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.

The most important thing that they have done in the past two years is to try to make the Department of Education be more responsive to the needs of parents. Many parents feel left out, many do not understand the reforms that are taking place, and many feel that they do not have a voice in the decision making process. To address this issue she has created a hotline in her office for concerns about education and the number is (212) 669-7250. Some may recall that last January, school bus routes were changed and many children were left standing waiting for buses. The public outcry from all five boroughs caused the City to revert to the original routes.

They have just published a guide of services available to senior citizens and it is available here tonight. The guide contains information on how and where to receive all types of services available to seniors such as the SCRIE (Senior Citizens Rent Increase Exemption) program.

Someone stated that effective October 1, 2007, a new law will go into effect wherein summonses will be issued to individuals who wear their pants too low. While she does not particularly care for the low pants, it is an unfair burden to place on our youth. Especially, since many are unemployed and would be further burdened with criminal warrants on their record for failure to pay the fines. What, if anything, can the Public Advocate do about this unfair law?

Public Advocate Gotbaum stated that she is unaware of the statute but she will investigate the issue. She agrees that our police resources should not be wasted on writing frivolous summonses.

Chairperson Younger thanked Public Advocate Gotbaum for her presentation and invited her to return.

She recognized Rev. Joseph Jones of Kings County District Attorney Charles Hynes’ office.

Rev. Jones stated that gun violence is an issue that should be a concern for all New Yorkers, especially the Black community. At a recent meeting at New Life Cathedral, Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly stated that over sixty percent of perpetrators of gun violence within the 73rd, 75th, and 77th Precincts are African-Americans and over seventy percent of the victims are also African-Americans.

We need to become proactive in our communities in order to get the guns out. The District Attorney’s Office is in the process of recruiting specific churches to assist by allowing guns to be

turned in at those specific churches with no questions asked. Upon turning in a gun the individual will receive a voucher that can be redeemed for \$100 at the District Attorney's office.

The Police Department also has their GUNSTOP program that rewards individuals \$1,000 for information that leads to the arrest of anyone who possesses an illegal handgun.

He comes from an era where you could not bring a stick of bubble gum into your house without your mother knowing. He refuses to believe that things have changed so much that children can now bring guns into their homes without their parents knowing. He warns that even if the parent does not know, someone else does. He related a story of an individual who upon hearing about the GUNSTOP Program became entrepreneurial about it and began working for the police by giving them information about nine of his associates who possessed illegal guns.

If there is a gun in your home placed there by your child and someone informs the authorities who find it, you, not your child, will be arrested. If it is in your home, it is in your possession. He is not asking that you turn in your child, he is just asking that you turn in the gun.

On the issue of baggy pants, there is no statute in New York City outlawing them. However, the police have been known to target individuals because of the way they wear their clothing. It is important that we inform our children to be wary of where they are going and who they are going with.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. William Whitaker of Borough President Marty Markowitz's office.

Mr. Whitaker concurred with Rev. Jones on the issue of guns. He related the story of a blind woman whose grandson lived with her and was arrested on New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) property while in possession of an illegal firearm. The grandmother is now facing eviction from her NYCHA apartment. He is working with NYCHA and the woman to prevent this from happening. He wants us to know of some of the consequences for having an illegal gun in your home.

He presented Perfect Attendance Certificates for the 2006 calendar year to Mr. David Alexander, Ms. Adrainer Coleman, Mr. Henry Hill, and Ms. Sarah Hall (who was absent).

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. James Tilmon of Assemblywoman Dianne Gordon's office.

Mr. Tilmon stated that Assemblywoman Gordon sends her thanks to those individuals who went out and voted in the recent election for the Kings County Surrogate Court Judgeship. She also encourages everyone to participate in the general elections on November 6th.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. L. Joy Mitchell of Comptroller William C. Thompson, Jr.'s office.

Ms. Mitchell stated that one urgent issue that the Comptroller is concerned about is foreclosure prevention. There are many organizations and individuals who are offering products that may be detrimental to our economic health. Nearly one million New Yorkers may lose their homes to foreclosure. In October, the Comptroller will host an event where everyone can come to learn about the help that the government has to offer.

They are also concerned with keeping the cost of living in New York City affordable. A recent survey shows that more and more people are moving out of New York. Details of the survey can be found on their website at: www.comptroller.nyc.gov or by calling the Community Action Center at (212) 669-3916.

Chairperson Younger recognized Assemblyman William F. Boyland, Jr.

Assemblyman Boyland stated that he and Senator John Sampson recently sponsored a housing forum at Tilden Houses where they heard about many of the issues that are challenging the residents. They will continue to sponsor these forums and address the issues.

He has hired a job developer to work at his office on the issue of employment and low wages facing the residents of East New York and Brownsville. He encourages residents who have

employment issues to visit his office at 467 Thomas S. Boyland Street.

He is pleased to announce that the recently constructed Bishop Richard B. Martin Houses on East New York Avenue at Legion Street has finally received their Certificate of Occupancy and will open in November.

He encourages everyone to attend his community advisory meetings on the second Saturday of each month.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Kevin McCall of Councilmember Charles Barron's office.

Mr. McCall stated that Councilmember Barron is concerned about the treatment by the police of the residents of the City, especially here in Brownsville. He stated that they recently arrested two young men who were doing nothing more than sitting on the steps of a building at Noble Drew Ali. On November 5th, which is Black Solidarity Day, they will stage a protest against this type treatment.

Councilmember Barron met with Mr. Mo Vaughn, the new owner of Nobel Drew Ali, to discuss employment opportunities for the residents. Mr. Vaughn has agreed to work along with Man-Up, a grassroots employment organization, to provide some skilled and un-skilled positions. Responsible residents who are ready, willing, and able may contact Man-Up at (718) 498-2320.

Chairperson Younger recognized community resident Ms. Blanche L. Peltonbusch.

Ms. Peltonbusch stated that she has had occasion to meet with several local elected officials and/or their representatives and has been disappointed by the responses or lack thereof. She encourages the audience to challenge the elected officials to meet their obligations.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Christina Larkin of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH).

Ms. Larkin stated that she is pleased to announce that the DOHMH has implemented two new programs in the community - the "MOOOOVE" to 1% milk Program and the Newborn Visiting Program, which she spoke to the Board about last year.

The "MOOOOVE" to 1% milk Program encourages families to move to 1% milk for everyone age 2 and up. Cutting down on unnecessary calories and saturated fat can prevent diabetes, heart disease, and other serious health problems. DOHMH will visit neighborhood bodegas and grocery stores and ask them to place placards advertising the program in their store windows and to stock 1% milk and fresh fruits and vegetables. It is also important that residents ask for these products to encourage the grocers to carry them.

The Newborn Visiting Program was implanted in Brownsville four weeks ago and they have already visited eighty new moms. She encourages the audience to invite any new mothers or mothers-to-be to participate in the program. They can assist new families by providing cribs to those who need them and conducting environmental assessments to look for things such as peeling paint, properly installed window guards, vermin infestation, etc..

She invites social service agencies to contact her for cross referrals.

Chairperson Younger acknowledged the presence of students from Frederick Douglass Academy and their teacher.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Stephanie Rooker of Party for the People.

Ms. Rooker stated that Party for the People is a grassroots organization that encourages social activism.

She is encouraged to see the turnout and active discussion at this meeting and invites everyone to join them at a community empowerment celebration event on Saturday, October 6th at the Yard, located at 388-400 Carroll Street in the Gowanus section of Brooklyn. The event is to encourage activism within the entire borough of Brooklyn. Councilmember Charles Barron is amongst the

speakers and grassroots organizations scheduled to attend such as Brooklyn for Peace, Center for Anti-violence Education, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, and Trees not Trash.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Helen Jordan of New York Urban League Service to Families.

Ms. Jordan stated that the Urban League has been providing counseling and advocacy from this building (444 Thomas S. Boyland Street) for the past twenty-five years. Most of the work that they do involves keeping families together, especially when there are children under eighteen years old in the family.

Tonight she is here to invite the community to a money management seminar that they will host on Saturday, September 29th. There will be workshops on several money management issues such as opening and maintaining a savings account, budgeting, credit management, and other financial strategies. The event is free and breakfast will be served.

Chairperson Younger recognized Police Officer Dean Elmore, Community Affairs Officer of the 73rd Precinct.

Police Officer Elmore reported that overall crime is down by four percent within the Precinct. Gun violence continues to be a problem. In fact, he is here tonight in his bullet-proof vest because he was just at a crime scene where someone was shot and will be returning there after the meeting.

They have asked the District Attorney's office to take on the task of recruiting houses of worship to place cameras outside their facilities to aide in apprehending shooters. They are considering asking individual homeowners to place cameras on their homes. Even if the cameras do not record the actual crime, they might assist by recording someone running away from the scene.

The Commanding Officer of the Precinct (Deputy Inspector Jeffrey Maddrey) has instituted some initiatives in response to 311 quality of life issues. Most of the complaints revolve around loud music and noise. Some people are under the assumption that they can play music loudly up to a certain hour. There are no time constraints on noise in the City - it is a matter of how loud the noise is and not when it is made. Be cognizant of your neighbors when playing your music.

They continue to ask building owners to sign up for the graffiti removal program.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Carolyn Sanders-James of the Mayor's Community Assistance Unit.

Ms. Sanders-James stated that she is saddened each time she hears about gun violence in our communities. Mayor Bloomberg continues to travel to Washington and Albany to campaign for stricter gun laws. He has joined with 250 other mayors throughout the nation to fight the issue that takes the life of so many innocent people.

The Mayor's Volunteer Center of New York City (formerly known as the Mayor's Volunteer Action Center) brings together individuals, corporations, government agencies and non-profit organizations in order to connect people and facilitate meaningful volunteer opportunities that significantly improve the quality of life in New York City. She encourages the community to take advantage of its resources.

There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Danny King, seconded by Ms. Pamela Junior and carried to adjourn the meeting.