

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 – October 23, 2007

Attendance

David Alexander (E)
Joyce Anderson
Renee Archer (A)
Octavius Bamberg
Sissi Benitez (A)
Josephine Blakeley (E)
Patricia Boone
James A. Bowens (E)
Gregory Coad (A)
Bonnie Crump (A)
Essie Duggan
Samantha Dunn (A)
Ivory Ellison (A)
Helen Giles (A)
Shirley Gonsalves
Daniel Goodine (A)
Sarah Hall
Henry Hill
Kofi Hormeku
Michael Howard
Allene Ingram
Daisy Jackson (E)
Javonn Johnson (A)
Troy Johnson (A)
Dr. Cade Jones, III (E)
Pamela Junior
Eula Key

Danny King (A)
Bettie Kollock-Wallace
Shawn Lewis
Deborah Mack
James Mack (A)
Yolanda Matthews
Sadie McNamara
Rev. Joseph Norton (A)
Edna Petty (A)
Marie Pierre
Elder Devon Ponds
Mattie Pusey
Lashon Segar (A)
Ernestine Turner
Rev. Miran Ukaegbu
Alice Vines
Dr. Merrill White
Herman Winston
Hazel Younger
Viola D. Greene-Walker, DM
E. Jane Coleman-Assistant ADM
Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
Latrice M. Walker for Hon. Yvette Clarke
Christopher Lundy for Hon. Edolphus Towns
Essie Duggan for Hon. Velmanette Montgomery
Maurice Phillips for Hon. Darlene Mealy

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

PUBLIC HEARING

Chairperson Hazel Younger called the Public Hearing to order at 7:04 p.m. and an invocation was said by Ms. Bettie Kollock-Wallace.

The first item was: IN THE MATTER OF a proposal by Concern for Independent Living, Inc. to establish 65 units of affordable housing for Brooklyn residents with psychiatric disabilities at 322-330 MacDougal Street.

District Manager Viola Greene-Walker stated that Mr. Ralph Fasano is present to make a short presentation in behalf of Concern for Independent Living, Inc. and their proposal.

Mr. Fasano stated that the proposal is to build housing for psychiatrically disabled individuals. The proposed building will replace an existing one to two story brick building that formerly housed troubled adolescents. It will consist of sixty-five studio apartments, community space, and an outdoor courtyard. The facility aims to be a more attractive building than the one it will replace. Each individual will have their own studio apartment with common lounge space, a library/computer room, and a physical fitness room available in the building.

Fifteen to eighteen new permanent jobs will be created, ranging from kitchen workers, maintenance, counselors, case managers, supervisors, and directors.

Concern for Independent Living believes that all people can recover from their disabilities. Building a beautiful structure helps people rise to a level where they can achieve greater productivity and gain respect for themselves and others. They also believe that maintaining the property is a must.

They pride themselves in not interfering with the neighborhood and for that reason their clients' leases contain clauses which state that any client who negatively interferes with the community is subject to eviction.

They anticipate that many of their clients will come from the neighborhood because mental illness is everywhere. Persons suffering from mental illness deserve quality housing and services.

The building will have nice community space and he encourages community groups to reach out to him about making use of the space.

Ms. Mabel Davis asked how will the clients be monitored when they are away from the facility?

Mr. Fasano stated that they will have staff available 24 hours a day – seven days a week, to provide medication to the clientele and there will be security personnel as well. This along with their strict rules should be sufficient for most of their clients. Some of the clients may receive travel assistance but most will travel independently when they go out to various programs.

Mr. Royston Antoine asked when is construction anticipated to begin and will local contractors be utilized?

Mr. Fasano stated that they anticipate construction to begin within two to six months. They will employ a competitive bidding process and encourage local contractors to participate in the process. In terms of permanent employment, they hope that enough people from the community will apply and fill the available positions.

District Leader Lisa Kenner asked how many sites have they built in the Brownsville area to date?

Mr. Fasano stated that they have not built any sites in Brownsville. The proposed site is the only one they have planned for Brownsville.

Ms. Kenner stated that a statement was made that the clients may be evicted for cause. If they are in fact evicted - where will they go?

Mr. Fasano stated that is the problem. If it's a situation where the client was unable to sustain themselves in their environment, they may attempt to place the client in a hospital. Ultimately, it is up to the client and some may end up homeless.

Someone asked where are Concern for Independent Living's other sites located?

Mr. Fasano stated that they operate facilities in Suffolk County and in southern Crown Heights.

Ms. Deborah Mack asked where do their clients come from and can they go back should they be evicted?

Mr. Fasano stated that some of their clients come to them from the shelter system and others come from State hospitals and other State facilities.

Someone asked if they realize that there will be a high school for boys operating across the street from the proposed site.

Mr. Fasano stated that they do not anticipate any interference with each other.

Mr. Morton Hall stated that a facility such as the one being proposed should not operate near a school.

Mr. Fasano stated that they have experience operating facilities near schools.

Ms. Blanche Peltonbusch asked if there is a facility such as the one being proposed near Mr. Fasano's home, and if so, is it directly across from his children's school?

Mr. Fasano stated that there is a facility in his community and it is near a school.

Ms. Peltonbusch asked if he would provide the address of the facility so that she could make a visit to the location.

Mr. Fasano stated that they are not in the habit of publicly broadcasting the exact locations of their facilities.

Ms. Peltonbusch stated that they are publicly broadcasting the desire to place one in this community where it is neither wanted nor needed.

Ms. Annie Walkes asked if they have contacted the community concerning the placing of this type of facility at the location? If this proposal does not go forward, can the facility be used for something else?

Mr. Fasano stated that this is the forum for public comment. They cannot receive State funding until the community has responded.

Ms. Bolden asked if their clients will be persons diagnosed as high functioning? If so, will they be supervised when they are away from the facility?

Mr. Fasano stated that they will generally be high functioning individuals who will not need additional supervision.

Ms. Bolden expressed a concern that the individuals, who are probably already taking one or more psychotropic medications, will be the target of the illicit drug trade in the area.

There being no further questions or comments, the next Public Hearing item was read: Pursuant to the New York City Charter to gather community views and proposals with respect to the New York City's Fiscal Year 2009 Capital and Expense Budgets.

The capital budget allocates funds for physical improvements, land acquisition, and major equipment. The expense budget allocates funds for the ongoing operations of the City, which include personnel, minor equipment and materials, and anything budgeted on a year-to-year basis.

District Manager Viola D. Greene-Walker directed the audience's attention to the list of recommended Capital and Expense Budget requests and their suggested priority for Fiscal Year 2009 (listed on the first six pages of tonight's District Manager's report).

Ms. Deborah Mack asked when are the budget requests due to be submitted?

District Manager Greene-Walker stated that they are due on October 31st and she hopes that the Board will vote on the requests tonight. The agencies' responses will be sent to the Board in February and a Public Hearing will be scheduled to obtain public comments on City agencies' responses on the Capital and Expense Budget Priorities. Budget Hearings will be held during the months of May and June and the budget decisions will be made then.

Someone asked for clarification on expense budget priority number 8.

District Manager Greene-Walker stated that in order for the City agencies, in this instance the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), to fund various programs the Requests for Proposals (RFPs) process is used. By listing the item as a priority, a message is sent to the agency that funding is needed to expand the youth programs in the community. There are existing programs in the community, however, most do not receive sufficient funding to provide the much needed services to the youth of our community. A positive response to the request will also enable new programs to be funded.

Someone asked how they would go about finding out how to fund a new program?

District Manager Greene-Walker suggested that they visit the DYCD website at www.nyc.gov/dycd.

There being no further comments, a motion was made by Ms. Sarah Hall, seconded by Ms. Eula Key and carried to adjourn the Public Hearing.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

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

A motion was made by Rev. Miran Ukaegbu, seconded by Ms. Pamela Junior and carried to dispense with the reading of the District Manager's report.

Chairperson Younger requested that the membership read both the minutes and the District Manager's Report at their leisure.

Ms. Sadie McNamara, Chairperson of the Health and Human Resources Committee, reported that the Committee met on Wednesday, October 17, 2007 with Ms. Yvette Jenkins who is a Health Educator with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Ms. Jenkins shared information with the Committee about neighborhoods in Central Brooklyn that have low flu vaccination rates and high flu-related mortality rates. She is here tonight to speak briefly about the importance of flu shots.

Ms. Jenkins stated that the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene wants to inform the community about the low flu vaccination rate in the adult population of Central Brooklyn (Brownsville, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Bushwick, and a portion of East Flatbush).

Influenza is a vaccine preventable disease that in 2005 was the cause of death for over 2,900 persons in New York City, making it the third leading cause of death in the City. Influenza is a respiratory ailment that is transmitted through coughing and sneezing. Its symptoms come on suddenly and may lead to hospitalization and some people do not survive a case of the flu.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) 2007 recommendation is that persons 50 and over, all pregnant women, children six months of age and older with certain chronic ailments, and persons with compromised immune systems should receive a flu shot. Persons who come into contact with large numbers of people on a regular basis are also encouraged to take a flu shot. Healthy people under the age of fifty may be able to receive the vaccine intranasal.

Some people have concerns about the side effects of the vaccine which are usually quite mild such as soreness at the site of the injection, headaches, or a low-grade fever. These side effects are pale in comparison to the flu and are rare. The only people who should not take a flu shot are those who have an allergy to eggs due to a protein in the vaccine that is derived from eggs.

Mr. Michael Howard asked if the shots are available free of charge?

Ms. Jenkins stated that they are and that a list of locations and times the vaccine is available may be found on tonight's distribution table. The Department of Health along with the Visiting Nurse Service also go out to many senior citizen centers to distribute the vaccine. There is no shortage of the vaccine this year.

Ms. Lisa Kenner expressed a concern about the vaccine being the cause of serious or deadly illness in some persons.

Ms. Jenkins stated that contrary to some beliefs, the vaccine is not known to kill anyone. It is a preventive treatment. There are those who for various reasons choose not to receive the vaccine. There are those who say that they have never had the flu before and ask why they need a vaccine. To them she says there is always a first time. The Health Department understands that among the African-American and African-Caribbean communities there is a level of distrust about the vaccine and they can only educate and encourage people to take proper precautions.

Ms. Patricia Boone asked if a flu vaccine taken last January is still effective?

Ms. Jenkins stated that a vaccine administered in January is no longer effective. The flu season runs from October to March the following year and each flu strain is different with a vaccine adapted for each strain.

A motion was made by Ms. Deborah Mack, seconded by Mr. Kofi Hormeku and carried to accept the report of the Health and Human Resources Committee.

Ms. Essie Duggan, Chairperson of the Economic Development Committee, reported that the Committee met on October 11, 2007.

The Committee continued to discuss the Livonia Avenue Market Study. The goal of the study is to redevelop businesses on Livonia Avenue between East 98th Street and Junius Street. Suggestions for businesses were an anchor store such as a supermarket. Another suggestion was a sporting goods store and a recreation facility for youngsters.

The Committee will be outreaching to the merchants on Belmont Avenue to strategize on ways to revitalize Belmont Avenue, which has a number of vacant stores.

The Department of Consumer Affairs did an Education Day along the Pitkin Business Improvement District on October 11th to inform the businesses about tips to correctly operate a business. For example, a store's refund policy should be posted in full view of customers. Also, the price of items above a specific amount should be clearly marked.

A motion was made by Ms. Sadie McNamara, seconded by Mr. Kofi Hormeku and carried to accept the report of the Economic Development Committee.

Ms. Bettie Kollock-Wallace, Chairperson of the Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committee, reported that the Committee met on October 9, 2007 with representatives of the Arista Development Group who were selected by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development to construct rental apartments on the following vacant, City-owned lots:

- 1) 30 units (5 one-bedroom, 20 two-bedrooms and 5 three-bedrooms) on Block 1433, Lots 23 and 25 on Atlantic Avenue between Saratoga Avenue and Thomas S. Boyland Street.
- 2) 18 units (11 one-bedroom and 7 two-bedrooms) on Block 1473, Lots 34-37 (Howard Avenue at St. John's Place).
- 3) 7 Units (5 one-bedroom and 2 two-bedrooms) on Block 1452, Lots 1 and 87 (St. Mark's Avenue at Howard Avenue).
- 4) 9 units (4 one-bedroom and 5 two-bedrooms) on Block 1451 Lots 42 and 43 (Howard Avenue between St. Mark's Avenue and Bergen Street).
- 5) 14 units (6 one-bedroom and 8 two-bedrooms) on Block 1451, Lot 48 (Howard Avenue at St. Mark's Avenue).
- 6) 16 units (12 two-bedrooms and 4 three-bedrooms) on Block 1447 Lots 67-70 (Bergen Street between Saratoga Avenue and Thomas S. Boyland Street).

The Committee recommends that the Board approve this project which will increase the number of affordable rental apartments in the district.

The Committee also met with representatives of Concern for Independent Living, Inc. which is proposing to construct 65 studio apartments for persons with psychiatric disabilities at 330-332 MacDougal Street.

The Committee recommends that the Board vote against this proposal for the following reasons:

- 1) Our community is over saturated with similar housing.
 - a. 49 units under construction on Mother Gaston Blvd. and Somers Street
 - b. 32 units at 1900 Sterling Place
 - c. Several smaller units scattered throughout the community.
- 2) This housing will not improve the immediate neighborhood which has a number of social ills.

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 and its recommendations.

Rev. Miran Ukaegbu, Chairperson of the Sanitation and Environmental Protection Committee, reported that the Committee met on October 10, 2007.

District Manager Greene-Walker brought to the attention of the Committee that bulk garbage at Jimerson Houses was not being picked up on a regular basis and the condition was creating a nesting place for rats. She followed up with the Sanitation Superintendent and the bulk is being picked up more frequently. The location is being monitored by the Sanitation Superintendent and there's been improvement.

Illegal dumping continues to be a problem in the district. If a name and address is found in the garbage, a summons can be issued to that person. If you observe illegal dumping, please report the location to the Community Board Office by calling (718) 385-0323.

The Department of Sanitation has been sending information to households on items to be recycled. Everyone is urged to read this information and comply with it.

Fallen leaves must be disposed of in brown paper bags or you can use them for mulch in your garden.

If you live in an apartment building and would like to see recycling improved, the Department of Sanitation invites you to sign up as a volunteer for the Apartment Building Recycling Initiative (ABRI). Volunteers must:

- be at least 18 years of age,
- live in a residential building with 3 or more units that currently receive Department of Sanitation collection,
- be willing to work cooperatively with building management to enhance recycling within the building, with building management's consent and,
- takes part in at least one ABRI training session.

Applications are available to anyone who is interested.

A motion was made by Ms. Mattie Pusey, seconded by Ms. Pamela Junior and carried to accept the report of the Sanitation and Environmental Protection Committee.

Mr. Henry Hill, member of the Senior Citizen Affairs Committee, reported that the Committee met on October 17, 2007,

The Guest Speaker for the meeting was Charise K. Lawrence, Director, Brooklyn Community Outreach unit of the Department for the Aging.

Ms. Lawrence presented information regarding the following: Medicare Part D – You must be enrolled by November 15, 2007.

Epic – The New York State (Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage Program), Epic can be used together with any Medicare Part D plan for greater coverage and savings. You may contact Epic by calling 1-800-332-3742 for an application. By doing so you will save money on your prescriptions if you are eligible.

Housing for seniors – The Housing Unit works with service providers, the private sector, government agencies and elderly consumers to plan housing resources that will meet with the changing financial and physical needs, as well as environmental preferences of older New Yorkers. It also provides information on New York City housing options and opportunities. (Source- New York Dept. for the Aging)

Grandparents Raising Children – There is a Grandparent Resource Center (CRC) that addresses the emerging needs of grandparents and other older individuals raising their grandchildren through counseling, information. CRC provides training and technical assistance to community-based agencies serving grandparents. (Source – New York Dept. for the Aging)

Alzheimer's & Long Care Unit – offers individualized assessment of needs, referrals to appropriate community services, education/training for professionals, caregivers, and general public, provides entitlement information and assistance regarding housing alternatives, the nursing home placement process, and other supportive services. (Source New York Dept for the Aging)

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) – provides financial help with fuel and utilities to income-eligible homeowners and renters.

Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP) – offers free assistance by trained older volunteers to people with questions on health benefits and programs, supplementary health insurance and long term care insurance.

Senior Job Preparation Workshops – provide mature applicants with effective job search skills and techniques for success in today's competitive job markets.

Carrier Alert Program – works in connection with the U S Postal Service. Stickers are placed on mail boxes to indicate a senior residence, if the mail piles up, an alert is signaled. More information on this can be obtained by calling 311.

Weatherization Referral and Packaging Program (WRAP) – helps low income elderly keep homes warmer in winter and more comfortable all year round with weatherization and energy related services.

In addition to calling 311 regarding some of this information, you may also call Ms. Lawrence at the Department for the Aging at (212) 442-1290.

A motion was made by Elder Devon Ponds, seconded by Mr. Kofi Hormeku and carried to accept the report of the Senior Citizen Affairs Committee.

A roll call vote was taken which resulted in 23 against, 0 for, and 1 abstention for approval of the proposal presented at tonight's Public Hearing by Concern for Independent Living, Inc. to establish 65 units of affordable housing for Brooklyn residents with psychiatric disabilities at 322-330 MacDougal Street.

A roll call vote was taken which resulted in 24 for, 0 against, and 0 abstentions to approve the District Manager's suggested Capital and Expense Budget Requests and their priorities which was also presented at tonight's Public Hearing.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Christopher Lundy from the office of Congressman Edolphus Towns.

Mr. Lundy stated that generally he acts as the liaison between Congressman Town and the churches and clergy in his district. He has now been asked to represent the Congressman at community meetings. He realizes that there are no "quick fixes" to the issues that he has heard here tonight and commits to including them in the reports that he submits to the Congressman each Friday. He encourages anyone with an issue that they can assist with to contact Congressman Towns' District office at (718) 774-5682.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Lisa Kenner, State Committeewoman for Assembly District #55.

Ms. Kenner stated that she is proud of the improvements that the Board has made in the submittal of Committee reports. It is good to see that so many of the committees are now active.

She recently had the pleasure to meet with Senator Hillary Clinton and Governor Eliot Spitzer.

She asked Senator Clinton for her views concerning public housing. Senator Clinton's response was that public housing needs to be funded better. She asked that Senator Clinton not forget Brownsville should she reach her quest for the Oval Office.

She asked that both elected officials work on passing legislation to protect our youth from the rampant gun violence in our communities from illegal gun trafficking. She attends meetings of New Yorkers Against Gun Violence where she often sees youth from the Bronx, Harlem, and Crown Heights. She would like to see and hear the youth of Brownsville speak about their views on the causes of gun violence in our community.

She has ten tickets available for persons who are interested in the Democratic Presidential Candidate Debate to be held Saturday, October 27th. She asked that only those persons who would attend request the tickets.

She expressed disappointment that a Youth Committee report was not given.

Chairperson Younger stated that the Chairperson of the Committee is ill and that the Committee hopes to convene soon.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Maurice Philips from the Office of City Councilmember Darlene Mealy.

Mr. Philips stated that he recently attended a meeting of the Area Policy Board and was disappointed to see that only \$400,000 out of \$16,000,000 allocated to Brooklyn was earmarked for Community District #16 organizations and services. Furthermore, no funds were targeted for the district's senior citizen organizations and services. He encouraged organizations and agencies, especially those serving seniors, to reach out to the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) and take advantage of the available funds.

Anyone seeking assistance in obtaining and completing applications should call Councilmember Mealy's office at (718) 953-3097.

In regards to the Department of Sanitation's routing times, the Councilmember and her colleagues have passed legislation that restricts the Department of Sanitation to writing summons for dirty residential sidewalks to the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. (effective December 26, 2007).

At last month's Community Board meeting he expressed the need for public outcry against the proposed increases by the Metropolitan Transit Authority and the Department of Environmental Protection. He is happy to report that the public has been galvanizing and voicing their displeasure of the proposed increases. He urges everyone to continue doing so.

Councilmember Mealy will host a town hall meeting at P.S. 21 and representatives from the Brooklyn Public Library, Legal Aide, and the New York City Housing Authority will be on hand to answer questions.

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

Ms. Walker stated that Congresswoman Clarke's District Office is located at 123 Linden Boulevard between Rogers and Bedford Avenues and the telephone number is (718) 287-1142. The telephone number for her Washington D.C. Office is (202) 225-6231. The Washington Office is responsible for legislation that affects our community. Prior to tonight's meeting, she contacted the D.C. office to obtain the number of calls placed to the office from persons in zip codes 11212 and 11233. She was surprised that only 60 calls were received from 11212 and none from 11233. If the community does not voice its concerns, they cannot work on legislation with those concerns in mind.

One piece of legislation they are working on is the reauthorization of the "No Child Left Behind Act". A point of concern within the Act is the use of the Annual Yearly Progress Report (AYP) which is used to determine the level of funding provided. If a school fails one year it is subject to closure if it fails again the following year. She encourages educators and parent teacher

coordinators to contact their offices and voice their concerns about matters concerning the education of the youth in our communities.

Another item that may affect educators is the talk of offering financial incentives to teachers who come from outside the community and not offering the same opportunity to local educators.

Congresswoman Clarke continues to champion "S-chip" legislation which is a National Health bill for children. There are many families who do not qualify for Medicaid but cannot afford private health insurance. This bill was vetoed by President Bush.

She is concerned about all the recent revelations of tainted toys that are on the market and has been in talks with Toys R Us to stop the sale of the toys. This is crucial because many of the children are not covered by a health insurer and they will not likely be treated if they are injured by the toys.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Essie Duggan, representing New York State Senator Velmanette Montgomery.

Ms. Duggan stated that Senator Montgomery's heartbeat is for youth and education. For this reason she is working with and allocating funds for several youth based organizations. She is also applauding the passing of the "Family Connections Bill" a new law that reforms the State prison telephone contracts.

Senator Montgomery and her colleagues were successful in their fight to stop Allstate Insurance from refusing to provide home insurance to qualified homeowners.

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

Officer Elmore reported the following 73rd Precinct crime statistics for the year to date period ending October 21, 2007: murders – up 38%, rapes – down 10%, robberies – down 9%, felony assaults – down 5%, burglaries – up .1%, grand larcenies – up 5.4%, grand larceny autos – up 5%, and shootings – up 73%.

One hundred and forty illegal guns were taken off the street, but this is not enough as gun violence continue to plague our community. There are two initiatives in place to help reduce the number of guns on the street. GUNSTOP will pay \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest of a person in possession of an illegal firearm. There is also a program that will pay \$100 to anyone turning in a firearm to designated houses of worship. There will be a meeting of the Clergy Council on Tuesday, October 30th at the 73rd Precinct. He encourages all clergy of the community to attend so that they may discuss ways to better our community.

He requested that the community continue to be vigilant toward acts of terrorism.

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