

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 – March 25, 2008

Attendance

David Alexander (E)	Danny King (E)
Joyce Anderson (E)	Bettie Kollock-Wallace
Renee Archer (A)	Shawn Lewis
Octavius Bamberg	Deborah Mack
Sissi Benitez (A)	James Mack (A)
Josephine Blakeley (E)	Yolanda Matthews
Patricia Boone	Sadie McNamara (E)
James A. Bowens (E)	Rev. Joseph Norton
Gregory Coad (A)	Edna Petty (A)
Bonnie Crump (A)	Marie Pierre (A)
Essie Duggan	Elder Devon Ponds (E)
Samantha Dunn (A)	Mattie Pusey
Ivory Ellison (A)	Melanie Rochford (A)
Helen Giles (A)	Lashon Segar (A)
Shirley Gonsalves	Ernestine Turner
Daniel Goodine (A)	Rev. Miran Ukaegbu (E)
Sarah Hall	Alice Vines
Henry Hill	Herman Winston
Kofi Hormeku (E)	Hazel Younger
Michael Howard (A)	Viola D. Greene-Walker, DM
Allene Ingram	E. Jane Coleman-Assistant ADM
Daisy Jackson (E)	Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
Javonn Johnson (A)	Christopher London for Hon Edolphus Towns
Troy Johnson (A)	Essie Duggan for Hon. Velmanette Montgomery
Dr. Cade Jones, III (E)	William Whitaker for Hon. Marty Markowitz
Pamela Junior (A)	R. Hermon for Hon. William F. Boyland, Jr.
Eula Key	Maurice Phillips for Hon. Darlene Mealy

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

Chairperson Hazel Younger called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. and an invocation was said by Rev. Joseph Norton.

A motion was made by Ms. Sarah Hall, seconded by Deborah Mack and carried to dispense with the reading of the minutes.

A motion was made by Ms. Deborah Mack, seconded by Rev. Joseph Norton and carried to dispense with the reading of the District Manager's report.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Olivia Morales of the Brooklyn Public Library.

Ms. Morales stated that she is a librarian with the Brooklyn Public Library's Service to the Aging Division. Since November, she and a colleague have been working on the Veterans' Oral History Project in partnership with the Library of Congress. The Project seeks to obtain first-hand accounts of United States Veterans from World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War, or the current conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In addition, those United States citizen civilians who were actively involved in supporting war efforts (such as war industry workers, USO workers, flight instructors, medical volunteers, etc.) are also invited to share their stories.

The histories will be stored in the permanent collections of the Brooklyn Public Library's Brooklyn Collection and the Library of Congress, and will be available to anyone that is interested. Submissions will also be featured in exhibitions at the Brooklyn Collection.

If you are, or think you may know someone who may be interested in providing an account of their experiences, please pickup a flier with contact information from tonight's distribution table. They have yet to receive any response from World War I veterans.

Someone asked how long will they be collecting the information.

Ms. Morales stated that they will collect the information until this coming May.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Carol Allsop from Volunteers of America's East New York SRO.

Ms. Allsop stated that she is the Program Director for Volunteers of America's East New York SRO, located at 1381 East New York Avenue. Volunteers of America (VOA) is relatively new to the area, having taken control of the operation of the SRO at the northeast corner of East New York Avenue and St. John's Place about five years ago. VOA has been in existence for over hundred years, providing services to homeless individuals and families. The East New York SRO provides permanent supportive housing and comprehensive on-site services to formerly homeless men and women.

One of the things that she is trying to do is to connect their clientele to local resources so that will not be necessary for them to travel to Manhattan in order to obtain needed services. She is grateful to District Manager Viola Greene-Walker for her assistance in networking with different agencies in the neighborhood. She can be reached at (718) 566-8750, extension 205.

Ms. Deborah Mack, Chairperson of the Transportation and Franchises Committee, reported that the Committee met on March 17, 2008 and discussed the New York Department of Transportation and the Transit Authority's responses to the Board's Capital Budget Requests for Fiscal Year 2009.

In an effort to get a better response and movement on the requests, the Committee has decided to enlist the assistance of the elected officials and is asking the general public to join them in this effort by calling and e-mailing the local elected officials, as directed on the fliers available on tonight's distribution table.

Your cooperation will be most appreciated. The voice of the masses will make a difference in our community.

The next Transportation and Franchises Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 9th, 6:00 p.m. in the Community Board Office.

A motion was made by Ms. Bettie Kollock-Wallace, seconded by Mr. Henry Hill and carried to accept the report of the Transportation and Franchises Committee.

Assistant District Manager Jane Coleman, in behalf of Ms. Daisy Jackson, Chairperson of the Youth Services Planning Committee, reported that the Youth Services Planning Committee met on March 24, 2008 with Mr. Willair St. Vil, Network Manager for Diploma Plus New York City.

Diploma Plus New York City has been approved by the Department of Education to operate two new transfer high schools in this community.

The two schools are slated to co-locate with other schools in existing school buildings in School District #23. One of the schools, Metropolitan Diploma Plus High School will be located at 985 Rockaway Avenue at Linden Boulevard and the other school, known as Aspirations Diploma Plus High School, will be located at 1495 Herkimer Street at Van Sinderen Avenue.

The schools will emphasize four essentials: performance based education, future focus, supportive school culture, and effective supports.

The schools are intended for youth between the ages of 16 and 20 who have been failed by a traditional system that did not adequately nurture their gifts, curiosity, intelligence and power as learners.

For more information about Metropolitan Diploma Plus High school, call (718) 935-3643 or e-mail myallowitz@gmail.com.

For more information about Aspirations Diploma Plus High School, call (718) 935-3605 or e-mail mmolloy3@schools.nyc.gov

The Youth Services Planning Committee will next meet on Tuesday, April 8, 2008, 6:00 p.m. in the Community Board Office to plan for a district-wide youth conference. Anyone who is interested in planning this event is invited to attend the meeting.

Mr. St. Vil was invited to come forward to respond to questions from the audience.

Mr. St. Vil stated that Diploma Plus of New York City has partnered with the Department of Education to create what they call transfer schools. Transfer schools were created as an alternative for students who have not fared well in traditional high schools. Diploma Plus offers them a second opportunity to earn a high school diploma (even a Regent's Diploma in some cases) and go on to higher education. The schools are kept small, ranging from 150 to 250 students. Diploma Plus operates five schools in New York City – two in Brooklyn, one in Harlem, and two in the Bronx.

Diploma Plus teachers are trained to evaluate the students' performance on a daily basis. The evaluations are not just based on test scores, they look at portfolios, class participation, projects, and other gauges to assess how well, a child is doing. The teachers work hard to ensure that the students are able to perform well not only in high school, but in college as well.

He invites the audience to attend one of their open houses where they can talk to the principal and teachers of the school.

Someone asked when will the open houses be held?

Mr. St. Vil stated that there will be one on April 21st at 985 Rockaway Avenue from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.. He is also seeking a location near Broadway Junction to host another open house.

A motion was made by Ms. Deborah Mack, seconded by Ms. Bettie Kollock-Wallace and carried to accept the report of the Youth Services Planning Committee.

A roll call of Board members was taken.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. William Whitaker from the Office of Borough President Marty Markowitz.

Mr. Whitaker stated that he is this community's liaison to the Borough President and can be reached at (718) 802-3876. He asks for the community's patience when calling, as he often in the field. Should you not reach him when you call, please leave a message and he will return your call. Fliers are available on tonight's distribution table for the upcoming Federation of Block Associations and he encourages block associations to attend. He also encourages them to email the Borough President with requests for grants for their summer block parties. The Borough President's e-mail address is askmarty@brooklynbp.nyc.gov and his office is located at 209 Joralemon Street in Downtown Brooklyn.

The Borough President's Family Help Center is available to assist individuals and families who are having difficulty in negotiating the city's bureaucracy. Free immigration services are also available at Borough Hall. Pamphlets on both services are available on the distribution table.

Chairperson Younger acknowledge the assistance of the staff from the Municipal Arts Society.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Ry-Ann Hermon from the Office of Assemblyman William F. Boyland, Jr..

Ms. Hermon stated that Assemblyman Boyland sponsors a community forum on the second Saturday of each month and she encourages community residents to attend.

Rev. Joseph Norton stated that at a previous Board meeting it was stated that Assemblyman Boyland had allocated funds for the installation of cameras along Rockaway Avenue, what is the status of the funding and when can we expect the cameras to be installed.

Ms. Hermon stated that she is new to her position and is not familiar with the request. However, we experienced how useful a tool the camera can be last week, when their use led to the capture

of an accused rapist at one of the Housing projects. She feels certain that the Assemblyman has the item in his budget.

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

Ms. Duggan announced that Senator Montgomery will sponsor a career day for our youth at Boys' and Girls' High School on March 29th from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m..

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Christopher London from the Office of Congressman Edolphus Towns.

Mr. London stated that he is the Ecumenical Liaison for Congressman Towns. As such, he deals primarily with pastors, church, and 501(c)3 organizations.

In dealing with these groups, they have found that not only are we being affected by the same old foreclosure issue, the Congressman's Office is receiving many calls concerning landlords who are raising the rents of senior citizens and others to unaffordable levels. They realize that the landlords have every right to raise rents, however, is it right to raise the rent of a senior who has lived in the same residence for twelve years to a level where they can no longer afford to live there? Where will they go?

The problem lies in the lack of truly affordable housing. No longer are there government-owned vacant properties wherever you look. The visible lots are most likely already allocated to one program or another. To address this need Congressman Towns has teamed up with the churches. Churches have parking lots that can be built upon and 501-c tax protection that can offset some of the cost of construction.

In April the Congressman will sponsor a meeting with faith-based organizations and representatives from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to discuss available incentives for the organizations to build low-income housing and senior residences.

Another issue that they are involved with is the return of former prison inmates into our communities. They are returning and are having difficulty finding jobs and therefore recommitting crimes. To combat this problem, they have reached out to National Grid (formerly KeySpan Energy) to co-sponsor a second chance forum on April 26th at One Metro Tech Plaza. At that forum they will provide instruction and information to pastors who can pass it along to parolees who may reach out to them for assistance.

He reminded the audience that analog television signals will cease to be broadcasted beginning February 2009 (After that time, you will need a converter box or have a television with a digital tuner in order to receive over-the-air signals. If you subscribe to cable or satellite television no additional equipment is necessary). He also encouraged everyone to complete a tax return in order to receive the tax rebate recently passed by Congress.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Maurice Phillips, Special Assistant to City Councilmember Darlene Mealy.

Mr. Phillips stated that a public hearing will be held on March 26th at 22 Reade Street to discuss the proposal for Brownsville North, Cornerstone Site 19. He encourages interested persons to attend the hearing and make their concerns known. He will attend the meeting in behalf of Councilmember Mealy who will be out of town. The Councilmember has expressed her disapproval of the plan as it were presented.

Chairperson Younger recognized the delegation from the 73rd Precinct and presented a plaque to Detective Dean Elmore from Senator John Sampson, congratulating him on his recent promotion to the rank of Detective.

Detective Elmore thanked Chairperson Younger for the award.

Deputy Inspector Maddrey, Commanding Officer of the Precinct, stated that during a 39-day period in January and February there were no reported shootings in the Precinct and their

statistics are amongst the best citywide. However, towards the end of February they began see an increase of shootings, especially in the area in around the Howard Houses. They are asking the community to be vigilant in the area of the complex and to report to the Precinct any information that may be useful to stop the shootings.

There is also an increase of cell phone being snatched from women in the area of train stations, especially along Fulton Street. The snatchings are occurring at all hours of the day and seemingly targeting cell phones.

As has been televised, a capture was made of a suspected rapist in the community. Subsequent, investigation has revealed several more victims. He emphasized the importance of reporting all crimes.

Detective Elmore asked the community to remain vigilant of suspicious activities, as terrorism is a concern for all of us. He also encouraged property owners with graffiti on their property to complete a form at the Precinct in order to have the graffiti removed by the city free of charge.

Ms. Deborah Mack reminded the audience that Community Board #16's Community Emergency Response Team will begin training on April 3rd and are still seeking volunteers to take the training and join the team.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Erick Fisher who stated that he is continuing his letter writing campaign and a petition regarding the service, or lack thereof, at the Brownsville Post Office at 167 Bristol Street that he started last month. Anyone interested in signing the petition should see him after the meeting.

First Vice Chairperson Hill recognized Ms. Christina Larkin of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Ms. Larkin announced that space is still available for the free Lamaze classes being offered to pregnant women at the Brownsville Health Clinic, located at 295 Bristol Street, beginning March 27th. Fliers are available on tonight's distribution table.

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