

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 – DECEMBER 23, 2008

Attendance

David Alexander	Deborah Mack (A)
Renee Archer (A)	James Mack (A)
Orlando Aupont (A)	Yolanda Matthews (E)
Octavius Bamberg (A)	Sadie McNamara (E)
Sissi Benitez (A)	Ted McQueen
Josephine Blakeley (E)	Rev. Joseph Norton (A)
Patricia Boone (A)	Marie Pierre (E)
Essie Duggan	Rev. Devon Ponds
Samantha Dunn (A)	Mattie Pusey
Ivory Ellison (A)	Melaine Rochford
Helen Giles (A)	Linda Sanders (E)
Shirley Gonsalves	Lashon Segar (A)
Sarah Hall	Tyrone Thomas (A)
Jessie Hilliard	Ernestine Turner (A)
Kofi Hormeku (E)	Rev. Miran Ukaegbu
Michael Howard (A)	Alice Vines (E)
Allene Ingram (E)	Annie Walkes
Daisy Jackson (E)	Herman Winston (A)
Javonn Johnson (A)	Hazel Younger
Troy Johnson (A)	Viola D. Greene-Walker, DM
Dr. Cade Jones, III	E. Jane Coleman-Assistant ADM
Pamela Junior (A)	Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
Eula Key	Essie Duggan for Hon. Velmanette Montgomery
Danny King (A)	Brandon Bloomfield for Hon. John Sampson
Bettie Kollock-Wallace (E)	Xamayla Rose for Hon. Marty Markowitz
Shawn Lewis (A)	

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

Chairperson Hazel Younger called the meeting to order at 7:19 p.m. and an invocation was said by Rev. Miran Ukaegbu.

A motion was made by Ms. Annie Walkes, seconded by Ms. Mattie Pusey, and carried to waive the reading of last month's minutes.

A motion was made by Rev. Miran Ukaegbu, seconded by Dr. Cade Jones, III, and carried to waive the reading of the District Manager's report.

District Manager Viola Greene-Walker called attention to the item on the first page of her report concerning the availability of applications for 150 new apartments at Prospect Plaza and the February 4, 2009 deadline for submission of completed applications. She encouraged all interested parties to read the article and comply with the instructions therein.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Archie Warner from the United States Postal Service (USPS).

Mr. Warner stated that the current economic turmoil is having an effect on USPS. They are currently operating with a five to eight billion dollar deficit. They are trying their best not have the economic crisis affect their ability to service their customers. However, sacrificial changes have to be made to their operations.

Amongst the changes that they have made is the hiring of less temporary holiday workers. This change was planned – as they have been experiencing a dip in mail volume due in part to the increasing use of email and electronic payments. Adding to the decrease in volume is the failure of businesses, as these failures occur the businesses are no longer sending mail to customers and suppliers. Thus a revenue stream is loss.

As Postal Service employees retire they are not being replaced. Like many other employers, they are asking their employees to do more with less. Locally 98% of the mail is delivered by 5:00 p.m. and the Postmaster is seeking to reduce that to 4:30 p.m.. An exception to this is on

days following a holiday when the work load is essentially doubled. In an effort to reduce overtime expense, you will likely not see your regular mail carrier more than five days a week. On days when the regular carrier is not servicing his/her route, your mail may arrive slightly later than usual. However, it should still arrive before the 4:30 p.m. goal.

In February 2009, first-class postage will increase by one cent. You may also hear about changes in shipping rates, but the shipping rate changes will only apply to commercial clients.

Beginning in January, operating hours of all Brooklyn Post Office stations, with the exception of the Canarsie, Kensington, and Cadman Plaza Stations, will be from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday thru Saturday. The Kensington and Canarsie Stations will continue to remain open until 7:00 p.m. and the Cadman Plaza Station will close at 8:00 p.m.. Prior to making this decision, they experimented with alternative hours at eight different postal stations around Brooklyn.

Chairperson Younger asked if a study was done to determine the specific effects of the new hours to the consumers who make use of the Brownsville Station?

Mr. Warner stated that no study was done that looked at individual stations. The decision was done at the District level and looked at the overall effect to service in the borough.

Chairperson Younger stated that too often broad stroke decisions are made without an understanding the individual communities. What works in one community may not necessarily work in another. It would seem that many people who work and make use of the Brownsville Station prior to going to their places of employment and cannot return before 5:00 p.m. will be adversely affected.

She suggested that a survey of the Brownsville Station's users be done and requested that Mr. Warner make the community's concerns known to the parties making these decisions. The community is asked to share in the burden of an increase in postage, they should also enjoy equal access to services.

She reported that there continues to be a problem with carriers placing pickup notices in mailboxes without attempting to deliver the articles to the doors of the recipients.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Blanche L. Peltonbusch.

Ms. Peltonbusch stated that she has been appointed by Congressman Edolphus Towns and A.C.O.R.N. to monitor the Brownsville Post Office. There is a senior citizen priority window available to seniors three days a week between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.. It is unfair to limit prioritization to these hours as seniors conduct as much business in the post office as do younger people. She further stated that during the periods when that window is also dispensing stamps and money orders to non-seniors, priority should always be given to seniors and the infirm even if there are others who were on line first.

She also expressed concern over unsanitary conditions at the branch. She has on several occasions discussed the matter with the Station Manager however the conditions persist.

Mr. Warner stated that these issues will be addressed.

Chairperson Younger thanked Mr. Warner for listening to the concerns of the community and recognized Mr. Ralph Blessing from the Department of City Planning.

Mr. Blessing stated that the agency is proposing a text amendment to facilitate the storage of bicycles in multi-family residential buildings (10 dwelling units or more), commercial buildings, and community facilities.

According to Department of Transportation statistics, from 2000 through 2008 the number of bicycle users in New York City has increased by 116%. Bicycling also has the benefits reducing congestion, lowering pollution levels, and promotes healthy habits. The City would like to have more bicycle usage for all these reasons. Their research indicates that people do not ride for two main reasons. There is a fear amongst some of vehicular traffic, and some find there is not sufficient secure storage for their bicycles.

To address the fear of traffic issue more bike lanes have been created throughout the City. The agency's proposed text amendment is written to address the issue of safe storage. There are two

methodologies in use for bicycle storage. One is so-called long-term storage which is usually a room where the bicycles may be stored on a semi-permanent basis. The other is short-term storage that is used to secure bicycles while owners are in shops or other visiting situations.

The Bicycle Text Amendment proposal seeks to address the long-term storage issue by requiring new multi-family residential, commercial buildings, and community facilities set aside space in their structures for the storage of bicycles. Under the proposal, existing buildings would not have to provide bicycle storage. The plan calls for 15 square feet to be set aside for this purpose with the possibility of reducing the requirement to 6 square feet by using space saving technologies. To encourage compliance by building developers, the bicycle storage areas will not count as floor area.

Chairperson Younger recognized Rev. Dr. Denise L. C. Boyce.

Dr. Boyce stated that she is here this evening to request the support of the Board in having Pitkin Avenue between Eastern Parkway and Van Sinderen Avenue co-named in memory of the late Gloria Boyce. She stated that Gloria Boyce (Minister Boyce) was a lifelong resident of Brownsville, her parents having moved here in 1905.

Minister Boyce was raised by a father who believed that they had a responsibility to help their neighbors whenever possible. She went on to raise her children right here in the Brownsville Houses and instilled that giving spirit in them as well.

Dr. Boyce presented a biographical sketch of her mother's life highlighting her many accomplishments which included serving on the Board of the Brownsville Community Council, Assistant Director and then Director of Action Center One, member of the Policy Board and Chairperson for Brownsville Physical Development Programs and Committees of the Central Brooklyn Model Cities, sponsoring marches that led to the development of Marcus Garvey Village, founder of the Northeast Brooklyn (Canarsie) Block Association and the LaVaughn Moore Day Care, and many other leadership roles in the community.

She thanked the membership for allowing her to present and considering the co-naming of Pitkin Avenue in honor of Minister Boyce.

Chairperson Younger thanked Dr. Boyce for her presentation and informed her that because a quorum was not present the item would be tabled. She recognized Mr. Wayne Miles of GoGreen, Inc..

Mr. Miles stated that he is the principle owner of GoGreen, Inc. which is a provider of non-toxic cleaning and building supplies, and janitorial services with offices located downtown Brooklyn.

One of his company's missions is to educate communities such as Brownsville about toxic chemicals that they may be unwittingly bringing into their homes. In his experience, communities such as the one where his store is located are acutely aware of the effects of common household cleaning products such as chlorine bleach and ammonia.

In 1989, the Environmental Protection Agency stated that we are three times more likely to contract cancer by breathing in toxic household chemicals than by breathing the air outside. From the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the 1940's when the nation started to rely on petro chemicals, we have been introducing more and more toxic chemicals into our homes. You are probably aware of this on a subliminal level but pay it no mind (When using cleaners such bleach or ammonia, you instinctively want to leave the room as soon as possible.). The ingestion of these chemicals year after year takes a toll on the body's ability to ward off illnesses.

He urges the community to take this information seriously. What he foresees is that as other communities begin to buy environmentally friendly products, manufacturers of the toxic cleaners will dump their surplus products in communities such as Brownsville. The dumping will likely be done in the guise of bargains offered at 99 cent stores.

The people most likely to be affected by this will be the young children who breath more rapidly than adults, play close to the floor and habitually place objects in their mouths, as well as our senior citizens whose bodies have already suffered damage through years of intake of these toxins. Prior to the Industrial Revolution the odds of an individual being stricken with cancer was 1-in-8,000. Today, the probability is 1-in-3. The products have been in the pipeline long enough that we can connect the dots and see the causal effects of the chemicals we use.

Ms. Mattie Pusey asked where is GoGreen's office located?

Mr. Miles stated that they are located at 485 Atlantic Avenue between Third Avenue and Nevins Street. The telephone number is (718) 625-0260.

Someone asked for a price comparison of some of the products offered by GoGreen and comparative common household cleaners.

Mr. Miles stated that there is a misconception that green products are either more expensive or less effective than their common counterparts. Take for instance, a common household multi-surface cleaner containing carcinogens which retails for \$3.29 and compare it to a GoGreen equivalent sold for \$8.29, at first glance it would seem to be more costly. However, consider that the GoGreen product is sold in concentrated form and two ounces diluted with water will make the same amount as the common cleaner, produces less waste that enters the landfills, and is made with non-toxic bio ingredients such as enzymes and fruits. The end result is a product that is less costly to the budget and to the environment.

Ms. Genese Morgan, member of the Economic Development Committee, reported that the Committee continues to work with the merchants on Belmont Avenue to increase shopping activity.

On Saturday, December 6th and 13th, Dr. Cade Jones, III, a member of the Committee and Pastor of St. Luke Community Church, led his choir members in singing Christmas carols on Belmont Avenue to the delight of shoppers.

Several stores participated in a discount coupon give-away. The coupons can be redeemed through December 31, 2008.

The Committee encourages everyone to shop locally. By shopping in your own neighborhood, it will help keep the stores open.

A motion was made by Rev. Devon Ponds, seconded by Mr. Ted McQueen and carried to accept the report of the Economic Development Committee.

Rev. Miran Ukaegbu, Chairperson of the Sanitation and Environmental Protection Committee, reported that the Sanitation and Environmental Protection Committee, and the Transportation and Franchises Committee met jointly on December 3, 2008.

The Local Development Corporation of East New York, which oversees the East New York In-Place Industrial Park, is requesting the Community Board's support to change street cleaning regulations in the area bounded by Van Sinderen Avenue, East New York Avenue, Powell Street, and Sutter Avenue from daytime to night regulation (3:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.).

The consensus is that our Sanitation Department is doing a good job cleaning the streets during the existing daytime hours. The Committees recommend that it remain on the daytime schedule because the district does not have a night mechanical broom.

Mr. Ralph Blessing from the Department of City Planning reviewed the Bicycle Parking Text Amendment which proposes to require indoor, secure long-term bicycle parking in new multi-family residential, community facility, and commercial buildings.

Because biking is increasing, it was suggested that this proposed text amendment also included existing buildings with 10 or more units.

Presently, there is only one bike lane along Bergen Street. The Committee is accepting recommendations for the placement of additional bike lanes.

The Department of Transportation is looking for locations to site Automatic Public Toilets. If you have a recommendation, please call Mrs. Greene-Walker at (718) 385-0323.

A motion was made by Ms. Mattie Pusey, seconded by Rev. Devon Ponds and carried to accept the report of the Sanitation and Environmental Protection Committee, and the Transportation and Franchises Committees and their recommendations.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Xamayla Rose from the Office of Borough President Marty Markowitz who offered holiday greetings and encouraged the audience to “Shop Brooklyn”.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Brandon Bloomfield from Senator John Sampson’s office.

Mr. Bloomfield stated that foreclosures continue to plague our community. He encourages anyone who is in jeopardy of foreclosure to contact Senator Sampson’s office ((718) 649-7653) where they may be referred to legitimate organizations that assist them in keeping their home. He asked that persons seeking assistance be wary of entities that ask for large fees to assist them as many of them will simply create a greater problem.

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

Ms. Duggan stated that the makeup of the State Senate will change beginning in January in such a manner that will allow greater access for funding to be directed downstate than was previously allocated. She encouraged everyone to remain vigilant of proposed budget cuts and to contact their elected officials and let voices be heard.

Chairperson Younger requested a round of applause for District Manager Greene-Walker and her staff for the work they perform in behalf of the community throughout the year.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Christina Larkin from the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Ms. Larkin reminded the audience about free training for building trade workers to instruct them on how to work safely in areas with lead paint. Beginning in 2010, the course will be required by law for anyone working as a contractor, superintendent, landlord, and/or handyman. She encourages persons in these fields to take advantage of the classes while they are free because future programs maybe at a cost. Interested persons should contact the Brownsville Health Center (259 Bristol Street between Blake and Dumont Avenues) for availability of future classes.

She announced that agency has set forth an initiative to have 44 free blood pressure monitoring stations in pharmacies in and around the Brownsville neighborhood. Currently, there are 14 such stations (including one at the Rite-Aid on Pitkin Avenue) in Brownsville with 7 more to be installed shortly. She encourages the audience to take advantage of them.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Annie Walkes and members of the 500 Chauncey Street Block Associations.

A member of the Association reported that a transitional housing program was recently established at 565 Chauncey Street. It is being operated as the Oasis Program by an organization called Echo Concepts. The program houses between 15 and 25 men in a three family residence. The Association only became aware of the program when twenty beds were seen being brought in the building. After being confronted, the operators met with the residents of the block and informed them that they are operating the program as a money making enterprise.

None of the principles of the organization live in this neighborhood or seem to care about how having their program here affects it. They operate with the belief that they can be here and nothing will be done. The Association questions the legality and legitimacy of the program.

Chairperson Younger thanked the Association for bringing this to the attention of the Board and stated that feedback such as this is needed in order to keep our community habitable.

Chairperson Younger recognized Detective Dean Elmore of the 73rd Precinct’s Community Affairs Unit.

Detective Elmore stated that overall crime is down for calendar year 2008. He read the following statistics:

Crime	2008 Year to Date	2007 Year to Date	Percentage Change
Homicides	26	28	-7.1
Rape	28	31	-9.6
Robbery	588	552	6.5
Felony Assaults	489	532	8
Burglary	298	276	7.9

Grand Larceny	493	458	7.6
Grand Larceny Auto	162	193	6.8
Shooting Victims	98	119	-17.6
Shooting Incidents	84	95	-11.6

He stated that through the 73rd Precinct Council they were able to distribute 1000 toys to neighborhood children this holiday season. They look forward to delivering even more next year.

Ms. Hazel Clark asked if there were any plans to increase police presence in the community during the holiday season?

Detective Elmore stated that they are expecting an additional fifty officers to be assigned to the Precinct. They are asking everyone to try to remain indoors from midnight to 12:30 a.m. as the New Year comes in. This is to avoid involvement with recreational gunfire that takes place during this period.

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