

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 –NOVEMBER 24, 2009

Attendance

David Alexander (E)	Ted McQueen
Orlando Aupont (A)	Genese Morgan
Octavius Bamberg (A)	Davond Motes (A)
Carolyn A. Benjamin-Smith	Rev. Joseph Norton
Patricia Boone (E)	Blanche L. Peltonbusch
Margaret Brewer	Marie Pierre (A)
Lynn Brown (A)	Rev. Devon Ponds
Essie Duggan	Mattie Pusey
Helen Giles (A)	Melaine Rochford
Shirley Gonsalves	Wendy Rutheford
Sarah Hall	Linda Sanders (A)
Jessie Hilliard	Tyrone Thomas (A)
Kofi Hormeku	Hellen Thomas-Purdie
Michael Howard (E)	Ernestine Turner
Allene Ingram (E)	Rev. Dr. Miran Ukaegbu
Prince Issachar	Alice Vines
Daisy Jackson (E)	Annie Walkes (E)
Orin Johnson-Griffith (A)	Herman Winston
Pamela Junior	Hazel Younger
Rev. Eddie Karim (A)	Viola D. Greene-Walker, DM
Eula Key (E)	E. Jane Coleman-Assistant ADM
Bettie Kollock-Wallace	Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
Charles Ladson (A)	Latrice M. Walker for Hon. Yvette Clarke
Shawn Lewis (A)	Melvin Faulkner for Hon. Inez Barron
Deborah Mack (E)	Maurice Roberts for Hon. Eric Adams
James Mack	Christopher James for Hon. Darlene Mealy
Yolanda Matthews	Xamayla Rose-Persadi for Hon.
Sadie McNamara (E)	Marty Markowitz

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

Chairperson Hazel Younger called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m., followed with an invocation by Ms. Bettie Kollock-Wallace.

A motion was made by Ms. Pamela Junior, seconded by Mr. Kofi Hormeku and carried to waive the reading of the minutes.

A motion was made by Ms. Pamela Junior, seconded by Ms. Mattie Pusey to waive the reading of the District Manager's report.

District Manager Viola D. Greene-Walker highlighted the following announcements in her report: 1) As part of a continued effort to prepare for the peak influenza season and the H1N1 virus, the city has launched the NYC FluLine which can be reached by calling 311. Additional information can be found on page 1 of her report under the heading of "Health Department Announce NYC FluLine". 2) In observance of Thanksgiving Day, there will be no garbage or recycling collection on Thursday, November 26th. Residents who normally get their recyclables picked up on Thursday will not be picked up until the following Thursday. Additional information can be found on page 3 of her report under the heading of "Sanitation Notice".

She encouraged everyone to read the entire report because the information is informative and important.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Clifford Welcome from an E-Commerce Business.

Mr. Welcome stated that his purpose for attending tonight's meeting is to talk about an opportunity to establish a home-based business. According to a book he read recently, entitled "Surviving the Current Recession", there have been several recessions since 1948 which have lasted from 8 to 22 months. We are already into the 26th month of the current recession that started in September of 2007.

They offer employed and unemployed persons an opportunity to supplement their income by

earning extra money in their spare time through a home-based business. They are in over 80 cities and countries, including the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Brazil, Honduras, Panama, Costa Rica, China, India, Russia and many other cities and countries. Through their internet catalog, they have the capacity to move over two million products and services of many well known companies such as Barnes and Noble, Home Depot, Magnavox, Dooney and Bourke, Kitchen Aid, Panasonic, Norelco, Sean John, Sears, Sharp, Nine West, Liz Claiborne, etc.. He will be available after the meeting to further discuss the business opportunity.

Chairperson Younger asked Mr. Welcome if he has written information to share with the audience because his presentation lacks clarity.

Mr. Welcome stated that he did not bring any written information because he was unsure of the Board's format. However, he does have a questionnaire for dissemination.

Chairperson Younger stated that in the absence of written material to fully clarify and explain the program and its guidelines, persons who are interested in hearing more about Mr. Welcome's business opportunity can talk with him after tonight's meeting. The questionnaires can be distributed at that time but not during the meeting.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Akosua Albriton.

Ms. Albriton stated that she is the Community Outreach Consultant for a not-for-profit organization known as IPRO which is one of New York State's health care improvement organizations. They are responsible for monitoring the medical services provided specifically to Medicare beneficiaries by hospitals, doctor offices, home healthcare agencies, and nursing homes.

They have been funded for the Initiative to Reduce Diabetes Disparities. This project focuses on New York City, specifically Upper Manhattan, Brooklyn (all over Brooklyn, but primarily Central Brooklyn) and the Bronx. They will also be visiting Staten Island and Queens.

They were able to document that almost 60% of adults diagnosed with diabetes in New York City are either African Americans or Latinos. This same group is receiving lower quality health care services than White New Yorkers. They have contacted physician offices and hospitals to ensure that whoever is coming before them for services are provided the best services across the board. Sixty-six physician offices are participating with them to bring their practices and standards up to par.

Her role in the process is with the Diabetes Wellness Workshops for seniors. Her purpose tonight is to notify the community about the program. She is not here to enroll seniors. The flyers and cards on tonight's distribution table provide contact information to sign up for the program.

They offer free workshops for seniors age 65 and older (youngest can be age 60) who have diabetes. The workshops provide tools and techniques for diabetics to learn how to control their glucose level. Some complications that diabetic people can needlessly experience are kidney failure, amputation of limbs, loss of eyesight, heart attacks, and strokes. They are trying to let people know that they can control their diabetes. The ideal situation is to control your glucose level with food. They are looking at making simple changes in the lifestyle of a diabetic which will allow them to move from insulin to pills or from pills to food. The most important thing for diabetics is learning to manage the disease so that they will not experience unnecessary complications.

She has set up diabetes wellness workshops in Brownsville, East New York, Bedford Stuyvesant, Crown Heights, and Fort Greene. Locally, workshops are available at St. Luke's Community Baptist Church, Tilden Houses, Van Dyke Houses, and Marcus Garvey Houses. The workshops are conducted in Spanish or English, depending on the participants. Their flyers and cards are printed with one side in English and the opposite side in Spanish and she left copies of both on tonight's informational table.

They do not require personal information from participants such as social security number and insurance information. They just need basic information so that they can notify participants about workshops or to contact them if they fail to attend a scheduled workshop.

This program is funded up to June 2011. During this period, they will visit a wellness workshop site as many times as needed to speak to the original, or a new group.

Someone asked when do they meet with the seniors?

Ms. Albriton stated that the date and time is up to the hosting site. They make themselves available at whatever time is convenient for the site, morning, afternoon, evening, Saturday, Sunday, etc.. If an organization has a group of ten to fifteen seniors with diabetes, they will come out and talk to them.

Someone asked what is the age limit?

Ms. Albriton stated that the age is 65 and over, but the person can be as young as age 60. Younger persons should contact the American Diabetes Association for assistance.

Someone asked about the statistics.

Ms. Albriton stated that she does not have all the statistics but 31% of adult diabetics are African Americans, 28% are Latino, and 7% are Asians.

Chairperson Younger thanked Ms. Albriton for her presentation.

Ms. Margaret Brewer, Secretary of the Economic Development Committee, reported that on Thursday, November 19, 2009, members of the Committee approved the final District 16 Liquor License Questionnaire. The Committee agreed to begin the process of reviewing the applications in January 2010. As of the time of this meeting, the Committee has received one (1) application for review.

During the meeting, there was a review of the minutes from the Economic Development Committee meeting with Mr. Woody Pascal from the NYS Liquor Authority on April 16, 2009. In review of a question asked by Mrs. Greene-Walker, "How early can a business start selling alcohol?" Mr. Pascal stated, "That depends on their method of operation". The Committee asked for clarity on "Their Method of Operation". The Committee will follow up with Mr. Pascal for clarity.

The Committee continues to work on the revitalization plan for the shopping area along Belmont Avenue. During the summer, the Committee performed an annual canvass of current storefronts to stay abreast of the occupied and unoccupied storefronts. They are still searching for ways to reconnect the community with the merchants by way of a holiday event; however, due to limited time and participation, this would not likely be possible this holiday season. This will give ample time to make plans and provisions for the next holiday season.

The Committee discussed the complaints from the merchants, of being stressed for monies, as to one of the many reasons they cannot participate in the current plans being offered to boost business here on Pitkin and Belmont Avenues.

As the Committee does not have the perfect answer to offer, they offer helpful information when possible. Con Edison and other utility companies have come out by request to share money saving ideas.

In addition, the Committee is looking to have a demographic report of our area to help in the proper needs assessment to the businesses in our area, as well as extend invitations to existing businesses to open additional locations and work on appealing to new businesses coming to our community.

A motion was made by Rev. Joseph Norton, seconded by Mr. Ted McQueen and carried to approve the Committee report.

Mr. Kofi Hormeku, Chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Committee, reported that on November 17, 2009, he and Mr. Tony Rosa, Manager of Parks for District #16, visited the parks and playgrounds in the District and their findings are in his report which is in every Board member's folder and also on tonight's distribution table.

Every month he and Mr. Rosa visit all the parks and are asking anyone who would like to adopt a

park to notify them or District Manager Greene-Walker at (718) 385-0323.

They are also present at every meeting to answer questions and address any concerns. The District Manager can also be contacted at (718) 385-0323, Monday-Friday between the hours of 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., with any concerns. You do not need to wait until a Board meeting to report a problem concerning the parks and playgrounds.

Ms. Essie Duggan stated that there are some concerns regarding the Marion Street Park picnic area that needs to be discussed. There needs to be a community meeting with the homeowners in the area. She will discuss the matter further with Mr. Hormeku after tonight's meeting.

Ms. Yolanda Matthews asked if signs are posted at all of the parks indicating the hours that the parks are open? Tickets are being issued as early as 5:00 p.m. by the Police Department.

Ms. Blanche Peltonbusch stated that some of the young men who play football in the Betsy Head Park have received tickets, fines, etc, at 5:00 p.m. Some of the signs are up and some aren't.

Mr. Hormeku stated that summons may be issued to persons entering a park after hours. This is the first time that this concern has been brought to his attention and he will follow up. (Parks and playgrounds are open from dawn to dusk.)

Ms. Latrice Walker stated that Congresswoman Clarke's office received a call from a parent who attempted to pick up her daughter from a park and was denied entrance by the police because she did not have a small child with her.

Mr. Rosa stated that the rule is that an adult is not allowed in the play area (where there are swings and other play equipment for small children) of the park without a child.

Ms. Carolyn Benjamin-Smith stated that it appears that the police need to be reeducated about the guidelines concerning the public use of parks.

Someone asked what is the protocol for addressing the issue? Should it be addressed at tonight's meeting, at another meeting, or in a memo form? What is the appropriate format?

Mr. Marcus Burchell stated that perhaps an open forum should be held. Recently, a young man was locked up overnight for being in a park. This should have been a misdemeanor offense with a summons issued.

Chairperson Younger stated that now that the concerns have been brought to the attention of the Board, they will be addressed.

Mr. Marcus asked if anything is being done about getting Betsy Head Park fixed or redone?

Chairperson Younger stated that the issue was discussed at last month's meeting during the public hearing for the Capital and Expense Budgets. It is on the request list for repair, pending the availability of funding.

A motion was made by Ms. Essie Duggan, seconded by Ms. Pamela Junior and carried to approve the Park's Committee report.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Xamyla Rose-Persadi from Borough President Marty Markowitz' office.

Ms. Rose-Persadi announced that on November 27th, the Borough President will start his annual toy drive to collect toys for distribution to low income families and children within the City's public shelter system. In previous years, they have collected over 84,000 toys to give away during their annual celebration that is held at the Christian Cultural Center, located at 12020 Flatlands Avenue. The Borough President's office can be contacted to make arrangements for donated toys to be picked up. Additional information can be found on the flyers left on tonight's distribution table.

The Borough President plans to host an event in recognition of "World AIDS Day" which is December 1st. District Manager Greene-Walker will be notified when the plans are finalized.

All are invited to attend the lighting of the Christmas tree on Tuesday, December 8th in the Borough Hall Plaza from 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. and the lighting of the Menorah on Monday, December 14th at 5:30 p.m.. Please call (718) 802-3717 if you plan to attend the events.

In each Board member's folder is a sample of the United States 2010 Census form. (Additional copies are available on tonight's distribution table.) Every United States household should receive a form in early January or February. In going around the borough they have found that many people are unfamiliar with the census form and what is required to be completed on the form. It is the Borough President's hope that by seeing a sample of the form, people will be able to complete it with greater ease.

On November 27th, Borough President Markowitz will start his "Shop Brooklyn" initiative. Those stores with a "Shop Brooklyn" logo in their windows are offering special Brooklyn bonuses and discounts from November 27th to December 25th. A website, www.ishopbrooklyn.com, is available to find out all the participating stores.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Melvin Faulkner from Assemblywoman Inez Barron's office.

Mr. Faulkner stated that New York State ranks 39th in the nation in terms of foreclosures. They are working to prevent foreclosures and have been successful in some of the cases. Some people are charging four to five thousand dollars to work with families who are approaching foreclosure while some companies will provide the service free. Please contact their office for a list of the companies that provide free services.

There have been cases brought to Assemblywoman Barron's office wherein predatory lenders have violated borrower's rights. Her office has been advocating and is winning some cases where the laws were violated or borrowers have been taken advantage of through deceptive practices. There are laws that give you a fighting chance and there is literature about the laws on tonight's distribution table.

The questions regarding immigrant status and personal income have been taken off the 2010 census form (These two questions have terrified people for years). There are only ten remaining questions which will be discussed at a meeting on December 10th at Thomas Jefferson High School and everyone is urged to attend. Completing the Census form is very important because it determines the funds that the community receives from the government and how they are spent. Within the last twenty years, millions of dollars have been lost due to some community residents' failure to complete their census forms. Money and representation can be lost on the federal, state and city levels if an undercount results.

Someone asked about available training to become a census worker.

Mr. Faulkner stated that they have applications in their office and persons can also apply on line.

Someone stated that it is their understanding that they have discontinued the testing and distribution of applications.

Mr. Faulkner stated that they cut it off at a certain period, but it will be restarted and an announcement will be made.

Chairperson Younger also stressed the importance of responding to the census so that an accurate count can be secured. She has a concern about not including income information on the form, as Brownsville is a diverse community. In the previous census, we were led to believe that everyone here is poor which is not true. Many hardworking individuals who are homeowners live in our community and it is her hope that they are represented in the upcoming census.

She recognized Mr. Maurice Roberts from Senator Eric Adams' office.

Mr. Roberts extended holiday greetings on behalf of Senator Adams and encouraged everyone to share with others during the holidays.

Available on tonight's distribution table are fliers for America Works, Inc., an employment agency which primarily serves veterans and formerly incarcerated persons by assisting with jobs and expediting the process for obtaining food stamps and other services.

The New York State Division on Human Rights has a simple process to enter claims of human rights violations. If you feel that your rights have been violated, you should contact their office. Under new legislation signed by Governor David Patterson, it is now illegal to discriminate due to one's arrest or conviction record. A limited number of pamphlets from the Division of Human Rights are available on tonight's distribution table. Please contact Senator Adams' office at (718) 284-4700 for additional information.

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

Ms. Walker reiterated the importance of everyone completing the 2010 Census form. She will also bring to the Congresswoman's attention that there are people in the community who would like to receive training to become census workers.

Congresswoman Clarke is focused on economic empowerment in Brownsville. She wants more minority women to start investing in their own businesses. She, in conjunction with the BOC Women's Business Center, is sponsoring three workshops on the "Basics of Starting a Home-Based Child Care Business" on Wednesday, December 16th from 6:00 p.m. -7:30 p.m. at the Van Dyke I Community Center, located at 392 Blake Avenue. Registration is required as seating is limited. RSVP by calling (718) 287-0943. Flyers about the workshops are available on tonight's distribution table. Also available are 2010 calendars from Congresswoman Clarke.

There were 957 attendees at the job fair hosted by Congresswoman Clarke last month and they received confirmation that people have been hired.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Christopher James from Councilwoman Darlene Mealy's office.

Mr. James announced that Councilmember Mealy will host her next advisory meeting on Saturday, December 12th from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at the Van Dyke Community Center, located at 392 Blake Avenue between Mother Gaston Boulevard and Powell Street. This will be a very special meeting and Councilmember Mealy is requesting the donation of toys for children ages 2-16. Please call her office at (718) 953-3097 for more information.

Chairperson Younger announced that Assemblywoman Annette Robinson, Congressman Edolphus Towns, Senator Velmanette Montgomery, and Councilman Al Vann are co-sponsoring a "Community Conversation" with Governor Paterson at First AME Zion Church, located at 54 MacDonough Street between Tompkins and Marcy Avenues on Tuesday, December 1st, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.. For additional information, please call the church at (718) 638-3343 or Assemblywoman Annette Robinson's office at (718) 399-7630.

The City of New York Voters Assistance Commission (VAC) invites everyone to attend a NYC charter-mandated election 2009 public hearing on your election day experiences and how to improve voter participation on Tuesday, December 15, 2009 from 6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. at City Council Chambers, City Hall. Testimony will be limited to 2 minutes (Please bring a copy of your testimony for VAC records). Please RSVP to Bibi Yusuf at 212-788-8384 or email at byusuf@cityhall.nyc.gov.

The Bushwick Postal Station is one of the post offices where the hours will be changed, effective November 30th. The new hours will be Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., Saturday, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and closed on Sundays. Other affected stations include the Kensington, Williamsburg and Canarsie Stations.

Chairperson Younger wished everyone a very safe and happy Thanksgiving.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.