

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 – JANUARY 26, 2010

Attendance

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

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

Chairperson Hazel Younger called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m., followed with an invocation by Ms. Bettie Kollock-Wallace.

A motion was made by Ms. Pamela Junior, seconded by Ms. Annie Walkes 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 encouraged the audience to read her report as soon as possible, as it contains articles which are time sensitive.

Ms. Genese Morgan, Vice Chairperson of the Economic Development Committee, reported that on Thursday, January 21, 2010, the Committee met to review the New York State Liquor License applications of Puerta Plata, located at 1453 East New York Avenue, and La Palma Restaurant, located at 371 Mother Gaston Boulevard. Unfortunately, the owners of La Palma Restaurant did not show up for the review meeting.

The owner of Puerta Plata did attend the review meeting to answer the questions from the Committee; however, the proper Community Board #16 Liquor License Application and Questionnaire were not completed. The owner was told to complete the paperwork and submit it to the Committee by February 9, 2010 so that it can be reviewed at the next Committee meeting.

The Committee continues to work on the revitalization plans for the shopping area along Belmont and Pitkin Avenues.

The Committee discussed the condition of the long standing smell coming from Belmont Avenue. At the time of the meeting, the smell had been minimized.

The Committee continues to work to develop a suitable demographic report of the District to assist in the proper needs assessment of the businesses in our area, as well as extend invitations to other existing businesses to open additional locations, and work on appealing to new businesses to come into our Community.

A motion was made by Ms. Deborah Mack, seconded by Ms. Annie Walkes and carried to approve the Economic Development Committee report.

Mr. Kofi Hormeku, Chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Committee, reported that on January 14, 2010, 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.

He and Mr. Rosa visit all the parks and playgrounds in the District each month. They are also present at every meeting to answer questions and address any concerns. Anyone who would like to adopt a park may contact them or District Manager Greene-Walker at (718) 385-0323.

The District Manager can also be contacted Monday-Friday between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 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.

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

Ms. Daisy Jackson, Chairperson of the Youth Services Planning Committee, reported that on January 19, 2010, the Committee held its first meeting of the year. They now have a Vice-Chairperson and Secretary.

Instead of having a youth convention this year, the Committee has decided to have a retreat. They are in the midst of working out the details with Assemblyman William Boyland's office.

The next Youth Services Planning Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 16, 2010 at 6:30 p.m..

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Kathryn Croft from Women In Need, Inc. (WIN) to revisit their proposal to build housing on Junius Street which was presented at the December 22, 2009 Board meeting but was not voted upon because the Board lacked a quorum.

Ms. Croft stated that WIN remains excited about their proposal to build a 280 unit residential building with ground floor retail at 75-121 Junius Street between Glenmore and Liberty Avenues.

WIN is a non-profit organization that has been in operation since 1983. They provide quality transitional and permanent housing. They have two public clinics, provide child care and wrap-around social services.

They currently operate 180 units of permanent supportive housing of which 87 are located in Brooklyn. Their units are in demand because of the way they maintain them. Fliers were distributed indicating the proposed breakdown of the units: 100 for current community residents, 10 for municipal employees, 10 for families with disabilities, 80 for formerly homeless families, and 80 for any eligible family. Prices will range from \$782 for a studio to \$1,165 for a three-bedroom unit. Twenty-four off-street parking spaces are proposed along with retail and commercial space on the first floor.

The proposed project would generate 65 temporary construction jobs and at least 137 permanent jobs. Services will include 24-hour security, social services, and recreation.

Ms. Croft introduced Mr. Tony Shitemi, President of Urban Architectural Initiatives, who stated that the site of the proposal is just two blocks away from Glenmore Plaza and other residential buildings. At the rear of the building is the "L" train and two other WIN facilities are nearby. The building's design is intended to be warm and welcoming. Upon looking at the building, one would not judge it a low-income building or an upscale building; they would simply say it is a beautiful building. It would be a ten-story building with the tenth-story setback along Glenmore Avenue which reduces the scale of the building visually. The building will be broken up into

seven visual components using two tones of bricks. Street trees will be planted and there is the possibility of planting on the setback areas of the roof. The approximately 27,000 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor can accommodate light manufacturing uses and retail uses such as a supermarket. The layout of the building maximizes natural light. There are four elevators and four stairwells. There will be studios, one-, two-, and three-bedroom units.

The building will be a green building that uses high efficiency heating and cooling systems, and materials that do not contain volatile organic compounds. Energy Star appliances and fixtures will also be used.

Ms. Croft introduced Mr. Stuart Klein who stated that he is an attorney whose specialty is zoning. He reviewed the process of obtaining a variance from the City's Board of Standards and Appeals.

Ms. Mabel Davis asked if the utilities will be included in the rents and will provisions be made for tenants who lose their source of income to maintain their apartments?

Ms. Croft stated that the rents do not include utilities, however, the rents are below current market rate which can assist tenants with making utility payments. As a landlord, there is not much that they can do to subsidize the rent of their tenants beyond the subsidies that are already being offered. As a social service organization, they would do their best to direct the tenants to resources such as the Human Resources Administration, charities, and others that can assist them with their hardship.

Ms. Deborah Mack asked if WIN's point of view is that they can build the proposed building as-of-right?

Mr. Klein stated that that is not their point of view; they are seeking a variance from the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) that will allow them to build the residential units in a manufacturing zoning as well as increase the floor area ratio from 6.5 percent to 7.5 percent.

Ms. Mack asked if the request takes into consideration the fact that the site may contain materials that may be hazardous to prospective tenants?

Mr. Klein stated that from the BSA point of view, they would be required to show how any negative effects of the variance would be abated.

Ms. Mack asked if any other locations were looked at for constructing the proposed building.

Ms. Croft stated that they have not looked at any other sites for this project. They were able to secure the land where they intend to construct the project, which has not been used in over forty years.

Mr. Klein stated that with any project, an attempt is always made to acquire the property for as little cost as possible. The land for the proposed project was made available for the lowest possible cost. Aside from the needs of the sponsor, every project is driven by economic factors.

Mr. Hiram Rothkrup, Environmental Consultant for the project, stated that they have performed a comprehensive site history of the proposed site which is comprised of two lots. One of the lots historically was the location of a coal company from the late 1800's through 1950 and encompasses approximately 30,000 square feet. The lot has been vacant and used as a parking lot for the last sixty years. The other lot, which is approximately 12,000 square feet, was formerly the site of a plumbing supply business which operated through the late 1990's. It was then acquired by the Helping Hands Ministries. The building on this lot is in a state of disrepair and cannot be occupied.

Soil tests of both lots reveal that they are contaminated. Their conclusion is that no one will likely incur the cost of cleaning the site to construct a manufacturing concern when they can easily build one elsewhere at a lower cost, which is why they believe that the properties have not been developed for many years.

WIN's proposal to develop residential units on the site requires that they apply to the City to do so. Environmental studies are performed and the information is disseminated to various state and city agencies. The agencies review the data and ensure compliance with standards.

Chairperson Younger expressed concern that the testing is being conducted by the applicant's agents and not the regulatory agencies. What assurances does the community have that the hazards are eliminated?

Mr. Rothkrup stated that the charged agencies will ensure that they comply with all governmental regulations and guidelines. The Department of Environmental Protection will, for example, ensure that windows and ventilation systems attenuate noise levels in the living areas to no more than 45 dBA and that all contaminated soil on the site is safely removed and disposed.

Chairperson Younger requested that remaining comments on the proposal be limited to the general scope of the project. The details are unimportant at this time as the Board's concern is the placement of the building on this particular site. Other matters can be addressed if, and when a variance is approved.

Ms. Croft introduced Mr. Louie Benton, an employee of Women In Need.

Mr. Benton stated that along with being an employee of WIN, he is a twenty-four year resident of the community. He has been with WIN for the past seven years and one thing that he can say about the organization is that they care about the communities in which they operate. He is speaking tonight because he has been to a number of meetings where the project has been discussed and often spoken of negatively. He believes that this project will bring new affordable housing to Brooklyn and it is known that Brooklyn is in need of affordable housing.

In a recent discussion with some of his friends, it was noted that Brooklyn is becoming the new Manhattan in terms of the cost of housing. The building that is being proposed is one that will uplift and bring life to the area. He hears the concerns of the audience about the location being in an industrial zone, but he is of the opinion that since the site is on the outskirts of the industrial zone, it can be integrated into it. The community will gain more from this project than what it might lose.

Chairperson Younger thanked Mr. Benton for his comments. She stated that if someone were to look at the community in recent years, they would see housing being constructed in every nook and cranny. The problem is that many of the developers come into the community under false pretenses. Buildings are constructed, put up for sale at exorbitant prices, and when they remain unsold they are rented. Furthermore, when the units are not rented, the developers form alliances with the Department of Homeless Services in order to receive funding for housing homeless persons. She suggested that Mr. Benton attend more Board meetings and learn about some of the issues that are affecting the community.

She commends WIN for their desire to help the less fortunate among us and for a beautiful design. However, the Board is not happy with the location and will fight to keep it from being built on the proposed site.

Ms. Mack stated that she agrees that the design is nice and was on the fence about the proposal until she heard that the site is contaminated. The community already suffers from a number of health issues. Why should we add to the risk by placing residential units in the area? It seems to her that it would be worthwhile to perhaps spend a little bit more and place the project in a safe location.

Chairperson Younger recommended that the members who were not present at last month's meeting take a moment to review a section of the minutes, beginning on page 3 where the Land Use, Planning, and Zoning Committee made their recommendation on WIN's proposal.

A motion was made by Ms. Marie Pierre, seconded by Mr. James Mack and carried by a vote of 23-in favor, 0-opposed, and 2-abstentions in opposition of the application made in behalf of Junius-Glenmore Development, LLC and Women In Need, Inc. for a variance to erect a ten-story, mixed use residential, community facility and commercial building in a M1-4 zone at 75-121 Junius Street (between Liberty and Glenmore Avenues).

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Maurice Phillips from Senator John Sampson's office.

Mr. Phillips stated that Senator Sampson and other community leaders want to ensure that an accurate count of our communities is taken during the upcoming United States Census 2010.

Federal funding for communities is allocated based on census count and the Brownsville, East New York, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and Bushwick communities have historically been severely undercounted. In an effort to combat this trend, they are sponsoring a series of meetings to spread the word about the importance of submitting a completed census form.

A Clergy Advisory Meeting will be held on February 9, 2010 and they are encouraging all clergy to attend.

Senator Sampson is saddened by the earthquake that recently struck Haiti. He has compiled a fact sheet with a list of contact points for persons who are seeking information about loved ones or property in the affected areas. It also contains information on where donations for relief efforts can be made.

Senator Sampson will host his next Community Advisory meeting on February 6, 2010, 12:00 p.m. at the Van Dyke I Community Center, located at 392 Blake Avenue. All are invited to attend and discuss issues of concern.

A town hall meeting will be held on February 18th, 7:30 p.m. at the Haitian Baptist Church at 9403 Avenue "L" (between 94th and 95th Streets) to discuss ongoing plans to assist persons affected by the earthquake in Haiti. The Senator's District Office can be reached by calling (718) 649-7653 and is located at 9114 Flatlands Avenue.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Michael Caver from the Office of Assemblyman William F. Boyland, Jr..

Mr. Caver announced that Assemblyman Boyland is sponsoring a health fair on Saturday, January 30th at 444 Thomas S. Boyland Street.

On Saturday, February 13th, Assemblyman Boyland will sponsor a bus to transport his constituents who want to attend the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus event in Albany. The bus will leave at 9:00 a.m. and return at approximately 6:00 p.m..

Assemblyman Boyland hosts his monthly advisory meetings on the second Saturday of each month. For additional information, please call his office at (718) 498-8681.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Xamayla Rose-Persadi from the Office of Borough President Marty Markowitz.

Ms. Rose-Persadi announced that Borough President Markowitz and his wife, Jamie, are inviting Brooklyn sweethearts who will be married for 50 or more years (during the calendar year of 2010) to reaffirm their vows at a free Champagne Reception on Friday, February 12, 2010 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the elegant El Caribe Country Club, located at 5945 Strickland Avenue in Mill Basin, Brooklyn. Please call (718) 802-3717 by February 5th to R.S.V.P. (you must R.S.V.P. in order to attend).

Borough President Markowitz will sponsor a Teen Dating Violence Symposium in February. Currently, amongst surveyed teens who are dating, fifty-six percent report that they have experienced abuse from their boyfriend or girlfriend. In the same survey, taken last year, thirty-six percent of the youth reported that they were the perpetrator of the abuse. On February 10th, a group of youth professionals will gather to discuss strategies on how to bring awareness of this issue to teens. The Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP) is a school-based domestic violence prevention curriculum that seeks to teach students how to recognize and prevent teen relationship abuse. The program is available in a few schools in Brooklyn and they would like to have it available in more.

She reminded members, whose term expire this year, that their completed renewal applications should be submitted as soon as possible. She has with her this evening both the renewal applications and applications for persons who are not currently members but are interested in joining the Board.

Borough President Markowitz is working on a Census initiative for the borough and has announced that the Census Bureau will be at Borough Hall on February 2nd to take pictures of Brooklynites as part of their Portrait of America campaign. She invites anyone who will be in the area on that day to participate.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Maurice Roberts from the Office of Senator Eric Adams.

Mr. Roberts stated that Senator Adams continues to support America Works, Inc., an employment agency which primarily serves veterans and formerly incarcerated persons by assisting them with jobs and expediting the process for obtaining food stamps and other services. Interested persons may contact Ms. Ellison at (212) 599-5627 extension 183.

Chairperson Younger recognized Rev. Joseph Jones from the Office of Kings County District Attorney Charles Hynes.

Rev. Jones thanked the Board for its support of their initiatives during the 2009 calendar year. They are preparing to do another gun buyback event that will take place sometime between April and May of this year.

They are excited to be bringing to Brooklyn, for the first-time, the Fugitive Safe Surrender program. This initiative has been a great success in cities such as Newark, New Jersey and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The program allows persons with non-violent open warrants to surrender voluntarily to law enforcement agents in a faith-based or other neutral setting.

The goal of Fugitive Safe Surrender is to reduce the risk to law enforcement officers, who pursue fugitives to the neighborhoods in which they hide, and also to the fugitives themselves. During the four days of the program operation in Newark, 4,400 individuals took advantage of the offer and of those only six were arrested. The six who were arrested were aware that they would be arrested because of the charges that were pending against them.

The program is better than having police officers unceremoniously breakdown a door to apprehend an individual and have them in lockup for forty-eight hours for jumping a turnstile. It is safer for law enforcement officers who would otherwise be subject to the uncertainty of what is behind a door that they forcibly enter. It also is safer for family members and the community.

There are some difficulties to contend with in implementing this program in Brooklyn. Kings County (Brooklyn) is the largest county in New York State and to-date there are over 310,000 open warrants in Brooklyn. Citywide there are over 1.3 million open warrants. If the offer is extended to Brooklynites, how do you turn away other city residents? During the Newark event, there were people who responded from the states of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. The program is not about amnesty, it's about receiving favorable consideration in sentencing. Payment plans may be allowed for fines and community service in lieu of jail-time.

There is also a revenue incentive for the City as well – fines that are collected go into the City's coffers. Courthouse clears paperwork and their records for open warrants. It is a win-win situation for everyone involved.

A target date of no earlier than June and no later than the end of summer 2010 is being sought. Volunteers will be needed to assist in the implementation of the program. They hope to have a more definitive date by next month's Board meeting so that they can begin the vetting process for the volunteers. Volunteers must be warrant-free. Persons who are interested in volunteering should contact him at (718) 250-3729.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Cheryl Wray from Councilwoman Darlene Mealy's office.

Ms. Wray announced that Councilmember Mealy will host workshops every Tuesday at her Union Street Office to assist persons in the Haitian community affected by the tragic earthquake. Representatives from the Legal Aid Society will be present to provide free assistance with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) applications. Under the umbrella of "Brownsville We Care", they are a drop site for donations (other than monetary). Brownsville We Care is made up of a host of merchants with stores along Pitkin Avenue.

On the last Thursday of each month, Councilmember Mealy sponsors a free CPR (Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation) training class in the Conference Room at 1757 Union Street. Persons completing the training will receive a certificate.

Councilmember Mealy, in conjunction with other elected officials, will sponsor a workshop entitled: "Yes, We Count" at the Boys and Girls High School (1700 Fulton Street) on

March 20, 2010.

On March 5th she will sponsor free mammogram services at P.S. 5 (820 Hancock Street). Please call her office at (718) 953-3097 for more information on any of these events.

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

Ms. Walker announced that Congresswoman Clarke will host a free small business seminar at her office, located at 123 Linden Boulevard on February 1st. Free half-hour one-on-one consultations with attorneys will be available for persons who have questions concerning a business which they operate or are considering.

On Thursday, January 28, 2010, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Congresswoman Clarke will host a special congressional briefing on Temporary Protection Status (TPS) for Haitian nationals who are currently in the United States.

Chairperson Younger acknowledged the presence of Mrs. Eleanor Jones, wife of the late Dr. Cade Jones, III.

She recognized Ms. Karen Cherry and Mr. Christopher Lundy from the Office of Congressman Edolphus Towns. Ms. Cherry and Mr. Lundy distributed 2010 calendars in behalf of Congressman Towns.

Chairperson Younger acknowledged Ms. Deborah Mack, Chairperson of Community Board #16's Transportation and Franchises Committee.

Ms. Mack announced that the Committee will meet in February and that persons who have concerns regarding transportation issues affecting the District should contact the Board's office at (718) 385-0323.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. William Boone from the Medgar Evers – Oasis Beacon Program.

Mr. Boone extended thanks to the officers of the 73rd Precinct, Community Board #16, Borough President Markowitz, Congresswoman Clarke, the 73rd Precinct Clergy Council, Assemblyman Boyland, and Health First for all their assistance during the holiday season.

The Beacon operate six days-a-week, Monday to Friday from 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.. They have recently added an English as a Second Language (ESL) program for parents to the list of programs they offer. The children participating in their martial arts program recently attended a tournament and they gave an outstanding performance.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Wadell English from the Fire Department of New York.

Mr. English stated that he works for the Fire Department's Office of Recruitment and Diversity. They are beginning their largest recruitment drive in the history of the Department and seek the assistance of local congregations and community groups by inviting them to come to their locations to speak about this effort. The new Commissioner of the Department would welcome the opportunity to share their initiatives with community-based organizations. The next examination for the Fire Department will be held early in 2011 but they have already begun recruiting.

They have not had a significant presence in Brownsville and would like to change this but they need the help of the community by way of invitations to speak to different groups. Flyers are available on tonight's distribution table with their contact information and he encourages the audience to reach out to them.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Kevin McCall who asked for a round of applause for Board members Yolanda Matthews and Louise Peltonbusch for their marching the entire length of the B-25 bus route, from Broadway Junction to Downtown Brooklyn, in protest to the Metropolitan Transit Authorities proposal to eliminate the route. Through their efforts, and those like them, the proposal has been terminated and the route will remain intact.

He is the Deputy Director for the Haitian-American Caucus and they have been active since the initial earthquake on January 11th. They have been collecting goods and monies for the relief effort and are in need of volunteers who have an hour or two to offer. One can even assist at home by making phone calls to help in the effort of locating missing loved ones. Interested persons may contact him after this evening's meeting.

Chairperson Younger recognized Deputy Inspector Samuel Wright, Commanding Officer of the 73rd Precinct, and commended him on the job that he has done thus far in the community.

Deputy Inspector Wright stated that it has been a year since he has been assigned to the 73rd Precinct and recalls making a commitment to reduce the homicide rate within the Precinct. He made the commitment with the stipulation that it would require the assistance of the community. Happily, this has happened. The community has given them information that has increased the number of gun arrests in the Precinct. Gun arrests have a direct correlation to homicides. The homicide rate in Brownsville has been reduced by an astounding thirty-two percent – the largest percentage within the City of New York. He has always proclaimed that he is not big on statistics, however, one statistic that he does look upon is homicides. When a burglary or robbery occurs, you may or may not report the incident. In the case of a homicide, there is no choice, it is reported. He thanks the community for their assistance and asks that they continue.

Going forward, in 2010 he will seek to improve the communication between the youth of the community and his officers. He will expand the Explorers program by having four different sites within the Precinct. He has received commitments from Bishop Alexander and Rev. Craig who have stated that their buildings can be used for the program. The Brownsville Recreation Center will continue to be used and they are seeking a fourth location. The four groups will meet together from time-to-time to get to know each other. It is his hope that the officers will also get to know each of the individuals by name. He will report the progress of this initiative to the Board on a regular basis.

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