

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 – FEBRUARY 23, 2010

Attendance

David Alexander (E)	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 (E)
Essie Duggan	Melaine Rochford (E)
Helen Giles (A)	Wendy Rutheford (E)
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
Allene Ingram (E)	Alice Vines (E)
Prince Issachar	Annie Walkes (A)
Daisy Jackson (E)	Herman Winston
Orin Johnson-Griffith (A)	Hazel Younger (E)
Pamela Junior (A)	Viola D. Greene-Walker, DM
Rev. Eddie Karim	E. Jane Coleman-Assistant ADM
Eula Key	Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
Bettie Kollock-Wallace	Latrice M. Walker for Hon. Yvette Clarke
Charles Ladson	Christopher Lundy for Hon. Edolphus Towns
Shawn Lewis (A)	Maurice Phillips for Hon. John Sampson
Deborah Mack (E)	Melvin Faulkner for Hon. Inez Barron
James Mack	Carolyn Sanders-James for Hon. Mike Bloomberg
Yolanda Matthews (E)	Cheryl Wray for Hon. Darlene Mealy
Sadie McNamara (E)	Xamayla Rose-Persadi for Hon. Marty Markowitz
Ted McQueen	

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

PUBLIC HEARING

First Vice Chairperson Bettie Kollock-Wallace called the public hearing to order at 7:05 p.m..

An invocation was said by Rev. Dr. Miran Ukaegbu.

IN THE MATTER OF the City's Preliminary Budget Statement and Community District Register for Fiscal Year 2011. The Hearing is to obtain public comments on City agencies' responses to Community Board 16's Capital and Expense Budget Priorities for Fiscal Year 2011 (A copy is available for review at the Office of Community Board #16).

District Manager Viola Greene-Walker stated that last fall the Board submitted its Capital and Expense Budget Priorities to the City. The responses to the requests were mailed to the Board members and are contained on the first eight pages of her report for this month.

Ms. Marie Pierre stated that it seems that many of the responses are that the agencies cannot accommodate the requests due to lack of funds. However, the need for the items is there. Should we continue to press for them?

District Manager Greene-Walker stated that we should continue to advocate for items like the placement of an elevator/escalator at the Rockaway Avenue IRT #3 Station, even though the Transit Authority is facing a budget crisis.

Rev. Dr. Miran Ukaegbu asked why is the study being done concerning the erection of a canopy between the IRT # 3 and the IND "L" lines at Livonia Avenue and Junius Street?

District Manager Greene-Walker stated that she is unsure of what the study seeks to discover because it is obvious that a canopy is needed. In inclement weather it would offer a degree of protection for passengers transferring from one to the other.

Rev. Dr. Ukaegbu suggested that representatives from the Transit Authority be invited to visit the site during inclement weather so that they may appreciate the predicament of riders.

Ms. Marie Pierre requested clarification on the response to the request for an increase to the funds for the operation of the Board's Office.

District Manager Greene-Walker stated that similarly to other City agencies, Community Boards are facing a budget cut this year. Last year, with the assistance of City Council, they were able to avoid a cut and will seek the assistance of the Councilmembers again to at least, maintain the current funding.

Rev. Dr. Ukaegbu requested clarification on the request for additional personnel for Sanitation Garage #16.

District Manager Greene-Walker stated that the Department is stating that they will appropriate funding commensurate with housing growth.

There being no further comment, a motion was made by Rev. Dr. Miran Ukaegbu, seconded by Ms. Eula Key and carried to close the public hearing.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

A motion was made by Ms. Sarah Hall, seconded by Rev. Dr. Miran Ukaegbu and carried to waive the reading of the minutes.

District Manager Greene-Walker highlighted an article found on page nine of her report regarding the availability of applications for the RiverRock Apartments. Applications are also available for the Beacon Apartments which are located on Thomas S. Boyland and Bristol Streets between East New York and Pitkin Avenues. An article regarding tax lien sales can be found on page ten. The audience was encouraged to read her report in its entirety as it contains valuable information.

A motion was made by Rev. Dr. Miran Ukaegbu, seconded by Rev. Eddie Karim to waive the reading of the District Manager's report.

Ms. Margaret Brewer, Secretary of the Economic Development Committee, reported that on Thursday, February 18, 2010, members of the Economic Development Committee met to review the New York State Liquor License application of Puerto Plata, located at 1453 East New York Avenue.

The owner of Puerto Plata, Ms. Luz Salcedo, returned the Board's Application and Questionnaire for review. The Committee reviewed said application and are satisfied with the responses provided both written and oral. A physical review of the establishment was conducted by Ms. Essie Duggan and Ms. Margaret Brewer and both agreed that the business provides adequate service. The business and local revenue can benefit from having the Liquor License.

Of the four members present, three voted for supporting the application and one member voted against the application. The member voting no, felt for religious reasons, Brownsville did not need another merchant bringing in more alcohol.

This brought about a discussion of the local economic position of Community District #16. Realizing the concern of alcohol access in our community, the Committee welcomes the audience's comments on alternate revenue earning ideas that may be more effective in the future.

The Committee recommends that the Community Board supports Puerto Plata's application to obtain a New York State Liquor license.

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. Sarah Hall, seconded by Rev. Eddie Karim and carried to approve the Economic Development Committee report and its recommendation to support the New York State Liquor Application of Puerto Plata, located at 1453 East New York Avenue.

District Manager Greene-Walker, in behalf of Ms. Sadie McNamara, Chairperson of the Health and Human Resources Committee, reported that the Committee met on February 16, 2010 with Dr. Gordon Davis who is proposing to operate an Ambulatory Chemical Outpatient Program at 145 East 98th Street at Blake Avenue.

The approach of the proposed program is abstinence and long-term recovery of the client using a comprehensive range of evidence-based health services, including medical, nursing, social work, stress management, nicotine replacement, and other concrete and clinical services provided individually and in groups of consultation.

The maximum number of clients at any one time will be approximately 10 to 12, with a capacity to handle 50 to 100 clients. Each client will have from three months to one year to obtain abstinence from drugs. If a client needs to stay longer than a year, then the client will need to get permission from the State. The program will have an aftercare service program once the client completes treatment.

According to data from the State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, there is a large population of persons with alcohol and substance abuse who are in need of services being proposed by Dr. Davis.

In an effort to address this growing problem in our community, the Health and Human Resources Committee recommends that the Community Board supports Dr. Davis in his proposal to establish a drug free program at 145 East 98th Street.

A motion was made by Rev. Dr. Miran Ukaegbu, seconded by Mr. Michael Howard and carried to accept the Health and Human Resources Committee report and its recommendation to support Dr. Davis' proposal to establish a drug free program at 145 East 98th Street.

Mr. Kofi Hormeku, Chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Committee, reported that on February 17, 2010, he and Mr. Maceau Medozile, 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.

The former Parks Manager for Community District #16, Mr. Tony Rosa, has been transferred to serve Districts 4 and 5. It is with mixed feelings that he introduces the new Parks Manager for this district, Mr. Medozile. While he will miss Mr. Rosa, we cannot be afraid of change and he looks forward to great things from Mr. Medozile.

Mr. Medozile stated that he comes to the district by way of Queens. He looks forward to working with the community and answers to the name "Max".

Mr. Hormeku made an appeal to anyone who would like to assist the community by adopting a park. Adoption of a park entails visiting a nearby park or playground periodically and communicating to him any issue that needs attention by calling the Board's Office at (718) 385-0323.

The Committee also seeks volunteers to join them in their efforts to improve the Parks and Recreation facilities in the district, especially the Brownsville Recreation Center and the Betsy Head Park Recreation Center,

Mr. Charles Ladson stated that in the past, the Betsy Head Recreation Center was open from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and provided recreation for the youth in the area and is currently not being used. Is it possible for a group headed by a local church to make use of the center during those hours to provide safe recreation to the youth again?

Mr. Hormeku stated that he is willing to work with responsible persons who are willing to take on the responsibility of obtaining the keys and locking up afterward. He does, however, have reservations about having the youth there during those hours because the comfort stations close at 4:00 p.m. and there is no other nearby facility.

A motion was made by Mrs. Hellen Thomas-Purdie, seconded by Rev. Eddie Karim and carried to approve the Park's Committee report.

Rev. Dr. Miran Ukaegbu, Chairperson of the Sanitation and Environmental Protection Committee, reported that members of the Sanitation and Environmental Protection Committee

met on February 10, 2010 to review some outstanding issues and plan an effective education strategy to ensure compliance and enhance the quality of our lives in our community.

Members examined the first comprehensive overhaul to the New York City's Noise Code in 30 years. The previous Code was outdated and did not reflect the changing city landscape or advances in acoustic technology. The new law states that:

“the making , creation or maintenance of excessive and unreasonable and prohibited noises within the city affects and is a menace to public health, comfort, convenience, safety, welfare and the prosperity of the people of the city”

As part of our plan to educate members of our community at the Community Board meetings, we continue tonight with a presentation on the new law and its impact on our quality of life as highlighted on the copies of the summary found in the folders of each Board member and are available at the Board's Office. For more information and the full text of the new code, please visit DEP's website at: nyc.gov/dep/html/airnoise.html. If we as community members do our part, then we can honestly hold both the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Sanitation Enforcement accountable with our complaints.

The next meeting of the Committee will be on April 14, 2010 at 6:00 p.m..

Ms. Blanche Peltonbusch commented that one of her neighbors constantly plays loud music. There have been instances wherein the music is played ceaselessly for twenty-four hour periods. She has filed complaints with the development's management, the Police Department, 3-1-1, and the Borough President's Office, to no avail. How can the new code assist in curbing this constant nuisance?

Rev. Dr. Ukaegbu stated that the new code is more enforceable than the previous one. Under the current code the Police Department has the authority to act upon a complaint of this nature. She recommends that they be contacted should the issue arise again. In the event they are called upon to assist in such a matter, please contact District Manager Greene-Walker so that she can follow-up on the matter.

A motion was made by Rev. Eddie Karim, seconded by Mrs. Hellen Thomas-Purdie and carried to approve the Sanitation and Environmental Protection Committee report.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Ms. Carolyn Sanders-James from the Mayor's Community Assistance Unit.

Ms. Sanders-James stated that Mayor Bloomberg recently held a press conference to speak about his New Housing Marketing program. He spoke of adding one hundred and sixty-five thousand new affordable housing units in all five boroughs of the City by 2014. As part of this goal, he has announced a new 1.5 billion dollar initiative that will redevelop many of the scatter site vacant buildings throughout the City and market them affordably. She will notify the community of the locations where this will take place.

She will attempt to reach out to the individual who is playing music, referred to earlier by Ms. Peltonbusch. Oftentimes, these are disguised cries for help. It is her intent to root out the underlying cause of the problem and find a means to address it.

Mr. Charles Ladson asked what will the price range be for the housing units being proposed?

Ms. Sanders-James stated that she did not know at this time.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Mr. Christopher Lundy from the Office of Congressman Edolphus Towns.

Mr. Lundy stated that Congressman Towns is currently in Washington, D.C. at hearings regarding the status of recently recalled Toyota automobiles.

In the past two months they have been actively engaged in a series of town hall meetings. The first was held at Borough Hall and dealt with issues such as jobs, unemployment, and fatherhood initiatives. Congressman Town's office is collaborating with Workforce 1 on the jobs issue.

He urges the community to complete and return their census forms when they arrive next month. Funds needed to operate various programs that serve our community are dependent on an accurate count of the community.

The Congressman's District offices are inundated with questions about jobs, housing, and immigration. There is a lot of misinformation being disseminated about immigration. Mr. Lundy is the immigration specialist at Congressman Town's Flatlands office and he encourages persons with questions concerning immigration to reach out to him. He can be reached at (718) 272-1175.

Mr. Charles Ladson asked: what is Congressman Towns' position on the elimination of transportation passes for students?

Mr. Lundy stated that the issue is a city issue. There are different levels of government, each having jurisdiction over different issues. Congressman Towns is a federal legislature who has no direct input on the transportation passes.

Mr. Ladson asked if the Congressman is aware that places such as McDonald's are no longer employing youth without a high school diploma?

Mr. Lundy stated that to the best of his knowledge, the hiring of an individual is at the discretion of the employer. The hiring of minors is further guided by labor laws.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Mr. Melvin Faulkner from the Office of Assemblywoman Inez Barron.

Mr. Faulkner stated that as a grandparent, with grandchildren in the public schools, he is annoyed at the way the City's education system closing schools. The schools they are closing are predominately in areas that are heavily populated by Blacks and Hispanics. The decisions are being made by the Department of Education without any input by the parents of the affected children.

In District 75, which is predominately special needs students, the Department is seeking to close 19 schools. We must stand up and let the Department know that this is unjust.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Ms. Latrice Walker from the Office of Congresswoman Yvette Clarke.

Ms. Walker stated that Congresswoman Clarke share the communities' concerns about school closures. We need to understand the different levels on which this works. The increase of charter schools is a reflection of an initiative of President Barack Obama's Administration entitled: Race to the Top. The initiative is intended to reform the country's education system by using billions of dollars in competitive grants. States are required to obtain a certain score in order to gain access to the funding. New York State did not have enough charter schools to meet the threshold required to apply for the funds. New York State needed to raise the number of charter schools to above four hundred and fifty-five schools. State legislators voted against doing so. Therefore, the State would not be eligible to receive funds from this program. She encourages the community to stay informed and make their views known on this issue at federal, state, and city levels.

The community was also reminded of how important the completion and return of census forms is to the funding of services in our communities.

Mr. Ladson asked how many charter schools are in New York City?

Ms. Walker stated that there are approximately thirty that are State funded and about another sixty-five that are funded by the City.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Ms. Cheryl Wray from the Office of Councilmember Darlene Mealy.

Ms. Wray stated that Councilmember Mealy is against the school closings and wants the community to be aware that there are hearings on the issue at several locations in the City. This is a citywide issue affecting many communities. She encourages the audience to contact their office for locations and times of the hearings. Oftentimes, you will not be able to speak at the

hearings but just your physical presence will demonstrate that you have a concern on the issue.

Councilmember Mealy, in conjunction with other elected officials, will sponsor a census event on March 20th at Boys and Girls High School (1700 Fulton Street). Assistance will be provided with completing the form and the form may be left there.

She is also working with the 73rd Precinct on a districtwide spelling bee for eighth grade students. If you know an eighth grader, please encourage them to participate. There will be many prizes awarded, including some iPods. Flyers on these and other events are available on tonight's distribution table.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Mr. Maurice Phillips from the Office of Senator John Sampson.

Ms. Phillips stated that the issue of getting an accurate census count of our community, as has been mentioned by other representatives this evening, cannot be over emphasized. Senator Sampson asks that we each reach out to our neighbors and encourage them to complete their census forms.

Senator Sampson is doing everything in his power to avoid the elimination of transportation passes for City students. He encourages the community to write to their elected officials to let them know where they stand on the issue.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Ms. Xamayla Rose-Persadi from the Office of Borough President Marty Markowitz.

Ms. Rose-Persadi reminded members of the Board, whose term expire this year, that their applications for re-appointment are due shortly. She listed the names of such members whose applications have not been received and encouraged them to submit the applications as soon as possible. She also stated that she has applications for re-appointment and new appointments with her for anyone who seeks one.

Borough President Markowitz' Brooklyn Summer H.E.A.T. (Help Employ Ambitious Teens) initiative will begin accepting application soon. H.E.A.T. is the Borough President's summer youth employment program, which encourages Brooklyn businesses to invest in our youth through employment. Since 2002, hundreds of teens between the ages of 16 and 18 have been hired through HEAT. Borough President Markowitz is calling on Brooklyn employers and students to participate in the program. This is not a part of the Department of Youth and Community Development's Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP).

Borough President Markowitz shares our concerns about school closing and has assigned a Policy Analyst, Margaret Kelly, to the issue. She can be reached at (718) 802-3700.

He is collaborating with the Social Security Administration to assist persons who may have lost a loved one in the earthquake in Haiti with preparing forms to receive social security benefits to which they may be entitled.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Captain Vern Rios of the 73rd Precinct.

Captain Rios stated that he is the Executive Officer for the 73rd Precinct and fairly new to the Precinct. He gave a brief history of his police career and stated that he is very happy to be here. He supports Deputy Inspector Wright's mission to reduce crime in the community through community interaction.

Major crimes are down in the Precinct and they attribute this to the information that they are receiving from the community. His Narcotics background tells him that it is important that they receive as much information about the crime and the participants as possible. He also stated that in the case of drug related crimes, it may not be immediately noticeable that the police are acting on tips that receive, but they are. A special unit works on drug related tips.

This year they will focus on youth. As a father and a police officer, he likes to focus on the youth. The Explorer program is the Police Department's version of the Boy Scout program. Youth ages 14 years old to 20 years old are recruited primarily within their precinct. The program is designed to promote leadership, physical fitness, and service. They realize that it is sometimes difficult for parents to get their children to the Precinct, which is where the Explorers

currently meet. They will now have four separate locations in the Precinct in order to facilitate the ability of the young people participation. They plan to host an open house for parents during the months of March and April to answer any of their questions about the program.

He has been given charge of the Impact Zone which is manned by approximately two hundred officers, and an additional one hundred and fourteen patrolmen and two sergeants.

Ms. Blanche Peltonbusch stated that seemingly, each time she becomes accustomed to a Commanding or Executive Officer at the Precinct, they are moved out. Is there anything that we can do to stop the revolving door?

Captain Rios stated that the moves are done based upon the needs of the Precinct. He requested to come to this Precinct and hopes to be here for a long while.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Mr. Mario Taglia who stated that there is resource in the community that is about to be lost and most people do not know it, the former Our Lady of Loreto Church (Sackman Street at Pacific Street). Last year the building was closed by the Archdiocese of New York who stated that they could no longer afford to operate the building. They plan to demolish the structure and replace it with eighty units of housing.

Some former parishioners wanted to save the structure and did some research on the building. Their research determined that the building is worthy of landmark status and is already qualified to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The parishioners went to the Bishop and presented a plan wherein they would purchase the property and develop new housing but would also preserve the church as a cultural center for the use of the community. The Archdiocese agreed to this and the parishioners worked on this plan for six months. They brought in a local developer, Mr. Jeff Dunston of Northeast Brooklyn Development, Corp., who is well known for building affordable housing in the area. A plan was drawn up to develop 101 affordable units on the site and restore the church as a cultural center.

In October 2009, the New York City Landmarks Commission came back to them and stated that the property does not qualify to be landmarked because there is no interest by the community. They have not come across anyone in this community who is against their idea, in fact, they have met with Ms. Patricia Deans who would like to make use of the space to host cultural events in the community.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Mr. Steve Mayer of Mensch Home Supply Company.

Mr. Mayer stated that his family opened what was known as Liberty Electric Supply Company in 1938. Ten years ago the business name was sold to a public company and he was given an agreement that allowed him to operate under the name for ten years. The agreement terminated last May and he needed to make a decision on how he would proceed. He decided that he would open a home center here in Brownsville, something of a mini Home Depot. They revamped the store and are now open for business at the corner of East New York and Rockaway Avenues.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Mr. Christopher Robinson of Rose Financial Services.

Mr. Robison stated that he is a former employee of J.P. Morgan-Chase Bank on Pitkin Avenue. He left their employment about seven months ago and formed his own financial firm, primarily to serve what he considers to be an underserved community. They are available to provide financial planning to people who would like to establish a retirement plan and those who already have a plan that they want to enrich. In working with the community, he has come to believe that too few of us have a plan for the transference of generational wealth. Most parents want to leave their children better off financially than they were. That does not happen without a plan. He encouraged anyone who may be interested to sign the contact sheet that he has left at the rear of the lobby.

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