

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 – June 22, 2010

Attendance

David Alexander (A)	Rev. Joseph Norton
Angela Alexander-Wilson	Deidre Olivera-Douglas
Carolyn A. Benjamin-Smith	Blanche L. Peltonbusch
Margaret Brewer	Marie Pierre
Adrainer Coleman	Rev. Devon Ponds
Essie Duggan	Mattie Pusey
Helen Giles (A)	Linda Rivera
Shirley Gonsalves	Melaine Rochford
Danny Goodine (A)	Wendy Rutheford
Chanel Haliburton	Beatrice Saunders
Sarah Hall	Christina Serano (A)
Kofi Hormeku	Hellen Thomas-Purdie
Michael Howard (A)	Ernestine Turner
Allene Ingram (E)	Rev. Dr. Miran Ukaegbu (E)
Prince Issachar	Alice Vines
Daisy Jackson	Annie Walkes
Minyarn Johnson	Yvette Williams-Lawson
Orin Johnson-Griffith (A)	Herman Winston (E)
Carl Joseph	Hazel Younger
Pamela Junior	Viola D. Greene-Walker, DM
Rev. Eddie Karim (A)	E. Jane Coleman-Assistant ADM
Eula Key	Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
Bettie Kollock-Wallace (E)	Hon. Darlene Mealy
Charles Ladson	Christopher Lundy for Hon. Edolphus Towns
Deborah Mack	Maurice Roberts for Hon. Eric Adams
James Mack	Brandon Blumberg for Hon. John Sampson
Yolanda Matthews (E)	Melvin Faulkner for Hon. Inez Barron
Linda Mayo	Essie Duggan for Hon. Velmanette Montgomery
Sadie McNamara	Nancy Pascal for Hon. Bill de Blasio
Ted McQueen	
Genese Morgan	

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

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

Chairperson Hazel Younger called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m., followed with an invocation by Ms. Hazel Clark.

Chairperson Younger recognized representatives from the Board of Elections.

A presentation was made on the new voting machines that will replace the current machines used in New York State beginning with the September 2010 Primary Elections. Following the controversy that came out during the 2000 Presidential Election, Congress passed into law the Help Americans Vote Act (HAVA) in 2002. HAVA mandated that all states replace aging punch ballot and lever polling systems with new systems that meet the standards set forth in the Act. The machines must be auditable and create a permanent paper record. New York is the last state to fulfill the requirement and has used the time to evaluate several systems used by the various states. The evaluations led to the adoption of the DS200 polling machine.

The DS200 is a portable electronic voting system that uses an optical scanner to read marked paper ballots and tally the results. This system allows paper ballots to be immediately tabulated at your polling site. The DS200 also notifies you of any voting errors. You will be able to immediately correct any errors to ensure that your vote is counted. Trained personnel will be available at each polling site to assist those in need of help with the machine.

Mock ballots were distributed and the audience was asked to try a demonstrator model of the polling machine that was positioned in the room.

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. Alice Vines and carried to waive the reading of the District Manager's report.

Chairperson Younger recognized Dr. Aletha Maybank from the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Dr. Maybank stated that she is the Assistant Commissioner for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. She oversees the Brooklyn District Public Health Office which is located at 485 Throop Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant. The office serves Bedford-Stuyvesant, East New York, Bushwick, and Brownsville.

She is here tonight to speak about sugar sweetened beverages. They are running a campaign entitled: "Pouring On the Pounds". It has been determined that the community's environment is not conducive to making healthy choices. The bodegas and supermarkets are filled with sugary drinks, processed and junk food, and offer very little in the way of fresh produce. Some of the things that are needed to change this have to be done on a policy level, however, there are some things that can be done on the community level as well.

She displayed a chart which indicated a rapid rate of increase of obesity in the community. The average weight of a pre-teen in 2002 was nine pounds more than a pre-teen in 1965. Adolescents from twelve to seventeen years old were fifteen pounds heavier and adults were twenty-five pounds heavier. Six out of ten adults in the City tend to be overweight. Forty percent of our youth are overweight or obese. The numbers are even higher for low-income communities. This affects our health – overweight persons have an increase chance of having diabetes, high blood pressure, infertility, stroke, arthritis, cancer, and many other diseases. Pregnant women who are overweight have an increased rate of giving birth prematurely and to stillborn babies.

Obesity is expensive - 7.6 billion dollars are spent each year on health cost related to obesity. Insurance tend to go up because of obesity. The rate of occurrence of diabetes is proportional to the rate of obesity. Where it was rare to see Type II Diabetes in youth, it is now common place.

Twenty years ago the average person consumed two hundred to three hundred less calories a-day than we do today. Half of those calories are from sugar sweetened beverages. If you read the label of many of the drinks on the store shelves, most will contain some type of sugar (fructose, sucrose, corn syrup, honey, maple syrup). The average American drinks forty pounds of sugar a year. That is enough sugar to fill a kitchen sink. Sugar is what is termed empty calories – it has no nutritional value. Drinking a typical bottle of soda is equivalent to ingesting sixteen packets of sugar. Next time you are at the store, look at the drink container and see how many grams of sugar are in it (one gram equals one teaspoon or one packet of sugar) and keep in mind the number of servings in the container.

A little sugar is perfectly acceptable in the diet of most people; the problem is we consume too much sugar. Some of the ways to reduce your intake are substituting seltzer or plain water for sugary drinks in our refrigerators (slice and add some fresh fruit into it if you don't like the taste of plain water), buy healthier drinks (a pamphlet was distributed listing alternative products from the major drink companies), drink tap water (New York City has the best tap water in the country and it is better regulated and monitored than bottled water), drink beverages that contain less than twenty-five calories per eight ounces, and be conscious of beverages that we provide and consume at our meetings.

Someone asked if there are differences in the sugar substitutes?

Dr. Maybank stated that if someone is looking simply to drink less sugar, diet soft drinks are a good alternative. However, she cannot testify to their healthiness as they contain a number of chemical additives.

Chairperson Younger next recognized Ms. Margaret Kelly from the Office of Borough President Marty Markowitz.

Ms. Kelly stated that she is an Education Policy Analyst for Borough President Markowitz. Prior to working with the Borough President, she has been involved at various levels with the school system and has children who went through the system.

There are five hundred and thirteen schools serving over three hundred and twenty-thousand students throughout the borough of Brooklyn. There are thirty-six thousand – seven hundred and sixty persons under the age of eighteen residing in Community District #16.

By September there will be twelve new charter schools added throughout Brooklyn in 2010. These schools are part of School District #23. There are thirty-four schools, including five charter schools, in School District #23 which serves Community District #16. Enrollment in School District #23 was 13,166 students in the 1995-1996 school year. The past school year, 2009-2010, enrollment was down to 10,888.

Each school district has two Family Advocates (who are often hard to find), each school has a Parent Coordinator who should be very accessible to parents, and every district has a Community Education Council (CEC). The CECs are similar to the old school boards but without their power. They do, however, act as a bully pulpit in calling attention to the concerns of parents. The Borough President appoints two representatives to each CEC and she meets with them each month to discuss school matters in the Borough. There is a vacancy on the Council of School District #23. Any adult who resides in the District and is interested in being appointed should contact her at (718) 802-3839 or mkelly@brooklynbp.nyc.gov.

A report card of the thirty-four schools in Community District #16 was distributed indicating the level of performance of the students in math and language arts.

Someone asked what is being done by the Borough President's office to raise the education level of the students?

Ms. Kelly stated that they work to ensure equitable funding – the Independent Budget Office now monitors funding of the schools. They try to provide support for the schools in any manner that is needed and also advocate for the schools. It should be noted that they are not involved with the hiring or firing of teachers or with the curriculum.

Rev. Miran Ukaegbu asked if there are any plans to develop a charter school for pre-k students?

Ms. Kelly stated that the charter schools rely on funding from the federal government. At this time, funding is not available for pre-k programs.

Mr. Scott Joyner asked if all schools are required to have a dress code?

Ms. Kelly stated that whether or not to have a dress code is a decision that is left up to the leadership team of each school. Parents can and should let their individual feelings on the matter be known to their Parent Coordinators.

Someone asked if any of the charter schools have or will have sports teams?

Ms. Kelly stated that it is up to the individual schools. There are few guidelines dictating physical activities for charter schools.

Chairperson Younger recognized Councilwoman Darlene Mealy who administered the Board's Oath of Office to the following new members: Adrainer Coleman, Angela Alexander-Wilson, Minyard Johnson, Carl Joseph, Linda Mayo, Deidre Olivera-Douglas, Linda Rivera, Beatrice Saunds, and Yvette Williams-Lawson. She then administered the oath to the Executive Board: Hazel Younger - Chairperson, Bettie Kollock-Wallace – First Vice Chairperson, Kofi Hormeku – Second Vice Chairperson, Sarah Hall - Treasurer, Sadie McNamara - Secretary, and James Mack Parliamentarian.

Councilmember Mealy stated that she hosted two seminars presented by the Small Business Administration. The seminars showed the attendees how to obtain 30-day vendor's licenses. Some were able to obtain the licenses on the spot. She plans to host more events to allow the community to make some extra money during these economically difficult times.

She is the Chairperson of the Council's Contracts Committee and they are seeking legislation to award small businesses grants of \$15,000 to allow them to obtain the services of Certified Public Accountants to properly setup their financial paperwork. They have recently passed a law wherein small contractors, who in the past did not have the resources to obtain the necessary bonds, will be able to obtain bonds through the City. This will allow more minority and women owned-business enterprises to obtain a fair share of the many contracts that are awarded.

She reminds the audience that she hosts her Advisory Board meetings on the second Saturday of each month. They are generally held at her office on Union Street, however, the next meeting will be held at Cacin Hall, located at 15 Rochester Avenue from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on July 10th.

She has met with some of the men in the community who have committed to walk in the area of the Breevort Houses and engage the young men in the area. They will not be asking them to pull up their pants. They will instead talk with them to find out some of their concerns. After asking the young men to raise their pants; what is next? Do we have a job for them? Will they look at our young men any different? We need to change their circumstances and then perhaps they will raise their pants on their own. When they see and speak to men in their community that they can relate to - then mentorship can occur. The mentors can let them know where they can apply for employment, where they can get help preparing a resume, and they will listen.

On Friday, June 25th, she is sponsoring an event entitled: "A Cultural Explosion". This event will feature local artisans who will look to sell their artwork on Eastern Parkway at Utica Avenue. The following day, along with the Caribbean Chamber of Commerce, she will sponsor the "Summer Sizzler" event on the promenade of Lincoln Terrace Park (President Street between Rochester and Buffalo Avenues). There will be music, rides, games, and health screenings. She encouraged everyone to come out and support these events.

Ms. Essie Duggan stated that Community District #16 has a unique commercial strip on Belmont Avenue that is in a crisis. She is reaching out to all of the elected officials that cover the area and asking for their assistance to help revitalize the strip.

Councilmember Mealy stated that she has discussed the issue with some of the property owners. The buildings are privately owned and she has offered tax relief as an incentive but they seemingly are not interested in occupying their spaces at this time.

Chairperson Younger requested that Councilmember Mealy, as she makes her rounds, appeal to persons in the community who have not responded to the Census to do so; the numbers for Brownsville are coming up low.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Dimitry Jeremie of the Brooklyn Eats Program.

Mr. Jeremie stated that, along with being a part of the Brooklyn Eats Program, he is a senior at Teachers' Preparatory High School. The Brooklyn Eats Program is an urban agriculture project with a mission of providing sustainable produce in local communities.

They planted their first garden in Brownsville in the rear of Teachers' Preparatory about two years ago and their first crops yielded a variety of fruits and vegetables. They have since expanded and now grow produce in several plant beds located in the Amboy Community Garden as well.

The Brownsville community is dotted with fast food restaurants that do not offer a significant variety of healthy food choices. The produce grown by Brooklyn Eats helps to increase both the variety and the quality of available produce to the community. One can taste the difference between freshly harvested vegetables and those that have been sitting on the shelves of the supermarkets.

The Brooklyn Eats are community-operated farms and food distribution systems. They were created so that urban neighborhoods such as Brownsville can grow fresh, healthy, nutritious food that everyone can eat, regardless of their income or personal circumstances. Cultivating crops in the neighborhood with the collaboration of local community groups allows the program to achieve this goal.

They can be contacted via email at info@activecitizenproject.com. They look forward to hearing comments or suggestions locating planting sites in the community.

Ms. Margaret Brewer, Secretary of the Economic Development Committee, reported that on Thursday, June 17, 2010, members of the Committee met to review the New York State Liquor License application of Villa Castillo, located at 1474 Pitkin Avenue.

A representative of the business, Juan Castillo, returned the Community Board #16 Liquor License Application & Questionnaire for review. The Committee reviewed the application and was satisfied with the responses provided.

A site visit of the establishment was conducted by members of the Committee and a consensus was reached that the business does provide an acceptable service to our area, and will benefit from having the Liquor License renewed.

The Committee recommends that the Board move to support Villa Castillo's application to renew their New York State Liquor License.

The Committee would like to thank the Board members for their faith in the Committee. Each issue that comes before the Committee is reviewed and thoroughly discussed before a decision is made. The Committee and Board play a vital part in the betterment of Brownsville. The Committee hopes that it has piqued the interest of the audience enough so that some may be interested in becoming a part of the Committee.

A motion was made by Rev. Devon Ponds, seconded by Ms. Marie Pierre and carried to approve the Economic Development Committee report and its recommendations to support the application for renewal of a New York State Liquor License by Villa Castillo Restaurant.

Ms. Bettie Kollock-Wallace, Chairperson of the Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committee, reported that the Committee met on June 8, 2010 with representatives from Services to the Underserved which is proposing to develop 53 units of low-income housing for single adults on a vacant city-owned lot at 21 Truxton Street (Block 1542, Lot 44).

This will be supportive housing and similar to the units at 86 Mother Gaston Boulevard (at Somers Street) with onsite services such as case management, job training, mental health and substance abuse counseling.

The Committee recommends that the Community Board supports the proposal by Services for the Underserved to acquire the vacant lot at 21 Truxton Street to develop 53 units of low-income studio apartments (between \$23, 000 and \$26,000 gross income) for single adults.

A motion was made by Ms. Mattie Pusey, seconded by Rev. Dr. Miran Ukaegbu and carried to accept the Land Use, Planning, and Zoning Committee report and its recommendation to support the proposal by Services for the Underserved to acquire the vacant lot at 21 Truxton Street to develop 53 units of low-income studio apartments (between \$23, 000 and \$26,000 gross income) for single adults.

Mr. Kofi Hormeku, Chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Committee, reported that summer has arrived and he anticipates that the Parks and Recreation facilities will be heavily utilized. He requests that the audience takes it upon themselves a certain amount of responsibility and assist in cleaning up behind themselves and their children when using the parks and playgrounds. There is a shortage of manpower and doing this will help keep our parks clean for everyone. He recommends that all park and playground goers pay heed to the rules and regulations posted about the facilities as they will be enforced.

A report is produced each month detailing the condition of Parks and Recreation facilities within Community District #16. The report is in every Board member's folder and on tonight's distribution table.

A motion was made by Elder Devon Ponds, seconded by Ms. Mattie Pusey and carried to approve the Park's Committee report.

Rev. Dr. Miran Ukaegbu, Chairperson of the Sanitation and Environmental Protection Committee, reported that as the Committee continues its public education presentations on the new noise code, they call to the attention of the audience excerpts from the latest noise code booklet regarding the following:

- 1) Food vending vehicles and their jingles. The new noise code prohibits the playing of jingles while stationary. Jingles may only be played when vehicles are in motion, traveling through neighborhoods.

- 2) Air conditioner and rooftop circulation devices. The noise code restricts the decibel levels created by air conditioners and circulation devices.
- 3) Refuse collection vehicles. The new noise code sets a more enforceable standard in order to reduce unreasonable noise emanating from the refuse collection vehicles.
- 4) Motor vehicles and motorcycles. The new noise code restricts noises coming from vehicles, including motorcycles, and prohibits excessive sound from the muffler or exhaust of motor vehicles operating on a public right-of-way where the speed limit is 55 mph or less.
- 5) Unnecessary noise in the environment:
 - Don't honk your horn if you are stuck in traffic.
 - Be sensitive to your neighbor's space.
 - Keep cell phone conversations to a minimum in public places.
 - Keep volume levels down.
 - Use power tools at appropriate times.

Complete copies of the noise code may be obtained by calling 3-1-1.

A motion was made by Ms. Sarah Hall, seconded by Ms. Alice Vines and carried to approve the Sanitation Committee report.

District Manager Viola Greene-Walker, on behalf of Ms. Deborah Mack, Chairperson of the Transportation and Franchises Committee, reported that the Committee met on June 2, 2010 with representatives from Services to the Underserved (SUS). SUS is proposing to develop a pedestrian plaza for the area bounded by Fulton Street, Truxton Street, and Eastern Parkway.

SUS is seeking the Community Board's input with suggested uses for the site. Committee members suggested a vegetable/flower garden and sitting area, seasonal events such as a flea market, farmer's market or art show.

The Committee will survey residents of the immediate area to get their suggestions.

Any suggestions from Board members will be appreciated.

A motion was made by Ms. Mattie Pusey, seconded by Elder Devon Ponds and carried to accept the Transportation and Franchise Committee report.

Ms. Daisy Jackson, Chairperson of the Youth Services Planning Committee (YSPC), reported that the Committee met on June 15, 2010.

The Washington D.C. trip is on hold until the fall. The Healthy Meals Workshop will begin in the fall as well. The Committee is working on the details of the workshop with the BMS Family Health Center and the internships being offered by World Financial Services.

The Local Development Corporation of East New York has offered a summer youth internship. Mr. Kendell Boykin, a member of the Ocean Hill - Brownsville Youth Leadership Council has accepted the offer.

The next YSPC meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 13, 2010 at 6:30 p.m..

A motion was made by Ms. Sarah Hall, seconded by Ms. Mattie Pusey and carried to accept the Youth Services Planning Committee report.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Christopher Lundy from Congressman Edolphus Towns' office.

Mr. Lundy reported that Congressman Towns recently sponsored town hall meetings on the issues of crime, unemployment, and foreclosure which were well attended. The unemployment

forum was not intended to be a job placement event but rather an information forum to aid job seekers with rethinking the way they go about looking for employment.

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

Mr. Faulkner stated that Albany has restored \$25,500,000 to the budget for the school transportation program; meaning that the transportation passes will not be taken away. They have also increased the budget to fund senior centers.

They are scheduled to meet with Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly this coming Thursday to discuss the police tactic of "stop and frisk" that is primarily employed in Black and Latino communities.

The courts have issued an injunction barring the Department of Education from closing 19 special education schools.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Nancy Pascal from Public Advocate Bill de Blasio's office.

Ms. Pascal stated that the Public Advocate is the watchdog for City residents. Since he took office in January, Public Advocate de Blasio has taken a number of steps to make the City work better for its residents. He has requested that the Charter Commission strengthen the role of community boards. He is seeking ways to make City government more transparent.

There are fifteen day care centers that are scheduled to be closed in the city. Eleven of them are in Brooklyn. Public Advocate de Blasio is spearheading an effort to keep them open or at least distribute the closing more equitably amongst the boroughs.

Among things that they have done, she is especially pleased with a new feature on their website: "The Guide to Community Organizing" which is designed to help people understand how our government works.

They encourage people to reach out to them for assistance with any issues or concerns.

Someone stated that they have tried to contact the Public Advocate's office but were unable to get through.

Ms. Pascal stated that they are aware that some people have been unable to contact their office and are working to resolve the issue. They are woefully understaffed and are hopeful that they can begin hiring after June 30th. However, she still encourages people to reach out to them with any issues of concern.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Essie Duggan from Senator Velmanette Montgomery's office.

Ms. Duggan stated that Senator Montgomery continues to work on legislation to reform our juvenile detention system and is now championing new handgun legislation to help reduce violent crimes in our communities. She asks that we write to our elected officials in support of these efforts. The Senator's newsletter is available on tonight's distribution table.

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

Mr. Bloomfield announced that Senator Sampson is working on details for their next town hall meeting which will focus on issues affecting homeowners. He encourages everyone to attend their monthly advisory meetings which are held on the first Saturday of each month.

On the issue of the budget, Senator Sampson wants the community to know that he is more interested in a balanced budget than in an on-time budget. They are working with a 92 billion dollar deficit and in these difficult financial times cuts must be made. Cutting across the board is not the answer - not all budget items are equal.

Senator Sampson also seeks to pass a legislative package which fundamentally restructures matrimonial law to improve the process and outcome of divorce for all New Yorkers, particularly women and children who are often the most vulnerable when marriages are dissolved. Under current law, determining who is at fault for causing the divorce has significant financial and

emotional costs and unnecessarily forces couples in deteriorating relationships to rehash the bitter, painful and embarrassing reasons for divorce. This legislation will better address today's economic and social realities and will help ensure that no party to a matrimonial case is strategically at a disadvantage for lack of resources to pursue or defend their case.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Maurice Roberts from Senator Eric Adams's office.

Mr. Roberts stated that Senator Adams' "Stop the Sag" campaign is actually targeting adults. Adults need to communicate to the youth that raising their pants will raise respect. No, it will not give you a job, but it may help you get a job.

On Sunday, July 25th from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Senator Adams will sponsor an Eco Arts Community Festival at Prospect Park. Please contact their office at (718) 284-4700 for more information.

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

Mr. Boone stated that they had their second annual Fathers and Sons Breakfast/Basketball Game on June 19th at the Beacon's host school, I.S. / P.S. 323, located at 210 Chester Street. He had the honor of presenting awards from Congresswoman Yvette Clarke, Senator John Sampson, and Borough President Marty Markowitz to five men who make a difference in this community.

Chairperson Younger wished everyone a wonderful and safe summer.

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