

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 – March 22, 2011

Attendance

David Alexander	Rev. Joseph Norton (E)
Carolyn A. Benjamin-Smith (A)	Deidre Olivera-Douglas
Margaret Brewer	Blanche L. Peltonbusch (E)
Adrainer Coleman	Marie Pierre
Essie Duggan	Rev. Devon Ponds
Helen Giles	Mattie Pusey
Shirley Gonsalves	Linda Rivera
Danny Goodine	Melaine Rochford (E)
Chanel Haliburton	Wendy Rutherford
Sarah Hall	Beatrice Saunders
Kofi Hormeku	Evang. Hellen Thomas-Purdie
Michael Howard	Ernestine Turner
Allene Ingram	Rev. Dr. Miran Ukaegbu
Prince Issachar	Alice Vines (E)
Daisy Jackson	Annie Walkes
Carl Joseph (E)	Yvette Williams-Lawson
Pamela Junior	Herman Winston
Eula Key	Hazel Younger
Bettie Kollock-Wallace	Viola D. Greene-Walker, District Manager
Charles Ladson	E. Jane Cole, Assistant District Manager
Deborah Mack	Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
James Mack	Latrice M. Walker for Hon. Yvette Clarke
Yolanda Matthews	Essie Duggan for Hon. Velmanette Montgomery
Linda Mayo (E)	Maurice Phillips for Hon. John Sampson
Sadie McNamara	Ry-Ann Hermon for Hon. William F. Boyland, Jr.
Ted McQueen	Carl Luciano for Hon. Darlene Mealy
Genese Morgan	Rene Hastick-Motes for Hon. Marty Markowitz

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

PUBLIC HEARING

Chairperson Hazel Younger called the public hearing to order at 7:15 p.m., followed with an invocation by Ms. Hazel Clark.

IN THE MATTER OF the City's Preliminary Budget Statement and Community District Register for Fiscal Year 2012. The Hearing is to obtain public comments on City agencies' responses to Community Board 16's Capital and Expense Budget Priorities for Fiscal Year 2012 (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 nine pages of her report for this month.

Ms. Mattie Pusey commented that pothole repair work done by the Department of Transportation is being done with inferior materials.

Chairperson Younger thanked Ms. Pusey for bringing the issue to the Board's attention. District Manager Greene-Walker will follow up on the matter.

Ms. Marie Pierre stated that many of the responses are recommendations that the project be brought to the attention of our elected officials. Does the Board follow up in this manner?

District Manager Greene-Walker stated that the Board does follow up. For instance, for the request for work to be done at the Brownsville Recreation Center (Item 4 on the capital budget request) the Borough President has allocated a million dollars to the budget for this work.

Ms. Daisy Wilson stated that the response to Expense Budget item #24 (Fund senior citizen centers) is that the Department is seeking proposals to expand or create new senior centers in selected community districts. However, at a recent Precinct Council meeting, what she heard is that they are trying to close centers not expand them.

Chairperson Younger stated that oftentimes when there are controversial issues like this, you will hear different things from different sources. One day, one might hear that they are cutting the budget on another day you will hear they are not. On this particular issue, she has been informed that there is news from the State Senate. She requested Mr. Maurice Phillips of Senator John Sampson's office to distribute a flier wherein Senator Sampson states that the Senate has restored funding for senior centers in their latest budget proposal.

There being no further comments, a motion was made by Ms. Annie Walkes, seconded by Ms. Yvette Williams-Lawson and carried to close the public hearing.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

A motion was made by Rev. Dr. Miran Ukaegbu, seconded by Mr. Michael Howard and carried to waive the reading of the minutes.

A motion was made by Ms. Mattie Pusey, seconded by Ms. Annie Walkes and carried to waive the reading of the District Manager's report.

Chairperson Younger highlighted the article on free tax preparation services found immediately proceeding the budget responses and encouraged the audience to read the Minutes and the District Manager's report in their entirety.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Peggy Leggat from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's GreenCarts program.

Ms. Leggat stated that she is the GreenCarts outreach coordinator. She queried the audience to see how many were familiar with the program. Most did not indicate that they were familiar with it. She stated that in 2008, legislation was passed by Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council to allow for the issuance of 1000 new GreenCart permits, specifically targeting neighbors that have historically shown to have a low consumption level of fruits and vegetables. Brownsville is such a neighborhood. She is here tonight to provide information about the program, as both an opportunity to increase the consumption level of fruits and vegetables and as a business opportunity.

There is a process in becoming a GreenCart vendor; it involves having a mobile food cart vendor's permit and going on a waiting list which opens in April. She suggests that anyone who is interested in operating a GreenCart get on the waiting list in April, as there is a very good chance that by June or July they could be in operation. It is a relatively inexpensive business to start and the East New York Capital Corporation and others are interested in helping people fund GreenCart start up costs, which typically run between \$1,800 and \$2,500.

Each borough is allocated a certain number of GreenCart permits. Brooklyn is allocated three hundred and fifty of which only one hundred and forty have been issued. There are several in operation along Fulton Street in Bedford-Stuyvesant. However, in Brownsville there is only one that she is aware of operating on Pitkin Avenue at Rockaway Avenue. At a workshop, conducted here at 444 Thomas S. Boyland Street this past October, interest was displayed by the Director of the Brownsville Recreation Center to have a cart setup outside the facility, as well as interest by a few different organizations to have fresh fruits and vegetables be made more widely available in Brownsville and East New York.

She is aware that there are some questions concerning competition with the idea being that the carts will directly compete with local food stores. However, when you look at the number of markets in the area as compared to the rest of the City, there are not many. Perhaps, having GreenCarts in the community will also cause the quality of produce in the community to improve. The Department of Health sees a connection between the amount of produce that is consumed with the amount that is locally available.

Ms. Hazel Clark asked what is the cost of becoming a GreenCart vendor?

Ms. Leggat stated that the cost is \$103 to obtain a license and to take the required course. The permit costs \$75. A new cart will start at about \$1800 but a used one can be obtained for \$1000 or less from outlets such as Craig's list. Additionally, there is the startup cost of purchasing the produce.

One obstacle that faces operators in Brownsville is the lack of qualified commissaries (places to store the carts) in the area. Because the Department of Health is eager to have GreenCarts in the area, they are waiving the need to store the carts in an official commissary. They are being more flexible in terms of where a cart can be stored, as compared to say a hot dog or coffee and doughnut vendor.

Chairperson Younger commented that the Department of Health should be providing locations for commissaries instead of placing the burden on the community.

Ms. Leggat stated that the Department is not funding the carts to come into the community. It is a free market business. It is expected that individuals will buy the carts and start their own business. A recent article (in the Wall Street Journal) shows that mobile food vending permits are a hot commodity in the city. This initiative is designed to spur consumption of fresh produce while at the same time offering an opportunity for individuals to open new businesses.

Ms. Violet Young asked if training is available to individuals prior to them making investment into the carts?

Ms. Leggat stated that Laura Tisch donated 1.5 million dollars to the city to help launch this program. The City hired a company call Heart Resources which provides technical resources to individuals interested in becoming GreenCart vendors at no cost to the individual. They hold workshops on how to obtain licenses and permits, how to display produce, how to finance a cart, and how to get the business started. She has heard that there isn't much of a food cart vending culture in the community but she has also heard the voices of a few people who would like to see more fruits and vegetables in the community. If there were a GreenCart or two outside of the Brownsville Recreation Center, then people would have a place where they could purchase fruits and vegetables right after they exercise instead of buying soda and chips.

Mr. Daniel Murphy, Executive Director of the Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District (BID), offered the assistance of the BID to help establish GreenCarts in the District. He envisions that they would be an asset to the community. Regarding competition, he referred to Union Square in Manhattan where a very active farmers' market coexists near a Whole Foods Market location. Whole Foods is not concerned about the competition they see it as increased traffic that can lead to additional revenue for their store. He can be reached at (718) 922-9600.

Ms. Sharon Marshall-Taylor asked if persons who were formerly incarcerated are eligible to operate a cart?

Ms. Leggat stated that they are eligible. This is a good way that they can make a good living for themselves, be their own boss, and not have to deal with the stigma that is sometimes associated with having a criminal record.

Someone asked for Ms. Leggat's contact information.

Ms. Leggat stated that their office is in the process of moving to Queens. The telephone: (212) 676-2022 will soon be disconnected and she can be reached via email: mleggat@health.nyc.gov. She stated that there are informational fliers available on tonight's distribution table.

Ms. Bettie Kollock-Wallace asked how long is the food protection course, when is it given, is it a pass or fail course? If it is a pass or fail course, what does a prospective operator do should they fail the course?

Ms. Leggat stated that there are two options for the food protection course. One is a mobile food vending safety course which is an eight hour course that is taken over two days. It is given at the Harlem Academy at a cost of \$53. Individuals signup in person at 42 Broadway. After a sufficient number of persons have signed up, a class will be scheduled.

Ms. Deidre Olivera-Douglass stated that information being offered through the workshops that were mentioned can be obtained elsewhere at no charge. Can the funds for the workshops be reallocated to creating qualified commissaries? It does not make sense to lower health standards by allowing carts to be stored anywhere.

Ms. Leggat stated that the Health Department will waive the requirement of storing the carts in an official commissary but that does not mean that they will allow carts to be store in a place that

is filthy.

Someone asked if persons who are interested in obtaining a GreenCart would be eligible for loans through Small Business Services?

Ms. Leggat stated that as someone from the Department of Health, she is not completely versed in all the available funding. Eric Parker of Small Business Services may be a good source to get that information. There are many different financing outlets that they have identified, but as an employee of the Department of Health she can only mention Axion with whom they have a contract.

Chairperson Younger next recognized Bruce Richard, Vice President for Local 1199 of the Service Employee International Union, United Healthcare Workers East.

Mr. Richard stated that the topic he wishes to speak about ties in well with the previous presentation. It concerns health in Central Brooklyn. Internally, his organization has had many discussions concerning healthcare in Central Brooklyn. Central Brooklyn has some of the worst standards in health and healthcare in terms of barriers and how well people care for themselves, than anywhere else in the five boroughs.

In Central Brooklyn the rate of HIV diagnoses is more than twice that of the rest of Brooklyn and New York City as a whole. The number of people living with HIV/AIDS in Central Brooklyn is 20% higher than the remaining portions of the Borough and 60% greater than the City as a whole. The average hospitalization rate for heart diseases is 10% higher than the Brooklyn rate and 20% higher than the rate for New York City. Twenty-nine percent of the residents of Central Brooklyn are obese as compared to 23% for the rest of Brooklyn and 20% for the City. Twelve percent of adults have diabetes as compared to 10% and 9% for Brooklyn and the City respectively. The average hospitalization rate for mental illness is 35% higher in Central Brooklyn than both the rest of Brooklyn and New York City. The death rate from drug related issues in Central Brooklyn is 60% higher than in the rest of Brooklyn and the City. These statistics and other can be found on the Department of Health's website (nyc.gov/health).

We need to challenge the acceptance and complacency around the deterioration of healthcare in distressed communities like Central Brooklyn, particularly around healthcare facilities many of which are somewhat on life support. We need to get the stakeholders involved in making and keeping concrete goals such as the reduction of the aforementioned statistics by half in a few years. To achieve this goal it is important to have all the healthcare providers work in concert. Currently, many work separately. We need the community to think more highly of itself. This can be accomplished through a method of self education.

Local 1199 has many members who are activist and live in this community. They are ready to embark on a door-to-door campaign to enlist residents in an awareness committee. The committee would then focus on providing resident driven programs to improve diet, exercise, and regular health examinations. This would also help reduce health cost particularly in an area where there is such a disproportion of uninsured residents.

Mr. Daniel Goodine commented that they may face difficulty in attempting to reach residents in a door-to-door campaign. People are wary of people knocking at their doors. How do we get people to exercise at Betsy Head when there is no grass on the field?

Someone asked what area does Central Brooklyn encompass?

Mr. Richard stated that it includes the 11212, 11233, 11213, 11215, and 11218 zip codes.

Someone asked how the data was gathered?

Mr. Richard stated that the information comes from the Department of Health.

Ms. Leggat stated that the Department of Health conducts scientifically tested surveys to provide that data which is available on their website. The data is not gathered from individual hospitals but by direct communication with individuals via telephone and is compiled for every district in the city.

Chairperson Younger thanked Ms. Leggat and Mr. Richard for their presentations. She requested that Mr. Richard return with some concrete plans of what they want to do.

Ms. Genese Morgan, Chairperson of the Economic Development Committee, reported that the Committee met on Thursday, March 17, 2011 at 6:00 p.m.. The Committee reviewed their tentative plan of action which outlined goals and ideas that were grouped into four specific categories of objectives: learning, work, partnership and presentation. This tool will be used to help us keep track of the objectives that must be met by the Committee to help the community secure economic resources and assistance.

Additionally, Ms. Daisy Jackson, Chairperson of the Youth Services Planning Committee, attended the meeting to discuss plans for a combined effort in creating a Youth Business & Career program. The program will be designed to equip teenagers with basic skills and knowledge needed to secure employment and start small businesses. More information will be made available when the program is finalized.

The Committee is pleased to announce that they are actively engaged in the creation of a newsletter and continuously working on plans for business growth and community development to help retain and attract businesses along our Belmont Avenue retail corridor.

On Friday, March 18, 2011, the Daily News ran an article in the "Your Home" section of the newspaper entitled "Reboundville" by Lynne Miller. If you haven't had an opportunity to read it, please do at you leisure as it highlights great contributions about our very own Board members.

On April 14th at 2:00 p.m., there will be a tour of the Brownsville retail corridor commencing at the Zion Triangle (bordered by Pitkin Avenue, East New York Avenue, and Legion Street). The tour is sponsored by Commissioner Robert Walsh of the New York City Small Business Services, Assemblyman William F. Boyland, Jr., the Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District, and Community Board #16.

The Committee meets every third Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m.. The next meeting will be on April 21st.

A motion was made by Ms. Mattie Pusey, seconded by Mr. David Alexander and carried to accept the Economic Development Committee's report.

Bettie Kollock-Wallace, Chairperson of the Land Use, Planning, and Zoning Committee, reported that the Committee met on March 8, 2011 with representatives from Praxis Housing Initiatives, Inc. which is seeking the Community Board's preliminary support on a project that is in a very early stage. They are proposing to develop 66 units of supportive housing at 144 Livonia Avenue between Amboy and Herzl Streets.

In an effort to inform residents in the immediate area of the proposed site and get their reaction to the proposal, a meeting is being arranged and representatives from Praxis Housing Initiatives will be invited to present their proposal and hear community reaction.

Praxis Housing Initiatives, Inc. will be invited back to the Land Use, Planning, and Zoning Committee meeting on April 12th to respond to additional questions.

The Committee intends to report its recommendation on the proposal by Praxis at our Community Board meeting on April 26th.

The Committee also met with a representative from Catholic Charities Progress of Peoples Development Corporation who gave an update on their proposal to construct 64 units of housing to be known as Our Lady of Loreto Apartments at Sackman Street and Atlantic Avenue.

The rectory and convent are in the process of being demolished. Construction of the apartments will begin in April 2011 and completed in February 2013.

There continues to be discussion about future use of the former church building. As updates become available, the Committee will inform the Community.

Comments were made concerning the deviation from the plans that were originally presented to the Board wherein a cultural center would be placed in the structure of the old church building.

Ms. Kollock-Wallace stated that they too were shocked when they saw the changes and have asked that Catholic Charities return with explanations for the changes.

A motion was made by Mr. Charles Ladson, seconded by Elder Devon Ponds and carried to accept the Land Use, Planning, and Zoning Committee's report.

Mr. Kofi Hormekku, Chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Committee, stated that the District has been assigned a new Parks Manager, Mr. Emilio Llopiz.

He requested that anyone who may have an issue with a Parks Department facility call the Board Office to report so that he may have answers to their questions at the following Board meeting.

Ms. Beatrice Saunders, Chairperson of the Public Safety Committee, reported that the Committee met on Wednesday, March 9th. There was discussion regarding the change to daylight saving time on March 13th and the need to change batteries in our smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Available, this evening, are batteries that were provided by the New York Fire Department so that anyone who has not yet placed fresh batteries in their detectors may do so.

As a result of discussions that took place at last month's Board meeting, the Committee met on Friday, March 11th with Ms. Sarah Hall, President of the 73rd Precinct Community Council, Deputy Inspector Samuel Wright, Commanding Officer of the 73rd Precinct, and Ms. Latrice Walker, Community Liaison for Congresswoman Yvette Clarke. After much discussion, the following actions are to take place: monthly meetings to follow up on incidents within the community, setup of core meeting with supervisors in the 73rd Precinct, more officers to attend the Community Council meetings, and a relaxing of stop and frisk procedures especially where children are concerned.

The Committee is actively seeking new members; anyone who is interested in joining the Committee is requested to call District Manager Greene-Walker at (718) 385-0323.

The Committee meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m..

A motion was made by Mr. Ted McQueen, seconded by Elder Devon Ponds and carried to accept the Public Safety Committee's report.

Rev. Dr. Miran Ukaegbu, Chairperson of the Sanitation and Environmental Protection Committee, reported that the Committee met on March 21, 2011. The Committee discussed the Sanitation updates, examined some outstanding issues on residential recycling and the Department of Sanitation (DOS) responses to our fiscal year 2012 budget requests.

All New York City residents are required by law to recycle. The owner or manager of a residential building containing three or more dwelling units must notify the residents of the requirements of the New York City Recycling Law by, at a minimum, posting and maintaining one or more signs in the recycling collection areas. Residents must keep recyclable material separate from garbage and set them out for recycling collection no sooner than the evening before their designated recycling day. It has been established that no residential recycling takes place at the Marcus Garvey Village housing complex hence making the owner/manager noncompliant to the law. The Committee recommends that they be held accountable, not with issuing of summons/violations, but by strongly advising them to establish a recycling program.

After thorough examination of the DOS responses to our fiscal year 2012 budget requests, the Committee recommends that the Board continues to affirm the requests as on-going and appropriate.

As part of our plan to educate members of our community at the Community Board meetings, we continue tonight with a presentation on What and How to Recycle with Sanitation and its impact on our quality of life as highlighted on the attached copies. Also available are the DOS magnetic decals and posters for your information. She reminded everyone that caps should be removed from juice containers before recycling the containers. Mattresses and box springs must now be bagged before discarding (they will not be collected if not bagged).

Let us all do our part, then we can honestly hold both the NYC Department of Sanitation and Department of Environmental Protection enforcement accountable with our complaints.

The next meeting of the Committee will be on May 18, 2011 at 6.00 p.m..

Someone asked how are mattresses supposed to be bagged?

Rev. Dr. Ukaegbu stated that bags for the mattresses are now sold at large hardware stores.

A motion was made by Ms. Charles Ladson, seconded by Ms. Essie Duggan and carried to accept the Sanitation and Environmental Protection Committee Report.

Ms. Margaret Brewer, Chairperson of the Women's Committee, reported that on Wednesday, March 2, 2011, the Committee met for the first time. This meeting was used to get acquainted and share the common goal for change in our community.

The Committee decided to conduct a community survey to assist us in serving our community properly. The survey will be designed to target the social needs of our citizens. We want to know how the people of Brownsville see themselves and what they can use to improve their personal life quality as well as our community. The Committee believes this will give a broad view of what resources can be brought to the person directly or possibly offer a public workshop or information in assistance.

The plan is to distribute this survey door to door and ask other committees and groups to help accomplish this goal of gathering this much needed information, as the Committee moves forward to better our community.

The Committee welcomes all who are interested in sitting on the Committee or working on the project. Simply contact the District Manager's office to reserve your seat at the next Committee meeting.

The Women's Committee meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month. The next meeting will be held on April 6, 2011, 6:30 p.m. in the Community Board Office.

The Women's Committee is proud to serve our community.

A motion was made by Elder Devon Ponds, seconded by Mr. David Alexander and carried to accept the Sanitation and Environmental Protection Committee Report.

Ms. Daisy Jackson, Chairperson of the Youth Services Planning Committee, reported that the Youth Services Planning Committee (YSPC) has been working on a youth employment initiative program with Pitkin Avenue BID.

Applications will be distributed throughout the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community.

Ten qualified youth living in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville area will go through a 12-hour job readiness program in June sponsored by the YSPC. Merchants of the Pitkin Avenue BID who have agreed to participate in this program will interview these youth for hire.

Other youth applying to this program will be referred to other local agencies for job training and summer employment opportunities.

The YSPC has two other initiatives currently being developed, a program for youth between the ages of 7-12, and an entrepreneurship program.

As was mentioned earlier by Ms. Morgan, the YSPC is working with the Economic Development Committee to develop these and other youth programs.

The Committee thanks Councilmember Darlene Mealy and Mr. Daniel Murphy of the Pitkin Avenue BID for their support of the summer youth employment initiative.

YSPC meetings are held every third Tuesday of the month at 6:00 p.m.. The next meeting will be on April 19th.

A motion was made by Ms. Charles Ladson, seconded by Mr. David Alexander and carried to accept the Youth Services Planning Committee Report.

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

Mr. Philips reported that the Senate was successful restoring some of the proposed budgets that

would have undermined our community. Of note is the restoration of funds for our senior centers.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Carl Luciano from the Office of Councilmember Darlene Mealy.

Mr. Luciano announced that Councilmember Mealy will host her State of the District Report on April 28th at P.S. 28K. Informational fliers are on tonight's distribution table.

Councilmember Mealy invites everyone, especially Board members, to attend her monthly Advisory meetings.

She will also host a women's conference on March 30th at 828 Hancock Street. For more information, please contact him or Ms. Lipkin by calling (718) 953-3097.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Ry-Ann Hermon from the Office of Assemblyman William F. Boyland, Jr..

Ms. Hermon announced that there was legislation that recently passed to remove the 4% state sales tax on shoes and clothing with a retail cost of \$55 or less and will go into effect on April 1st. They are seeking to increase the limit to \$110 in 2012.

Assemblyman Boyland will sponsor a job fair on April 14th.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Renee Hastick-Motes from the Office of Borough President Marty Markowitz.

Ms. Hastick-Motes announced that Board members whose terms expire in 2011 should submit their re-appointment applications immediately, if they have not already done so. Applications are also being accepted for new members.

Borough President Markowitz will host a job fair at 12:00 p.m. on April 13th at Long Island University.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Essie Duggan from the Office of Senator Velmanette Montgomery.

Ms. Duggan announced that Senator Montgomery would like the community to know that the Senate is working on restoring many of the budget cuts being proposed. The fight lies not so much as Democrats versus Republicans as much as it is upstate versus downstate. The cuts are having a greater effect on downstate counties than it is on upstate counties. Senator Montgomery urges the community to keep the pressure on my writing and calling your elected officials.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Latrice Walker from the Office of Congresswoman Yvette Clarke.

Ms. Walker thanked everyone that helped make Congresswoman Clarke's job fair a success earlier today. Congresswoman Clarke attended a class on the census and wants to congratulate Brownsville as its population has increased. As a result, the community should be eligible for more resources and a few elected officials. New York State will lose two Congressional seats, most likely one from upstate and one from Long Island. The census reports also show that Brooklyn is down in poverty. This means some funding resources will be lost such as Title I, the extra moneys that our schools receive from the federal government.

They will need the support of the community to fight for those resources even harder. If you have or know someone who has lost a WorkForce voucher or Section 8 voucher, please contact her at (718) 287-1142. Copies of the letter of denial or termination may also be fax to (718) 287-1223.

There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Ms. Eula Key, seconded by Mr. Charles Ladson and carried to adjourn the meeting.