

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 – FEBRUARY 28, 2012

Attendance

David Alexander	Genese Morgan
Carolyn A. Benjamin-Smith	Terry Norfleet
Margaret Brewer-Seck (E)	Rev. Joseph Norton
Adrainer Coleman	Deidre Olivera-Douglas
Essie Duggan	Blanche L. Peltonbusch
Norman Frazier (E)	Marie Pierre
Helen Giles (A)	Rev. Devon Ponds
Shirley Gonsalves (A)	Mattie Pusey
Daniel Goodine	Linda Rivera (E)
Chanel Haliburton	Melaine Rochford (A)
Sarah Hall (E)	Wendy Rutherford (A)
Kofi Hormeku	Beatrice Saunds
Michael Howard	Melina Terry (A)
Allene Ingram (A)	Evang. Hellen Thomas-Purdie
Min. Prince Issachar	Ernestine Turner
Daisy Jackson (E)	Rev. Dr. Miran Ukaegbu (E)
Minyarn Johnson	Annie Walkes (E)
Carl Joseph (A)	Jennifer Williams (A)
Pamela Junior	Yvette Williams-Lawson
Eula Key	Viola D. Greene-Walker, District Manager
Bettie Kollock-Wallace	E. Jane Coleman, Assistant District Manager
Charles Ladson	Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
Deborah Mack (A)	Karen Cherry for Hon. Edolphus Towns
James Mack	Melvin Faulkner for Hon. Inez Barron
Yolanda Matthews	N. Giagnacova for Hon. William F. Boyland, Jr.
Linda Mayo	Tammy Braithwaite for Hon. Darlene Mealy
John McCadney, Jr.	Essie Duggan for Hon. Velmanette Montgomery
Sadie McNamara (E)	Rene Hastick-Motes for Hon. Marty Markowitz
Ted McQueen (A)	

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

Acting Chairperson Bettie Kollock-Wallace called the public hearing to order at 7:02 p.m. and requested Rev. Joseph Norton to give an invocation.

She requested that the audience keep Ms. Mabel Davis and her family in prayer as they mourn the passing of Ms. Davis' mother.

IN THE MATTER OF the City's Preliminary Budget Statement and Community District Register for Fiscal Year 2013. The Hearing is to obtain public comments on City agencies' responses to Community Board 16's Capital and Expense Budget Priorities for Fiscal Year 2013 (A copy is available for review at the Office of Community Board #16).

District Manager Viola Greene-Walker stated that last October 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.

She asked if there were any comments on the agencies' responses.

There being no comments, a motion was made by Mr. David Alexander, seconded by Ms. Pamela Junior and carried to close the public hearing.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

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

District Manager Greene-Walker highlighted following articles found in her report:

- the sale of tax liens by the City of New York,
- an offering by Con Edison for property owners and building managers of ways to make properties with 5 to 75 units more energy efficient, reduce costs, save money, and help

- protect the environment,
- and the effort of the Brownsville Action Community for Healthy Equality (BACHE), a project of Brooklyn Perinatal Network, to train community residents for their Community Health Advocate program.

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

Acting Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized representatives from the Children's Aid Society.

Ms. Laren Menkes stated that she and her co-presenter, Ms. Denise Eugene, are from the Children's Aid Society's Program on Medical Foster Care, which is a foster care program for children who are medically fragile. They are present this evening in an effort to recruit foster care parents from this community. Many of their charges are children from this community. It is difficult placing these children in appropriate homes, but they think it would be easier on the children if they were to remain in their community.

They brought pamphlets with information on becoming a foster parent. To be a foster parent, an individual would be trained by their agency. The foster parents receive a monthly board check which ranges from \$700 to \$1,700, depending on the needs of the child.

Ms. Eugene stated that there are some misconceptions about foster parenthood that they would like to dismiss. Foster parents may be employed or be the recipient of public assistance. They may live in subsidized housing as long as the household has adequate space. Many of the children they place are special needs children and have Medicaid - no medical costs are borne by the foster parents. Their agency also provides free child CPR training. They encourage anyone with questions about the program to contact them at (212) 949-4391 or (212) 949-4800. They also encourage the audience to pass the word along about their outreach.

Acting Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Mr. Ralph Blessing from the Department of City Planning.

Mr. Blessing stated that he has recently presented to the Board on a couple of occasions to inform the community on their Sustainable New York initiative. On Saturday, March 3rd, there will be a Visioning Forum event at Aspirations High School, located at 1495 Herkimer Street. City Planning is inviting the community to join them and share its thoughts and ideas on improving the area around the Broadway Junction station.

Ms. Genese Morgan, Chairperson of the Economic Development Committee, reported that the Committee met on Thursday, February 16, 2012 at 6:30 p.m., to continue discussing economic development within our community.

The Committee reviewed an application for renewal of a Beer and Wine license submitted by Glen Grocery, located at 55 Hegeman Avenue between Bristol Street and Thomas S. Boyland Street. The Committee recommends that the Board supports the application for renewal.

Brooklyn Summer H.E.A.T applications are due by March 15, 2012. Please visit www.brooklyn-usa.org to get the application.

For summer jobs with federal agencies, please visit www.usajobs.gov. Application deadlines vary by agency.

For New York City Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) and alternatives to SYEP, please visit www.nyc.gov/dycd or call 1-800-246-4646.

Workforce1 is a service provided by the Department of Small Business Services that prepares and connects qualified candidates to job opportunities in New York City. You may register at 9 Bond Street 5th Floor, Brooklyn, New York 11201. Please call (718) 875-3400 for more information.

On February 15, 2012, the Mayor's office announced the launch of "Compete to Win", a new set of initiatives to help New York City Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) compete for and win City contracts. Interested business owners who are currently certified as M/WBEs should complete the "Compete to Win" form on the Small Business

Services website www.nyc.gov/sbs. The initiative will offer training in NYC Team, NYC Construction Loan, Technical Assistance, Bond Readiness and NYC Construction Mentorship. For more information, please contact Small Business Services at 311 or (212) 639-9675.

The Committee is still hard at work on the community banking survey and banking proposal, and has created a series of questions to be answered in their proposal and organized into research teams. Community residents who are interested in assisting the Committee are encouraged to contact Ms. Genese Morgan. There is still time to complete the banking survey for persons who have not taken the survey. The survey is available at www.surveymonkey.com/s/CB16Banking.

Mr. Joe Blankenship of Pratt Institute is currently conducting a retail survey on Belmont Avenue as part of the revitalization efforts for Belmont Avenue. The Committee is asking that the audience take the short 3-5 minute survey because the Committee values the community's opinion in the plans that are being developed for them.

Several options for free income tax preparation are available throughout the tax filing season for individuals earning \$25,000 and families earning \$50,000 or less. The Internal Revenue Service's VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) Program has locations within our community at Grace Church of God, 35 Blake Avenue Brooklyn, New York, (718) 342-1155 and Revelation Church, 307 Rockaway Avenue, Brooklyn, New York, 11233 (718) 974-0024.

The Committee's next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 15, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.. If anyone has any questions or comments regarding the contents of this report, please feel free to contact Genese Morgan at genesemor@aol.com.

A motion was made by Mr. Charles Ladson, seconded by Ms. Mattie Pusey and carried to accept the report of the Economic Development Committee and its recommendation to support the application for renewal of a Beer and Wine license submitted by Glen Grocery, located at 55 Hegeman Avenue.

Ms. Lori Boozer, member of the Legislative Committee, in behalf of Marie Pierre, Chairperson of the Committee, reported that the Committee met on February 15, 2012 and discussed several pieces of legislation that are pending in the City Council. One is the living wage bill.

The Committee offers the following resolution for the Community Board's support:

WHEREAS, the minimum wage in New York City is presently \$7.25 per hour, and

WHEREAS, the cost of living has outpaced the earnings of employees who make minimum wage, and

WHEREAS, the cost of food, clothing, shelter and medical costs continue to increase, and

WHEREAS, the current minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour is not a sufficient living wage for workers and their families,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board #16 supports legislation to increase the minimum wage to \$11.50 per hour, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board #16 urges the City Council members to vote in favor of increasing the minimum wage to \$11.50 per hour.

A motion was made by Rev. Devon Ponds, seconded by Mr. Charles Ladson and carried to accept the resolution and the report of the Legislative Committee.

Mr. Kofi Hormeku, Chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Committee, reported that there is an issue with insufficient personnel to monitor the comfort stations properly in our parks and playgrounds. He strongly urges, for the sake of one's personal safety, individuals do not enter the comfort stations alone.

There are three or four parks in the District that have been funded for capital improvements, however, they are waiting for schematic drawings to be completed in order to begin work. This does not sit well with him, as it should not take two years to complete drawings. The delays can result in the loss of funding due to the Councilmember who allocated the funds no longer being in office. He encourages the audience to look at which fiscal year in which funds were allocated

for a project when examining his reports. He is at times disappointed at the lack of feedback concerning the reports he submits each month.

He also has concerns with the state of repairs at Betsy Head Park and the Brownsville Recreation Center. In the case of the Brownsville Recreation Center, he has witnessed workers patching walls in a location where the ceiling continues to leak and that does not make sense to him. The funds have been allocated but the work to fix the leak has not begun.

He discourages anyone with breathing or heart conditions to avoid the pool area of the Brownsville Recreation Center as the air conditioner is not operating properly and there is a mold condition in the area.

The Betsy Head Recreation Center is in dire need of work, however, there have been no funds allocated for the needed rehab of the center. The requests for funding made to the Commissioner are always responded to with a statement which says we should speak to our elected officials.

Ms. Marie Pierre asked what we, as a community, can do proactively to help resolve these issues? Can the Legislative Committee work with the Parks and Recreation Committee and perhaps draft a petition?

Mr. Hormeku thanked Ms. Pierre for her question and stated that he does get frustrated when meetings with the Commissioners are called to discuss the budgets and there are only one or two other people in the room to voice concern. He believes that if there is a large contingent there to voice their displeasure the agency is more apt to take those concerns seriously.

Someone stated that the youth are not allowed to make use of the parks after dusk. During school breaks he has often had to come to the rescue of young people being harassed by the police for being there. Where are the children to go to? He heard comments earlier about touring the Broadway Junction area. He does not need anyone to tour him around the neighborhood because he knows it better than they do. What he would like to see is when jobs are available in the community, our youth get the jobs. He does not want to see the gentrification that took place in Harlem and is taking place in Bedford-Stuyvesant happen here.

Mr. Hormeku stated that there are valid reasons for the parks to be closed by 8:00 p.m.. There are signs posted at the parks and it is mentioned in his report each month.

Ms. Deidre Olivera-Douglas stated that the Committee meetings should be public forums where people can come and voice their ideas for the community. The dates of the meetings should be made known to the community.

Mr. Hormeku stated that he has called meetings and the attendance is often poor. Each of the Committee members agreed to inspect some parks and playgrounds, but he never hears from anyone.

Mr. Danny Goodine stated that barriers are in place that makes the task of inspecting the parks and playgrounds difficult. It is uncomfortable when as an adult trying to do something positive you are approached by a police officer who wants to know what you are doing there. You are made to feel as if you don't belong there.

He questioned why are we continuing to depend on elected officials who have consistently been non-responsive to our request to assist the youth. He resents outsiders coming to our community and telling us how we should live. He respects the work being done by the Department of Probation, but why not use a small portion of that funding to repair the leak that we keep complaining about.

Mr. Randy Hudson stated that the recreation centers should be open 24 hours a day to give the young people a positive place to go. He also recommended using the internet to broadcast meetings so that persons who cannot be here in person may participate.

A motion was made by Ms. Mattie Pusey, seconded by Mr. David Alexander, and carried to accept the report of the Parks and Recreation Committee.

District Manager Viola Greene-Walker, in behalf of Deborah Mack, Chairperson of the Transportation and Franchises Committee, reported that the Committee met on January 26, 2012 and discussed a request by a group of concerned individuals known as "Constant Change Touching

Friends & Families Group” who have petitioned the Community Board to support their efforts to co-name the corner of Watkins Street and Pitkin Avenue in memory of Zurana Horton.

Zurana Horton, a community resident, sacrificed her life and that of her unborn child on October 21, 2011, when she used her body to shield several school children from gunfire that erupted during dismissal time at P.S. 298.

The Committee recommends that Community Board #16 supports the request to co-name the corner of Watkins Street and Pitkin Avenue in memory of Zurana Horton.

A motion was made by Min. Prince Issachar, seconded by Mr. John McCadney, Jr. and carried to accept the report of the Transportation and Franchises Committee and its recommendation to support the request to co-name the corner of Watkins Street and Pitkin Avenue in memory of Zurana Horton.

Acting Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Ms. Sharon Marshall-Taylor from the Brooklyn Perinatal Network.

Ms. Marshall-Taylor stated that her agency is housed here at 444 Thomas S. Boyland Street – Room 206. She presents to this forum fairly regularly as part of the BACHE (Brownsville Action Community for Health Equity) Project. They received funding through the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to address the infant mortality crisis in Brownsville through a more system’s change approach than direct services. They were charged to find a way to improve delivery of care through partnerships with organizations that provide direct services.

They will be training Community Health Advocates beginning March 5th. Community Health Advocates are individuals who are trained to identify individuals and families in need of health and social services, and to provide them with increased awareness of health maintenance. They are actively seeking individuals to participate with the ideal candidate being between the ages of 18 and 30 years old. They have accepted persons who are older but believe that peer-to-peer communication will better facilitate getting the word out.

On March 22nd, they will sponsor a health forum at Brookdale University Hospital in honor of Women’s History Month and to commemorate the second anniversary of the signing into law of the Affordable Care Act. Some call it Obama Care but she prefers not to. The Act contains many benefits for our community, but many of us are still unclear of those benefits. One of those benefits will be the formation of a health insurance exchange. They will be providing information on the exchange at this forum.

Acting Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Captain Joseph Gulotta of the 73rd Precinct.

Captain Gulotta stated that he is the new Commanding Officer for the 73rd Precinct, but he is not new to the command, having been in the Precinct for about a year and half. He is pleased to be serving the community where his grandfather was born and his grandmother lived until her death in the 1980’s.

On the crime front, they have seen a spike in crime in the area of 599 Ralph Avenue, since its conversion to a men’s shelter. With the cooperation of CAMBA and the Department of Homeless Service Police, they were able to remove 27 individuals with open warrants from the two hundred-bed facility. They also removed 22 individuals with open warrants from the shelter on Atlantic Avenue. Most of the individuals arrested (45 out of 47) are not from the community.

Overall, violence in the Precinct is down from the levels they were at in 2010 and 2011. Year to date, there have been six shootings. Two of which are still under investigation and may not have taken place in the Precinct. He asks for the assistance of the community to help them by reporting criminal activity. They recently were able to obtain a search warrant and raid a location where they found illegal drugs and weapons and made arrests based on information given to them from the community. The parties arrested have no idea where the tip came from. He promised that they will be discreet with the information provided to them by the community. He urges anyone with information about crimes to contact their Community Affairs Unit or him to advise them of the issue. He promises that all legitimate complaints will be acted upon.

Mr. Randy Hudson stated that some of the funds budgeted for the Police Department should be redirected towards the recreation centers. It is his belief that this would reduce the need for policing because much of the crime committed by youth is due to the lack of things for them to

participate in.

Captain Gulotta stated that since coming to the Precinct, he has personally gone out in the community and has had conversations with residents. One of the things that he consistently hears is that there are historical issues between housing complexes where residents of one complex feel there is an unwritten code which prevents them from travelling through the grounds of another complex. This cycle needs to end. While he embraces the suggestion of shifting funds, it is beyond the scope of his job.

Mrs. Blanche L. Peltonbusch commented that residents of the shelters are creating a quality of life nuisance along Pitkin Avenue. What is the Department doing to correct this?

Captain Gulotta stated that he has assigned officers to the shelters who will continue to patrol that area as they get a handle on the situation.

Ms. Lorna Fairweather stated that recently, tickets were issued to vehicles parked along Pitkin Avenue at locations that were never ticketed before. Has there been a change to the parking regulation on Pitkin Avenue?

Captain Gulotta stated that on a particular day he was attempting to travel along Pitkin Avenue and had difficulty doing so because of a number of vehicles being illegally double parked along the Avenue. He instructed his officers to go out and issue tickets. Tickets should have been issued to any vehicle that was double parked, parked at hydrants, or at bus stops. These are all hazardous conditions.

Ms. Nancy Giagnacova, representing Assemblyman William F. Boyland, Jr., stated that there have been some staff changes at the Assemblyman's office and apologized for their inconsistent attendance at Board meetings. Mr. Michael Cavers of their office recently suffered a heart attack and is convalescing. She is certain that he welcomes the prayers and well wishes of the community and they hope to have him back at work shortly.

In terms of constituency work, in the short term they are focusing on youth summer employment plans. Too often, youth will begin seeking summer employment in the summer when most opportunities for employment are gone. The registration period for registering five year olds into kindergarten is open through March 2nd. She has placed on tonight's distribution table fliers which contain information on opportunities that are available to youth for the summer.

Ms. Tammy Braithwaite, representing Councilmember Darlene Mealy, stated that she is present at most of Community Board #16's monthly meetings. Any issues that arise concerning Councilmember Mealy's District are brought to her attention. She reminded the audience that Councilmember Mealy hosts her monthly Advisory Board meetings on the first Saturday of each month. The next meeting will be at 10:30 a.m. on March 2nd, at her office, located at 1757 Union Street - 2nd Floor (between Utica and Rochester Avenues). Councilmember Mealy and Senator John Sampson will host a combined advisory meeting in April. As the plan develops, they will advise the community.

At the last Community Board meeting, Ms. Deborah Mack stated that she had made a request that some Advisory Board meetings be held on Sundays to accommodate Sabbath observers. Councilmember Mealy has announced that the first such meeting will take place on Sunday, May 6th.

Wednesday, February 29th, will mark their final celebration for this year's Black History Month at Saratoga Square. This year's theme has been Jazz and swing and homage has been paid to Duke Ellington, Lena Horne, and Louis Armstrong.

Applications for discretionary funding are now filed online. She can be reached at (718) 953-3097.

Mr. Hudson requested that the issue of funding extended hours for the community centers be brought to the attention of Councilmember Mealy.

Ms. Braithwaite stated that she will inform Councilmember Mealy of the request.

Mr. Melvin Faulkner, representing Assemblywoman Inez Barron, stated that they are engaged in a recruitment drive to register voters, especially youth who will be at least 18 years old by the

date of the general election. If they wait until their birthday, it may be too late. They want to ensure that every center, church, and organization have voter registration cards on hand for distribution.

Ms. Karen Cherry, representing Congressman Ed Towns, stated that she heard some concerns tonight where the dialogue is about issues that do not necessarily belong in this forum. She will advise Congressman Towns to reach out to some of the City officials to discuss some of the issues, especially as they concern the youth of the community not having places to go for recreation. It should be understood that the members of this Board are merely reporting to the audience and that attacking them will not resolve the issues at hand. She will seek to convene a town hall meeting with the elected officials and commissioners in attendance. She can be reached at (718) 272-1175.

Ms. Essie Duggan, representing Senator Velmanette Montgomery, stated that she is disseminating Senator Montgomery's newsletter which includes information on a stimulus bill being proposed. She concurs with Ms. Cherry's statement on the importance of keeping our elected officials aware of issues affecting our community. It is equally important to keep the Community Board apprised of these issues. Too often, programs are brought into the community without the knowledge of the Board which counts on community residents to be its eyes and ears.

She is pleased to see so many young adults present at this meeting as they are our future leaders. She encourages them to continue to attend.

Ms. Rene Hastick-Motes, representing Borough President Marty Markowitz, stated that applications for board membership renewals were due last Friday. She called out the names of members whose application have not been received by her and requested that they contact her to inform her of their intent.

Acting Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Ms. Denise Harrison of Roads Charter School.

Ms. Harrison stated that everyday there are seven thousand students who drop out of school. Students who have to repeat a year only have a fifteen percent chance of graduating.

Roads Charter Schools will be opening a high school in the District to serve 15 to 17 year olds living in the Brownsville and East New York communities who are lacking the credits they need to graduate. This includes eighth graders who were not promoted to ninth grade, students who have dropped out and desire to return, and those who may have been involved with the court system. They will be given an opportunity to receive a Regents Diploma and go on to college as well as be prepared for the workplace. She invites any interested person to attend a family information night event on March 7th at 1495 Herkimer Street. Fliers and applications are available on the distribution table. She can be reached at (646) 204-7798 or emailing dharrison@roadsschools.org. Applications are due by April 2, 2012 and may be found online at roadsschool.org.

Acting Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Ms. Jane Eai of Shen Yun International.

Ms. Eai stated that Shen Yun is a performing arts company that relates 5,000 years of Chinese culture and history through a series of dance and musical acts. The shows sold out in January but will be returning to Lincoln Center in April. All are invited to come see the show.

Acting Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Ms. Jennifer So Godzeno of Transportation Alternatives.

Ms. Godzeno stated that they are working collaboratively with Brownsville Partnership on a program designed to get more children physically active in the community. To complete their project, they are seeking parents and guardians of 6 to 11 year old children who will take photographs and draw pictures of places they would like to see bike and walking lanes in their communities.

Participants will receive a small gift for taking part in the project and they will then work with residents to advocate for city agencies to make the changes work for the community.

Acting Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Ms. Rebecca Weinhold of Uncommon Schools.

Ms. Weinhold stated that Uncommon Schools currently operates two charter schools in the District. When all of the schools become fully operational they will be serving about 2,000 students in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community. Applications for elementary and middle school age students are available for tonight's audience.

Acting Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Ms. Judy Kahlmor of the Brooklyn Public Library.

Ms. Kahlmor reminded the audience that the three local libraries are now equipped with laptop computers and offer job readiness courses. The hours for the Job Readiness 101 course have been extended from 2 to 4 hours. You can meet one-on-one with someone who can assist you with resume preparation, practice interview skills, and online job searches.

Their Media Literacy Labs will be coming to each of the branches to teach kids, ages approximately 10 to approximately 15, how news is made and how to be more critical pursuers of news. These are three week programs.

Acting Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Pastor Sherry Black of Redeem and More Church of God.

Pastor Black stated that her church is located at 337 Rockaway Avenue near, East New York Avenue. They will host a two day event to address the violence amongst the youth of the community. The dates will be April 14th and 21st at Betsy Head Park. It is their desire to collaborate with all the churches in the Brownsville community. Churches who wish to join them may contact her at (347) 447-2244.

There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Ms. Pamela Junior, seconded by Ms. Essie Duggan and carried to adjourn the meeting.