



Ruben Diaz, Jr.
Borough President

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD No. 10

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Peter J. Sullivan
Chairperson

Matthew Cruz
District Manager

Veterans' Services Committee Meeting Minutes December 1, 2017

Attendees: T. Salimbene, J. Misiurski, Col. W. Chin, I. Guanill-Elukowich

Absent: R. Barbarelli

Guests: N. Fernandez, NYS Governor's Office, T. LaCrown, B. Gordon, P. Del-Debbio, J. Firriolo, J. Castro, J. Mallach, T. Mele, J. Perez, J. Bello, J. Mondello, E. Sementilli

Meeting opened by the chair with Pledge of Allegiance at 7:30 pm. Special guest recognized-Nathalia Fernandez from the Governor's Office

Mr. H.P. Schroder, veterans' MTA discount – absent. Tony will speak on his behalf.

No Old Business

New Business:

First guest, Ms. Jordana Mallach, NYS Division of Veterans Affairs. She spoke about various state entitlements and how to obtain them, thereby assisting an observer in the audience. Jordana also cleared up rumors and misconceptions about various entitlements and easier ways to obtain needed documents, taking many questions. (She mentioned she is also Commander of the Lake Placid, NY American Legion Post which got a nice round of applause!)

John Perez spoke about his outreach to veterans contemplating suicide, being a recently returned 1st Sargent. He provided an update on an anti-bullying pilot program with the NY Army Guard Recruiting Command and the NYC School System, with a current push due to the recent Bronx bullying - alleged murder incident. He believes the young people may not care for police or teachers but seem to look up to our military. Money has been allocated but mostly for some web site. He will keep track of its value and progress with army vets as mentors.

Anthony (Tony) Mele' of AMI Global Security, LLC (and US Army veteran) spoke of the 65th Infantry Boriqueneers 17th annual awards dinner at Marina Del Ray. They are a presidentially recognized, highly decorated US Army unit from Puerto Rico. They met at the marina since the parade committee selected, in their opinion, a known terrorist and they declined to participate this year. He mentioned the awards they present and any person from any branch of service (or community worker) can be nominated. He began a long discussion on veterans owned businesses and how the many programs in place do not actually work and why.

Joe Mondello, BX Borough President's Veterans Advisory Board (and NYS Legionnaire of the Year) thanked CB #10 for the inclusion of this committee. He, as a small business owner, continued the discussion on the inequities veteran business owners face compared to other preference groups.

Joe Bello of NY Metro Vets and years with several advisory boards also mentioned how nothing seems to get accomplished, there's talk and promises from the elected officials and their newly created service offices, but there's always another rule or obstacle.

Javier Castro, NYC Veterans Day Parade Committee, advisory board member and former NYS Militia member reported the city has gone from 3 to 9 veterans' services committees and that BX CB #10 was his original model. His main project was a success – getting legal designation of veterans as a protected group against discrimination in NYC! The exact wording is available. The chair thanked him for this milestone in city legislation.

Tony spoke of H.P.'s project to have qualified veterans eligible for MTA Reduced Fare Cards. There will be a MTA Executive Board meeting next week where H.P. and CUNY Student Veterans will be on the agenda to present their need for a little assistance as they transition back to school and/or work. Joe Bello opined, cynically, that getting on the agenda was great but this has been tried before and with the state of NYC Transit, a fare discount is highly unlikely to pass. Tony will collect petition signatures anyway and forward them to the MTA.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m. with a moment of silence for veterans suffering physical and mental disabilities and those currently deployed.

The next meeting will be the last Friday in February, currently the same time and location. Tony wished all a happy and safe holiday season on behalf of CB #10.

Respectfully submitted,
A. Salimbene