



THE CITY OF NEW YORK

BOROUGH OF THE BRONX

COMMUNITY BOARD #5

Honorable Ruben Diaz, Jr., Bronx Borough President

**Chairperson
Dr. Bola Omotosho**

**District Manager
Kenneth Brown**

June 17, 2020 June Bronx Community Board 5 Minutes

❖ **Board Members**

❖ **Present:**

M.Rosado, E.Acosta,F.Amato,P.Blanco, T.Bushby, H.Esteban, R.Gonzalez,
B.Akumah, M.Heath,G.Medina, A.Caballero,J.Curiel, C.Shorter, Dr.B.Omotosho,
D.Perry, F.Ramos-Guareno, M. Rodgers, P.Stewart, C.Westbrook.

◆ **Absent:**

Dr. M. Brown, A.DeJesus, N. Graham, Jr. K. Jabouin, B.Lawrence, K. Lewis,
D.Maldonado, T.Mims, B.Moore, R.Owusu, J.Parra, D.Perez, J.Perez, L. Reyes,
C.Rosario, S. Rudolph, R.Whetstone, and S.Markland-Suwareh.

❖ **Welcome**

❖ **Opening Prayer**

➤ Opening Prayer is done by Cheryl Westbrook, CB5 Board Member.

❖ **Quorum Present:** 6:15 pm

❖ **Approval of Minutes:**

- In April 2020, the board members amended meeting minutes.
- Charles Shorter motioned the minutes and accepted and seconded by Angel Caballero at 6:40 pm.
 - Last month of May 2020, the board members amended meeting minutes.
 - Jaqua Curiel motioned the minutes and accepted and seconded Roxana Gonzalez and third by Dr. Bola Omotosho at 6:36

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Serving these Neighborhoods:
Fordham, Morris Heights, Mount Hope, University Heights

pm.(Jaqua Curiel accepted the minutes and held on a minute as approved with any additional revisions or edits.)

❖ **Chairperson of Dr. Bola Omotosho Report:**

➤ **Proceedings:**

- The agent will hold back the rezoning project due to Covid-19.
- The Parks Project on 1801 Davidson Avenue will be discussed by an Elected Officials with Borough Commissioners to prioritize the project to get approval.
- It is essential to know about the lockdown of Covid-19 that affected most of the police officers. At this point, most are back to their regular schedules.
- We would like to have 46th Precinct to look forward to opening a meeting every Monday for BJT or Jerome Tremont Merchants Association for safety purposes from what had happened to some of the merchant's losses during Covid-19 looting.
- We thank everyone who supported the community during our difficult times, especially in our District.
- From what we have seen of the Burnside strip, looted by anonymous people, protesters around the neighborhood have damaged our community.
- NAICA gave a summary of the proposed homeless shelter at 2314 Jerome Avenue, which they've proposed to Fernando Cabrero without the concerns of CB5. NAICA also tried to justify the services. CB5 reminded them that they also came before the board 4 years ago, in 2016. Unfortunately, our CB5 board members found it disturbing. We will bring over September 2020 to vote again if NAICA plans on placing a building in our community.
- Bronx Community College will announce when they will open during our next Board Meeting.

- During this time, our Community Board Five office will remain operating remotely. You can reach out to us by emailing our office, and will reply promptly.
- During this pandemic, we are hoping not to lose any more vulnerable lives in our District, please keep your distance or practice on social distancing to protect your loved ones.
- One of our Board Members has resigned from Community Board Five.
- There will be new Board Members appointed to our Community Board Five in September of this year.
- I sent a letter out to inquire with the Parks Department to present the project of Davidson Playground. Since we have Commissioner Iris Rodriguez here in this meeting tonight, it is an excellent opportunity for us to hear about the project. As you heard from the Council Member and Commissioner Parks Department will not be losing this opportunity, and I expedited the letter to the city from our last Board Meeting so that the design phase can be over. The Parks Department will need a Letter of Support for Davidson Playground.
- Commissioner Iris Rodriguez wants to give a special Thank you to our District.
- At the last Executive meeting we had taken a vote on the recommendation to take a look at the board elections. It will be September or depending on the climate that this voting may be addressed.
- We need a motion to hold the election or to revisit it in September to vote or review our board officers.
- DHS decided not to honor the invitation to be at this board meeting. NAICA declined to receive an email from the office about effects of the new shelter expressed by board members, which was sent yesterday and follow up today and drop our meeting.

- We are making sure that the BJT Merchant Association operates its businesses.
- Angel Caballero and the BJT Merchants Association Teams are developing a list of all the businesses in our District. We are all supporting our businesses.
- We had a prior experience whereby there was a water main break. Our businesses suffered from this.
- There was another group from Fordham also doing a GOFUNDME. They call it Cleanup. They have raised more than 1000 dollars in their GOFUNDME.
- Keep that in mind that most of the stuff that street vendors offer you to buy, come from the looted items.
- We have the antibody testing or Covid-19 testing Centers available at The Davidson Community Center, Morris Health Center, or Hospitals, all require appointments.

❖ **District Manager's by Ken Brown Report:**

❖ **District Manager by Ken Brown Report:**

- Good Evening everyone and to all the Board Members and the residents of Community Board Five, and all Elected Officials.
- I, and Angel Caballero, notified The BJT Merchant Association that their GoFundMe relief effort went live today.
- We received from FHA information about the homeownership foreclosure moratorium. The rental eviction moratorium expires on the 20th of this month and the moratorium on foreclosure on homes is extended to August 31 of this year. I will send it out details tomorrow by email.
 - **Question: Charles Shorter (Board Member) would like to inquire about an updated report for an accurate report of all the shelters in the area of District Five. How can the District Manager or the**

Community Board Five provide the numbers of Shelters that we have in our community? Can we collaborate with the Bronx Borough President's Office to get further information or help?

- **Ken replied: In the past, we have asked for that, and DHS has said that existing shelters are confidential. I will ask again and see what they can provide.**
- **Question: Cheryl (Board Member), activity at 1980 Jerome Avenue, is a shelter coming into the community? This building has been abandoned for years over a decade.**
- **Ken replied: There should be no more shelters coming in for the foreseeable future, especially during this pandemic.**
- **Charles Shorter: Jerome Avenue is surrounded by many homeless people, and we need some facilities to accommodate these vulnerable people. Primarily, we have too many of them clustered in one area; it brings all the crime in this area. When there are methadone clinics, mentally ill soldiers, it will affect our community and looks bad. Nothing perfect is happening in our District. It is my opinion or suggestion.**
- **Question from Cheryl Westbrook: Will there be a shelter at 1980 Jerome Avenue coming into the Community Board 5?**
- **Ken Brown: That should not be any shelters coming into Community Board Five.**

❖ Voting Items:

- **Letter Of Support: 1801 Davidson Playground**
 - The main motion was by Angel Caballero

- The second motion was by Jaqua Curiel
- 20 Yes and 1 abstained
- **Resolution on Board Elections to roll over the following year of 2020-2021**
 - The main motion was Angel Caballero
 - The seconded motion was Enesta Acosta
 - 18 Yes and 1 abstained

❖ **46th Precinct**

- Captain Peralta is the Executive Officer of the 46 Precinct
- The 28 days report; Murders, rapes are three versus one and robberies are down to 29.
- Assaults are 60 versus 48 burglaries.
- 126 versus 17 of looting on June 1 and June 2 losses are down.
- Someone is stealing unattended vehicles. It usually happens between 1700 -1900 hours.
- It is indeterminate how long we can afford the extra resources on Burnside Avenue so as to avoiding the looting happening again. It depends on the patrol needs.
- The next Council Precinct Meeting will be in September 2020.
- The 46th Precinct will provide crime rates reports on all sectors to the CB5 Office.

❖ **Presentation: Proposed legislation for Police reform**

- **Not Available**

❖ **Presentation: Davidson Playground**

➤ **The Presentation of Davidson Playground**

- **By Marina Fedorova, NYC Parks**
- **The goals address existing soil stability and contamination issues, update site utilities, including water supply, storm, and security lighting, and construct Davidson Park with emphasis on children's play area.**
- **We are here to focus on getting a vote and a letter of support from Community Board Five.**
- **The playground is in Morris Heights at a mid-block location.**
- **It is not a drainage area, and the predominant surrounding land use are multifamily residential.**
- **We have 17 other diverse Park's spaces within the 10-minute walk of this site.**
- **The existing site features include asphalt pavement for a basketball court, spray feature, and a cluster play equipment.**
- **Unfortunately, the pavement and play equipment's existing conditions make the site unsafe for public use. Trees will be removed and later will be demolished, and presently the site has an eight-foot-high fence and two double gate entrances.**
- **There are many trees and shrubs along the property's back, a basketball court is on the left of the picture, and a tall natural stone retaining wall, and a tall wall which belongs to the neighboring building.**
- **This proposed site plan features three main subspaces near the sidewalk. You will see a splash pad or water play area to the south, you will see a five-swing, swing-set with various seat types.**
- **Play equipment area seating and also the site features several places for new plants.**

- We have made sure to keep the plantings in the center low for visibility and for safety reasons.
- The proposed playset will feature fitness and play elements. All connected by accessible ramps.
- As a reminder, Angel Caballero: Everyone will be aware that the money is about \$11.5 million allotted towards this Davidson playground. You know that the rezoning was the last item on the list that the Councilman could put in. We fought for so long, and we can have some decent play area for the kids in the neighborhood.

❖ **Presentation: New Homeless Shelter**

- **Not Available**

❖ **Public Session**

- **New York City of Public Library**
 - **Good Evening to all Board Members and Elected Officials.**
 - **The library is planning to open a few branches to provide for Go and Grab services.**
 - **They are offering a Summer Reading Program this year, and you can sign up at nypl.org.**
 - **Any free programs that you are interested in, please go to our website at NYPL.org.**
- **Isha Taylor is the Community Education Council representative for (District 10)**
 - **Hello and Good Evening to all the Board Members and Elected Officials.**
 - **I am from the Community Education Council of District 10.**
 - **I wanted to send over directly from our Deputy Chancellor office to all students in their Google**

Classrooms about the survey to fill out what the parents are looking for in September.

- **Please fill out the survey to determine if the parents will go for Fully remote or Blended remote learning.**

- **Orosmar Cuevas is a resident of Community in CB5**
 - **Thanks for giving me this opportunity to speak tonight at this meeting.**
 - **I am a Committee Member of Board Five and an NYPD instructor.**
 - **We had a cook up at 2365 Morris Avenue held at the big schoolyard. Over 400 people came to join, and it makes a massive difference in this Charity. The Charity is straight to the donation of helping out the businesses.**

- **Ana Gonzalez is the representative for Morris Health Heights Health Center**
 - **I am the Director of Marketing for Morris Health Heights.**
 - **The wellness project is joining forces with several partners like the Health Center and Union Community Health Center.**
 - **We're focusing on healing and resilience for our minds, and each other.**
 - **We are conducting Covid-19 testing to provide some facts as to how much in this District 5. We do not know precisely the numbers but maybe 3000 community members with our three CoVid-19 Testing Centers.**
 - **You can reach us at 718 716 4400 to schedule an appointment with us or for your nearest testing center.**

- **Some of these Testing Centers are available now: 85 West Burnside Avenue, Bronx, NY 10453.**
 - **If you have any questions, please feel free to call, and I will provide more testing centers in your location.**

- **Carlos Rosario is Bronx Community Board Member**
 - **Good Evening to the community board and all the elective officials.**
 - **The Fort Tryon Park has local organizers coming together in the Park this Friday, June 19, to create a healing and therapeutic space, along with an educational opportunity.**
 - **If you are interested in that event, please send me an email at Brockadvocacyguy@gmail.com**

❖ **Elected official's Reports**

☐ **Honorable Council Member Vanessa L. Gibson's Office District #16**

The Representer is Nereida Gomez

- ☐ **Good Evening and Thank you, everybody, for coming to this meeting.**
- ☐ **Covid-19 home page to Monday the 22nd has guidelines for businesses to open.**
- ☐ **Our agencies have helped small businesses and restaurants with safe spacing and healthy spacing and a lot of the equipment. I have been asking the administrator to help enterprises with furniture and equipment.**
- ☐ **We want to make sure that we have safe spaces for our young people for children, and families.**
- ☐ **The horrific murder of George Floyd, I genuinely believe his murder has not been in vain. He has woken up the**

sleeping nation, and people are standing up, and they are fed up and tired, and people are marching, and they're demonstrating and hearing the city and the State across the country.

- ❑ Thank you to my colleagues in Albany for their work last week on passing a collective package, repealing 50A.
- ❑ I want to acknowledge Community Board Five and Angel Caballero and Davidson Community Center, and the elected officials to visit Burnside and Fordham road that were vandalized. The majority of those out there are protesting, and I have been out there too.
- ❑ I appreciate all of you in this community for standing up because we cannot let that happen again.
- ❑ I recognizing all lives should be treated fairly and equitably in this city during this Covid-19.
- ❑ The mayor announced that \$500,000 will be available for those businesses vandalized last year.
- ❑ Thank you, Dr. Bola, our CB5 Chairperson, Ken Brown, our CB5 District Manager, for your support.
- ❑ We have a new testing site with Senator Serrano at St. Matthews Church at 1788 Sedgwick Avenue; it is right outside of River Park. The hours are from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. We will be giving out masks, hand sanitizers, and food.
- ❑ I am making sure that the youth have summer programs or camps available for them, especially during this pandemic.
- ❑ We want to make sure that our food access for seniors and families because many families are still in need of food.
- ❑ When the housing court opens and gets lawyers ready to deal with all of the tenant harassment, many tenants will see a result of not paying the rent.
- ❑ We want to be mindful of the parks and open spaces and recreation, the small businesses protection, which are

essential programs for homeless families and homeless individuals.

- ❑ Considering when you hear words like defunding the NYPD, schools facing school crossing guards that are currently under NYPD will be delayed capital projects due to the fact of Covid-19.
- ❑ We are going to be voting on a police reform package. We have a chokehold prohibition. We have a bill that would prohibit officers from covering their shield and badge numbers.
- ❑ We have an app. related to police surveillance and technology and data from the department.
- ❑ I am optimistic as we get through Covid-19 as we work together as a community; we have a lot.

❑ **Representative for the Honorable State Senator Gustavo Rivera District #33**

- ❑ Hello and Good Evening to all the Board Members, residents, and officers.
- ❑ The office is open in a remote setting.
- ❑ In early July, we set up tenant specialists who work with our office and make appointments. We will be setting up a meeting on Zoom or by phone calls.
- ❑ You can reach out to our attendance specialist for meal assistance, unemployment assistance, free legal services, food, or cash assistance.
- ❑ We had a virtual forum on tenants' rights yesterday. The video is available on the Facebook page.
- ❑ Last week we went about to pass a slate of Police reforms that was passed last year.
- ❑ We repealed a 50A, and this is in civil rights law that protected the disciplinary records of police officers.
- ❑ We also passed the Eric Garner MP chokehold Act, which established the crime of aggravated strangulation, which now will be signed into law.

- ❑ We also passed the law to require law enforcement personnel who discharged a weapon under circumstances where a person could be struck by a bullet to report the incident immediately.
- ❑ We also established an affirmative right to record police activity and allow for civil suits when there is a violation.
- ❑ We also passed the state act that will improve transparency by disclosing data on policing and its effect on communities and establishing a private right of action or a protected class member.
- ❑ We also passed a law and other family law requiring law enforcement to provide medical attention to individuals under custody.
- ❑ We established a law enforcement misconduct investigative office like the Inspector General for law enforcement.
- ❑ We passed a law requiring the use of body-worn cameras by New York State Police Officers.
- ❑ Question by Pablo Blanco (CB5 Board Member):
- ❑ Is there any punishment mechanism or qualified immunity for police officers that engaged in these types of acts such as George Floyd's case, Kevin Parker, who broke the bill for the Cooper Law, Execution of Muhammadu Diallo, or throughout the five boroughs?
- ❑ Answer: I am a public official or servant, but I can't take away your freedom. I can't make a decision—some people have the authority to act on behalf of the State. And unfortunately, that's not been the case. We're moving in that direction, and I believe that this is what we started to do.
- ❑ Question: by Cheryl Westbrook (CB5 Board Member) :
- ❑ Just anticipation of a new wave of Covid-19 in the fall. How do we prepare to combat our community or District, which is the hardest hit in the city?
- ❑ Answer: It's one of the things that we have prepared enough in maintaining that we were able to flatten the curve, although the fact that we have so many people in the State, particularly in

places like in the Bronx, and among people in the community. We can do many things to seek more help from the city and State to maintain our community in better health. I want everyone in this community to go outside and vote and vote early and fill out the census. We're going back at least one more time legislatively, and I'm hoping that there are some of these things that we can do to fight for everyone's rights. We need to do that, and we need to push the Federal government so we can get resources from the StateState and hopefully pass a whole host of bills that some of my colleagues have to make sure that we can manage.

☐ Honorable Jose E. Serrano, Member of Congress District #15

☐ Representative is Anthony R. Jordan

- ☐ Good Evening everyone, Dr. Bola and the District Manager, Community Board Members, and Elected Officials.
- ☐ We have seen many evictions happening in our community, yet Congressman Jose Serrano and some colleagues are fighting for tenants.
- ☐ I want to remind the members that this is not only racial police brutality, but we also have to understand that black and brown and other folks have to build on the deficit that happened around the affordability of housing in the community.
- ☐ The press release is battling Parkinson's Disease. Congressman Jose E. Serrano has been fighting for overtime about how this illness will progress over time as he wants to give the constituency that has elected him into an office for the past 45 years plus years so he can go forward to continue to fight for this illness.
- ☐ Congressman Jose E. Serrano has allocated a million dollars to more businesses experiencing either causing the loss of funds during this CoVid-19 out or Protection Program Advocate that members on payroll and unemployment benefits.

- ❑ Congressman Jose E. Serrano also ensures that he provides protective equipment for first responders and hospitals HealthCare facilities and other emergencies as technicians.
 - ❑ Congressman Jose E. Serrano also provides grants to offices opening.
 - ❑ Congressman Jose E. Serrano visited the Economic Development Organizations and small businesses to speak to the store owners and provide them with a small grant.
 - ❑ If you need more details about the grants, please reach out to us at 718 200 0084. Our office hours from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm.
- ❑ **Representative for Honorable Adriano Espaillat, Member of Congress, District #13**
- ❑ The congressman Adriano Espaillat said that he is participants in the transportation of infrastructure committee markup funding for transportation aid and legislation in congress that will come back to the Bronx at this exact hour.
 - ❑ He is at the 10th hour of the process with some intermittent breaks.
 - ❑ The congressman also wanted to share the Harlem manifesto that has laid out and supported criminal justice reform elements, both at the City, State and Federal level.
- ❑ **Committee Reports:**
- The Burnside, Jerome, and Tremont Avenue Merchant Association Report by Angel Caballero.**
- ❑ Good Evening to all Board Members and Elected Officials.
 - ❑ I am Angel Caballero to give you an update on the BJT Association. I want to thanks to Dr. Bola for all his work or support given to BJT Association or the merchants association.
 - ❑ The BJT has registered with the GOFUNDME site to help out all the merchants on our strip.

- ❑ We collaborate with most city agencies to develop or launch it to see if we can raise funds to support the small business owners.
- ❑ The BJT Bronx committee wanted to do it for a while; we were able to put it together because of the looted on June 1st and 2nd.
- ❑ I will put all the documents together of the devastating scenes of the day looted to the merchants and the community residents.
- ❑ All these GOFUNDME will go straight to the small businesses that need help and those who don't have business insurance.
- ❑ We are making sure that we can keep the businesses on Burnside, West Tremont, and Jerome Avenues operating.

❑ **Old Business**

- ❑ We are in a recession and hope that we do not have a second wave of Covid-19 in New York City. fFr the first round, which has destroyed many vulnerable people approximately 20,000 lives in New York State alone have gone.
- ❑ We do not know when the CB5 office will be available.
- ❑ The District Manager is searching for support from the Bronx Community College Office to find out how they can provide the Wifi to the CB5 staff.

❑ **New Business**

- ❑ Encouraging all the Board Members, and Elected Officials that this Covid-19 pandemic is real.
- ❑ The Davidson Community Center will give away hand sanitizers and masks to the community on Monday.
- ❑ Some of the Elected Officials will be giving out hand sanitizers and masks at some locations.
- ❑ Michelle Heath (CB5 Board Member) has commented that the Covid-19 testing center at Holy Spirit Church on University Avenue is available.
 - ❑ Why do we not have enough postings around in the neighborhood for Covid-19 testing Centers?
 - ❑ The Holy Spirit has testing centers available, which I was saddened by because they never had any English postings.
 - ❑ Everyone that was there were only Hispanics.
 - ❑ We have different ethnicities in our community. It wasn't being expressed by the lines they had because the information on the posters or anything they had was in Spanish.
 - ❑ In the last few days that they had postings, they will finally appear in English and Spanish postings.
 - ❑ There are 800 mobile units available for testing for Covid-19 by some of the Elected Officials in New York City.
 - ❑ We hope that Mobile Units can mobilize somewhere up to the Bronx or our District to help out the vulnerable people.
 - ❑ The zipcode of 10453 has the highest counts of Covid-19.
 - ❑ My opinion is that the second wave will come because we have seasons in our weather, and knowing the flu season will hit us hard.
- ❑ One important announcement about the financial institution brought up to our Community Board Five is Chase Bank on Burnside Avenue. This has been offline for

the last several months. The only financial institution that we have is on University Avenue, which is not what the merchants requested.

- ❑ Those looters had badly damaged Western Union located on Jerome Avenue.

❑ **Meeting is adjourned**

❑ **At 8:34 PM**

Prepared and Submitted by

Ms. Stewart

Secretary of Community Board 5