

**COMMUNITY BOARD #14
MONTHLY BOARD MEETING
OCTOBER 23, 2019**

**TORAH ACADEMEY FOR GIRLS
444 BEACH 6 STREET
FAR ROCKAWAY, NY 11691**

PRESENT

Audrey Amsterdam-Handy, Khaleel Anderson, John Cori, Dr. Gerald David, Mordechai Dicker, Ahmad Edwards, Noreen Ellis, Temina Feldman, Eugenia Gibson, Yitzchok Goldstein, Tamara Jacobs, Felicia Johnson, Paul King, Betty Leon, Denise Lopetri-Neibel, Ife Maijeh, Desiree Maple, Rosalyn Mason, John McCambridge, Sonia Moise, Helen Montero, Al Moore, Daniel Mundy, Ellen O'Reilly, Dolores Orr, Dr. Harold Paez, Isaac Parsee, Dr. Eli Shapiro, Linda Plummer, Ellen O'Reilly, Karen Sloan-Payne, Chris Tedesco, Jose Velez, Wanda Warden, Edwin Williams,

ABSENT

Louis Caucig, Stephen Cooper, D. Brian Heffernan, Annette Lord-Cohen, Nancy Martinez, Alicia Mazyck, Eugene Pasternak, Edward Pastore Sr., Michael Tubridy, Tyrone Worsley

GUESTS

Manuel Silva – Rep. City Councilman Donovan Richards, Tavia Blakley – Rep. Assemblywoman Michele Titus, Dekendra Dazzell - Rep. State Senator James Sanders Jr., Robby Schwach – Rep. City Councilman Eric Ulrich, Anna Palmer – President of Rockaway Community Advocate, Richard David – District Leader of the 31st Assembly District, Brandon Jeffries – Rep. Queens Law Association

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:25pm.

MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 10, 2019

Betty Leon made the motion for the Board to accept the September 10, 2019 minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Isaac Parsee. The motion carried by a hand vote in favor of the motion.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

The Chair reminded all that NYC Election Day is Tuesday – November 5th, but for the first time there will be early voting beginning October 26, 2019 through November 3rd. The location of early voting for all residents of Community Board #14 is at the Arverne YMCA on Beach 73 Street.

The Chair reminded everyone that in accordance with Community Board #14 By-Laws at the November Board meeting the members of the Nominating Committee will be announced. At the December Board meeting the Nominating Committee will announce their recommendation for the Executive Board positions and nominations for candidates for any of the Executive Board positions will also be taken from the floor. At the January

2020 Board meeting Board members will vote, via ballot, for the Executive Board positions.

The Chair updated everyone on the Public Service Commission audit of National Grid's data submitted in support of National Grid's application for an additional gas pipeline and the denial of gas service to approximately 1100 customers. The Public Service Commission has been ordered to immediately provide gas service to those 1100 customers. Audit of National Grid's data continues.

REPORT OF THE DISTRICT MANAGER

District Manager, Jonathan Gaska informed Board members that they were emailed a draft committee list to be reviewed at to contact him at the office if there are any changes needed.

The foundation for the new Far Rockaway Library is completed and construction is moving along. Phone calls were made to DOT regarding the traffic backups on Central Avenue being caused by allowed parking at the two schools on Central Avenue; perhaps some of the parking could be eliminated temporarily to help traffic flow. The installation of new infrastructure for the downtown Far Rockaway shopping area is already causing 40 minute delays.

PUBLIC SPEAKING: The Chair opened the floor for public speaking at 7:38pm. 14 people signed up to speak. They all were recognized and heard. The Chair closed public speaking 8:19pm.

Office of QUEENS BOROUGH PRESIDENT MELINDA KATZ

Dan Brown announced that Queens Borough President Melinda Katz awarded Service Awards to Board members Michael Tubridy and Isaac Parsee for years of outstanding dedicated community service.

EXECUTIVE BOARD VACANCY VOTE

The Chair explained that tonight there will be a vote by open ballot for the position of Secretary/Treasurer for the Executive Board candidates - Khaleel Anderson and Betty Leon. At that October meeting it was announced that at the November Board meeting there would be a vote to break that tie for the Secretary/Treasurer position.

Ballots were distributed, collected and counted by District Manager, Jonathan Gaska. Vote count was: Betty Leon received 18 votes and Khaleel Anderson received 11 votes. Betty Leon is the new Secretary/Treasurer for the Executive Board.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PARKS AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

John McCambridge reported on the meeting held on October 8, 2019.

The first agenda item for discussion was regarding Coastal Storm Risk Reduction Project (Rockaway Beach, Queens, NYC) erosion Control features. Project Manager Daniel Falt of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers' gave the report.

Features recommended by the U. S. Army Corp of Engineers

1. Reinforced dune structure – Steel and Rock sea wall covered in sand and vegetation with the total dune height of 18ft, from beach 9th street to beach 149th street.
2. Initial beach sand fill and 50 years of beach re-nourishment.
3. Construction of new erosion control features to reduce the re-nourishment requirement and to enhance resiliency.
4. High Frequency Flooding Risk Reduction measures for the Bay side of Hammels, Arverne, Edgemere, and Queens County, as well as the Cedarhurst/Lawrence, Nassau County.

Project Goals – Erosion Control Features

1. Groins – designed to reduce erosion of beach sand
2. New structures will be very similar to existing structures but bigger.
3. In Rockaway Beach the Groin will be from beach 9th to 149th street. There will be one about every 5 blocks. Total construction will be up to 3 years total. A total of 19 new and reconstructed stone groins.

The next step in the contract is targeted for spring 2020. Public meetings will be held after the contract is awarded. At that time there will be more details available regarding construction methods, timing and sequencing. Once construction begins there will be weekly status meetings with local stakeholders and public officials for the duration of the construction.

The final report was signed by the Chief of the Army Corps on Aug. 22nd 2019. Actions still required to begin construction:

1. Approval by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.
2. Execution of the Project Partnership agreement with NYS and NYC
3. Final Environmental Documentation and Permits.
4. Final Construction access agreements
5. The Federal Contracting process.

Work will occur year-round and will take approximately 3 years. It is yet to be determined if they will go over or around the boardwalk to get the materials on the beach. They plan on 10 trucks of stone a day. Beach will be closed on the beach they are working on. There will be 19 new groins installed - 13 groins west of the existing 10 groins and 6 new groins on the east end. The 10 existing groins will be enhanced. The cost will be between \$50 Million and \$150 Million. Removal of the old wood jetties is not part of this project but will be looked into cost of removing them.

Work on the bayside will not begin until the study is completed. However the study is funded.

Summer Report: by Park Administrator Eric Peterson and Queens Borough commissioner Mike Dockett.

-Attendance for the beach was down but felt that a better way to come up with a true number is being looked into.

-Concessions on the boardwalk had a good year.

-Bike safety and dogs on the boardwalk seem to be an ongoing problem.

-The biggest problem of the year Peterson pointed out is the placement of Life Guards, especially on beach 30th and Beach 59th Street, where this year problems have been the greatest. Peterson pointed out that these decisions are not made by his office but by the Lifeguard division. They decide where the lifeguards are stationed.

Questions asked by Committee:

-Asked why are more lifeguards not hired? Response was to give numbers citywide but not the numbers for Rockaway

-When asked for the number of open beaches and lifeguards, Commissioner Dockett advise that those statistics were in a booklet called "Beach Safety Plan for Rockaway" *which the committee does NOT have*. Mr. Dockett committed to provide booklet to Committee. It

was requested that the lifeguard division attend the next Parks Committee meeting. It was duly noted by the Commissioner Dockett.

- There were a total of 6 drownings, 5 on the Beach and 1 on the bay.

Peterson said that they are planning water safety measure and education. Dockett stated that Park Dept. was looking into seasonal allocation of staff for the beach to the end of September. That PEP officers stay on the beach to 9PM patrolling to keep people out of the water. Dockett also states that the city council has given Parks 43 Million additional funds to hire 80 PEP officers, 18 of them will be stationed in Queens

- there are only three Licensed Surfing schools on the beach but there are other surf schools using the beach without Park Licensees.
- Parks looking at additional bike racks off the boardwalk to stop the chaining of biked on the boardwalk rails.

The Committee comments that better signs about the bike lanes, looking into speed limits on the boardwalk for bikes, looking into taking the bike lane off the boardwalk. Also ticketing people who enter the water without a lifeguard. More signs on the Bay side about not swimming. To use (technology) an app. to issue warnings about currents and water conditions. NO Dogs on the beach is not being enforced and better signs about dogs not being allowed on the beach.

Deputy Inspector of PEP Edwin Falcon reported he had one sergeant and one officer on duty the day the boys went missing and has increased beach detail after the drowning. He should have more PEP officers assigned to Rockaway next year with Queens getting 18 more officers. Parks Director of Concessions Alexander Han discussed that Rockaway Beach club, B106, B97, B86 and B68th Street are all up for Request of Proposal and current Lease is ending at the end of 2020 summer season. Looking at a Kiosk on 67th and 68th, will not be on the boardwalk but in lot on the north side of boardwalk. Hope it can be more than a food truck.

Motion to write letter of support for present concessioner for the next RFP. It did not pass with 2 for and 6 abstentions.

Terrapin Point also known as Last Point between B72nd Street and B92nd Street. On the bay side is owned by State and City. 6.6 acers of the south side east of the canal is the city which can be used as a park while the rest of the area is designated as a bird sanctuary. This City area

is being proposed by Paula Segal to be used as a recreation area for swimming, kayaking and playground. While many people thought it was

a good idea, local civil association members of Thor and Rockaway Call to Action were not supportive of the proposal. That this was the first time they learned about this idea. That flooding, pumping station, bulkheads and mosquitos are more important issues then a park or a bird sanctuary. Segal pointed out that it already has happened and it became a conservation area in 1997. The civil Association ask that they be involved going forward on this matter.

EDUCATION AND YOUTH SERVICES COMMITTEE

Harold Paez reported that a meeting was held on September 23, 2019

The first agenda items the committee discussed was regarding the following:

1-Mayor’s plan to end Specialized High School Admission Test

(SHSAT) fails. The mayor has announced that he is abandoning his multi-year effort to eliminate the Specialized High School Admissions

2- Mayor’s advisory group seeks to eliminate Gifted and Talented

Programs Their report includes the recommendation to ELIMINATE the highly popular Gifted and Talented programming in NYC schools, replacing them with “equitable enrichment alternatives”. There has been immediate and widespread pushback. And calls for the plan to be expanded in low income and minority areas of the city, not eliminated.

3- The DOE’s “Bronx Plan” to be implemented in various Rockaway

schools. The Bronx Plan, unveiled as part of the latest Teacher’s Union Contract, will boost teacher salaries and give teachers formal decision-making power in their schools. There are 50 schools listed in the initial announcement including 7 in Rockaway. The schools are: PS/MS 42 R. Vernam School, PS 43, MS 53 Brian Piccolo School, PS 197 The Ocean School, Village Academy, Rockaway Park HS for Environmental Sustainability and Rockaway Collegiate HS.

4- Receivership status of Frederick Douglas Academy VI.

The HS held a meeting in September to update the community on the status of the school which is the only one in Rockaway currently on the State’s Priority School list.. The Frederick Douglas Academy’s principal Burnett stated that she is attempting to bring the school out of receivership status and that certain benchmarks must be met by June of 2020. Principal Burnett was asked what support measures the Community Board could request from our elected representatives and Borough President’s office. She stated that funding for bilingual staff and for translation technology/software would be a great assistance as fully half of the student population at the school are English Language Learners (ELL).

5- Waterside Children’s Studio School (PS317) receives the Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Lighthouse Award.

Similar to the Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Award awarded by the Federal Department of Education, the Lighthouse Award is awarded yearly to schools which demonstrate significant progress in improving student outcomes across a wide range of critical performance categories including teaching practice, positive school culture and closing the achievement gap among student demographics.

6- Rockaway Schools test positive for lead in classrooms.

Two schools in Rockaway tested positive for lead in this assessment; PS 106 and PS 197. The good news is that before school started in September, the DOE and SCA had completed its remediation of all classrooms utilized by children under six years of age. A total of 1,860 impacted rooms.

7- PS 47 The Chris Galas School in Broad Channel to be Replaced

PS 47 in Broad Channel will have a new building with construction commencing in September 2020.

Additional items discussed during our committee meeting:

-Ms. Stephanie Barreto-Lastra, Borough Manager, Community Affairs, DOE was present to introduce herself and to listen to the committees concerns over various issues in Rockaway. We discussed many of the items which we presented for inclusion in the CB14 list of Capital and Expense budget requests such as our request for the funding of swim programs in Rockaway schools and for the expansion of NEST and Horizon programs for children on the Autism spectrum. Ms. Barreto indicated that she would be bringing our list of ideas and concerns to the DOE borough office and continue to work with us on establishing better communication lines to the DOE.

-Mr. Rashaun Banjo and Mr. Lugarry Vernon from Team Crate and the Far Rock Strong organization attended the meeting to discuss important youth services topics with members of the Committee and to present the mission of their non-profit organization focused on Rockaway. Mr. Vernon stated that the organization has partnered with other organizations and city agencies such as the Queens Law Associates Outreach Center and the Parks Department on projects to help local youth. They are currently mentoring over 300 young men and women with book

clubs, sports programming and positive social experiences aimed at elevating their self-esteem and mentoring their growth as individuals.

-**A round-table discussion** followed in which the role of parental involvement was emphasized as a vital factor in the positive development of young men and women both socially and academically.

A large step in the right direction would be the funding and development of an academically advanced middle school/ high school similar to the highly successful Scholars' Academy, but located in Far Rockaway. It was the consensus that amid funding for thousands of units of housing being developed on the Eastern end of the Peninsula, a vital component is a magnet school.

Results of this year's (2019) NY State ELA and Math testing:

Citywide Averages for 2019 increased a small amount from 2018 but failed to pass the 50% mark on proficiency, defined as levels 3 and 4 in standardized testing. Analysis of elementary schools on the Rockaway Peninsula:

> Four elementary schools maintain proficiency levels well above citywide averages in both ELA and Math: PS 317; PS/MS 114; PS/MS 47 and Wave Preparatory Academy

> Five elementary schools increased proficiency levels in both ELA and Math but remain below citywide averages: PS 105; PS 106; PSMS 42; PS 43 and PS 197

>Two elementary schools decreased proficiency levels in both ELA and Math and remain below citywide averages: PS/MS 183 and PS 104.

>One school increased proficiency in ELA and decreased proficiency in Math, and remains below citywide averages: PS 253.

>One school increased ELA proficiency to the same level as the citywide average but decreased in Math, remaining below the citywide math average: PS/MS 333.

>Three charter elementary schools: Challenge Preparatory, Peninsula Preparatory and Success Academy Far Rockaway, all achieved proficiency rates well above citywide averages. Success Academy Far Rockaway achieved a remarkable 84.1% ELA proficiency rate and 93.9 % proficiency in Math for its first class of students taking the test in 3rd grade, with residential and commercial development in order to achieve long term neighborhood stability.

The committee commends the youth service work of such organizations as Queens Law Associates Outreach Center, Team Crate and the Far Rock

Strong organization as non-profit groups working to mentor the positive development of youth in our community.

-The committee recommends that the community board send a letter to our elected officials requesting a renewed effort to include a discussion of school development in line with residential and commercial development in the East end. A magnet middle school/high school, similar to Scholars' Academy, located in a redeveloped Far Rockaway.

BUDGET COMMITTEE

Dr. Eli Shapiro reported that at the last board meeting ideas/suggestions and improvements were made to the FY 2021 Capital and Expense Priority list. The list was updated to include the new additions and sent out all the members and public last month.

PUBLIC HEARING-The Chair opened the floor for a public hearing regarding the draft 2021 Capital & Expense Priority List. 3 people signed up to speak. They were recognized and heard. The Chair closed the public hearing.

Dr. Eli Shapiro made the motion for the board to accept the draft FY2021 Capital and Expense priorities with the new additions. The motion was second by Betty Leon. The motion carried by a roll call vote of YES 29, NO 0 and 0 ABSTAINED.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:40pm.

Respectfully Submitted By: M. Dunning