



THE CITY OF NEW YORK Borough Of The Bronx

COMMUNITY BOARD #12

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Bronx Community Board 12 January 23, 2020

The regularly scheduled meeting of Community Board 12, the Bronx, for January 23, 2020 was called to order at Town Hall, 4101 White Plains Road, The Bronx, by the First Vice Chairman, Dr. Michael Burke at 7:30 pm. Those wishing to participate were asked to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Gallery Session

First Vice Chairman Dr. Michael Burke reminded all Public Gallery presenters that there is a 3-minute limit speaking limit.

Ms. Yadira Moncion/Bronx Rises Against Gun Violence (B.R.A.G)

B.R.A.G is a program of Good Shepherd Services. Miss. Moncion stated that the purpose of the organization is to mediate conflict, to prevent escalation and/or police involvement. They provide a range of youth activities to help keep youth safe and focus on teaching youth to engage in non-violent ways.

Their next event, "Love Peace and Paint" will take place at 3:00 pm on February 15, 2020, at 825 E 233rd Street, 2nd floor. Flyers are available. Ms. Moncion invited the community to engage with the organization and participate in their events.

Various Representatives of Troop 109/Boy Scouts of America

Mr. Arlene Foster stated that he is a member of Troop 109 and came to the Board to observe.

The other members of Troop 109 present introduced themselves.

Mr. Michael X. Hinton/Community Resident

Mr. Hinton stated that he grew up in the community. He further stated that he challenges the community to come together to do more for the community. He called for the community's elected politicians to address the ongoing gentrification of the community. Mr. Hinton can be contacted at BruthaMikeX@gmail.com.

First Vice Chairman Dr. Burke encouraged Mr. Hinton to consider applying for Board membership.



Mr. Sydney Finley/Damm Workbooks

Mr. Finley stated that his role is to encourage and stimulate learning in youth and others. Dr. Burke encouraged Mr. Finley to liaise with the Board's Education and Youth Services Committee and the Library and Cultural Affairs Committee.

Mr. Toba LaCrown/New York City Community Emergency Response Team (NYC CERT)

Mr. LaCrown provided an overview of the NYC CERT Program. He encouraged greater community participation of the program. He stressed that extensive training is provided to NYC CERT volunteer team members.

Ms. Pamela Johnson/President of 47th Precinct Community Council

Ms. Johnson stated that the next 47th Precinct Community Council meeting will be held at 7:30 pm, February 12, 2020, at PS19. The topic will be the criminal justice reform bill. Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie will attend the meeting. Ms. Johnson stressed the importance of community participation at the meeting and encouraged all present to read the bill on criminal justice reform.

Motion made by Mr. Ivan Borrás and seconded by Mr. Anthony Reid to move to the business session of the meeting. Motion passed.

Presentations/Special Guests

First Vice Chairman Dr. Burke introduced Bronx District Attorney Ms. Darcel Clarke. Ms. Clarke thanked the community for supporting her. She stated that she also lives in Community Board 12. She reported that she is visiting all communities in the Bronx to explain the new criminal justice reform laws that took effect January 1, 2020.

The two areas of greatest concern raised by Bronx communities are:

Bail

Ms. Clarke stated that the purpose of bail is to ensure that those accused of a crime return for trial. After January 1, 2020 bail will no longer be required for certain misdemeanor charges. Judges will still have the discretion to require bail on felony charges. Ms. Clarke explained that many people who will be released without bail would have been released anyway. She stated that her office's policy is – if they are not asking for jail time for a person they will not ask for bail. Under the current law, judges do not have the discretion to require bail for repeat offenders.

Discovery

Discovery is the exchange of evidence between the prosecutor and defender. Ms. Clark stated that she agrees that this reform was needed because it ensures that evidence is turned over by district attorneys to counselors for the defense in a timely manner. However, she stated that the new law requires that the district attorney's office turn over evidence within 15 days of arraignment, which is a challenging target to meet. She stated that while her office believes in the fairness of the new rule the DA's office needs more time – 30 days to 60 days – to achieve compliance.

Ms. Clark stressed the importance of understanding the underlying issues behind crime, which might be mental illness, substance abuse or poverty. The job of the district attorney's office is public safety.

She also noted that discovery includes contact information of the victims and witnesses. Previously this information could be held back until later in the process to protect the safety of victims and witnesses. The District Attorney's office can apply for a protective order from the judge to redact the information; sometimes the order is granted and sometimes not. The District Attorney's office also has a public safety program to help keep victims and witnesses safe. There are also g-mail addresses and phone numbers defense lawyers can use to contact victims and witnesses without jeopardizing their anonymity.

Mr. Carl Lanzano asked what happens if persons charged are released without bail and do not report to court. Ms. Clarke responded that if someone is out on bail on a felony, fails to report to court, and then commits a misdemeanor the judge has discretion to assign bail when they are charged again. If someone willfully and consistently fails to appear for a court date the judge can hold a hearing to determine if bail or remand should be required. For misdemeanor charges judges must wait 48 hours before issuing the warrant.

Ms. Clark accepted questions from Board members.

Dr. Burke asked (on behalf of an audience member) why some district attorneys from outside NYC are not supporting the criminal justice reform law. Ms. Clark responded that there are 62 district attorneys in NYS, with different policies, procedures and police practices. She also noted that downstate districts have different issues from upstate districts.

Council Member Andrew Cohen

Mr. Cohen announced:

March 1, 2020 a state-wide plastic bag ban is going into effect. Free reusable bags are available from his office.

On January 30, 2020 the MetroCard Mobile Sales Unit will be available in Woodlawn, from 1:00 to 3:00 pm, at the Woodlawn Heights Library. Senior citizens (age 65+) and people with disabilities are qualified to use the service.

The participatory budget process will be simpler this year: the community should contact his office with requests that need capital funds from the City.

There are two development items on his office's radar. He encouraged the community to remain vigilant regarding the types of development undertaken in our communities. There are two rezoning issues currently under discussion.

Maryann Joyce from State Senator Alessandra Biaggi's Office

Ms. Joyce stated that the 2nd Annual Bronx Delegation Budget Forum will be held at Lehman College, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm on January 30, 2020, to hear testimony regarding budget priorities. Each person

will have 2 minutes to speak. Senators Biaggi, Serrano, Rivera, and Sepulveda will be in attendance. Feedback can also be emailed to any of the senators' offices.

A 2020 legislative priorities flyer is available. There is also a flyer available explaining the criminal reform legislation.

Mr. Ivan Nedds, representing Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, reported that the MTA Bronx bus service redesign plan will not be cutting any express bus service this year; however, the issue will be revisited in 2021.

A representative from Speaker Carl Heastie's office, reminded everyone of importance of participating in the census. He reported that the State Assembly passed strongest tenant protection laws in NYC history, and the criminal justice reform bill was passed. He also encouraged everyone to attend the upcoming 47th Precinct Community Council meetings.

Mr. Victor Martinez, representing Comptroller Scott Stringer's office, reported that applications for the 2020 Summer Internship program will be accepted through March 6, 2020. He stated that the paid internship is a real opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students to learn about the City Comptroller's office.

Mr. Manuel Lagares, from the Department of City Planning, stated that he has been assigned to Community Board 12. Has been working for the Department of City Planning for approximately 40 years, and during that time acted as liaison to many NYC community boards. Mr. Lagares invited any board members or other community residents to direct any questions regarding planning and zoning in this district to him at (718) 220-8508.

He added that seats are still available for the Monday, January 27, 2020 community board training session.

Bronx Borough President's Report

Ms. Alexis Diaz reported that the NYS attorney general and the Bronx Borough president invite anyone interested to attend the non-profit incorporation program taking place on January 24th, 2020, at Hostos Community College. A flyer is available.

Community board re-appointment application deadline is February 7, 2020. Also, all board members must complete the sexual harassment training by February 7; if not completed by that date reappointment applications will not be considered.

First Vice Chairman's Report

Dr. Burke reported that the proposed Grace Avenue shelter has been taken off the table for the moment.

The proposed 200 bed women's shelter at 1591 E 233rd 200 is now tentative. The proposed location is in an M1 district, so the district would need to be rezoned to allow the project to proceed.

The full First Vice Chairman's Report is attached.

District Manager's Report

Mr. Torres reported that Andy King's office provided flyers on two upcoming events:

There will be a Town Hall meeting regarding the wind turbine which collapsed near Co-op City. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 29th, 2020, at the Bartow Mall.

Council Member King's office is collecting non-perishable food, clothing and medical supplies for Puerto Rico. Donation can be dropped off at the Council Member's office at 940 East Gun Hill Road.

The end of this fiscal year is the target for completing remaining Town Hall infrastructure work. He noted that there are now new cushioned chairs, new tables, and additional flatscreen TVs.

Both proposed homeless shelters are in manufacturing districts. However, the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) has not approached the Board for a zoning variance. Currently the developers' plans are to build the properties as hotels, which is permissible in an M1 district, but they cannot then be turned into homeless shelters without a variance.

A meeting is planned with DHS. Dr. Burke commented that 1,000 people attended protests homeless shelters in another Community Boards.

Committee Reports

Health and Human Services Committee

Dr. Burke reported that the Health and Human Services Committee is planning a rat control awareness workshop. The session will be rescheduled from the original date of February 12th due to the schedule conflict with other events.

Housing Committee

Chairman Mr. Robert Hall met with representatives of the DOE Fund, developers regarding 98 planned units of supportive housing at 4519 White Plains Road. The developer requested a letter of support; however, Mr. Hall raised concerns about the developer's compliance with Section 8 code. Mr. Hall also raised concerns about "as of right" development, which means that the Board has only an advisory role, the developer does not need Board approval. Council Member Cohen responded that the DOE Fund has not approached his office to discuss the proposed project. There was additional discussion regarding the definition of affordable housing and how the proposed project would benefit the community.

Parks and Recreation

Chairman Mr. Ivan Borrás reported that a community resident raised concerns about the need for more trash cans at Seton Falls Park. The Parks Department representative present at the meeting said that this could be done if there is no dumping of trash as a result. The resident also complained that trash from the nearby PS 111 is ending up across the street from the park.

Mr. Borrás reported that the Shoelace Park renovation, on target for completion in December 2021, will not include any historical preservation or commemoration. The committee requested a letter from the Board to protest the destruction of elements of the first highway in the US.

The RC park, located in Shoelace Park near Webster Avenue, is to be decommissioned and repurposed by the Parks Department due to underuse.

Ms. Denise Bond has taken on the role of Parks and Recreation Vice Chairwoman.

The committee requested three letters to:

The Parks Commissioner to recognize and commemorate the historical significance of Shoelace Park
The principal of PS 111 regarding the trash collecting near Seton Falls Park
The Parks Department to request that trees be planted on Holland Avenue between Gun Hill Road and Magenta Avenue

Motion made by Ms. Judith Benitez to approve all three letters; motion seconded by Ms. Denise Bond.

Motion passed.

The committee's full report is attached.

Approval of the Minutes of November 21, 2019

Motion made by Mr. Robert Hall and seconded by Mr. Carl Lanzano to accept the minutes as printed with any necessary corrections. Motion passed.

All of Us Research Program

Ms. Paulette Spencer, who works with the Bronx Community Health Network, stated that the objective of the All of Us Research Program is to lessen the gap between community residents and medical providers. The program is sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). All data collected from participants is disaggregated and anonymous. They are focusing on Community Board 12's community. The goal is to customize treatments and interventions to each patient.

Payment to participants is \$25 upon patient registration.

New Business

The First Vice Chairman Dr. Burke stated that the Community Board 12 committee structure is under review. He asked any Board member without a committee affiliation communicate with him.

Dr. Burke announced that an Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for February.

He reported that 25% of board membership is consistently absent.

He reported that at the February meeting the Board will vote to change the meeting start time to 7:00 pm to allow more time to cover all issues that need to be addressed.

He encouraged all Board Members to attend the Planning Department training to be held next week.

501C3 non-profit organization training will be held tomorrow at Hostos Community College.

He noted that new Board Members are not given training or mentoring, solutions will be discussed in Executive Committee.

Ms. Dena Robins announced there is a bill before the NYS Assembly, Bill A8531, to commemorate the abolition of slavery, and asked everyone present to support it.

There being no further issues to discuss the meeting was duly adjourned at 10:00 pm. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 27, at 7:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carla Borsotti". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Carla Borsotti

