

NEWS FROM BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #10

Contact K. Kearns at 718-892-1161

Recently, the Board learned that the group home planned for 3701 Bruckner Blvd. was not going to be opened. The Board had opposed siting a group home in the Waterbury Estates community, because of the incredible costs associated with its purchase and renovation. In 2008, the Board learned that the proposed home was going to be operated by a contractor to the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (NYS OMRDD). Group home sites are selected by the contractors to offer clients residential and occupational services. Community Boards, under legislation known as the Padavan Law, are required to hold a public hearing, which was done in October, 2008, and are given the opportunity to support the proposed home, object to it and offer alternatives. A contractor associated with NYS OMRDD had selected one of the homes in Waterbury Estates to house six developmentally disabled individuals. The contractor was planning to move the six adults from a location in Bronx Community Board #3 to Waterbury Estates, because they were unhappy with the condition of the property in Bronx Community Board #3. At the Board's Public Hearing, the sentiment of the community was not to accept the home and the Board adopted a Resolution at its November, 2008 Board meeting opposing its placement. The contractor appealed the Board's decision to the NYS OMRDD and requested a Commissioner's Hearing in March, 2009. The Hearing was attended by both the Board's District Manager and staff from Senator Jeffrey Klein.

The District Manager was ably assisted in the Hearing process by Ms. Dana Carotenuto of Senator Klein's staff. Both made salient arguments concerning the proposed home's cost (close to a million dollars), the inappropriateness of using the housing at Waterbury Estates for this purpose, and the proximity of other homes in the immediate area. It should be noted that Bronx Community Board #10 has welcomed many other group homes into its service area. As a rule, group homes make fine neighbors, but the sheer cost of this home's purchase and renovations, was too high a price to pay, given the conditions of our economy.

The fact that the proposal to site the group home was rejected shows that civic involvement is important to the life of your community. This particular site was inappropriate; residents and the Board stated it, and with the assistance of our elected officials, convinced the NYS OMRDD of the inappropriate nature of the property. The Board is grateful to all of its elected officials for their assistance, but particularly thanks Senator Klein and Ms. Carotenuto for all of their considerable labors in this area.

As you all know, the MTA claims that they are in a fiscal crisis. Our Board had testified at the public meeting of the MTA Board in December and corresponded with the Chair of the agency on the importance of retaining the BX #14, BX #8, keeping Access-A-Ride Affordable and preserving free passage for students. The MTA has issued a plan that radically alters the bus routes in the northeast Bronx. You may access this plan by going

to the agency's website: www.MTA.Info. The agency will be conducting a public hearing on March 3, 2010 at the Loew's Paradise Theatre at 187th Street and the Grand Concourse starting at 6:00 PM. Anyone interested in these matters, should attend.

Metro North Railroad has openings in several specific technical areas, such as elevator mechanic, iron worker, radio maintainer, signal trainee, and structural welder. Interested parties can go the railroad's website at www.MTA.info for more information. Queens College is offering a job training program known as Women and Work. Classes and supplies are completely free. Additional information can be obtained by contacting Ms. T. Nylund at 212-642-2057.

The Board is once again, proud to offer the services of Mr. Patrick Caruso to those who wish assistance in completing the various real estate tax exemptions that are available to homeowners, veterans and seniors. Please contact the Board office at 718-892-1161 for an appointment.

Bronx Community Board #10 is available to assist you with your concerns, please feel free to contact us at 718-892-1161 or BX10@cb.nyc.gov. Please feel free to visit our office at 3165 E. Tremont Avenue. We are open five days a week between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM.