

Bronx Community Board Four District Manager's Report for February & March 2008

Submitted by: José Rodriguez, District Manager

FEBRUARY

On February 13th Ms. Ezell and Ms. Saunders and I attended the Mayor's PlaNYC Workshop on neighborhood parking. The Focus of the workshop was centered on the Yankee Stadium area of our district. The following Data collection method was used in preparation for the workshop. 4,542 vehicles were surveyed in the study area. The focus area was from 165th Street to the North, 150th Street to the South, The Major Deegan Expressway/Exterior Street to the West and Morris Avenue-Concourse Village East to the East. The data collection found the following statistics. 18% of vehicles that were surveyed in the AM period were still there in the PM period. Among the total available residential spots 85% were occupied in the AM period. 97%percent were occupied in the PM period and 96% were occupied in the Saturday period. Lastly, about 35% of spaces turn over every hour across all time periods.

The workshop also focused on Residential Parking Permits. The Following options were presented as possible initiatives. Option A 8-24 Hour Permit-Only Parking-permits required to park on residential streets during hours that RPP is in effect eight to twenty-four hours. Option B 1-2 hour Permit Only Parking-permit required to park on a residential street during hours that RPP is in effect one to two hours per day, staggered on each side of the street. Option C 8-24 Hour Residential Parking Permit plus \$ 8 a day Fee-permit required to park on a residential street during hours that RPP is in effect eight to twenty-four hours. Option D 1-2 Hour Permit Only Parking plus \$8 a day Fee-permit required to park on a residential street during hours that RPP is in effect one to two hours per day, staggered on each side of the street.

Please note that the above mentioned will be discussed at length at tonight's meeting.

On February 15th The Macombs Dam Park/Yankee Stadium Project Briefing
Parks and Recreation Project Updates

Ballfield in West Bronx-The site has demobilized for the Winter and once the weather warms up to a consistent 50 degrees, Parks will begin to lay down the ballfield. The field's anticipated opening is the spring.

Ballfield at PS 29 -Parks expects this field to be open at the start of its Spring permit season.
Macombs Dam Park will be constructed in two phases. The construction of the 1st phase will be complete in Spring 09. The 2nd phase will be constructed by Spring 2010.
Ruppert Place -the plaza will be open by Fall 2011.
Heritage Field construction will be completed in the Fall of 2011.
The Bronx Terminal Market Waterfront Park should be open in the Winter of 2009-2010. Parks is expected to start construction on the shell of Building J in April, and the interior in the Fall of 08. They expect this building to earn a Silver LEED certificate.
River Avenue Parks are slated to be completed in Spring 08.
Mullaly Park North should be completed in June 08.
Mullaly Park South should be completed in the Spring of 09.

Local Street Planting Initiative-the next planting season will begin on March 15th and is expected that plantings of 1,000 trees will be done this Spring season.

Community Concerns regarding Yankee's Home Opener are as follows.
Illegal parking on Sidewalks and plazas-Suggestions: place parade barriers
NYPD indicated that summonses will be issued and vehicles will be towed and will work with the Yankee organization and local parking lots to assist in fan parking. Local garages have upgraded their signage to direct fans in the most efficient way. In addition, DOT will work to ensure that they update signage directing fans to the correct lots

On February 20th District Service Cabinet Meeting the following agencies and groups were in attendance.
DEP
44th PCT.
DOS
DOT
DPR
DOH
FDNY
NYS Comptroller's Office
Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson's Office
Bronx District Attorney's Office
NYCTA-MTA
DOHMH
Samaritan Village

The following are the minutes from the DSC on February 20th.
Mr. Jose Rodriguez opened the meeting at 9:45 am and asked everyone to review the minutes. If there are no objections/corrections, minutes were adopted. He then introduced Ms. D. Lee Ezell, Board Chair. Ms. Ezell welcomed everyone to the DSC meeting and then officially and formally introduced the new District Manager, Mr. Jose Rodriguez. A round of applause was given to Mr. Rodriguez on his appointment. She asked the agencies for their assistance in welcoming him in his new position while fostering his relations with representatives. Mr. Rodriguez thanked Ms. Ezell for the kind words. He also thanked Ms. Thompson for her assistance and help in organizing his first DSC meeting.

Agenda ITEM #'s:

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. Eleftheria Ardizzone, Community Coordinator for Bronx DEP, reported that the agency has enhanced their services requests that are sent to the Boards on a monthly basis. DEP deals with sewer issues, water and noise. There are currently no capital projects in Board 4.

NYPD 44TH PRECINCT MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT

Mr. Rodriguez informed everyone that there is a new Commanding Officer at the 44th Precinct, he introduced and welcomed Deputy Inspector Dermot Shea to the district. Deputy Inspector Shea said a few words and looks forward to working with everyone.

DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION

Superintendent David Martin explained that Supt. Corbin is off today and he introduced himself and stated that there is nothing to report at this time. In reference to the DOHMH Rodent Initiative, he stated that DOS is working with DOHMH on this initiative.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Commissioner Constance Moran, Bronx/DOT, welcomed Jose Rodriguez to his new position and she also welcomed D.I. Shea, whom she has worked very closely with in the past.

Reconstruction of the Grand Concourse – Commissioner Moran introduced the new liaison for the project, Ms. Melissa Johnson. She is available at the Field Office located on the Grand Concourse for any questions or concerns. They were scheduled to re-open the southbound service lane on 161st Street at the end of March however; it will open earlier on March 20th. The project will be totally complete in November 2008, which is 361 days earlier than expected. They are near the end of the project; planting will start in the spring. All decorative street lights have been completed.

161st Street Underpass – The work on the underpass is 96% complete. Punch work to be done including stained of the underpass walls. The paint used for the underpass will be anti graffiti, it is stained then a coating is put on it. The colors are green and blue and have been approved by the Art Commission. It is a quick process to do and there is no need to close the underpass to do it.

Commissioner Moran spoke about a joint site visit with various City agencies on Plimpton Avenue re: resident's complaint of buses. It appears to be a roadway issue.

153rd Street Bridge – they are preparing the bid documents now and will come before the Board for a presentation.

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Mr. Frank McMorrow, Park Manager, distributed information on the Bronx Speak Up to be held on Saturday, February 23rd from 1:00pm-5:00pm at Lehman College.

Update on construction projects in District 4 – ball field at West Bronx Recreation Center will be available in the Spring, they still have to put down the astro turf (synthetic field) when weather permits.

Mullaly Park is on schedule with expected completion in June. The Yankee construction project is moving along.

Mr. McMorrow reported that there is a special tree planting project in CB#4 for tree replacement. This program is to replace the trees lost from Macombs Park and the planting is going on schedule; 2,173 trees were planted in 2007. 1,294 trees planted for the Fall and they are looking to plant at least 1,000 trees every season, with a 4-year contract for the tree planting.

ITEM #4-REPORT FROM THE NYC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & MENTAL HYGIENE

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES

Mr. Randy Quezada, Director of Community Relations/DHS, stated that his agency is chartered with the task, on the behalf of the City; they have asked the agency to end homelessness by the time the Mayor leaves office. They seek to prevent homelessness where possible and provide shelter where needed.

The City operates under the Facto Right to Shelter, which came about through litigation and monitored closely by the State and the courts. They have expanded their homeless prevention program, it started in six community districts due to success of the pilot program, and it has now been expanded citywide. He noted that anyone who is experiencing a housing crisis and have not yet been evicted, they should contact the DHS or a home base provider. The program has a 97% success rate in preventing homelessness. DHS provides shelter for single adults and families. Single adults coming into the shelter system do so through the intake center at 30th Street in Manhattan. Women intake centers are located in Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens available 24/7 and can access information by calling 311.

Families entering the shelter system has an eligibility process that requires them to show where they have lived for the past two years and it has to be determined that they don't have anywhere else to go. Once verified, then they are deemed eligible for shelter. DHS has a wide range of rental subsidy programs to help people move back in the community and not experience homelessness longer than needed. He continued to say that with the new Family Intake Center being developed at the site of the old EAU will be a larger facility and will help the families move through the system more quickly. He stated that their goal is to have the ribbon cutting ceremony by the end of 2009.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that CB#4 in coordination with the Board Chair would like DHS to attend a full Board Mtg. and give an update on the facility, thus making the community aware of what is coming to the site.

Ms. Ezell, Board Chair, stated that in terms of the EAU, please note for the record that the new EAU is being developed under protest. CB#4 position is in agreement with the Borough President's that it is unfair for this district/borough to bear the burden of this service for the City. A more responsible approach would be to have a more responsible approach would be to have more than one, preferably one in each borough. There are concerns that the City would place an impediment such as this in a residential area. It is very important to the community that DHS listen to the concerns raised regarding the EAU.

Ms. Aurea Mangual, Bronx Borough President's Office, stated that the EAU serves the entire nation and Board 4 is bearing the burden.

Mr. Quezada responded that he appreciates the comments and concerns and likes the collaborate spirit at Board and he expects to be called whenever a constituent has a problem or concern. He will return calls and work through the issue. He noted that 37% of people coming into the system are from the Bronx.

Mr. Rodriguez thanked him for coming to the DSC meeting, as he's been informed that in the past it was difficult to get a representative from his agency to attend a meeting. He looks forward to a working relation with the City agencies.

BX. CB #4 DISTRICT SERVICE CABINET MEETING MINUTES-FEBRUARY 20, 2008

NEW YORK CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Roger Montesano, Community Affairs/FDNY, distributed statistics for calendar year 2007. All FDNY categories decreased except for medical emergencies which show an increase for year 2007. EMS – increased 3.17%, non life threatening calls decreased 1.19%, civilian deaths were increased a large part of that is due to the fire in Highbridge. He reported that they reopened the Fire Marshal base in Queens, increasing the availability of more fire marshals. They also have a team that deals with kids in the Junior Fire Setter Program. The FDNY has received a \$900,000 grant given by the US Department of Homeland Security, and thanked Congressman Serrano, who was instrumental in securing the grant. Community Board 4 is a targeted community to benefit from this grant, where one community board per borough will participate.

Battalion Chief Frank Manning, Battalion 17 reported on the stats for CB#4. Lt. Bruce Silas, Fire Safety Education Unit, gave an overview of the program. CB#4 is considered a high risk area and has been chosen to receive the benefits of this Target Five Program. He started that starting next month people

from the Fire Safety Education Unit, will have two targeted groups, one is the schools K, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades where fire fighters will go into the classrooms and conduct on presentation with videos and handouts to the children. The other group will target senior citizens, where they will talk to them about fire safety. Smoke detectors and batteries will be distributed. It is an intense educational program that will be closely monitored by the City.

Capt. Mitch Berkowitz, EMS Station 14, gave an overview of the available units in District 4 including the Haz Mat Units. He informed everyone that all ambulances and EMS apparatus are now equipped with a GPS system.

Ms. Ezell noted that CB#4 held its 7th Annual 4+44 Award Program for 2007 and acknowledged two recipients of that award.

Ms. Venecia Fernandez, NYS Comptroller's Office, spoke about "unclaimed funds" and how people can claim said funds. She said that she will be available for presentations throughout the borough and she will be attending meeting, visiting senior centers to promote and inform every one of the unclaimed funds.

Ms. Carolyn Jones, representing Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson, stated that they will be hosting a business workshop for minority and women owned business entitles "Getting Down to business" on February 22nd from 8:00-10:00am at Lehman College.

They will also have a "How to Comply with IRS Requirement" workshop. For further information, please call #718-547-8854.

She also announced that Senators from the Bronx will be doing an Operation Protect your Home workshop at Spellman High School from 12:00-8:00pm. Lawyers, counselors and banks will be available to assist homeowners who are threatened with foreclosure.

Ms. Barbara Robles Gonzalez, Director of Community Affairs/Bronx DA Office, announced an "After the Arrest" workshop that deals with arraignment process.

Ms. Jacqueline Carter, NYCTA, welcomed the new District Manager. She then stated that there are currently no capital projects in CB#4. She noted that station renovations were completed in 2007, and CB#4 stations are 161st, 167th, 170th & Mt. Eden Avenue. They will begin the painting of the elevated structure in the Spring. She can be reached at #646-252-2654.

Prepared by

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Bronx Community Board #4

February 20th Meeting with DDC-Presentation to District Managers of Community Board 1 and 4 regarding the East 149th Street Reconstruction Project-Exterior Street-A.J. Griffin Place. Project ID HWX733BW

DDC is administering a capital construction project to reconstruct East 149th Street b/w Exterior Street and AJ Griffin Place. The work is necessary to upgrade the existing water main sewer and roadway infrastructure. DDC will make every effort to minimize disruption and inconvenience to residents, pedestrians and businesses.

The work on this project will include, but is not limited to: Distribution water main, Tree planting, Combined sewer reconstruction, catch Basins, and reconstruction of roadway, curbs, sidewalks, pedestrian ramps.

The Project Schedule will be for 12 months winter 08-winter 09 and the working hours will typically be Monday-Friday 7am-6pm with some night and weekend work may be scheduled however, please know that advanced notice will be provided in all instances.

To maintain adequate travel lanes and a safe construction zone lane closures will be necessary. One lane of traffic will be maintained in each direction along East 149th Street. Curbside parking may be eliminated in order to maintain adequate traffic lanes. Advance travel advisories and signage will be posted including 4 traffic agents assigned to the project area.

Community Impacts: Pedestrian access to buildings will be maintained at all times with street closures and or limited access signs posted and emergency vehicles will most definitely be allowed access. Parking may be temporarily restricted and driveway/loading dock access may be temporarily interrupted. Public transportation bus stops and or bus routes may be relocated or detoured.

Limited water service interruptions are planned however, one day advance notice will be provide with specific instructions prior to water shutoff. A rodent control will be performed prior to construction and control stations will be installed by a professional rodent control contractor.

February 27th meeting with SCA, DEC, Bronx Borough President, NYLPI, Community residents and Parents of P.S.156. The meeting was scheduled to give a preliminary review of the former Metro-North property (Mott Haven) Draft Site Management Plan. The presentation was given by the Center for Public Environmental Oversight. The CPEO was retained by NYLPI to conduct independent review of cleanup plan. Fundamental Issue: at sites where contamination is left in place, long-term site management is required to prevent exposures. POINTS: Operation and Maintenance, Monitoring and Inspection, Engineering Controls and Institutional Controls. Specific Issus of Concern: Open areas, Vapor intrusion, Hydraulic Barriers, Groundwater monitoring, Existing schools, Inspection, Responsibility, Contingency plans, and Community oversight.

Background

- The School Construction Authority proposed a cleanup plan under the NY Brownfields program
- Remedy of the site included partial removal of contaminated soil, engineering controls to eliminate exposure to humans, and institutional controls to ensure that site is not used for purposes that would increase chances of exposure
- Community expressed concern that area was not safe as a site for 4 new schools, and that construction was affecting existing schools.

February 27th meeting with the UFT, the Bronx Borough President's office, and the Council for Unity to discuss involving the Community Boards with the Council for Unity. The Council for Unity was founded in 1975, by Robert J. DeSena. At its inception, Council for Unity brought together six gang leaders from contending racial and ethnic groups to make peace. From this evolved the model that the Council of Unity uses today. Their mission is to empower young people, individuals and groups with the skills necessary to promote safety, unity and achievement in schools and communities. Serving youth in grades K-12, Council for Unity invites them to join its chapters, where they spend at least an academic year developing and carrying out plans to promote school and community racial and ethnic harmony. Its original model, involving a credit-bearing yearlong course and a high school curriculum, has been adapted so that the organization now also serves elementary and middle school students, and youth in after-school programs and special settings such as group foster care homes. In 2000, Boys and Girls Club

of America decided to use Council for Unity as a gang intervention strategy, and today chapters operate under Boys and Girls Clubs auspices in six states outside of New York.

Today Council for Unity serves over 80,000 youth daily. Council for Unity is a recognized leader in successfully addressing the issue of youth violence. The Council for Unity has been planting seeds of positive change, chapter by chapter. Together these chapters are growing into communities of peace.

The following are just some of Council for Unity's programs:

School Based Initiative

This in-school program works to create unified, safer environments where young people are free to develop and achieve academically and socially. Council for Unity staff trains teachers and students in its customized curricula on methods and activities that work to unite children from different cultures, develop leadership skills, mediate possible violent incidents and support students in their academic achievement.

After-School Programs

A Federal Justice Department study found that the majority of crimes committed by or against youth occur between the hours of 3:00pm and 8:00pm. CFU addresses the need for after-school/weekend programming by implementing the following:

Membership Advantages Center (MAC): An after school component offering a multitude of services ranging from tutoring and intramural sports to health education and video production,

Bridges: A youth network that reaches out to recently arrived immigrant youth to assist in their transition to a new school and community.

Youth Congress: A youth driven, self-governing body made up of delegates from all sties to make policy and advocate for those issues affecting the lives of young people.

Alumni and Friends Association: A program that promotes social, cultural and community service projects to bring alumni and current members together.

World of Work: Training today's youth to become tomorrow's leaders in the workforce. Participants learn skills such as resume writing, dress for success, working in a diverse workplace and job hunting tips that will last them throughout their career.

MARCH

March 4th Meeting with the Department of Education, Highbridge 5 school Coalition and the SCA to discuss the Highbridge United Middle School initiative. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the Deputy Chancellor of the hardships that many families and children face in the Highbridge community and to inform the DOE of the neighborhood school needs.

March 5th Meeting with Roger Montesano of the FDNY to discuss the Target 5 initiative. The Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta and FDNY Foundation Chairman Stephen L. Ruzow joined Congressman José E. Serrano, (NY-16) on February 11th and unveiled the largest fire safety campaign in the history of the FDNY and its non-profit arm, the FDNY Foundation. The cutting-edge campaign is funded through a major grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Prompted by a tragic fire in the Bronx that took the lives of nine children and an adult in March 2007, the Sound the Alarm campaign features a series of powerful advertisements and public service announcements educating the public on the importance of smoke alarms and how to properly maintain them. The event took place at the Quarters of Engine 68 / Ladder 49 – 1160 Ogden Avenue. The program will be done in all Five boroughs and Community Board Four will be the target area for the

Bronx and the initiative is geared towards reaching our “at risk” population elementary school children and seniors.

March 6th myself and the DM of CB 10 represented the Borough and were the only DMs from the Bronx invited to a meeting with OMB and CAU to discuss our impending 5% budget cut and an additional 3% cut. During our meeting OMB did not offer any hope of a restoration however, the Mayor’s office did ask if we would organize our Borough Community Boards to lobby our state delegation to restore \$750 Million that the State is cutting from the funding it provides to New York City. After said meeting DM Fratta called a meeting at his district office on Monday, March 10th to discuss strategy and coordinate our attendance at the City Council’s Governmental Operations Committee Hearing regarding the budget cuts. The Bronx was the only Borough to have its entire District Manager delegation present.

On March 11th Ms. Ezell, Ms. Saunders and I attended the NYS DEC Public Review and Comment hearing. At which the following was discussed: The Site Management Plan-Remedial Actions performed, development, implementation, and management of all engineering and institutional controls, development and implementation of monitoring systems and monitoring plan and development of the plan to operate and maintain the Sub-Slab Depressurization System. In addition, the SMP establishes protocols for the submittal of Site Management Reports, performance of inspections and certification of results, and the communication of related information of NYSDEC and the public. The SMP will be finalized after the conclusion of the public comment period voluntarily offered by the New York City School Construction Authority and consideration of received comments during the period.

Background

- The School Construction Authority proposed a cleanup plan under the NY Brownfields program
- Remedy of the site included partial removal of contaminated soil, engineering controls to eliminate exposure to humans, and institutional controls to ensure that site is not used for purposes that would increase chances of exposure
- Community expressed concern that area was not safe as a site for 4 new schools, and that construction was affecting existing schools.

On March 12th I attend the Bronx Clergy Coalition and made a presentation to the Coalition in regards to our efforts at Board 4 in relation to the Mayor’s budget cuts and the City’s fiscal crisis.

On March 12th I was given a tour of the Volunteers of America’s Webster House SRO facility.

Webster House is a nine story, 200-unit single room occupancy residence SRO providing permanent, supportive housing to formerly homeless single adults, many living with mental illness or AIDS. The program’s goals are to teach residents appropriate mechanisms to cope with the everyday challenges of life, self sufficiency and integration into the community through intensive case management. The following are the program service that VOA provide: Case Management, Medical Care, Independent Living Skills, Recreational activities, Substance abuse services, Vocational services and off site services

The units are equipped with basic furniture. 50 apartments have a private bathroom while throughout the rest of the facility there is one bathroom for every two apts. Each floor consists of 3 lounges, and case management staff offices. Also within the confines of Webster House you will find a laundry room, conference room, tenant gym, dining pavilion/patio, tenant library and computer room.