

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR
DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT June 2009
Submitted by: José Rodriguez, District Manager

June 30th marks the end of Fiscal Year 2009 and this fiscal cycle has proven to be one that has challenged us to thoroughly think of more cost effective ways to conduct our business. As we continue to be face with financial uncertainties we must remain vigilant not to allow for cuts that will impact on our quality of life. As we support efforts made by City Government to balance our budget and manage our City, we cannot be idle observers in the process but rather diligent participants assisting our leaders in crafting innovative ways in managing our budget difficulties. Last month I gave you an outline of the process by which the Mayor and the City Council prepare for the upcoming fiscal year. We also play a role in that process. As per the City Charter our mandate and responsibilities involve holding District Level Consultation meetings which involves meeting with our local district service chiefs to discuss and coordinate our district requests. These consultations allow us to present and outline our district needs and at the same time agencies communicate their policy priorities and fiscal constraints.

District Consultations are important for they help and guide us in developing our District Needs Statement and provide for the development of our Expense and Capital Budget Priorities.

By reviewing all elements in this process Community Boards are poised to craft and target projects and budgetary items granting greater influence on the upcoming fiscal year.

A great deal has been accomplished during FY2009 however, much remains to be done. As we enter into this summer season and the beginning of FY2010, it is my sincere hope that you all have a healthy, happy and safe summer. May we all return in September, not only refreshed but with a new vision and dedication toward the betterment of this community and Borough.

Lastly, I also want to thank community residents, community based organizations, and our religious institutions for holding the moral fiber of this community. I thank you for holding the torch of hope and passing the mantle of community service a noble task that many in our community are ready to undertake. Our district continues to experience a renewed strength and forward thinking development for a community that continues to move forward.

Listed below are some of the meetings, events and announcements held over the Month.

June 3, 2009-Bronx Borough Service Cabinet Meeting.

As pursuant to Chapter 4, Section 85 of the NYC Charter our monthly Service Cabinet Meeting was held and the following agenda items were discussed:

Overview of New Initiatives at the office of Child Support Enforcement

The new services are available to help on noncustodial parents (NCP) are Modify DSS Order(MDO), Arrears Credit Program (ACP), Expanded Employment Services (EES) and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

- MDO – NCPs whose children received or are receiving cash assistance, can go to their Customer Service Walk-In Center and enter into an agreement that will adjust their payment to reflect their actual income without having to return to Family Court. Arrears (child support debt) owed to NYC can also be adjusted to as low as \$500 for eligible NCPs if the debt grew while income was at or below the federal poverty level.
- ACP – In exchange for finding employment and paying their current child support order for 3 years, NCPs may have their arrears owed to NYC reduced by up to \$30,000.
- EES – Employment vendors predominately serving recipients of cash assistance have expanded their programs to NCPs that are known to the child support program with the objective of connecting them to sustainable employment. This is the Employment Opportunity Program (EOP) in NCPs can participate voluntarily. In addition, the Family Court refers NCP's to an employment program if they don't have a job or are not earning enough money to pay their child support. This service is called the Support Through Employment Program (STEP).
- EITC – NCPs who pay their current child support in full may be eligible for a NYS noncustodial parent income tax credit.

Update on the Pedestrian Plaza Program - NYC DOT will work with selected not-for-profit organizations to create neighborhood plazas throughout the City. We will do this by transforming underused streets into vibrant, social public spaces. This Program is a key part of the City's effort to ensure that all New Yorkers live within a 10-minute walk of quality open space.

The NYC Plaza Program will re-invent New York City's public realm. In New York City, the public right of way comprises 64 square miles of land-that is enough space to fit about 50 Central Parks. The Program will re-claim streets at appropriate locations to make new plazas. Sites will be selected based on the following criteria: Open Space, Community Initiative, Site Context, Organizational & Maintenance Capacity, and Income Eligibility. Eligible not-for-profit organizations can propose new plaza sites for their neighborhoods through a competitive

application process. The City will prioritize sites that are in neighborhoods that lack open space, and will look to partner with community groups that commit to operate, maintain, and manage these spaces so they are vibrant pedestrian plazas.

June 8, 2009 – Meeting with New York City District Council of Carpenters to discuss their Residential Market Recovery Initiative /Residential Market

- The Market Recovery Initiative is a market-sensitive agreement that gives their signatory contractors the ability to compete within the residential sector. The Market Recovery Rate only applies to residential construction under 12 stories in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Staten Island, Queens and Manhattan, north of 110th Street. Every union carpenter can choose to work at this new rate, for a union employer, within the residential sector. As their market share increases in the residential sector, more and more union members will have employment opportunities, but no one is obligated to work under this new agreement, the exception being new members that join the carpenters union through the Market Recovery program. These members must work on Market Recovery jobs for 10,000 hours before they can work on non-market-recovery jobs.
- Wages - The Market Recovery Rate establishes a wage and benefits package of \$46.25 an hour (\$28/hour for wages and \$18.25/hour for benefits). This rate will make our union competitive in a market that is far less funded than the commercial market.
- Apprentices Rates - A first year apprentice working in residential construction under this new rate will receive 40% of journey level rate, just as he or she would under a commercial contract. A second year apprentice will receive 50%, a third year apprentice will receive 65% and a fourth year apprentice will receive 80% of the journey level wage. It is important to note, however, that every union apprentice, regardless of his or her tenure, will receive the same benefit package of \$17.90/hour on residential projects.
- New Opportunities - The construction industry is highly susceptible to change. We must keep up with these changes. A progressive union must make the changes necessary to grow, while never compromising its principle of protecting its members. Only when we stand united can we defeat our competition. Our union will approach the residential sector with the same determination we have always had in the commercial sector. We

will fight for union representation wherever a project may rise. A collective effort to organize this sector of work will bring all of us higher density, more power in every market and more employment throughout the year. The more we all work, the better our futures look.

June 9, 2009 – Rally on the steps of City Hall to save community boards across the City, which faced devastating cuts. Representatives of the city’s 59 community boards met outside City Hall in Manhattan with the support of the borough presidents from Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx, as well as New York City Comptroller Williams Thompson. Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. stated that “Community boards serve as a crucial watchdog to keep our neighborhoods clean and safe, a role that will be even more important in a down economy,” “These proposed cuts are shortsighted, and have the potential to lower the quality of life in neighborhoods not just in the Bronx, but all over the city. Community boards represent the voice of the people, and their budgets must be preserved.” Under the proposed cuts of approximately 11%, the city’s budget would provide only \$169,709 to each community board for the fiscal year 2010, over \$20,000 less than prior years. (Update the City Council has restored PEG cuts of \$29,186 to each community board for FY2010. As a result of the restoration each community board’s operating budget for 2010 has been increased to **\$198,895** (excluding rent and energy)).

June 10, 2009 – Meeting at Taft High School. I Met with Principal and Custodian to inquire about their policy and procedures has it relates to their ball field permits.

June 16, 2009 – Meeting with Council Member Arroyo, City Council Central Staff, District Managers and Chairs of Community Boards 1 and 2 to discuss DHS’ practice of siting of homeless service facilities.

June 17, 2009 – Meeting with the Harlem River Working Group. An ongoing meeting with to discuss strategy on bringing awareness to the Harlem River along the Bronx Coastline in order to develop a access to the waterfront. Pertinent agenda items discussed were committee structures and applying for a NOAA grant to assist in the groups endeavors. NOAA which is the

acronym for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is a federal agency focused on the condition of the oceans and the atmosphere.

June 17, 2009 – District Service Committee Meeting.

June 22, 2009 – 1st alarm fire was reported at 1132 Clay Ave and East 166th Street on 6/21/09 at approximately 2340 hours. As per the Bronx Borough President's Office, American Red Cross (ARC) had originally responded, but no building residents requested assistance at that time.

Building management subsequently padlocked several apartments on the second floor due to fire damage. As a result, several tenants inquired about assistance with temporary shelter.

Aurea Mangual called the board office to give me an update and to inform me that she along with Tracy McDermott were going to the location. Once at the location we attempted to assess the situation. Due to the Ms. McDermott's efforts ARC returned to the in addition, HPD also came by and conducted an official assessment of habitation issues throughout the building.

Later in the evening around 8pm OEM responded and along with HPD did a walkthrough of the entire building and concluded that no vacates would be issued. However, some tenants decided to self-relocate and others decided to stay in their apartments. At around 9:45pm temporary lighting was placed in all hallways except for the 6th floor and the elevator was shut down.

HPD and a private contractor will return on June 23rd to oversee any outstanding issues.