

The City of New York
Bronx Community Board Four
General Board Meeting
Held on Tuesday, MARCH 26, 2013
BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS
1040 Grand Concourse & East 165th Street

Ms. Kathleen Saunders, Chair, Presiding

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. John Howard Algarin, Ms. Naimah Bilal, Ms. Beverly Bond, Mr. Emmanuel Cabrera, Mr. Felix Camero, Mr. Maynard Charles, Ms. Ernestine Davis, Ms. Brenda Dawson, Mr. Robert Garmendiz, Mr. Winston George, Ms. Frances Hudson-Marrow, Ms. Mildred James, Ms. Nurys Laureano, Bishop Earl McKay, Ms. Marie McCullough, Dr. Karie Nabinet, Mr. Ebrahim Dawda Ndure, Mr. Barry Nissen, Mr. Michael Rendino, Ms. Martha Reyes, Mr. George T. Robinson, Sr., Ms. Lilliam Rosa, Ms. Kathleen Saunders, Mr. Jackson Strong, Ms. Shelly Wilson, Mr. Oshrie Zak, Ms. Grace Zarate.

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Mr. Walter Harris, Mr. Ray Henry, Mr. Mohammed Mardah, Ms. Mary Sears.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ms. Ramatu Ahmed, Ms. Evelyn Arauz, Mr. Bourema Niambebe, Mr. Omar O. Ortiz, Ms. Rockyatu Otoo.

STAFF:

Mr. José Rodriguez, District Manager
Ms. Lynne Thompson, Administrative Assistant
Ms. Elizabeth Gonzalez-Rodriguez, Senior Secretary

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Ms. Aurea Mangual, representing Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr.
Ms. Amanda Cromwell, representing NYS Senator Jose M. Serrano
Mr. Elvin Garcia, representing NYS Senator Gustavo Rivera
Mr. Yves Filius, representing NYS Assemblywoman Vanessa Gibson
Mr. Greg Faulkner, representing NYC Councilman Fernando Cabrera

GUEST PRESENT:

Ms. Miriam D. Tabb- Bronx Museum of the Arts, Ms. Evelyn Rivera- President 11 West 172nd Street Tenants Association, Ms. Arlene Hall- Grand Concourse Academy Charter School, Mr. Howard Banker- Grand Concourse Academy Charter School, Ms. Tahiana Urena- Resident, Mr. Robert De La Rosa- 101 East 161st Street Restaurant Corp., Ms. Gloria Hughes- NYPL Grand Concourse Library, Mr. Enrique Colon-CASA New Settlement Apartments, Mr. Patrick Wall- DNA info., Mr. Fenton Thomas- Resident, Ms. Sonja D. Gracy- Resident, Mr. Richard Garey- Resident, Ms. Nora Martins- Sheldon Lobel, P.C., Ms. Latoya Joyner- Resident, Ms. Fay Swavy- Church of God Prophecy, Mr. Paul Philips- NYC Department of City Planning Bronx Office, PO Roger Bennett- NYPD 44th Precinct, Mr. Ernest Serrano- Resident, Ms. Chrelle Silvera- Resident, Ms. Vanna Valdez- Resident, Ms. Juanita Peterson- Resident.

Public Session

Enrique Colon, Outreach Coordinator for CASA – March 27, 2013, Housing Court Campaign Meeting at 6:00 pm. March 30, 2013, from 11 am to 2 pm Housing Legal Clinic Workshop and April 5, 2013 at 6:00 pm, bimonthly movie nights along with PAC (Parents Action Committee) is featuring, “The City”. All events will take place at 35 Marcy Place.

Welcoming remarks and announcements by Ms. Kathleen Saunders, Board Chairperson.

The Chair welcomed everyone and stated that pursuant to Chapter 7 Section 2800 of the City Charter the actions and procedures of community boards and their committees are governed by divisions of the City Charter and New York State Open Meetings Law. Therefore, Community Board 4 shall meet every fourth (4th) Tuesday of the month. This Tuesday, March 26, 2013 the meeting is at The Bronx Museum of the Arts at 1040 Grand Concourse. She called the meeting to order at **6:20 p.m.** She announced a change in the format of the agenda in order to move forward of the business of the corporation. She also announced that Judge Beltre-Rosado, our former member was honored in a luncheon in Albany on March 23, 2013 by Entre Nosotros.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance led by Bishop Earl McKay.

Motion to Review/Correct/Adopt of General Board Meeting: Motion was made by Ms. Frances Hudson-Marrow and seconded by Ms. Naimah Bilal to approve the General Board Meeting minutes for February 26, 2013 with corrections. All were in favor with two abstentions. The Motion duly carried.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT- HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES- HOUSING & LAND USE- MUNICIPAL SERVICES & EDUCATION - PARKS- YOUTH SERVICES

Economic Development Committee- Two Letters of Support for a corporate change in liquor license for a new application for existing business at Billy’s Sports Bar at 856 River Avenue and for an additional bar at the extension. Motion was made by Mr. Michael Rendino and seconded by Mr. Oshire Zak. The motion was duly carried with one abstention on the bar extension. A Letter of Support was also requested from El Molino Rojo Restaurant for a 30 day waiver for a liquor license. The license is only for wine and beer. Motion was placed on the floor by Mr. Michael Rendino and Ms. Mildred James seconded it. The vote was unanimous. Both motions carried.

Municipal Services & Education Committee- No Report.

Housing & Land Use Committee- Grand Concourse Academy is requesting a Letter of Support for an application to Board of Standards and Appeals of a variance for the existing facility in order

to expand its use as a gymnasium. A motion was made by Bishop McKay and seconded by Ms. Mildred James. The motion duly carried.

Parks and Recreation Committee- Met with Helen Foster's group and received report on parks issues. Money will be coming in for Grant Park, Highbridge Park, Nelson Playground, etc. Merriam and Macombs Dam are getting fixed up as well as some work in the skate park at Mullaly's. At Frank Segal there will be some volunteers on April 22, 2013 and at Claremont Park there is going to be some cleaning on April 20, 2013. We are working on the fencing at Joyce Kilmer Park. Some of the elected officials are supporting it and putting in \$400,000 that is needed of this \$900,000 project.

Youth Services- Update on C-Ball League. There was a meeting on March 15, 2013 and it was a great opportunity. We are moving forward with the league. We are putting together a smaller league starting in June. More information will be provided at a later date. Also planning Youth Day if anyone is interested in helping out in the planning, please come to the next meeting on April 18, 2013 at Bronx Lebanon at 6:30 pm.

Health & Human Services Committee – No Report.

Nomination Committee:

The Chair of the Nominating Committee, Ms. Beverly Bond announced that once again there are vacant seats in our community board that have to be filled. She mentioned that this board has some really qualifying people. The committee's nominations for the First-Vice Chair are, Mr. Michael Rendino and Mr. Robert Garmendiz. A motion by Ms. Bond was placed for the First Vice-Chair. After a vote of 17 to 8 with one abstention, Mr. Garmendiz is the new First Vice-Chair. The Municipal Services & Education Chair also had to be filled since Ms. James' vacancy. Her recommendation to fill in as Chair is Ms. Brenda Dawson. Ms. Bond called the motion and Ms. Zarate seconded it. After the vote, all were in favor except for two abstentions. The vote was unanimous and the motion duly carried. The Madame Chair asked the Nominating Committee to reconvene once again and find a replacement for the now emptied Parks Committee Chair and place their nomination to the Board at next month's meeting.

Street Renaming of 168th Street and Nelson Avenue as Bishop Wenzell P. Jackson Place

Ms. Martha Reyes made the motion and seconded by Bishop Earl McKay with correction of the address for the location. The DM will verify the correct address prior to submitting the request for a Letter of Support to Councilmember Foster. The vote was unanimous. Also a request was made by Mr. George T. Robinson that all board members be notified when the unveiling occurs.

Report from the District Manager, Mr. Jose Rodriguez:

Committees have started paying attention to district needs and services that we deserve here in the community. I have met with different community groups and city agencies to talk about the district and what services we are entitled to. In my most recent District Cabinet meeting I made a comment on what we need what to focus on. I am not asking for more. I am asking for what we are entitled to. I am asking if the Grand Concourse was recently done and we have tree plantings that are missing I am asking for the Parks Department or whatever city agency that is responsible to replace those plantings as they would do in any other community. Also to recognize not only are we a community of minorities and new arrivals coming from the Caribbean, Latin America and/or West Africa, but we also are a community with individuals who live in the City of New York coming in to our district. Some would like to say its gentrification though I do not like to use that term. However we are a community that is becoming more diverse. We should embrace that change and we should embrace that diversity. We should demand that our quality of life be held at the highest standard. We should demand that we receive those services that any other community in the City of New York receives. I met with EDC to talk about how we can look at certain areas in the district and develop some type of market study to attract entrepreneurs, developers and new businesses and current businesses to see how we can look at the assets that we already have, whether they be transportation or other businesses and see how we can leverage those assets within our community district to promote our quality of life. In addition, to that we need to revisit some of the coop owners along the Grand Concourse, Walton and Gerard Avenue to talk about some of the issues that they face. Whether it is New Settlement CASA advocating for the affordable housing; whether it is other members of our community advocating for the market rate and new housing; or whether it is Billy's coming in and expanding their business; whether it is other developers taking advantage of the new zoning rules in 161st; whether it is the Landmark Preservation Corporation looking at the Grand Concourse historic district and improving on that; we should embrace the economic diversity, the human capital diversity that we have in this district and see how we can leverage that. It is 2013 and the Bronx is no longer burning and we should no longer use that to promote our cause.

Report by the Office of the Bronx Borough President, Ruben Diaz, Jr. – Aurea Mangual

- State of the Borough Address was well attended.
- Gun Crime Registry – would report annually within 10 days of receiving verification form.
- April 6, 2013 from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm – Health & Wellness Summit at Fordham University with Dr. Max Gomez.
- National Women & Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on March 10, 2013.
- Bronx Week – May 9 to May 19, 2013
- Second Phase of application process for community board membership appointment.

Mr. Rendino asked Ms. Mangual whether a decision had been made by the BBP on the garage and hotel that was supposed to have been developed since they haven't received any information yet. Ms. Mangual advised that she forwarded the information to the Borough President and to Mr. Wilhelm Rhonda and has yet to hear from them.

The Board Chair reminded the board members that are not participating in any committees that they will be contacted and will be assigned to a committee.

Report by Local Elected Officials or their representatives.

Councilman Fernando Cabrera's Office represented by Greg Faulkner

- March 29, 2013 – Counsel Discretionary Funding for non-for-profit organizations– apply online.
- Lien List – property owners that may be in jeopardy of losing their property can get assistance through the Department of Finance who can set up a payment plan.
- Sector Stat Bill – It is expected to pass soon. It will provide a map that will show crime stats in particular areas of the district.
- April 10, 2013 from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm – Forum at Monroe College with mayoral candidates to hold a discussion on what are their plans for our communities, issues on development; and issues on what is going to be done to improve the quality of life of people that live in the Bronx.
- Office number is 347-590-2876.

NYS Senator Jose M. Serrano represented by Amanda Cromwell

- Working on a financial forum at Albany
- Restoring funding for education
- Increasing minimum wage
- Against hydro-fracking
- Advocating for gun restriction and encouraging stronger registration
- Sincerest sympathy for the loss of Pastor Wendell P. Jackson

Assemblywoman Vanessa Gibson's Office represented by Mr. Yves Filius

- Black History celebration went very well.
- Women's History Month Celebration on March 27, 2013 at 5:30 pm at the Andrew Freedman Home – 1125 Grand Concourse.
- Governor and Assembly reach Budget Agreement for 2013-14 Fiscal Year
- Increased funding for Education to \$2.1 billion.
- Budget proposal allocated \$25 million for Dream Act.

NYS Senator Gustavo Rivera represented by Elvin Garcia

- New Community Affairs Representative.

Report by NYPD 44th Precinct – Officer Roger Bennett

- Viewing of the young girl that lost her life on Grand Avenue will take place on 3/27/13.
- Reminder that everyone makes sure that they have smoke detectors in their homes and that they are working properly.
- Universoul Circus ending on March 31, 2013.
- 44th Precinct Council meeting will be held at the nursing home at 1072 Grand Concourse on April 10, 2013 at 7:00 pm.
- Yankee Stadium opening day is April 1, 2013.
- The Explorers Recognition Awards Dinner on March 27, 2013 at Marina Del Rey.
- Family Affair Event at Bronx Museum of the Arts on March 20, 2013 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

- Hurricane Sandy site to be revisited for volunteer services with the Explorers once again.

Announcements

Mr. George T. Robinson - March 30, 2013 - Easter Egg Hunt from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm for boys and girls ages 12 and at the park at W. 155th Street and 7th Avenue. A kids Easter party will take place at the American Legion, Charles Young Post 398 located at W. 154th Street and 7th Avenue.

Mr. Jose Rodriguez - Thank you to Ms. Miriam Taab and the Bronx Museum for everything they do for the Community Board. The Community Board greatly appreciates it.

George T. Robinson - New York Foundation for Senior Citizens – available in Manhattan. The program is free and provides many recreational activities. Transportation is provided. Program runs from 9 am to 5 pm. Such a program is needed in the Bronx.

A question was placed to the board from a participating audience. She was concerned about stores on 161st Street and Gerard Avenue that are now closed. Mr. Rendino advised that the Crowne Donuts will be relocating next to McDonalds and Chase Bank will be combining both branches to make a larger location. The supermarket will remain at its current location.

Meeting adjourned at 7:54 pm.

Prepared and submitted by Ms. L. Rosa.