

The City of New York
Bronx Community Board Four
General Board Meeting
Held on Tuesday, April 28, 2009
BRONX LEBANON HOSPITAL CENTER
MURRAY COHEN AUDITORIUM
1650 Grand Concourse

Ms. D. Lee Ezell, Board Chair, Presiding

Call To Order

The General Board meeting commenced at 6:17 PM by Ms. D. Lee Ezell, Board Chair. All were welcomed to the meeting.

Invocation

The Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance was led by Dr. Karie Nabinet

Board Chair Remarks

Ms. Ezell made mention of the heat wave and talked about the Mayor's press conference regarding the swine flu and the precautions that we all should follow to stay healthy. She then proceeded to make mention of the following: The Grand Opening of the new Home Depot at the new Gateway Center, the New York Yankees giving **three** neighborhood youth the opportunity to become Bat Boys, the 161st Street BID hiring an Executive Director.

The Board Chair thanked the NYPD and our First Responders for their efforts in coordinating last week's incident at JHS 143. She spoke briefly about a change in the agenda relating to the nomination committee. And lastly she announced that the Board will hold a public hearing on May 19th prior to our General Board Meeting regarding 161st Street re-zoning ULURP and wished everyone a Happy Mother's Day.

Review/Correction/Adoption of Previous Minutes

A motion **to approve** for March GBM Minutes was made by Ms. Kathleen Saunders and seconded by Mr. George T. Robinson. The motion was duly carried.

Presentation Yankee Stadium Station by Mr. Mark Mannix, Director of Government & Community Relations, MTA Metro-North

- Metro-North's new Yankees-East 153rd Street Station, located on our Hudson Line, is set to open May 23rd was on time and on budget.
- Their convenient and reliable train service to this station will "take you out to the ball game" without the hassles of parking, tolls, and traffic.
- Fast, convenient "trains to the games" for fans, year-round service for customers traveling to and from the Bronx, and, of course, attractive fares for everyone. The station will serve as yet another access point between the Bronx and Hudson Line communities such as Yonkers, Tarrytown, Beacon, and Poughkeepsie.
- The station features a reasonably priced commuter parking facility with easy access off the Major Deegan (I-87).
- This station also represents their continued commitment and contribution to the revitalization of The Bronx, and our ongoing partnership efforts with the City of New York.

Service, Tickets and Fares

- There will also be plenty of additional service before, during, and after the games on the Hudson, Harlem, and New Haven lines.

- The Hudson Line customers will enjoy direct service from Grand Central Terminal and Harlem-125th Street Station and outlying Hudson Line stations, year-round, seven days a week - offering an array of ticket options to meet your travel needs.
- Harlem and New Haven Line customers, direct service will be available for weekend and holiday games, in addition to some direct return service for weeknight games.
- Harlem and New Haven Line customers will be able to transfer to Hudson Line trains, or special game-day shuttles, at Grand Central or Harlem-125th Street Station, using our new "Via" fares, which are slightly higher than fares to Grand Central.
- Getting to and from the game is a one-ticket ride from our Hudson, Harlem, and New Haven lines.
- Monthly and weekly ticket holders who normally travel to or from Manhattan (on any of the three lines) can travel to or from Yankees-E. 153rd Street Station at no extra charge.
- Tickets sales begin May 1. (they will be posting regular and game-day schedules in the near future.)

Station Amenities

- A short leisurely walk to the stadium and local destinations, the new station has spacious 10-car island platforms to allow us to bring many fans to the game in a short period of time while still providing a comfortable ride.
- Topping the platforms is a 10,000-square-foot mezzanine highlighted by a translucent barrel roof and featuring state-of-the-art customer information displays, providing real-time train status data.

Other facility features are:

- heated passenger shelters.
 - closed-circuit TV cameras.
 - strategically located Ticket Machines (for the purchase of rail tickets).
 - a number of elevators and stairways, all of which are ADA-compliant.
 - enhanced platform lighting.
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- The station facility not only provides a convenient travel option for fans, residents and visitors, it's easy on the eye too.
 - A covered 450-foot covered pedestrian overpass that is ADA-compliant spans from the station and connects the station, mezzanine, stadium, parking area, and local destinations.
 - The overpass is topped by an undulating roof that reflects the rolling waves of Yankee fans. Additionally it provides critical "green" initiatives--natural ventilation and streaming natural daylight.

Commuter Parking

- For customers--business and discretionary alike--wishing to travel into Grand Central, there will also be a parking area for Metro-North customers who want a hassle-free alternative to driving. The facility is only a short train ride into the Terminal.
- The will keep us updated as they near completion of the Yankees-E. 153rd Street Station.

The following questions were asked by Board Member's regarding the Station:

Mr. Carlos Sierra made a statement regarding the lack of parking for community residents and hoped that the MTA Metro North made allowances regarding this issue when designing the Station.

Pastor Wenzell Jackson questioned why the station was named Yankee Stadium when there is more than the Yankees in our neighborhood. MTA Metro North responded by indicating that it was regarding the name. **The stations are named for the location.**

The Board Chair concluded by saying that the Community Board was excited by what the MTA has presented to the full Board.

Presentation Heritage Field, Ruppert Place and 157th Street by Mr. Frank McCue, STADIA-Project Manager and Ms. Michele Lignore-Diaz, Project Manager of New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

- With one of the best competition tracks in New York City, the seven-acre Macombs Dam Park will also feature four handball courts, a soccer/football field with grandstand seating, four basketball courts, landscaping, a new public toilet building and picnic table terrace area. A beautifully landscaped hill will connect the park and the adjacent Ruppert Plaza and Heritage Field, providing an integrated park experience for users and spectators alike.
- Built on top of the roof of the partially below grade, two-story Ruppert Plaza Garage, the park will be surrounded by greenery to provide natural protection from the urban surroundings. The park is currently under construction, with the first section of the park to open for community use in May 2009, providing access to part of a synthetic field with options for running. The full park will be complete in the spring of 2010.
- This 10-acre park to be located on the footprint of the old stadium features three championship-quality, grass athletic fields for baseball, softball, little league, discus, shot put, and javelin. The southern ballfield is oriented in the same alignment as the old Yankee Stadium ballfield and all fields offer spectator seating.
- At Heritage Field, viewing mounds, overlooks, and on-grade bleachers provide a creative array of seating options for families. A new field-level public toilet is available for park users, with an adjacent garden irrigated by a natural rain water system. A tree-lined walking trail outlines the perimeter of the old Yankee Stadium with plaques and markers that commemorate its place in New York City baseball history.
- The pedestrian promenade along Ruppert Plaza will feature ample walking space, shade trees, and terraces with plantings, seating, and landscaping. The plaza allows space for
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- outdoor vendors along the promenade. A grand staircase, hill, and pedestrian ramp seamlessly connect the plaza to the adjacent Macombs Dam Park.
- Heritage Field and Ruppert Plaza will be constructed over a year and a half, after the current stadium is demolished.
- In addition to these replacement facilities, Parks is undertaking additional projects to improve the parkland in the Yankee Stadium area.

Once the Parks Department concluded their presentation several Board Members voiced their opposition and concern regarding the Parks by passing the Committee Process in order to receive full Board approval for the Heritage Park design. After much debate regarding procedures and the neglect by the Parks Department to follow our committee structure, a motion was called to allow the Parks Department to present to the Committee once they have received approval. The motion called to refer Heritage Field design to the Park Committee was made by Pastor Wenzell Jackson and seconded by Mr. Carlos Sierra. The motion did not carry.

The Board Chair explained that whenever an item does not go through a committee for any reason, the item can be brought to the full board, especially when meeting calendars and deadlines. The alternative is to miss the opportunity for the Board to give input.

A second motion was called to grant the Parks Department a letter of support for the Heritage Field design. The Motion was made by Ms. Martha Reyes and seconded by Mr. George T. Robinson. The motion duly carried.

Several community residents voiced concern regarding the way in which the Parks Department by passed the Community Board's Committee structure. In addition, the same individual voiced concern with the time frame for all parks being on-line. (One resident presented a proposal to the Parks Department for to incorporate Gate 2 entrance structure into the Heritage Field design.) Ms. Ezell introduced Mr. Mark Costello of the Save the Yankee Gate 2 Committee. The group developed a proposal to save the gate for Heritage Field. Ms. Ezell stated that even though the proposal was submitted late, it is worthy to be heard.

Presentation Overview of ENVISION-Bronx Program by Ms. Megan O'Connor, Director Of Programs, NYC Alliance Against Sexual Assault

- The NYC Alliance and 11 of NYC's Rape Crisis programs are partnering with communities in New York City to prevent sexual violence. We are working with community leaders and community members in the South Bronx, the Lower East Side and Williamsburg to address the causes the conditions that allow sexual violence to exist in relationships, families and communities.
- Sexual violence is any completed or attempted sexual act against a person's will. It ranges from unwanted sexual comments or advances to completed rape.
- In the U.S., 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men have experienced an attempted or completed rape at some time in their lives.
- Nearly 80% of incidents of sexual violence are perpetrated by someone known to the victim.
- Gender inequality, poverty, race, and other social factors are linked to sexual violence.
- Sexual violence is a silent, unrecognized problem in families and communities. It is a serious public health problem and a violation of human rights.
- Sexual violence is a preventable problem that requires community involvement.
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Nominations Committee Report

Ms. Ezell announced that the Nominations Committee did not meet and that the Committee Chairperson resigned. She called on the board to hold off on filling the open positions until the by-laws section on elections has been presented. The Board Chair then called for a meeting of the By-Laws Committee to take place before the next meeting so that the election section may be presented at the May meeting.

She then proceeded to re-address the committee membership form from the Committee Membership portion of the By-Laws. After discussion with the Borough President's General Counsel regarding the form it was suggested that we use the same terms used by the Borough President for Community Board Membership. The term in question is: Civic organization, Fraternal, Community organization. The motion was made by Pastor Wenzell Jackson and seconded by Mr. Barry Nissen. The motion duly carried.

Remarks By The District Manager

Mr. José Rodriguez, District Manager wished everyone a good evening and spoke about the following from his report and indicated that a copy of the report may be obtained at the office for review.

The District Manager provided an overview of the events and announcements made over the last month by the Executive and Legislative branches of City Government.

Executive:

- The Mayor made a statement on the start of public review for 161st Street River Avenue Rezoning to strengthen the Bronx Civic Center.
- Mayor Bloomberg and HRA Commission Doar announced that New Yorkers on Food Stamps will receive a 13 % increase in monthly grants from the federal stimulus package.
- The Mayor on his weekly radio address spoke of using transparent and innovative ways to keep government accountable as we receive federal stimulus funds.
- The Mayor mentioned how the city launched a new tool that will let citizens track how the City is using the stimulus dollars that are coming to us as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that President Obama signed in February.
- The Mayor announced a new initiative that would prove to assist nonprofits with managing financial difficulties as a result of the economic downturn.

Legislative

- The Council voted on legislation to extend New York City's rent stabilization laws. In conjunction, the Council voted on a resolution that officially recognizes that the city is in a housing emergency which requires rent control practices.
- The City Council Announced their FY 2010 Budget Response the following are the Council's comments from their executive summary.
 - *Tax Revenues: Steep Declines in Economically-Sensitive Taxes.*
 - *Property Tax Dampens Revenue Recovery in the Out years.*
 - *The 2010 Preliminary Budget: Many Uncertainties; Difficult Choices.*
 - *Fiscal 2010 Preliminary Budget Response The State Budget: Federal Stimulus Funds Provide Partial Relief. April 2nd*

- The City Council voted to reduce its operating budget at a total of more than \$1.7 million. This reduction follows last year's historic reduction of \$2.3 million, the most substantial reduction of the budget in the history of the modern Council. The Council's budget reductions will impact Central Staff's operations. Council Member's individual budgets will not be reduced.

Meetings, events and announcements held over the Month

- Meeting with Mina Davis of the New York Urban League (NYUL) located at 1530 East 222 Street, Bronx, New York.
- Meeting with Peter Rivera and Craig M. Wilson of the National Hip Hop Museum.
- Meeting with Mid-Bronx Senior Citizens Council, Inc regarding their festival for the Grand Concourse Centennial.
- Meeting with Levon Chambers, Construction Marketing Representative Community Affairs for Greater New York Laborers-Employers Cooperation and Education Trust.

Report from Acting Bronx Borough President Earl Brown

Ms. Aurea Mangual, representing the Borough President made the following report:

- 2009 Community Board Reappointments
 - Community Board Members who have submitted a reappointment application should continue to serve until they receive a letter from the Borough President regarding their reappointment. The terms of Community Board Members who have chosen not to reapply for a new term ends on March 31st.
- The Borough President announced a commitment of \$2.5 Million in funding for Bronx Children's Museum.
- Initiative in partnership with the Jewish Community Relations Council of NY/CAUSE-NY and Hostos Community College to assist struggling nonprofits.
 - The Office has also launched a new webpage called the "Bronx Nonprofit Corner" where nonprofits can find information about upcoming events, trainings and resources to survive the financial crisis.

Report from 44th Precinct, Police Officer Hilda Estrella

Officer Estrella made the following report:

- Announcement of the 44th Pct's Fellowship Breakfast
- Volley Ball sign up for girls 14-17 years of age
- Gun Program this past Saturday was a success

Public Session

Candida Bido of DHMH gave an update on the swine influenza and heat related fatalities.

Adjourned

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 pm.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY: Mr. Jose Rodriguez, District Manager for Mr. Oscar Real, Recording Secretary

