

**BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8
MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON DECEMBER 18, 2008**

Attendees

Debbie Bowden, Chair
Bob Bender
Tom Durham
Thomas Giallorenzi
Marvin Shelton
Karen Green
S. Alexander
R. Press
Jamin Sewell
M. Rosen
M. Bez

Z. Safran, JPAC, Fordham Plaza
Tony Freyre, School Construction
Authority community liaison
Alan Senzer, Chief, Bronx office SCA
Steven Quo, project design
Frank Angerano, PS 95 project manager
Abdur Razzag, SCA
James Carter, SCA
Elan Abner, SCA
Francesca Weiss, AmPark School

The meeting began at 7:30PM. Chair Debbie Bowden introduced the team from the School Construction Authority, who made a presentation on the design of the new AmPark School adjacent to PS 95.

The new building will be the PS 95/AmPark School. Cost is estimated at \$48,460,000. The new building will accommodate 416 students. The location was chosen because it would have the least impact on the functioning of PS 95. One consequence of the construction is that the existing early childhood playground has had to be relocated to the existing playground.

The existing PS 95 building is 107,000 square feet. The new building will be 62,000 square feet. The new building will be ADA compliant and will be air-conditioned. Elevators in the new building will offer access to all floors of the existing PS 95 building; however, that building will still not be ADA compliant.

A September, 2010 opening date for the new building is planned.

The basement level of the new building will enlarge on the existing cafeteria at PS 95. The second floor will contain classrooms. Third floor will have a music room and classrooms. The fourth floor will contain space for PS 95. The rooftop terrace of the new building will contain science labs and a music room as well. Every floor will connect the two buildings.

There will be a loss of 10,000 square feet of playground space. Designers say that the rooftop terrace on the new building will compensate for this loss of space. The new building will not contain a gym but will have a "multi-function space." The AmPark School will not use the PS 95 gymnasium.

Construction is being done during non-school hours (weekends, summers, etc.) Approximately 10% of the construction work has been done to date. The new school will comply with the City's "green" initiative.

There was some discussion of the overcrowding problem in CB8. The SCA officials said that they are not the proper agency to address this problem. They confirmed that a reported K-8 school in the Spuyten Duyvil vicinity has not yet been sited. The website for communicating about real estate availability to SCA is cecinput@nycsca.org

Francesca Weiss, the literacy coach at AmPark, explained that AmPark has two classes per grade and follows a certain DOE model. It is zoned for the Amalgamated Housing, Van

Cortlandt Village, reservoir vicinity. It is currently accepting “overflow” students from PS 81, where some grade levels are now capped. As a “school of choice” it offers space first to those in the zone, then to those outside the zone.

Class size is 17 or 18 students. The school is K-5 but now runs only through 3rd grade; new grades are added each year. When the new building is complete, the school will move from the Workmen’s Circle building. Current enrollment is 91 students but the school is expected to grow to 300. Ms. Weiss does not yet know where the graduating 5th graders will go to middle school.

AmPark has a school-designed curriculum that complies with state and city requirements. The school does not use grading but substitutes “rubrics” and teacher assessments. It is an empowerment school in the Hurwitz network.

Chair Debbie Bowden reported on the previous month’s meeting, which featured Congressman Anthony Weiner. Although Congressman Weiner was very good, turnout was disappointing. The Chair also reported that nine New York City schools made the US News list of the country’s best high schools. Two Bronx schools were included: the High School of American Studies and Bronx High School of Science.

There was discussion that pending NYC budget cuts will hurt our schools and that education should be our top priority in the coming year’s budget.

There was also discussion about the overcrowding problem. Although some of the cuts to planned expansion in classroom seats in the area have been restored, there are still not enough seats to accommodate the current enrollment, much less the increase that is to come because of new construction and continuing growth in the community.

There will be no January committee meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Bender
Approved by Debbie Bowden

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