

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

**MINUTES OF THE LIBRARIES & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON MAY 8TH, 2014
AT THE DERFNER MUSEUM HEBREW HOME
JACOB REINGOLD PAVILION**

Present

Marvin Goodman
Martin Wolpoff
Sylvia Alexander
Maria Khury
Mercedes Zegarra-Soja
Rebecca Barbier
Peter Pamphile
Susan Chevlowe
Marina Lopez

Affiliation

CB8, Committee Chair
CB8, Committee Vice Chair
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Manager, Riverdale Branch Library
Manager, Van Cortlandt Branch Library
Curator, Derfner Museum, Hebrew Home
Community visitor

The meeting began at 7:20PM. The Chair introduced our guest speaker, Susan Chevlowe, who is the Chief Curator of The Derfner Museum, and thanked her for her extended time and for providing refreshments to our group.

Susan Chevlowe gave a brief history of the founding of the Derfner Museum, its founding benefactors and its move to its current location. This is probably the only public museum in Bronx Community Board No. 8's district, and more residents should visit it, and the art displays at the Hebrew Home. The current exhibit is showing propaganda art work of the Nazis during World War II. Dr. Chevlowe took the group on an extensive tour of the museum's permanent exhibits. These center on religious artifacts and specific objects related to specific religious holidays. On display also is a partially destroyed torah, burnt by the Nazis during the infamous 1938 Kristallnacht. We were also treated to several exhibits on the grounds of the Hebrew Home in the immediate area of the museum itself. Of greatest interest were: two permanent exhibits of moving electric trains making their way through villages and valleys (an on-going exhibit which many thought superior to the annual train exhibit at the NY Botanical Gardens), a 3-D exhibit of items and artifacts of life on the Lower East Side of Manhattan in the 1930's, and a view of a huge fish tank featuring many exotic tropical fish. We saw paintings on display in another area of leading Israeli and Jewish leaders of the late 20th century.

Our next item of business was the approval of the minutes of the March 12th meeting.

Our new business items included a presentation by Peter Pamphile, manager of the Van Cortlandt Library by Rebecca Barbier, manager of the Riverdale Library on the Capital budget request items for fiscal year 2016 for the branch libraries in Bronx Community Board No. 8's area of jurisdiction. The capital budget for fiscal year 2016 centered on items requested for the Riverdale Library, the Van Cortlandt Library and the Spuyten Duyvil Library:

1. Full interior renovation and a new roof for the Spuyten Duyvil branch library. This is to include life safety systems, HVAC replacement and interior renovation, including ADA compliance. The HVAC systems rehabilitation and replacement is estimated at \$550,000.

2. Partial interior renovation of the Riverdale branch library, including upgrading life safety systems, HVAC replacement and changes for ADA compliance, new furniture and equipment, as well as rehabilitation of the retaining wall, sidewalks, entrance area and doors and an upgrade to the drainage system. The HVAC replacement is estimated at \$900,000. The exterior rehabilitation areas cost is estimated at \$720,000. (There is strong evidence of interior water seepage after rainstorms which may lead to mold and carpeting damage).
3. Major renovation of the Van Cortlandt branch library, including the need to rehabilitate the façade and affected interior spaces, a new roof, a renovation of interior spaces, new windows new furniture, new equipment, and a replacement of the roof top HVAC unit for ADA compliance. The estimated cost is \$1,800,000.
4. Funding to acquire an additional, or new site for the Van Cortlandt branch library. The current library is too small to meet the demand of a growing population. The estimated cost of the new site acquisition is \$1,000,000.

The members of the Libraries and Cultural Affairs Committee gave unanimous approval to these items for submission to the full Community Board for consideration.

The meeting ended at 9:15PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 12th at the Van Cortlandt branch library at 6:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marvin Goodman
Chair, Libraries and Cultural Affairs Committee