

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING
HELD ON MARCH 10, 2009 AT THE
CONSERVATIVE SYNAGOGUE, 475 WEST 250TH STREET**

PRESENT: R. Abbott, B. Bender, D. Bowden, A. P. Cassino, A. P. Creaney, W. S. Dolny, T. Durham, R. Fanuzzi, T. Feerick, B. Feinberg, A. G. Feldmeier, B. Fettman, P. Friedman, T. Giallorenzi, A. Goldman, J. Goris, V. Gray, M. Khury, G. O. Koppell, B. Maybury, D. McShane, C. G. Moerdler, K. O'Brien, K. Pesce, J. M. Pilsner, J. Plaza, T. Rubinstein, B. Trebach, E. Tossas Tucker, M. Wolpoff, H. Young

ABSENT: A. Fana, M. Katzenstein, I. Ladimer, R. Moll, J. O'Reilly, C. Prentice, J. M. Reyes, S. Scheinbach, L. Spalter, I. W. Stone

STAFF: N. Stent – District Manager, CB 8
D. Bay – Community Associate, CB 8
P. Manning – Community Associate, CB 8

GUESTS: J. Martin – rep. State Senator Jeffrey Klein
A. Zamcheck – rep. State Senator Jeffrey Klein
R. Martos – rep. Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz
A. Keefe – rep. Councilman G. Oliver Koppell
A. Ferreira – rep. Councilman Miguel Martinez
A. Toledo – rep. Bronx Borough President Earl Brown
N. Danyluk – Department of City Planning
L. Acevedo – Jerome Park Library
S. Alexander
S. Barker – Kingsbridge Library
M. Bell – American Cancer Society
M. Borell
A. Cohen
D. Conley – Riverdale Mental Health Association
L. Cria
J. DeSio – Riverdale Review
A. Faustin – American Cancer Society
E. Feigenbaum
G. Flores – American Cancer Society
M. Hernandez – Riverdale/Kingsbridge Neighborhood Association
Capt. A. Lindquist – 50th Precinct
P. Moerdler
J. O'Brien – Riverdale Mental Health Association
R. Press – Bronx News
C. Reich
Det. L. Rodriguez – 50th Precinct, Community Affairs
H. Scheinberg
R. Times
D. Tracey

Chairman convened the meeting at 7:45 PM.

Gallery Session

- A. Dick Conley announced the 50th anniversary of Riverdale Mental Health Association (RMHA). There will be a 5 K run/walk events held on April 26th in Van Cortlandt Park to mark the occasion and to raise funds for RMHA. D. Conley invited everyone to attend and participate. A pamphlet with full information was provided.
- B. Guillermo Flores and Megan Bell, American Cancer Society, presented information on the organization, research funding and statistical data pertinent to Bronx residents. They informed the community of the local Bronx office at 2330 Eastchester Road. They advised of the Relay for Life event at Manhattan College on April 4th and 5th. For further information call 1-800-ACS-2345 or www.cancer.org
- C. Marjorie Borell informed of her background in real estate and advised of her volunteering with the newly established Greater Riverdale Chamber of Commerce to promote revitalization of the district's commercial area to improve quality of life.
- D. Robert Press expressed deep concern with quality of life issues in the community, i.e.; the downgrade of education, negative neighborhood changes including rash of property vacancies, etc.
- E. Leesa Dillon, Bronx News 12, highlighted the recent station initiatives, which included weather and investigations. Additionally, she proudly noted that there had been no layoffs in the wake of the poor economy.
- F. Daniel Tracey invited the community to the next meeting of Kingsbridge Riverdale Neighborhoods Association to be held on March 17th at the Church of the Mediator, 260 West 231st Street, from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM. He advised that the first meeting had a large turnout with 30 members of the community present.

1. Approval of Regular Board Meeting Minutes of February 10, 2009

The minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Discussion of Executive Board Committee Meeting Minutes of March 4, 2009

The minutes were adopted as written.

3. Chairman welcomed Councilman G. O. Koppell and staff member Aya Keefe; Jay Martin and Abraham Zamcheck, representing State Senator Jeff Klein; Randi Martos, representing Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz; Ariel Ferriera, representing Councilman Miguel Martinez; Andy Toledo, representing Borough President Earl Brown; Nestor Danyluk, Department of City Planning; Capt. Al Lindquist, and Det. Luis Rodriguez, 50th Precinct; John DeSio, Riverdale Review; and Robert Press, Bronx News.

Chairman invited Captain Lindquist, 50th Precinct, to address the Board.

Captain Lindquist reported that the crime in the 50th precinct continued to decrease. Robberies had decreased by 11, felony assaults by 4 and burglaries by 18. Car theft was up by 1. Captain cautioned the need to guard against credit card theft. He discussed the recent shooting at the Connecting Bar on Broadway at the Yonkers border. The 50th is working with Yonkers Police and the Community Board and seeking a revocation of the Bar's Liquor License.

He invited all to attend the Precinct's Community Council meeting on March 12th where the Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson will be speaking.

4. Chairman invited Councilman Oliver Koppell to address the Board.

Councilman Koppell advised that the Council is addressing the budget with relation to the stimulus package and he was working with the Department of Education to maximize the Gifted and Talented program. At this time, there has been no final decision on the retention of the Whitehall school annex. The ULURP application for Broadway Plaza will be before the Council momentarily and the Councilman will review the Board's application conditions and act accordingly. Community Board appointments may be postponed until after the election of the new Borough President. He reminded applicants to forward applications to his office in addition to submitting to the Borough President. Councilman further advised of his support against the budget reductions to Community Board. The City Council vote for development of the Bed Bug Task Force has been set for March 11th. He announced the good news of the availability of more summer youth jobs.

5. Report from the Office of the Borough President – A. Toledo

Chairman announced that the new Borough President is Earl Brown, who will remain in the position until the special election is held on April 21st.

- Community Board appointments will not go forward until the election of the new Borough President.
- Distributed an Unemployment Benefits FACT Sheet constructed by the Borough President that can be used as an aid with the unemployment process.

6. Report from the Department of City Planning – N. Danyluk

- Broadway Plaza ULURP application came before City Planning Commission on February 17th and the vote was favorable. The application is currently at City Council for its vote.
- Two Special Natural Area District applications are pending referral to the Board.

7. Chairman's Report

- Chairman McShane advised that Board Members Robert Moll and Todd Rubinstein had tendered their resignation from the Board effective April 1st. Councilman Miguel Martinez, whose District includes Marble Hill will attend the April 7th Board meeting being held at the Marble Hill Community Center.
- There will be further expansion of the Board's website and volunteers with skills and interests in that area are asked to contact Chairman and/or the District Manager.
- The plan for contending with the proposed Community Board budget cuts will be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget during the month of March. However, the goal is to have the cuts eliminated altogether.

8. Treasurer's Report

Chairman McShane reported in the absence of J. Reyes.

- The Friends of Community Board No. 8 subcommittee will produce a report on the research and recommendations from the Conflict of Interest Board, other community boards and the like with respect to the Board engaging in fundraising.

9. District Manager's Report – N. Stent

- The Bronx District Managers will be testifying before the Governmental Operations Committee of the City Council this Thursday, March 12, 2009. Many of the 59 community boards in the city will also be testifying and be represented by their DMs and chairs. The District managers are asking the City Council to oppose the community board proposed budget cuts for FY 2010.
- The Board office has a new intern sponsored by Riverdale Neighborhood House. Her name is Jaime Millan and she is a 9th grade student at RKA, MH/HS 141. She will be in the office twice a week for 4 hours in total. Her projects will include working on the youth and senior directories for the website, handling a few complaints and general office work.

10. Committee Reports

A. Youth Services

No report.

B. Aging – K. Pesce

The next meeting will be held on March 24th at Riverdale Senior Services. The Committee will work with the Health, Hospitals & Social Services Committee on the AARP's report that called for a bill to prohibit the gifting of pharmaceutical drugs to doctors.

C. Budget – K. O'Brien

1. The response letter on the Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2010 has been submitted and is available on the website. Copies have been emailed to each member of the Board.
2. In preparation of the budget requests for Fiscal Year 2011, K. O'Brien reviewed the guidelines and formulas for selecting budget requests. The deadline for Committee budget priorities is June.

D. Economic Development – R. Fanuzzi

1. Yankee Stadium job referrals are being conducted through the Borough President's Office of Bronx Overall Economic Development.
2. Appreciation goes to Suzanne Axelbank for providing space at her shop on 238th Street for community use; Beal Bocht Restaurant for its sponsorship of Sunday Brunches once a month for cultural mixes.
3. Skyview has agreed to run a van to Johnson Avenue for shoppers.
4. R. Fanuzzi has joined with Riverdale Economic Vitality (REV) group to lobby Trader Joe to develop a site in the Board district.
5. The Committee is opposed to the proposal for retail wine in supermarkets. The following resolution was presented:

WHEREAS, the wine and liquor stores of Bronx Community Board No. 8 district comprise a vital part of the area's small business community; and

WHEREAS, the wine and liquor stores of the district depend upon the sale of wine for a very large portion of their revenue; and

WHEREAS, a key objective of the Bronx Community Board No. 8, according to its 197A-Plan, is to promote the economic vitality of businesses in the area; and

WHEREAS, the supermarkets located in the district already provide the residents of the district with a very wide range of goods and services and enjoy steady patronage; and

WHEREAS, competition from these larger retailers would inflict harm upon the economic prospects of small businesses in Bronx Community Board No. 8; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Bronx Community Board No. 8 opposes any measure that would allow the State of New York to grant supermarkets the right to sell wine.

Vote: 27 in favor, 3 opposed, and 0 abstentions

In Favor –

R. Abbott, B. Bender, D. Bowden, A. P. Cassino, A. P. Creaney, W. S. Dolny, T. Durham, R. Fanuzzi, T. Feerick, B. Feinberg, A. G. Feldmeier, B. Fettman, P. Friedman, A. Goldman, J. Goris, V. Gray, M. Khury, B. Maybury, D. McShane, C. G. Moerdler, J. M. Pilsner, J. Plaza, T. Rubinstein, B. Trebach, E. Tossas Tucker, M. Wolpoff, H. Young

Opposed –

T. Giallorenzi, K. Pesce, K. O'Brien

6. The next Committee meeting will be held March 26th.

E. Education – D. Bowden

1. The State is seeking to have the annual reading and math tests normally given in January and March to 3rd and 8th graders pushed back to April. Opponents of using these test results to evaluate teachers believe the tests are given too early in the school year to properly evaluate teachers' performance.
2. NYC's public elementary and middle schools have seen an increase in class size with an average of four students for nearly every grade level for the first time in many years.
3. There were 13 schools taken off the state failing list. Twelve are middle schools.
4. Forty-two new public schools are due to open fall 2009: 14 Bronx, 13 Manhattan, 10 Brooklyn, 3 Queens, 1 Staten Island, and 1 undetermined. About 40% of these schools will open in buildings of closed schools.
5. Mayoral control of the schools will come before State legislators again in June 2009.
6. Free and reduced school lunches have increased since the recession.
7. Application deadline for the Community Education Council has been extended to March 14th.

8. The Education Committee will meet jointly with Public Safety Committee in May or June to address Bronx gang activity.
9. The next Education Committee meeting will be held March 24th, at the Board Office, at 7:30 PM. Renée Cloutier, Principal of PS 7 will be the guest speaker. PS 7 is an underutilized school. The next Community Education Council meeting will be held on March 17th, at MS 32, at 6:15 PM;
10. Information as to the fate of the Whitehall Annex is still not known, and a letter has been sent to Chancellor Klein under both signatures of Chairman McShane and D. Bowden to support the reacquisition.

F. Environment & Sanitation

B. Trebach reported on behalf of S. Scheinbach.

1. Illegally posted signs, flyers, and graffiti continue to plague the community. A moving company and pet care company are primarily responsible for most the postings on utility poles. Sanitation Enforcement is aware of both and a subpoena has been issued to the cell phone company to provide subscriber's name. However, the moving company is hard to track since they use prepaid cell phones and change subscriber names frequently. City Councilwoman Gail Brewer has been working on this issue. Complaints of this nature can be reported at the Board office, or to 311. With regard to graffiti on stores, property owners receive a "Request to Remove" along with a waiver to allow the City to clean free of charge. If the owner takes no action within 45 days, the Department of Sanitation can issue a "Notice of Violation."
2. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will be opening the upstate Cannonsville Reservoir to canoes, sail boaters and kayakers, with the aim of expanding the program to other upstate reservoirs. Fishing from rowboats and shores has already been allowed in all upstate reservoirs. This practice contrasts with DEP not allowing any public access to the Jerome Park Reservoir.
3. DEP presented its procedures for emergency response in case of chlorine gas leaks at the Jerome Park Reservoir, in particular Gatehouse No. 5 where two such leaks occurred in the past year. Chlorine monitors are inside the building and personnel seem prepared to handle a leak. However there is no emergency coordination with Lehman College and Bronx High School of Science located immediately across the street and it appears they depend on the NYC Fire Department. S. Scheinbach recommended installation of alarms outside the building to alarm the schools; and school personnel training for response to such emergency.
4. DEP is planning to hire outside contractors to operate the Croton filtration plant. Refer to Committee minutes for complete report.

G. Housing – T. Durham

1. The Operation HOPE report on unsheltered homeless number shows a city low of 2,328 with Bronx County at its lowest.
2. A Stop Work Order was issued on 3882 Cannon Place supportive housing application due to lack of private organization sponsorship.
3. The Committee will meet on March 30th. Discussion will include Department of Building's utilization of Certification of Correction.

H. Land Use – C. Moerdler

The Committee discussed the rules for Fieldston's Historic District's Master Plan. C. Moerdler's comments on the Plan were forwarded to Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) and all Board members. C. Moerdler is in contact with the Chair of LPC on the matter, and the Committee will re-visit to conclude and finalize its recommendations at its next meeting. Date to be announced.

I. Law, Rules and Ethics

No report.

J. Libraries and Cultural Affairs – R. Abbott

The Committee did not meet in February. The next meeting will be held on March 23rd at the Board Office, at 7:30 PM.

K. Community Services Award – R. Abbott

The Board's Annual Community Services Award presentation will be held at the Board meeting in May. The Press Release announcing the event has been sent to newspapers in the area. Nominations are due by April 10th. R. Abbott asked for volunteers to serve with him on the Committee.

L. Parks and Recreation – B. Bender

1. The Committee met jointly with Public Safety and discussed last summer's noise complaints in the parks. The 50th Precinct will monitor to eliminate the problem.
2. The Committee will hold its regular meeting on March 25th.

M. Public Safety – A. G. Feldmeier

1. The meeting with Parks was very successful.
2. A shooting occurred at the Connecting Bar on Broadway. The 50th Precinct will take necessary steps to divest of liquor license. The owner will be given notice of a special meeting on March 31st, at the Precinct at 7:30 P.M for the purpose of adopting a resolution to that affect.

N. Traffic and Transportation – A. P. Cassino

The next Committee meeting on March 18th will address Con Ed's M-29 roadway repairs; MTA's proposal to toll the Broadway Bridge; bicycle parking with new construction; bike lanes; and pay toilet site recommendations.

Meeting adjourned 9:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia Manning
Community Associate