

PENDING COMMITTEE APPROVAL

**BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8, JOINT TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION
AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Minutes of June 29, 2016 Meeting

Committee Attendance:

M. Heller, Committee Chair and Member
S. Alexander, Committee Chair and Member
S. Sarao, Committee Member
A. Creaney, Committee Member
J. Green, Committee Member
J. O'Brien, Committee Member
H. Young, Committee Member

Committee Absences:

D. Fuchs, Committee member

Guests:

Neile We
Lisa Heannover, Riverdale Press
Robert Press, Bronx Voice
Dahiana Sanchez
Constance Whitlock
Leidy Ramos, AAPCS
Cynthia Lambert
Deborah Wallace, Committee for BX10/20 Better Service
Roderick Wallace, Committee for BX10/20 Better Service
Bev Kelly, Committee for BX10/20 Better Service
Colin Greene, AAPCS
Cora-Jane Vanlierop
Afid Corporan, AAPCS
Nephtali Sierra
Jasmin Alonzo
John & Christine Clark
Jenny Jiang
Cindy Jiang
Jose O. Vargos
Daniel Rawells
Susan Brenner
Yessenisa Benitez, LMSW
Canus Rodriguez
Martha Rivera
Orlando Cintron

Jaime Carabello

Chair Michael Heller called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with a quorum present. The May 2016 minutes of the Traffic and Transportation were approved upon a vote presented.

Atmosphere Charter School Traffic Problems and other issues - The chair provided a briefing on a recent presentation recently given at the Community Board meeting session by a group of concerned residents regarding the Atmosphere Academy Charter School in the Marble Hill area. Present was Colin Greene, the Principal of the Academy and Ms. Cintron of the local community group. Ms. Cintron and her group had significant concerns over the academy.

Chair Alexander expressed the desire to hear from members of the community and the group of concern citizens, Marble Hill United Avenue Association, allowing a full dialogue and forum to both share and collaborate together.

Chair Heller explained the role or lack of role of the Community Board and committees, but equally expressed the desire to hear concerns while recognizing that our ability to effect any change at this juncture is limited.

Ms. Cintron President, made a statement to the Committees including their concerns, including double-parked cars, traffic congestion and a perceived lack of proper notice given to the local area. Ms. Cintron questioned the application process, and whether proper procedures were being followed. Ms. Cintron has completed numerous conferrals with local politicians and other constituents regarding her concerns. The Association provided a downloaded copy of the application/proposal for the public charter school and has reviewed it in its entirety. Chair Alexander stated that she has completed conferrals with SUNY and SUNY representatives have stated that the application and process was conducted appropriately.

Chair Heller provided Mr. Greene an opportunity to speak. Mr. Greene stated that his school serves children and families in the area, are sensitive to the community and want to partner with the community. Mr. Greene does not wish to have a confrontational relationship, but rather wants to have a collaborative relationship. Mr. Greene asked that we recognize other points of view. Community School district is large and when they originally proposed it had one location that did not come to fruition. A second location was also chosen.

Mr. Greene stated that Marble Hill is part of Manhattan but is part of the Charter District. Mr. Greene stated repeatedly that he wants to serve the community and improve any negative issues. Mr. Greene introduced his bussing coordinator, Ms. Sanchez who indicated that the school has buses lining up at 3:45 p.m. and departing at approximately 4:45 p.m. The school also has an afterschool bus at 5:30 p.m. Ms. Sanchez wants to determine which buses are causing problems and address those issues specifically. Ms. Sanchez has attempted to resolve any issues

and was advised to call 311 when and if there are buses that appear to be causing traffic problems. The School has done that recently in order to improve any congestion. Ms. Sanchez stated that the school has some signage. They have 3 buses that arrive in 5-8 minute increments. Ms. Sanchez stated there are no weekend buses and no buses after the 5:30 p.m. time frame.

Chair Heller wanted clarification on community outreach in the specific area of the current location. Mr. Greene stated that they made many efforts to provide information, postings, emails and other efforts.

Yassenia Benitez, a licensed social worker was allowed to provide testimony. Ms. Benitez stated that Mr. Green has been harassing, cursing and all on video. Ms. Benitez stated that many community members feel threatened by the school and its employees. The community is hurt, upset.

Constance Whitlock, a resident from Marble Hill for many years stated that she had no idea that a school was happening. Ms. Whitlock is a member of the community and only found out about the school recently and had no notification.

Cynthia Lambert, who lives at 47 Marble Hill Avenue for forty plus years provided testimony. Ms. Lambert disputes that the school reached out to the community. Ms. Lambert said she met a woman who was taking applications for the school and had no knowledge that the school was opening up in the community area. Ms. Lambert has been inconvenienced many times.

Cory Jane Vanburen, provided testimony and has lived in the community for 45 years and was not notified about the community school. If there was a posting on a lamp pole she believes she would have noticed it. Ms. Vanburen stated there were no postings in bodegas or apartment buildings. Ms. Vanburen does not know who was informed, and stated that the community was not properly informed.

Deputy Inspector O'Toole appeared to speak on the conditions that relate to the current issued under discussion with both the Traffic and Transportation Committee and Education Committee. The Inspector stated that in January or February the issue first came up. NYPD wants safe, educated kids in a safe positive environment. They will enforce summons on a regular basis, not every day but often. Laws are enforced and there is not much more that can be done in this instance. DI O'Toole will continue to monitor the situation, supervise enforcement but reminded everyone that schools have traffic during early morning hours.

Mario, a community member, expressed his disappointment at the removal of signage causing people to drive completely around 225th Street.

DI O'Toole stated that he will meet with the PTA at the Charter School and advise them to park appropriately, drive carefully and remind the parent body and school regarding traffic issues.

Chair Heller stated that all parties have the attention of the community committee and the Police Precinct. The Community Board does not have much that they can do. We do not have the power to do much. Local residents can express themselves to SUNY. Recommend changes to the process and objections to the current situation. Chair Alexander stated that SUNY feels that all was done appropriately and they will not make any changes.

Robert Press, stated that Marble Hill covers 4 community boards and is within the Bronx. There are two other Charter Schools at Kennedy High School and Collier Avenue. Charter schools are not perfect but they build buildings and are improving education. Mr. Press suggested that the community watch its development.

Chair Alexander suggested we all have an open mind and have further review in September. The committees are open to further work and discussion.

SAPO (Street Activity Permit Office) - Victoria Quiles, Jose Olivera, Chair Heller stated that a mistake was made in application. The guidelines are clear, it must be approved by committee, then board, then City of New York. Land Use does meet and that committee will be meeting on July 21, 2016. It is extremely inappropriate to make a late application, as was also done last year. Chair Heller provided notification that if this is done again, a permit will not be provided. Mr. Olivera stated that he would not do this again, but he has. Bethel Community Church. Chair Heller made a motion for approval, approved 8-0-1 abstention (for cause).

Budget Priorities Request for fiscal year 2018 – No major recommendations but street resurfacing. Last year things were recommended and DOT did many initiatives and may not recommend all of our choices. DOT stated that they may be rehabilitating a bridge near Mosholu. The floor was opened for capital budget items, including, but not limited to a Traffic Study 238 and Corlear and Irwin Avenues.

Repaving Schedule – The Resurfacing list that was CB8 Traffic and Transportations recommendations for resurfacing was presented for review. Also included was the list of what DOT will be doing, irrespective of when the work is being done. Many of the CB8's recommendations were taken care of. DOT has their own process but our recommendations and theirs seemed to align and we are getting 12 lane miles. Robert Press expressed concerns over the timely completion of certain work to be done. John Eddie, a community member, wanted to know if any speed bumps will be put in the area. Mr. Eddie was informed that five should be installed and inquired when. Chair Heller explained the process, including determining conditions, surveys to Mr. Eddie. CB8 previously reviewed the process but no longer does because it is not within our purview. Reverend Dixon expressed concerns about City Bus traffic on 228th Street, which he has called numerous times about. Chair Heller asked if the buses were Kingsbridge Buses. Reverend Dixon said that they were. Chair Heller stated that he would address the issue.

Deborah Wallace, stated that she has been out gathering signatures and currently has 750 and well on their way to 1000. The bus riders are angry and very upset about many issues with the bus service. Mr. Wallace presented research that challenges DOT calculations and “tech fix.” Ms. Wallace said they would continue to follow-up with us regarding their concerns and work towards improvements.

New Business – No new issues

Old Business – No old Issues

The meeting was adjourned at 913 p.m.

By Committee Member Steven Sarao