



BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #1

3024 THIRD AVENUE

BRONX, NEW YORK 10455

(718) 585-7117 • Fax (718) 292-0558 • E-mail: brxcb1@optonline.net

SERVING PORT MORRIS • MOTT HAVEN • MELROSE



RUBEN DIAZ, JR.
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

BETTY BRYANT-BROWN
CHAIRPERSON

CEDRIC L. LOFTIN
DISTRICT MANAGER

FULL BOARD MEETING

April 29, 2021
MINUTES

Ms. Betty Bryant-Brown Chairperson opened the meeting with a prayer.

CHAIRMAN AND DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT

PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Cedric L. Loftin District Manager said that there was to be a Public Hearing on the Zoning Accessibility Text Amendment by the New York City Department of City Planning and the MTA.

Mr. Justin Lamorella Senior Borough Planner New York City Department of City Planning said that the Department of City Planning and the Transit Authority are proposal and also proposing a citywide Text Amendment that is being presented to all the 59 Community Boards across the city. The proposal includes a system wide easement requirement focused on increasing accessibility in New York City's Transit System and using zoning as a tool to do that. This proposal is a joint effort between MTA, New York City Department of City Planning, and the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities. You'll hear about the Zoning Text Amendment as many of you know it's essentially an update to the tax rules in the Zoning Resolution. It has been referred out to all 59 Community Boards there are some aspects of the proposal that more directly apply to Community Board 1 so we will be focusing on those tonight. We're inviting your recommendations and questions about this proposal and also hope that today's presentation can help to inform your understanding of it.

Mr. Charvey Gonzalez MTA Government Relations said that it's a citywide Zoning Text Amendment that proposes to expand zoning tools and that would allow the MTA to improve how we work with developers to achieve accessibility faster and first would be the Mass Transit easement requirement which would apply system wide and the second is a new Transit Bonus Program that would apply in the highest density areas. So, in terms of how accessible our Public Transit System is now I'm

FULL BOARD

April 29, 2021

Pg. 2

sure all of you as New Yorkers have a sense of this only 136 of our 493 combined subway and Staten Island railroad stations are accessible so that's about 28 percent and only 25 of 39 Metro North Long Island railroad stations within city limits are accessible so that's the number so it's about 28 percent for the subway. The limited accessibility impacts people of all walks of life with disabilities, seniors, young children, people with temporary injuries and the lack of accessibility has turned short trips into long journeys. In New York City over 550 thousand people have a disability that impacts their ability to travel, there's also about 500 thousand children under the age of 5 and 1.2 million people over 65 all these people would benefit from accessibility improvements and the numbers are only growing, the population of those over 65 have grown over 20 percent from 2005 to 2015.

The MTA current Capital Plan makes historic investment in accessibility more than \$5 million dedicated to making 77 stations accessible, 43 percent of New York Transit stations serving over 60 percent of riders will be fully accessible and the goal of this is to have no subway rider no more than 2 stations away from an accessible station. While we're committed to doing this work, building elevators is very challenging, most of our system was built before 1950's and no station before that time had any type of accessibility requirements or elevators in mind, all the vertical pathways were built with stairs almost exclusively so that means to make these stations accessible. All stations need to be retrofitted and we need to work around the existing structures, narrow platforms that some stations have, limited entry and exit passages, layers of utilities and often we find utilities that weren't mapped and then we have to do costly relocations, narrow sidewalks on the streets, limited clearance between buildings and stations and most stations require more than one elevator to be accessible so these costly situations cost when we're doing this.

Mr. Justin Lamorella said the main component of this proposal is the easement requirement, the easement is the legal right to use a space for a specific limited purpose, it is a small space reserved in a building, easements have been new for station entranceways hutches. So what this proposal does is all developments and enlargements within 50 feet of a mass transit station in applicable zoning districts would need to file an application with the MTA and Chair of the CPC and they would determine whether equivalent and all manufacturing districts on zoning lots of at least 5,000 sf and within 50 feet of mass transit stations. The second part of the proposal only applies to one lot near 149th Street and Grand Concourse proposed easement and bonus station in District 1. This Text Amendment for Zoning Accessibility was referred out to all 59 Boards for 60 days then to the City Council and the Mayor. We are seeking a letter of support.

Before wrapping up I want to tell you about other citywide Text Amendments coming your way we have these four others Hotel Special Permit, Fresh II – The Food Retail Expansion to support fresh (Food), Health and Fitness and Open Restaurants we will be making presentations on each of these proposals.

So in conclusion on what is Zoning Accessibility is all about it's a Zoning Text Amendment for to coordinate transit station improvements that requires a consultation process for developments and enlargements on zoning lots in the applicable zoning districts where easements are required. The goal of the accessibility build out is for to have accessibility in as many stations as possible in the current Capital Plan. The Zoning Accessibility Text Amendment does not specify the stations that will be getting elevators, it's about working with new development to obtain an easement that we can use. The easement is a system wide easement on a case by case basis this is just another tool of accessibility. We are seeking a letter of support for this project.

FULL BOARD

April 29, 2021

Pg. 3

Questions and Answers

Ms. Arline Parks Chairperson Economic Development Land Use & Housing made a motion that a support letter be granted for the Zoning Accessibility with the condition that prior to installation of any elevator they have to come back before Community Board 1 to present the plan in it's entirety for the installation of an elevator at a particular location in the district. Motion duly seconded. Roll was called and the item passed.

Ms. Arline Parks asked the Board for a motion to send a letter to the MTA requesting a walk through with them and the appropriate parties around the handicapped accessible locations and to obtain a commitment from MTA to maintain these stations and deal with the issue of public safety.

Motion made to send a letter to the MTA requesting a walk through with the with them and the appropriate parties around the handicapped accessible locations and to obtain a commitment from MTA to maintain these stations and deal with the issues of public safety. Motion duly seconded. Roll was called and the item passed.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

Ms. Jasmine Lawrence that I'm a Media & Community Specialist for Cayuga Centers we're a non-profit family services organization committed to ensuring children have a safe and loving home and we do that through a variety of different services including therapeutic counseling and some court programming for individuals. We have been expanding we have 3 offices in Harlem and 1 in the Bronx. I'm hoping that this introduction and me attending these Board meetings will serve as a turning point for a more consistent relationship in the community. In New York City our services are focused on youth and families that are at risk, so we provide foster care services for children. I'm reaching out today because we have a number of job openings in our Bronx office. As you know COVID19 is alive and well and is what we've been dealing with in the past few months as an agency we've been proud to keep our staff on payroll expanding into a second office in the Bronx, our current office is 250 Walton Avenue. We also have a 15 thousand sf gym on Bruckner Blvd. we're still waiting for approval from the State to open but that's something I'm hoping will be available to the community. I'm going to include a link with our career portals for the job openings, also a link for foster care interest form and will put this information on the chat.

Questions and Answers

PUBLIC SESSION CLOSED

HEALTH-HUMAN SERVICES & SENIORS COMMITTEE

CARE FOR THE HOMELESS

FULL BOARD

April 29, 2021

Pg. 4

Mr. George Nashak CEO Care for the Homeless said that we're presenting this evening a project to help reduce homelessness in the area surrounding Lincoln Hospital. We are an organization that has provided healthcare to homeless and unstably housed people for 35 years and we have a very robust network of health services in the Bronx we're a long-term 35-year service provider in the Bronx. We're particularly concerned after a series of conversations we've had that for a couple of years of people experiencing homelessness congregating in and around Lincoln Hospital. Lincoln Hospital has quite a bit of people that encamp every night in the winter it's a little bit better in the summer and we've been working with them and BronxWorks a healthcare provider that are at many of our sites to find solutions to help Lincoln Hospital.

So what we're proposing to do is create a program at 528 Morris Avenue directly across the street from Lincoln Hospital and that program would consist of a federally funded health center providing healthcare services to the people on the streets and then we would have some beds in something that is called a Safe Haven Program to move people off the street into that place and then into permanent housing. We're proposing to the Community Board that this will reduce the homeless population in that community. I want to assure everyone that we have a long track record and one of the things that we wanted to make certain we presented this evening we wish to become active members of this community, we want to create a Community Advisory Board. The purpose of the Community Advisory Board is to make sure that we're landing in the community in a respectful way, will probably start on a monthly basis basically collecting information on how we're doing as a community member, are we having any impact on the community that you need us to address. We don't know exactly when we will be able to start this program, we're still in the process of finalizing the contract with the Department of Homeless Services. We're hoping to get it up and running as soon as possible because we've seen a significant amount of people living on the street and we want to begin to put these interventions into place.

Questions and Answers

MUNICIPAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Mr. Cedric L. Loftin District Manager said that this presentation came before the Committee a project related to Brook Park on Brook Avenue between East 140th and East 141st Streets. It's been an historic park in our district for years and they're now at the point where they have a budget allocation of \$84 thousand dollars to be used in the parks scope that will supply water fountains, and fencing. It was approved by the Committee and approved by the City Council. Their looking to start construction and unfortunately construction would have been started and completed if it had not been for the Pandemic. That was the item that came forth from the Committee and once again their vote was affirmative. So just putting that forth for Full board presentation and a vote.

Motion made to approve a letter of support for the renovations to Brook Park. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and item passed.

ELECTED OFFICIALS REPORTS

FULL BOARD

April 29, 2021

Pg. 5

The representative for the Honorable Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. said that first the Borough President's Monthly Report was a little bit late so you should have received it sometime last week. So, take time to look at that email and report and any questions that anyone might have please feel free to bring them up to me I've put my cell phone number and also my email in the chat. Any Board Members that have not yet completed the Sexual Harassment, please complete that training, and submit that information as soon as you can. If you're still having trouble getting the link or accessing the link once again just shoot me a message and I'll correct that. Lastly any member that did not receive a reappointment letter continue to serve until you receive the reappointment letter from our office and any member that did not reapply for reappointment their term would have ended on March 31 202.

The representative for Honorable Congressman Richie Torres said that the biggest piece of legislation and the biggest accomplishment we're proud of is the Child Tax Credit, this is going to take on child poverty which costs us about 1 billion dollars. The latest bill is going to provide \$250 to \$300 dollars a month for our families providing how old the children are. This is the biggest piece to come out of the COVID stimulus discussions. There's a lot of conversation around financial literacy as well and the tax deadline was pushed back to May 15 there are a lot of families that haven't filed or are not used to filing, so we have a ton of sites throughout the Bronx throughout our district. We can also can direct people to organizations that can help with other financial problems. We had a briefing with the US Postal Service on the problems, immigration is still a big issue so if you know of anyone that has been detained or going through problems reach out anytime.

The representative for Honorable State Senator Jose M. Serrano said that the State Budget was passed early this month 212 billion package most of it for recovery for COVID 19 crisis. The package includes 2.4 billion in assistance for recovery programs to help our constituents who have not been able to pay for the rents and 100 million for issues of hotels and commercial properties and affordable housing, 200 million for the New York Housing Authority (NYCHA), also the State Budget includes also 2.4 billion to the childcare system for providers, 2.1 billion for Workers Fund to provide one-time unemployment benefits to workers who have lost employment due to the Pandemic, so people who were not able to get a stimulus check they will be able to apply. During the session the legislature established the community Violence Intervention Act against gun violence funding source for community and hospital violence intervention. The budget has 10 million dollars to combat against discrimination. So, our office continues to assist in unemployment claim issues and also those people facing eviction, so if you need help you can reach out to us at 212-828-5829.

The Honorable State Senator Luis Sepulveda said that one of the things that I want to emphasize first of all we also passed in the budget 8 hundred million dollars for small businesses we have many, many issues in our community and small businesses going out of business and as many of us know these small business owner is the backbone of the economy for us. So, we're doing everything possible to make sure that business owners get access to capital, many of them do not have the correct books tax reports. In order to be able to access this type of money one of the things my office is working on is providing resources to small business owners in our community on how to prepare their books so if you know of anyone in need please have them to reach out to my office. The Bronx has been last in terms of jobs,

FULL BOARD

April 29, 2021

Pg. 6

We've been last in all the important things health we're last in unemployment and we're last in graduation rates that has to stop, so we're working diligently to change the trajectory of what we want to do. The other topic I want to talk about is the vaccinations my office started something call the Vaccination Wait List and we're responsible for the vaccination of 1,500 people to date. What we're seeing now people are no longer going to get vaccinated we have a program with Urban Health Plan where we are willing to go anywhere in the community to get the people together and we will take the vaccination to them it could be in a school it could be a house of worship it could be an social gathering Urban Health Plan will do the vaccination. I'm working on a plan with one of my staff members you get a vaccination you get a free beer, we are diligent about wanting to get people vaccinated and we're doing everything that we can to get people vaccinated. Our rate for COVID now is 2.11 it's gone down considerably, but we still all have to do our part so that we're no longer last in something else. If I say it once I'll say it a million times we have to make sure that we do twice the work so our people are community we are the busiest general service office in the entire State of New York. We service anywhere between 50 to 60 people a day. We're a high needs office and that's why we do it with all diligence and pride and all the effort. I have wonderful staff members that are willing to help. You can go to my Facebook page and you'll see a lot of great information for our community that deal with the taxation issue, claims and anything else you need assistance with. Everyone please stay safe, wear facemasks and if you need help give us a call we're happy to help.

The representative for Honorable Councilman Rafael Salamanca said that I put my information in the Chat and on Monday we should be opening fully to the public at low capacity. We're still doing the COVID testing on Thursday's from 9 AM to 4 PM if anyone is interested. If anyone needs any help you can give me a call.

The representative for Honorable Councilwoman Diana Ayala said that I just want to let everyone know that last week our office coordinated a food distribution drive at Mitchell Houses also Senator Serrano was in attendance and Assemblywoman Amanda Septimo as well, it was a really wonderful event. Unfortunately, we still have to continue to do these types of things, however, the need is there and collectively coming together with our colleagues we're providing this service. We had a really fruitful conversation with he residents on Timpson Place in an attempt to address quality of life issues that some of the homeowners have been experiencing of late. The Precinct Commander was in attendance as well as the NCO's and a representative from the Department of Sanitation, so we had a really good conversation. There's some follow up that we definitely have to do collectively, I'm reaching out to my colleagues to reach out to the District Attorney's Office about illegal activities and unfortunately the other day there was a shootout as a result of these illegal parties that took place along that block as well as the warehouse on that block where they park their motor bike and when they come out it just causes havoc for everyone along the block.

The representative from the Honorable District Attorney's Office said that I've put my information in the chat, if anyone has any concerns or questions contact me. If anyone knows of a church or any house of worship that will lend us the space for to host the gun buy-back event ideally in the 40th Precinct sector, please let me know.

FULL BOARD

April 29, 2021

Pg. 7

Motion made to accept all Elected Officials Reports as presented. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and passed.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Cedric L. Loftin District Manager said that he would continue trying to get a meeting together with the Banks.

NEW BUSINESS

NONE

Motion made to adjourn. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and passed.

MEETING ADJOURNED.