



BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #1

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RUBEN DIAZ, JR.
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

FULL BOARD MEETING

December 17, 2020

MINUTES

BETTY BRYANT-BROWN
CHAIRPERSON

CEDRIC L. LOFTIN
DISTRICT MANAGER

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

A moment of silence was observed in memory on the passing of Boardmember John Johnson.

Mr. Cedric L. Loftin, District Manager said that Mr. Johnson was a tremendous person and an outstanding member of the community, he will be missed.

A motion was made to approve the Agenda as presented. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and passed.

Mr. Cedric L. Loftin, District Manager said good evening everyone and it has been a stressful year. I want to thank everyone for their service as we move towards 2021. I just want to report on some items from over the last month in the district like yesterdays snowstorm. Since that snowstorm I have been in contact with Sanitation making sure that preparations were made and in place. I wanted to give you an after action report spoke to the Mayor's Office later this afternoon and I've been in contact with agencies with respect to what has transpired. So as you know we deal with two agency types here in Board One hard services and soft services. I'm going to go through the hard services agencies first then will move on to the soft services agencies.

First, we're going to start with the 40th Precinct. At this point from last night's storm there have not been any areas to the storm that the Police Department has not been able to handle, so everything is good with that respect. In regard to the Fire Department there were no calls that came through regarding snow activity within the district. There were not any injuries reported by EMS nor any response to engagements by the Fire Department. That report came through the Fire Chief of the district and the other report came through the Inspector of the 40th Precinct. The next item has to deal with NYCHA we have over 19 developments here in Board One. I will tell you with those 19 developments historically there have been problems. As we cycle into the fall and winter months there is a problem with delivery of services especially with heat and hot water. So based upon last nights events I did not get any calls from anyone in the district related to issues made to any of the Managers of NYCHA and also a call was made to the overall General Manager of NYCHA for the City of New York although I have not received any reports. Please be advised that I will stay in connect with NYCHA periodically every other day because historically unfortunately there's been a problem here in the district because of the level of conditions on the service delivery in NYCHA leading to its infrastructure and also related to all the service use.

There has been money that was supposed to flow from Washington to NYCHA that has not flowed substantially so there are several developments that still have issues related to heat and hot water conditions and a lot of these developments have problems with the risers as far as bringing heat and hot water to the upper levels. This has been a long standing point raised with NYCHA at borough levels and beyond and still the money has not been flowing. Hopefully with new Administration there will be a change in policy on the direction and flow of monies. After realizing what kind of fiscal deficit the country is in now you will not know that until October. But at this point we will just continue to monitor NYCHA. If you know of anyone that has an issue at one of our NYCHA developments even if it's not you that resides there please send me an email so that we can follow up with the appropriate Manager at the development no matter what the issue is even if outside of the borders of service delivery or if it's a security issue that has come to your attention please contact and send an email to the Community Board so that it can be rectified as soon as possible.

Let's move on to our soft services as to Sanitation throughout the district as you know we've received a lot of snow. The Sanitation Superintendent has been on point related to the removal of that snow. At this point they have a compliment of men and women that are out in the district doing snow removal with all of the equipment that they have available including the bobcats that generally you see in smaller and narrower streets going through removing snow out of the district at crosswalks and corner locations. As far as refuse removal on the corners and baskets that is going to happen shortly after the snow is removed, you can put out your garbage and refuse at this point. If anyone feels that there has been a lag time as far as the pickup of your refuse shoot me an email so that I can reach out to the Superintendent to make sure that your refuse is picked up appropriately, but all garbage will be picked up. As to transportation, the Department of Transportation has everything moving along with the MTA's work. It was only one condition that we had earlier today where there was an issue with the No. 2 line where there was a disruption in service but that has been rectified. As far as service delivery through New York City Transit is handling it. Going back to DOT as far as traffic that flows into the district all the bridges are free, one of the bridges had a shut down as far as from Manhattan into the Bronx and has been rectified and closed out. Now moving on to Parks, the Department of Parks as you know works with Sanitation. The perimeter of all of our parks they're going to be cleaned and monitored not only by the Parks Department but also by the Department of Sanitation to ensure that all of the entranceways are opened. Now the Parks Department has a program where they actually go into the parks and look at all of the trees within the park to make sure that the conditions are stable and make sure that no one is hit by any falling limbs within the park. All of that's in place at this point there are no trees or branches down at any of the parks in the district. As far as DEP they are working with Sanitation and DOT to make sure that all of the catch basins at the corners of our streets are clear of snow so any runoff can flow freely down the street into the catch basin and into the system. We have not gotten any complaints related to that. The next thing as far as a soft agency I'd like to report out on is related to work being done around Lincoln Hospital of the removal of trees and also the condition as you can see around Lincoln on Morris and 149th Street that the sidewalk has come up because the of the tree roots which will be removed and smoothed out so that condition will not happen anymore.

So that is everything related to all the hard and soft services regarding what has transpired with the snowstorm as of yesterday. Every evening I get a late report around 11 o'clock and it tells me what the conditions are in the different aspects within the district. Now with the snow that report comes to me related to the conditions. So I will be able to know what the conditions are and we can get them rectified to make sure that they don't impact on anyone's life here. As you know a school was not opened today, but it's my understanding the school will be opened tomorrow. The last point which is not part of city jurisdiction but is part of what we deal with which is Con Ed. There have not been any outages of power

here in the district. There are not any outages in the Bronx except in the northern portion of the Bronx but not here where everyone had full services throughout the storm.

I want to get to another point that has come up that we have to deal with, earlier this week I was part of a Zoom meeting related to the issue of COVID 19 and it's impact here in our district. After that meeting I had a discussion with Lincoln Hospital of delivery of the vaccine, the Piser Vaccine that has to be handled in cold storage and it's now at Lincoln Hospital for use by the personnel there. Also my understanding at about an hour ago the Moderna Vaccine has been approved by the FDA Drug Administration. This vaccine does not need cold storage and will also be delivered to the city hospital system of Health & Hospital Corporation. Now as we know we're in the first portion of the distribution and the persons to receive the vaccine are persons working in the hospitals both public, private and also Nursing Homes. So I just want everyone to know that the second phase of it has not come down yet will probably happen sometime in the middle or late spring. I'm not telling anyone to go past what they think they're own personal preference is related to the vaccine's administration. Point by Dr. Facha that individuals under the age of 16 have to take the vaccine, that's the Piser Vaccine. Just been informed as far as the Moderna that individuals under the age of 18 take the vaccine. So this vaccine is out in the y area New York is going to be getting more deliveries of it. Johnson and Johnson is coming out with their own vaccine probably in the next month and the vaccine will be available. What I would tell people at this point you know what we as a district went through last year with the Corona Virus we were ground zero and we lost more people than any other portion of the Bronx and as I expressed to everyone before we had people coming from Elmhurst a hotspot coming over to the Bronx for treatment. I was also informed even though the vaccine is not available but will be available it's still necessary for people to do what they've been doing before related to their health to still mask, social distance and to frequently wash your hands. None of that will change although the vaccine will be available and you take it. Now going back to the Piser Vaccine it's a two process vaccine you take the first shot and weeks later you get a second shot. Now I will tell you something that I know everyone has heard the adverse effect on some persons after taking the shot, that was also discussed. Under the Biden Administration there will not be any cost in receiving the vaccine.

The last thing I wanted to touch on is related to the State Budget, there is a 15 billion budget gap. As you know or may have heard that the Senate and the House are looking at the possibility finding funding under the Cares Act and the provisions thereof. However it's also said but I haven't seen the last proposals yet the amount that is going to be given out may be half of what individuals received in the first Cares Act. We will not know what's going to happen until President Biden is sworn in. So there's probably going to be some gaps in the system because there is a shortfall the Senate is not looking to pass any funds that would help municipalities including state municipalities. So there will be some issues with funding levels the Governor has said that once President Elect Biden becomes President funding streams will open up. At this point that is where things are the budget from the state is also reflective of the city budget and has shortfalls associated with it but we have not heard anything related to reduction of services under this years current budget which runs through June 30th of this year. So that's where we are in respect to the budget, that's where we are in respect to COVID and to what transpired yesterday.

Unfortunately the situation we've been in under this COVID has been something that we've not gone through before but I will say that the cases coming out of our district have been miniscule compared to other districts here in the Bronx over the past period of time since Thanksgiving of people contracting and having caught the COVID. Just asking people to be steadfast as far as what they've been doing with their families and to be able to stay home if you can but if you have to travel to be safe. They're recommending now even if you do travel or in someone else's home that you continue to wear a mask. Because you're in close proximity there's not much outdoor activity the virus can pass more frequently.

So I just wanted to report out on some of those things to close out the year. Are there any questions from anyone on what was reported out?

This concludes my report and as I said if anyone has any issues, please email the Board.

Ms. Brenda Goodwin, Chairperson Health-Human Services & Seniors I spoke to Lincoln Hospital today and as of today we have 24 patients. We are ready the treatment staff is ready. As you said Piser was here delivered yesterday. The essential workers clinical and non-clinical will be receiving the vaccine. I have contacted CVS and Walgreens related to the vaccine and will stay in contact with them to make sure the community is informed. I just want to ask people to speak to their primary doctor on an ongoing basis so that they can get the proper information they need about the vaccine.

Mr. Cedric L. Loftin, District Manager said Ms. Goodwin I want to thank you for your persistence in staying on top of things with Lincoln Hospital, this is a very critical time and as you know we're really in very uncharted waters here.

Motion was made to accept the District Manager's report as presented. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and passed

The representative for the Honorable Ruben Diaz, Jr. said that first and foremost I hope that everyone is staying safe and warm inside. I just have a couple of announcements the Borough President is advocating for everyone to get tested for COVID especially with the recent uptake of COVID cases. So if anyone needs any assistance in finding a COVID Testing Site that will be something that we will be able to assist with. If anyone knows of a homebound individual encourage them to call 311 the Department of Health has self-testing kits and paid for by the Department of Health please send this information those persons. Board members that term expires 2021 if you haven't received the re-appointment applications in the mail you should expect to receive them by the end of this month or you don't receive it by the end of this month shoot Tom an email or you can just let Cedric know and he will inform us. If you know of anyone that's interested in joining the Community Board applications are due back in our office February 15th. So if you know of anyone interested refer them over to our website or can contact me and I'll email them a copy of the Community Board Application. Lastly, just want to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday. Thank you for the District Manager, staff and Boardmembers of bearing with us through this very challenging year. We're hopeful that 2021 brings a lot more positive energy.

The representative for State Senator Jose M. Serrano said that we'd like to remind you that our office is distributing masks and sanitizers to organizations and individuals in need so you can contact us if you'd like to make a request at 212 – 828-5829. The Senator was reappointed as Chair of the New York State Senate Majority Conference by the Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins. The Senator recently participated in a forum on supporting the Immigrants art community during the COVID 19 Pandemic and our office is currently compiling a report to support our artistic and cultural communities during this difficult time. The Senator is co-sponsoring legislation to extend the addiction moratorium for 1 year following the end of the Pandemic. He's also co-sponsoring legislation to provide commercial

relief for businesses that are suffering and we know what's going on in our neighborhoods. Just to remind you that we still have our full range of constituent services so feel free to reach out to our office.

Honorable State Senator Luis Sepulveda said that first of all I've really got to give credit to Cedric for a fantastic presentation, he stole some of my thunder.

At the Senate we had a retreat last week where we discussed some of the issues that are going to impact the State going forward. We're facing about a 13 to 16 billion dollar budget deficit and normally what happens when you have deficit's they try to balance the budget on the backs of poor black and brown communities. So I can tell you that myself and my colleagues in the Senate including Senator Serrano are fighting like hell to make sure that these proposed cuts do not impact our communities we know how COVID has devastated where we live. There are vaccines now that are coming and the Governor has promised that after our essential and medical workers are vaccinated that then he will go to the poor communities to immigrant communities to make sure that because the number of deaths are so substantial and because many of our immigrants are essential workers that receive very little in terms of benefits from federal relief packages or the State we have to make sure that we take care of them. So we are going to push the Governor to make sure that those second wave of vaccines go to our communities here.

Now we face several problems in our community obviously for years now the Bronx has been at the bottom in terms of health metrics, has been at the bottom in terms of unemployment, has been at the bottom in terms of nutrition and we've still not been able to shake that. So there is a lot of work that we have to do as legislators. We face about 3.6 billion dollars in rent arrears in this state and that impacts about 1.2 million people. Before COVID started there was a backlog of about 200 thousand eviction proceedings in the city. If not for some of the actions that we've taken we probably would have seen a disaster. Now I believe the Governor will continue to extend the moratorium to make sure people aren't evicted.

When this all began the Senate Leader creates these working groups to impact and decide on policy and legislation that is going to impact the State. So one of the areas that she created a working group of Senators was the issue of housing. Not because in my first life I was a Housing Lawyer the Leader asked me to participate in this group to create some legislation that we ultimately did and that was the Tenancy Harbor Act, very important because it protected many people from being evicted I was one of the Senators that participated in creating that legislation. We're looking at other options now the second wave and we have a new President and we still have many challenges that we still have to face. We are essentially going to make sure that we continue to create legislation to make sure that people stay home and to raise revenue. We don't want to wait until a Federal Stimulus Package comes. Probably best case scenario at this point would be April with the new President I know they're talking about relief now but I'm talking about something substantial that's going to impact our State. We created a 100 million dollar fund to help people pay rent, the Governor only wanted to give us 50 million. Now for those of us living in the Bronx we know that 50 million won't even cover 20 Bronx apartment buildings. So because the Governor of New Jersey gave as much as 100 million dollars the Governor here essentially it kind of embarrassed him to give us another 50 million dollars. So we have 100 million dollars but most of that money has already been used and the application process is no longer available. So we have to do everything we can to generate more revenue to pay for apartments to pay for small homeowners one to two families that are at risk of losing their homes because they cannot pay their mortgages. What we discussed as revenue and I want you all to know so that you know what we're facing. One of the things we're talking about is raising the tax rate from 8.8 to 10.9 for people making over 5 million dollars a year. I'm limiting deductions for the super wealthy, increasing corporate tax and a tax on petroleum and of

course giving the okay to expedite the process of opening of casinos. We're talking about ending tax breaks for things like yachts, you know we give tax breaks for things like yachts in this State. For planes they don't pay a certain level of sales tax all this stuff that essentially helps the super wealthy it's time for them to pay their fair share now. Now we hear millionaires are leaving the State of New York in droves and that is nonsense and I can tell you that if 10 millionaires were to leave the City of New York or State of New York you'll find another 50 that want to come here because this is the place where most people of substantial wealth want to have a foothold in. So we don't buy the argument that if we raise taxes that suddenly you're going to see a major departure of the super wealthy in New York City and New York State. The reality is they have all this wealth now look what's happened with Amazon and all these delivery services is that they've quadrupled their overall wealth and if they don't feel it's their civic responsibility to pay a little more so that a young child can get food, so that a senior can get their medication, so that a family can stay in their apartment then I will open the door and make sure that I hit them in the ass on the way out. It is more important that we take care of our people and if the super wealthy have a problem with that then adios amigo, we're not going to stand for that. Food and security is another major problem in our community, myself and I know other legislators and their elected officials in City and State have worked overtime to provide free food for many people and we've given out thousands of pounds of food, thousands of pounds of nutritional substance to help people.

Now with the Budget that's coming up again my colleagues and I in the Bronx are fighting like hell to make sure we provide additional funding or any federal funding that comes to help programs that feed people. The Child That Don't Care Program which provides free food free nutrition to seniors and children is a program that we have to make sure we provide extra funding for. The Commodity Supplemental Food Program which feeds people that are approximately 60 years or older is another program that we have to make sure we fund. With our federal legislators we have to make sure that we provide money for SNAP part of the federal monies that are used to pay for some of the pantries that are feeding a lot of people. I wanted people to know that tomorrow morning at 9:30 at Irma Carver Houses I will be giving out approximately 1000 pounds of produce to people in the surrounding area. That's Irma Carver Houses 887 Southern Blvd. So if you or anyone you know needs food, needs produce we invite them. We're also going to give out face coverings and PPE's almost every day or every other day I go out to our train stations giving out face masks so I've given out over 30 thousand face masks since the Pandemic started, I want to make sure that our people are protected. There are many people who can't afford the face masks wear them over and over again and so we try to help as much as we can. So we've been able to secure face masks through different sources, we work closely with the Taiwanese Government and we were able to secure about a quarter of a million face masks for our Nurses and our staff that work in medical facilities, but they also gave us here. So if anyone needs face coverings let us know and we will provide as much as we can we want to make sure that we continue to give face masks so that people don't get sick. So many things that are happening now with COVID we see the numbers that are rising and its incredible what has happened in the past where 34 percent of Latinos were the ones who died, 29 percent of African Americas who died and predominantly in our poor communities. What COVID has done that it has brought up to the surface the systemic inequities, I dare say the systemic racism in economic policy in this county. There's no reason why we should have what they say is 22 percent unemployment in the Bronx but the real number is closer to 40 percent. There is no reason that our people should be dying at an incredibly higher rate than wealthy white neighborhoods no reason of course we all know why, because over the years our governments could give a dam about the Bronx and so they didn't invest in our healthcare facilities. The largest employer in the county of the Bronx is the Healthcare Industry, yet we are 62 out of 62 in terms of health metrics. We have the highest unemployment rate all that is attributed to again systemic economic and health racists policies that has put us in this position a and we have not been able to get out of it.

So I'm doing my part to make sure that we hold accountable high levels of government, having constant conversations with the Governor's Office working with my colleagues that we get our fair share and that our people are protected, our people get the kind of services that they're entitled as tax paying citizens in this State.

Questions and Answers

The representative for Honorable Scott Stringer the New York City Comptroller said that the announcement that I have for tonight we publish our annual Making the Grade Report this gives a grade to each agency related to MWBE contract. Basically from the 22.5 billion dollars on contracts awarded this past fiscal year only 1.1 million were awarded to MWBE. The city once again got a C grade so they're not doing that great and we're letting the city know that they have to do better. Also at the end of this month I will be leaving the Comptroller's Office. It was great working these past two years and a half with the Comptroller and assisting the community in many ways but I'm going to still be around and starting in January I will be on the team of Congressman Richie Torres.

The representative for Honorable Councilwoman Diana Ayala said that I want to thank the Senator for a great civic and public policy discourse definitely some good nuggets in there.

Our festivities this year are very different and it is the Councilmember and members of staff remain working on the ground to ensure that all communities get the needed resources. As you all know there is still the transmission of COVID 19 there continues to be spikes and positive cases throughout the city and within District Council 8. That is why the Councilmember on December 29th is hosting a COVID Day of Testing, day of action and we are doing it in conjunction with Health & Hospitals Corporation and also Eastside House Settlement from 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM at Mitchell Community Center 210 Alexander Avenue.

Lastly Councilmember along with Councilmember Mark Levine issued a letter to Commissioner Chosky asking the Commissioner for the prioritization of individuals with intellectual disabilities and development disabilities in vaccine distribution, it's something that needs to be done. We have through the Department of Aging have been given information that there have been individuals calling seniors and others calling them and saying that for a very low monetary fee that they can be placed on a vaccine patient list and can get prioritization, so be mindful of these types of scams.

Motion made to accept the Elected Officials reports as presented. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and passed.

Ms. Josephine Fernandez-Byrne the Chairperson of the Education & Youth Committee provided an overview of presentation made by The American Dream School who were requesting a letter of support for a temporary increase of the student enrollment by 35 more students.

Motion made to provide the American Dream School with a letter of support on their request to temporarily increase student enrollment by 35 more students. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and passed.

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Mr. Hakiem Yahmadi Chairperson of the Municipal Services Committee provided an overview on the presentation made by Honorable Jose A. Padilla District leader of the 79th District requesting a letter of support for the street renaming of the northside of east 149th street, between Tinton and Wales Avenues in the name of Honorable Israel Martinez former Assemblyman and Democratic Male District Leader of the 84th Assembly District.

Motion made to provide a letter of support on the renaming of the northside of east 149th street, between Tinton and Wales Avenues in the name of the Honorable Israel Martinez. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and passed.

OLD BUSINESS

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

NONE

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

MEETING ADJOURNED.