



The City of New York
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #1

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Serving and Representing: Port Morris, Mott Haven and Melrose



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CHAIRPERSON

March General Board Meeting Minutes

March 28th, 2024

DRAFT

Community Park cleanups and Bronx Parks Commissioner Aponte gives on St. Mary's Recreation Center

- Partnerships for Parks hosts events to clean and beautify neighborhood parks with the help of volunteers and local organizations.
- The Community board will work with St. Mary's Park volunteer group to sponsor a cleanup event. Stay tuned.
- Bronx Parks Commissioner discusses the work of volunteers in beautifying the community space, inspiring others to take charge and participate.
- Questions arise regarding the gap in programming for the Rec Center, particularly for middle schoolers who previously used the space, and how the need will be met.

Outdoor recreation programs in a community with limited facilities.

- Community recreation centers limited by capacity, expanding summer camp programs.

Recreation center renovation and programming challenges.

- Parks Representative Rebecca Byrnes highlights the renovation of a local recreation center as a "miracle" and credits Mayor DeBlasio for funding the project.
- Rebecca Byrnes shares concerns about summer program cuts and seeks community input.

Construction delays and community concerns.

- Carmen Santiago asks about the remaining budget for the community center construction, which is estimated to be around 64% complete.
- Construction delays due to design issues.

Addressing drug addiction in NYC communities.

- Councilmember Diana Ayala describes a public health crisis in New York City, particularly in St. Mary's playground, where there are 1000s of improperly disposed syringes and a link between poverty and mental health issues.
- Councilmember Diana Ayala believes that addressing the root cause of the problem, such as drug dealers, is crucial to reducing the number of syringes entering the community, rather than just cleaning up after them.
- Councilmember Diana Ayala advocates for a buyback program to address the issue of needles on the streets, particularly in communities of color and low-income areas.
- Jacqueline Dejesus, a parent of a child with autism, asks about programs for children on the spectrum, expressing concern for their inclusion and access to support.

Community recreation center project.

- The city aims to partner with specialized service providers to enhance recreation center programming.
- Members discuss challenges and potential solutions for a community project, including issues with contractors and project timelines.

Rec center renovation delays and unexpected costs.

- Contractors have made mistakes in renovating rec centers, leading to delays and unexpected costs.

School construction delays and funding issues.

- 2nd Vice Chair Ngande Ambroise expresses frustration with the slow progress of a construction project in Harlem, citing delays and inadequate funding.
- 2nd Vice Chair Ngande Ambroise and other parents question the decision-making process and seek more control over the project's timeline and funding.
- 2nd Vice Chair Ngande Ambroise expresses frustration with the lack of progress on community projects and the lack of communication from the Parks commissioner.
- 2nd Vice Chair Ngande Ambroise encourages community members to be engaged and bring problems to the committee for solution.

Bronx Recreation Center Renovation Delay.

- Bronx Commissioner Jessenia Aponte expresses frustration with the delayed reopening of the St. Mary's Recreation Center, the borough's only indoor pool facility.
- Bronx Commissioner Jessenia Aponte commits to updating the community on the center's status more frequently and providing access to programming information on the borough's website.

- Members discuss next steps for a community garden project with representatives from various city departments.

Homelessness in New York City.

- Maria A. Prado shares her personal journey from surviving on the streets to advocating for women and youth protection policies.
- The Prado Forward organization aims to support housing, educate, and empower women, with a vision to decrease homelessness and address substance use disorders, mental health issues, and domestic violence.
- Organization seeks funding and support to provide services for homeless women in New York City.

Recycling education and community outreach.

- Member Ngande Ambroise expresses frustration with commercial services not emptying trash cans on the street, despite being told they would be.
- Sanitation Representative Adam Dobrzynsk discusses the importance of outreach and education in recycling, mentioning that the community needs to be informed about how to recycle properly.
- Member Sonyi Lopez expresses concern about the lack of knowledge about recycling in the community and suggests that more education is needed to supplement what teachers have already established in schools.

Trash enforcement in the South Bronx.

- Adam Dobrzynsk mentioned that the agency has been issuing warnings to businesses in March, with the goal of starting to issue violations in April.
- Member Ramona Ferreyra questioned the scale of costs for violations, which can range from \$250 to \$400 or more depending on the number of offenses.

Free tax preparation services and IDNYC site issues.

- Councilmember Diana Ayala discusses free tax preparation services and IDNYC site closures.
- Councilmember Diana Ayala expresses frustration with unequal access to resources and services in different neighborhoods.

Community issues in the South Bronx, including sanitation and workforce development.

- Councilmember Diana Ayala highlights the issue of inadequate sanitation resources in the South Bronx, including overflowing garbage cans and a lack of education on proper waste disposal.

- Councilmember Diana Ayala advocates for larger garbage cans and more frequent changes, as well as a map of missing garbage cans, to improve the community's cleanliness and quality of life.
- Councilmember Diana Ayala emphasizes the importance of workforce development and access to job opportunities for the next generation of Bronx residents.
- Councilmember Diana Ayala highlights the need for community centers to have proper programming and supervision for children in the community.

Community center development and homelessness in Mott Haven.

- Councilmember Diana Ayala discusses the plan to build a new community center, including new hub for workforce development.
- A member from the audience advocates for a community center in Mott Haven to reduce crime, particularly near Patterson and Mitchell.
- Community members advocate for homeless services in the Bronx, citing 125 Street success.

Mental health app for underserved communities.

- Julius Robins, Executive Director of Athena Psych seeks funding for a mobile mental health app in NYC, primarily serving the South Bronx.
- Clinic prioritizes underserved populations, offers in-person and virtual services with no out-of-pocket costs.
- Therapy providers discuss licensing and billing issues with local government officials.

Job training initiatives and community support in NYC.

- NYC Mayor Representative announces new initiatives for job seekers and neighborhood support teams.
- Councilmember Diana Ayala advocates for new security cameras to ensure public safety.

Public safety statistics and community concerns.

- 40th Precinct presents crime statistics, addresses concerns.

Community issues and police collaboration in the Bronx.

- PO Daniel Lopez mentions that the Community Council meeting discussed issues related to vandalism in the area, including car vandalism on Brook Avenue.
- NYPD Citizens Academy offers free 6-week course with real-life scenarios and graduation.
- Members prioritize issues, including seniors' safety and youth programs, and urges council members to fund them.

- The community board has implemented a new process for approving permits for community events, involving committees and the district manager.

Sanitation issues in a NYC district.

- Anthony Jordan emphasizes the importance of sanitation in the district, particularly in areas with illegal dumping and over-saturation of garbage.
- Anthony Jordan encourages board members to reach out to the district manager with suggestions for addressing these issues.
- Anthony Jordan emphasizes the importance of addressing sanitation issues in the community, particularly in areas around Third Avenue and the Plaza.
- Member Ramona Ferreyra notes that agencies are not providing sufficient statistics on district-wide issues, and the board will need to follow up on this request.

Economic development projects in the South Bronx.

- Member Paola Martinez introduces Economic Development Committee Vice Chair Susan Camerata and highlights committee presentations on transitional housing, air quality monitoring, and community development.
- Community board to hear presentation on new funding opportunities for small businesses in the South Bronx.
- Committee discusses improving public spaces in commercial districts and approaches to addressing community concerns.

Streaming meetings, tech recommendations, and community outreach.

- Communications & Technology Chair Sonyi Lopez discussed the committee's efforts to improve accessibility for community members, including streaming meetings and providing interpretation services.
- The committee is also creating a template for a newsletter and a website for Community Board #1 and has established guidelines for handling inquiries from the media.

Senior issues, food assistance, and LGBTQ+ rights.

- Seniors & Aging Chair Josephine Fernandez-Byrne discusses senior safety, access to Medicaid services, and communication issues within the system.
- Committee members discuss outreach strategies for LGBTQ+ community in South Bronx.
- Community board members discuss legislation, budget cuts, and LGBTQ+ issues in the South Bronx.

Ethics and conflict resolution in a community space.

- Ethics Committee Chair Evelyn Alvarez discusses ethics and conflict resolution, aims to improve communication skills for community growth.

Community issues and events in New York City.

- Chairperson Clarisa Alayeto discusses upcoming events, including a walk/run group and an autism walk.

Action Items

NYPD Share stats on car vandalism incidents with details on locations to the community board.

Provide a recap of the 40th precinct meeting.

Look into getting MTA to present on elevator issues at the 149th St subway station.

Send questions ahead of time to agency speakers like Sanitation.

Review 311 reports at respective committee meetings.

Have Department of Aging representatives present at the May Senior Committee meeting.

Create and distribute flyers to senior centers about the May presentation.

Identify an ADA accessible location for the May Senior Committee meeting.