



The City of New York
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #1

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Serving and Representing: Port Morris, Mott Haven and Melrose



VANESSA L. GIBSON
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

PAOLA M. MARTINEZ
CHAIRPERSON

ANTHONY R. JORDAN
DISTRICT MANAGER

Municipal Services Committee Minutes

May 14th, 2026

Ngande Ambroise, Committee Chairperson

Proposal for Community Space Management

- Committee Chair Ngande Ambroise apologizes for the delay and introduces himself as the Chair of municipal services.
- Member Cesar Yoc motions to add five minutes to discuss the Stacy and Weaver Scholarship Fund.
- District Manager Anthony Jordan questions the lack of prior email notification for the agenda change.
- Member Audrey Dejesus suggests adjusting the original agenda to allow the commissioner to present first due to other commitments.
- Speaker 6, Ryan Campbell, introduces himself and presents a proposal to manage a space under the Major Deegan Expressway, emphasizing the need for more open space in the Bronx.

Details of the Proposed Space Management

- Ryan Campbell describes the current state of the space, including abandoned vehicles, garbage, and pigeon droppings.
- The proposal includes taking responsibility for cleaning and maintaining the space, and using it for recreational activities.
- Ryan Campbell highlights the health risks associated with the current state of the space, including bacterial and fungal diseases from pigeon droppings.
- The church members plan to clean up the space and manage parking during events to ensure safety and community benefit.

- Ryan Campbell seeks the board's help in acquiring the space and managing it for community benefit.

Discussion and Questions from the Board

- Chairperson Paola Martinez inquires about any information on tax assessments or other requirements for using the space.
- Ryan Campbell clarifies that they are not seeking ownership but responsibility for cleaning and managing the space.
- Member Audrey Dejesus shares knowledge of similar situations in Hunts Point and Bronx Park, emphasizing the difficulty of obtaining public property for specific use.
- Member Cesar Yoc suggests contacting Former Councilmember Diana Ayala's former advisory group for more information and support.
- Kaila Paulino from South Bronx Unite introduces their organization and their plans to activate the underpass with permission from the Department of Transportation.

Update on St. Matthew's Recreation Center Reconstruction

- Jessenia Aponte, the Bronx Parks Commissioner, and her team provide an update on the reconstruction of St. Matthew's Recreation Center.
- The project started with \$8.3 million, focusing on reconstructing the ground floor, ADA access, bathrooms, and fire alarm systems.
- Discoveries during construction, such as water infiltration and structural issues, led to expanding the project scope.
- Additional repairs and upgrades include lead testing, repainting, heating system repairs, and flooring replacements.
- The center is expected to reopen by the end of the summer, with new programming and community engagement initiatives.

Community Engagement and Programming Plans

- Jamal Laval, the center manager, outlines the vision for quality community enrichment programming at St. Matthew's.
- Planned programs include financial literacy, STEM education, swim lessons, ESL classes, media education, and computer literacy.
- The center aims to serve everyone from toddlers to seniors, with a focus on educational and recreational activities.
- Jamal emphasizes the importance of community feedback and collaboration to tailor programs to the needs of the neighborhood.

- The center will continue to offer various events and activities, even during the construction phase, to maintain community engagement.

Public Safety and Maintenance of Parks

- Member Cecil Brooks Jr raises concerns about public safety and the presence of unsheltered individuals in the park.
- Jessenia Aponte explains the collaboration with NYPD and local service providers to address public safety issues.
- The parks and force patrol regularly patrol the parks, and the community is encouraged to report any issues to 311.
- The commissioner emphasizes the importance of maintaining public safety and cleanliness in the parks.
- The community board and local organizations work closely with the parks department to monitor and address any issues in the parks.

Fundraising for Women in STEM Scholarship

- Member Cesar Yoc introduces the Stacy and Weaver Scholarship Fund for women in STEM fields, focusing on women of color and first-generation students.
- The scholarship requires raising funds first, followed by a selection process based on essays from admitted college students.
- The scholarship aims to provide financial support to students pursuing STEM degrees, with a goal of raising \$1,000 to award two \$500 scholarships.
- The community is encouraged to support the fundraising efforts and spread awareness about the scholarship.
- The scholarship is part of a broader initiative to provide opportunities for underrepresented groups in STEM fields.

Final Remarks and Adjournment

- Committee Chair Ngande Ambroise thanks the commissioner and her team for their presentation and engagement with the community.
- The community board members express their appreciation for the updates and the opportunity to provide feedback.
- The meeting concludes with a motion to adjourn, and the community board members express their commitment to supporting the initiatives discussed.
- The importance of community engagement, public safety, and programming in parks is reiterated, with a focus on continuous improvement and collaboration.

Action Items

- Introduce or connect Ryan Campbell (Pastor) to Diana's former advisory group contacts and relevant city council contacts who previously negotiated on underpass/jail-area improvements.
- Follow up after the meeting with Cesar Yoc and Steven Palmers to discuss scholarship fundraising logistics and next steps (fundraising mechanism and coordination).
- Investigate the timeline and current status of the Lower Concourse / Coast Guard amphitheater / EDC-managed project and report back to the community board.
- Discuss patrol allocation and visibility with Parks Enforcement / Parks Patrol Captain and follow up on ensuring adequate park patrol presence in the neighborhood; report findings back to the community board.
- Provide community organizers with guidance on the special event permitting process and connect them to Borough permit coordinator Sylvia Munoz for questions about event permits and World Cup-related restricted dates.
- Activate the underpass (under the Major Deegan) with Department of Transportation permission and coordinate cleanup/activation activities for community use.