



# BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #1

3024 THIRD AVENUE

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**RUBEN DIAZ, JR.**  
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

**GEORGE L. RODRIQUEZ**  
CHAIRPERSON

## FULL BOARD MEETING

MINUTES

October 26, 2017

**CEDRIC L. LOFTIN**  
DISTRICT MANAGER

**Board Members Present:** George Rodriguez, Clarisa Alayeto, Barbara Alvarez, George Alvarez, Maria Garcia-Baltazar, Daniel Barber, Carol Boddie, Betty Bryant-Brown, Passyna Bula-Bula, Josephine Fernandez-Byrne, Carolyn Chamorro, Maura Cosme, Linda Duke, Isabel Figueroa, Lynda D. Gaines, Brenda Goodwin, Lucas Henriquez, Richard Iyasere, John Lemon, Jennifer Montano, Mohammed Mutawakil, Ricardo Cosme-Ruiz, Mohammed Sheikh, Nicole Taylor, Cesar Vasquez, Hakiem A. Yahmadi.

**Board Members Absent:** Ngande Ambroise, Steven Benedith, Ronnie Caraballo, John Johnson, Aracelis Lucero, Addie Marrow, Nellie McKay, Idelsa Mendez, Walter C. Nash, Arline Parks, Freddy Perez, Jr., Andreas Rodriguez, Jr., Brenda Rodriguez, Carmen Santos, Alice Simmons, Sandra Stone, Tracy Alecia Woodall, Delores Waller-Worrell, Cesar Yoc.

The District Manager asked the First Vice Chairperson Ms. Betty Bryant to start the meeting with a prayer.

### Public Session

**Captain Robert Gallitelli Commander of the New York City Police Department Housing Bureau (PSA7)** said that I started about a month ago and trying to get out to as many community meetings as I can so that everyone can see me, see my face and know whose at PSA7 now. I have almost 17 years with the Department prior to my assignment here was the Commanding Officer of Bronx Gang and before Bronx Gang I was in Narcotics. I do have some past experience with housing I worked in PSA5 in East Harlem when I first got promoted. I've kind of been all over I've been in the Bronx, upper Manhattan, Queens so I've been around. Really just wanted to stop by and tell you some of the goings on in PSA7 right now. Just recently we did a large scale take-down at the Millbrook Houses and we really want to key everybody in into that take-down. So that was done by Narcotics along with the Gun Violence Division as well as the Safe Streets Taskforce which is a joint FBI/NYPD Unit. There were 35 arrests made with that take-down they were looking at homicides and shots fired going all the way back to 2007 and with this take-down they're going to prosecute 17 shooting incidents so it's phenomenal work and I think that it's going to really go a long way to make things much safer at Millbrook because high level drug traffickers were locked up in that take-down. It's going to be really good for the community so we just wanted to kind of let you guys know about the take-down.

**Detective Irizarry** said that we have a breast cancer event on Saturday on 169<sup>th</sup> and Washington starting at 9:30 AM.

**Rebekah Shoaf of Boogie Down Books** said that I'm here to talk to you about an event that my new Startup Boogie Down Books is hosting this Saturday as well as November 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> as you all know



there are currently no general interest bookstores in the Bronx and there are no specialty bookstores for children and teenagers for our young people under the age of 18 which comprises approximately 25 percent of Bronx residents. So my new startup Boogie Down Books is hoping to address that this Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup> we're doing a free Popup Book Shop for kids and teenagers between the ages of 11 and 18 in the South Bronx. We are giving away 200 hundred books kids and caregivers are welcome and we are doing that at MS343 at 345 Brook Avenue there are flyers being distributed that have this information on it. Then on November 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> we are hosting three Book Clubs on for anyone so not just for the 200 young people who get the free books from us this Saturday but for anyone who wants to join is welcome to come together with us. Research tells us that the two life-long issues in promoting reading in young people are the ability to choose what they read and the opportunity to talk about what they've read in a community of readers and we're working to promote that. Three things I'll say about our partnerships we are grateful to be partnering with MS343 for our space this Saturday and we're grateful to be partnering with the New York Public Library the Mott Haven Branch for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Book Club meetings. We're also partnering with a non-profit called House of Speak Easy which has a mobile book truck and they will be joining us on October 28<sup>th</sup> giving out free magazines to younger children and also selling books at discounted prices. So for people who want one of our books but are not eligible for a free one and prefer to purchase one they can do that with the book truck. Finally on November 18<sup>th</sup> is the second round of Book Club meetings we have at least two Authors who will be joining us. I left some flyers on the desk available in English and Spanish. The Book Clubs are facilitated by volunteer Educators.

**Ms. Jeanine Thomas-Cross Library Manager Mott Haven Library** said that on November 17<sup>th</sup> we're going to have panelist and a discussion and we're trying to get youth to come in to talk about violence in the community. So we're going to have Actors and we're trying to get either Denzel Washington or Jennifer Lopez and there's a whole group of people that we're trying to get to come out and it's going to be VIP for the youth. After that they're going to do the Hercules Play and then after that we're going to have a discussion. That's on November 17<sup>th</sup> from 4:30 to 7:00. We also have a program that is called Mentoring at the Library it's a President Obama initiative and it's for kids in High School from 15 to 18 years old they either come to the Library on Tuesdays or Thursdays with free pizza. They're getting them ready to build resumes, for jobs set goals and explore different career pathways. So far we have about 30 kids that are already enrolled we can have 15 in one group and 15 in the other group.

**Ms. Glennie Gomez from the New York City Department of Education** said that I'm here to briefly speak to you about Specialized High Schools. We are an outreach team that the Chancellor Carmen Farina and the Mayor Bill de Blasio have created a few months ago and this is to increase the diversity in Specialized High Schools. What are Specialized High Schools that are schools that are public schools free but they provide 4 years of science, math technology to engineering. There is a history of low percentage of African American and Hispanics that are just not enrolled in the Specialized High Schools but they're not taking the admission exam that is required to get in. So this outreach team has been working and been here before at the Community Board. We have attended more than 25 Middle Schools that we have given power point presentations of the High School admissions process with an emphasis on the Specialized High School admissions process. Speaking to students in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades and to parents. Working closely with the School Counselors, and Parent Coordinators so that we can have access to the parents. We have held close to 31 information sessions at New York City Libraries throughout the boroughs of Bronx, Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens and it's for that same purpose so that we can reach out to the parents we are going where the parents are. We are active with the Community Boards throughout the different boroughs and myself I'm active here in Community Board 1



and we have Specialist in all different boroughs. So we are making sure that whatever communications we have we forward it to the Community Boards so they can share it with the community. We are planning to try to present at NYCHA developments that is a priority and is going to take a lot of Specialists which we don't have at this time but we are planning to and specifically with shelters also. We're planning on going to shelters so that we can speak on Specialized High Schools and how we can increase the numbers of the students that take this exam. This weekend we had the Specialized High School exam given so that we are waiting for the numbers and we have another exam that will be given to the 4<sup>th</sup> of November. We also work very hard to do outreach by calling parents because the Department of Education also runs the Dream Program which is their 22 month free to students that demonstrate that they have high grades in math and reading comprehension on their State Exam. So we hope that with the work we've been doing that we have a higher percentage of African American and Hispanic that took the exam.

We are active and have been active in the Middle and High School Fairs by tabling and when I say tabling we're not just sitting there we have Specialists like myself and I speak Spanish other Specialists speak Mandarin and French as well so that we can really speak to the parents and let them know the importance of having the students take the exam and also we have brochures. We have student handbooks that we provide and most of all the Libraries have received boxes in English and Spanish. It's a free student handbook you can go to the nearest Library.

### **Questions and Comments**

### **End of Public Session**

### **The Chairman called for the roll.**

The roll was called and there were twenty-six members present constituting a quorum.

### **The Chairman called for a motion on the Agenda.**

Motion made to approve the Agenda as presented. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and passed unanimously.

### **The Chairman called for a motion on the prior meeting minutes.**

Motion made to approve the Prior Meeting Minutes as presented. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and passed unanimously.

### **Chairman and District Manager's Report**

**The District Manager Cedric L. Loftin** said that tonight there is a presentation by the New York City Department of Social Services, Human Resource Administration and Department of Homeless Services related to the Mayor's "Turning the Tide on homelessness in New York City. This is related to DHS homelessness Policy by the Mayor over the last year. We have a site in our district that is being looked at now for siting out of this process. I have invited those agencies to come and the Chairman also wanted them to come to speak to the Board about this process and to answer any questions that the Board Members may have.

**Ms. Jackie Bray First Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Homeless Services** said that I'm also here with Iris Rodriguez Associate Commissioner for Adults to speak about the Mayor's Plan for Turning the Tide on Homelessness in New York City but also about the opening of a facility here in this district. This plan will citywide end the use of cluster sites and hotels while opening 90 new more effective traditional shelters.

The plan is for homeless New Yorkers from every community across the five boroughs the opportunity to be sheltered closer to their support systems including schools, jobs, healthcare, family, houses of worship and the communities that they called home in order to more quickly stabilize their lives.

Central to our plan is the closing cluster sites and hotel facilities. We are phasing out the use of one hotel and 110 cluster units across 16 sites in this community as part of the Turning the Tide. As part of this plan 17 out of the currently 27 sites utilized by DHS in this Community Board will be phased out.

About 70 percent of shelter residents are families, but in Board 1 nearly 150 families are being sheltered in less effective facilities that are being phased out as part of the plan which includes the one commercial hotel and 110 cluster units that will no longer be used. This community also does not have any shelters specifically for the supporting of adult families. This new facility will be the first in the community that is dedicated to helping adult homeless families to get back on their feet with comprehensive social services. Preference will be given to adult families from CB1 but there might be other families that meet the criteria and will not be from this district or the Bronx.

This new facility at 500 East 134<sup>th</sup> Street will house 94 adult families being offered the opportunity to be sheltered closer to their support networks in the community they call home in order for them to be able to more quickly stabilize their lives. The on-site services will include case management, housing placement assistance, health and mental health services and employment counseling. Off-site linkages include primary healthcare, substance use treatment, vocational training, employment placement, GED instruction, conflict mediation and legal services. The average length of stay is approximately a year and a half. There is a 10:00 PM curfew but those individuals who work late hours will receive passes to return to the facility after curfew based on their documented work schedule. This facility is scheduled to open in November. Westhab a not-for-profit service provider with over 30 years' experience in operating transitional housing facilities will operate this site.

**Ms. Danielle Presto Principal from PS65** said that I'm on 141<sup>st</sup> Street and Cypress Avenue so there's at least 6 to 8 shelters in a five-block radius. When I came in I was looking through the information and wondering where the focus on education is and then I realized a little bit later that we're talking about an adult shelter so I kind of simmered down. So I will gladly come back when you're ready to talk about the interrupted education and I am super passionate about what I do so I would welcome a conversation.

#### **Questions and Comments**

**The District Manager** asked if there was anyone that wanted to speak. There was no one.

**Ms. Jackie Bray** said that we welcome input from the community and whenever possible will make adjustments based on feedback from the community.



**The District Manager Cedric L. Loftin** said that he would be emailing the Board Members a copy of the FY 2019 Needs Statement and Budget Request and would like a response for any additions by November 2, 2017.

**The Chairman called for a motion on his and the District Manager's Report.**

Motion made to approve the Chairman's and District Manager's Report as presented. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and passed unanimously.

**Elected Officials Reports**

**The representative from the Bronx Borough President's Office Ruben Diaz, Jr.** said that so as you heard today there's a homeless crisis issue in this city. So one of the ways that the city's looking at combating this issue is through the process of rezoning locations. So one of the major if you guys are not aware of the Jerome Avenue Rezoning Plan. They're looking to rezone blocks along the Jerome Avenue corridor. The purpose of this rezoning is to create more housing to create more economic development in that area of the Bronx. This is not nothing new this whole rezoning process started with Bloomberg but Bloomberg did it in a different way to really get his cronies into luxury housing in places like Williamsburg and Astoria Queens, and downtown Brooklyn. What Mayor de Blasio's Administration is doing is really looking at this and saying as we have a homeless crisis issue we need to start looking at certain neighborhoods and rezoning to create more housing and more economic development in some of these neighborhoods. So that is a major rezoning proposal that encompasses Community Boards 4, 5 and 7. Community Board 4 voted on Tuesday night to approve it, Community Board 5 voted last night to approve it and Community Board 7 is voting for it tonight. The reason why I bring this up I know it doesn't reflect here in this Community Board but it is something that is very monumental especially in the Bronx you've never seen a rezoning at this scale.

So the Borough President is having a Public Hearing on this next week on Thursday November 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Bronx Supreme Court Building Room 600 and it starts at 5:30. I brought some flyers and whether you support this or not please come out to this Public Hearing we want to hear from as many folks as we can. The Borough President will be making a decision on the rezoning on November 30<sup>th</sup> that's the last day of the ULURP Application for the Borough President after that it goes to City Planning and then it goes to the City Council Members for the final vote. This is sort of the way the city is trying in one way of combating homelessness and looking at neighborhoods and rezoning them and attaching that together.

**The representative from Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito's Office** said that we really don't have anything to report because we're transitioning this is Melissa's last year but everything is still the same my office is going to stay. You know that Diana Ayala won the seat so we're going to continue in the same space so you will be able to find us.

You know Melissa is very close to Puerto Rico and we're just hoping that we will be able to help them because they are part of us and if they come down here we need to help them as much as we can. Any questions or concerns you know where to reach me at 347 – 297-4922 and my office is located at 214 St. Ann's Avenue.

**The representative from the New York City Comptroller's Office Scott Stringer** said that some of you may know me I was the Office Manager for Marcos A. Crespo but I now represent the Comptroller. As you know the Comptroller is responsible for overseeing public pension funds. He's also responsible for making sure that city agencies are transparent and held accountable for the job that they're doing. He also wants to make sure that we continue to feel proud about the work that city government is doing and there's no other way to feel proud then in a room like this and now we're all together here fighting for our community. Most recently he said that he's going to release a report where individuals will be able to improve their credit scores.

**The Chairman called for a motion on the Elected Officials Reports.**

Motion made to approve the Elected Officials Reports as presented. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and passed unanimously.

**Committee Reports**

**The District Manager** said that the Economic Development-Land Use & Housing Committee Report was in the Board Member folders.

**The Health-Human Services & Seniors Chairperson Ms. Brenda Goodwin** submitted the Committee Report and requested a motion of support on the Argus Community's Capital Project/Capacity Increase.

Motion made to provide a letter of support to Argus on their Capital Project/Capacity Increase. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and passed unanimously.

The Municipal Services Chairperson Mr. Hakiem A. Yahmadi submitted the Committee Report and requested a motion of support on the New York City Parks Department of Parks St. Mary's Anchor Park Phase II Reconstruction and Patterson Playground Reconstruction Projects.

Motion made to provide a letter of support on the New York City Parks Department St. Mary's Anchor Park Phase II Reconstruction Project. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and passed unanimously.

Motion made to provide a letter of support on the New York City Parks Department Patterson Playground Reconstruction Project. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and passed unanimously.

**The Chairman called for a motion on the Committee Reports.**

Motion made to approve the Committee Reports as presented. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and passed unanimously.

**Old Business**

None

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**New Business**

None

**The Chairman asked for a motion to adjourn.**

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

**Meeting adjourned.**