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BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD No. 10

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Joseph Russo
Chairperson

Matthew Cruz
District Manager

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #10 VIRTUAL DISTRICT SERVICE CABINET MEETING MINUTES June 16, 2020

Attendance: CB10: M. Cruz; N. Kilkenny; Con Edison: R. Infante; DDC: M. Caminero; DEP: E. Ardizzone; DFTA: J. Melendez; DHS: N. Jordan; Crystal's Place: R. Vazquez; DoHMH: E. Peralta-Downing; DOT: D. Cruz; DOT Bridges: A. Zhou; A. Bayer; Emergency Management: A. Banks; FDNY: R. Velez; HRA: J. Williams; MTA: J. Carter, C. Gonzalez; NYPL: L. Brown, L. Marin, T. McCree, L. Torres; NYPD: Det. J. Souhrada; Officer H. Rahn-Rivera; Parks: C. Acosta; K. Zagorski; V. Davis-O'Neill; Assemblyman Benedetto's Office: M. McKay; Comptroller Stringer's Office: M. De La Cruz; Councilmember Gonaj's Office: F. Rubin; Councilmember King's Office: M. Martinez; DA Clark's Office: M. Santana-Tavarez; Sen. Bailey's Office: A. Meza; Sen. Biaggi's Office: M. Joyce; (33)

Mr. Cruz commenced the meeting at 10:08 AM by welcoming Cabinet members.

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene – E. Peralta-Downing

Ms. Peralta-Downing reported that the agency is not yet fully staffed. Inspection requests continue to be logged and will be executed as soon as possible. Ms. Peralta-Downing continues to serve on the Emergency Response Team but will respond to calls and emails to assist with any issues.

The Agency continues to promote the use of face coverings, frequent hand washing and social distancing. COVID-19 testing sites can be located by calling 311.

Mr. Cruz indicated that he had proposed two possible testing sites to the State Department of Health but did not receive a response. Ms. Peralta-Downing requested that he forward his email to her for follow up.

NYPD – 45th Precinct – Det. J. Souhrada, Officer H. Rahn-Rivera

Detective Souhrada reported that on June 15th a body, with bound hands and feet, was discovered by firefighters responding to a brush fire on the northbound Hutchinson River Parkway just before Exit 6. The case is under investigation with no further details available.

Also, on June 15, 2020, a male was shot in the leg near 1514 Crosby Avenue. Three suspects fled in the victim's yellow BMW. The case is under investigation.

Crime statistics: burglaries are up with 16 this year compared to 10 last year; grand larcenies are also up, 13 this year to 8 last year. There is a citywide spike in grand larcenies>.

New York City is in Phase One of reopening. Bars continue to operate on a to-go basis and no complaints were received for drinking establishments. Social distancing complaints were received; however, the NYPD is not aggressively enforcing social distancing and mask usage.

The NYPD distributed one million face masks citywide, a commendable accomplishment.

Detective Souhrada reported that the 45th Precinct is operating at full staff and is not currently being negatively affected by COVID-19.

Mr. Cruz inquired if the NYPD is continuing to respond to homeless issues. Detective Souhrada reported that though policy changes are underway, they have not yet become effective and officers continue to respond to homeless issues.

Ms. Jordan of the Department of Homeless Services reported that responding to homeless issues is limited because NYPD resources are limited.

Fire Department of New York (FDNY) – R. Velez

Mr. Velez reported that there were 29 structural fires for the month and 165 year to date. There were 318 EMS runs with 1,400 year to date.

Citywide there were 3,412 EMS calls, 903 in the Bronx. The average response time was 6 minutes, 49 seconds.

4,705 staff members have returned to work after being sick. 273 are currently sick or suffering with COVID-19 symptoms. 100% of all units are active.

The agency is focused on Fire Safety Education and anyone wishing to arrange for a virtual class should contact Mr. Velez at Richard.Velez@FDNY.nyc.gov.

Mr. Cruz inquired if there were smoke alarm batteries available for distribution to residents. Mr. Velez agreed to arrange for a supply to be sent to the Board Office.

Department of Transportation (DOT) – D. Cruz

Ms. Cruz reported that the following are approved but a work schedule is not yet available. The contract may not be finalized. Ms. De la Cruz of the Comptroller's Office indicated that she will check if the contract is at the Comptroller's office. If it is, the office has a 30-day processing policy.

- lighting installation on Westchester Avenue from Middletown Road to Wilkinson Avenue
- lighting installation on East Tremont Avenue from Bruckner Boulevard to Miles Avenue.
- Installation of pedestrian ramps at Keane Square Park, DOT-407680-P2P5

Ms. Cruz reported that there is a hold on Capital Projects. She will report on the Board's request for a capital reconstruction of Revere Avenue from Dewey Avenue to Sampson Avenue, DOT-426667-M4S1, when information is available. Mr. Cruz explained that a manhole on this street is raised over a foot above the roadway and creates a dangerous condition and requires immediate attention. Ms. Cruz will report the issue to the spot repair crew.

The request for repaving Ellsworth Avenue between Fairmount and Layton Avenues, DOT-400580-C1N5, and the request for repaving Barkley Avenue, between Wilcox and Clarence Avenues, are on the 2020 repaving schedule which is being fulfilled on a week by week basis. The exact date of repaving these streets is not available. Ms. Cruz will check if they may have already been addressed.

The Signals Department remains on hold with no updates available on the following:

Traffic Signal Request – Tratman and St. Peters Avenues – DOT-443718-F6T4
Traffic Signal Request – Frisby and St. Peters Avenues – DOT-443719-M7G6
All Way Stop Sign – Frisby Avenue and Rowland Street – DOT-443721-Q6L5
All Way Stop Sign – Seddon Street and Maclay Avenue – DOT-443725-G5C9
Request for traffic controls at the intersection of Edison Avenue and Harrington Avenue, Case # DOT-449247-X2X0

A response to the request for “No Parking Anytime, 12 AM – 5 AM” signage on Schley Avenue between Brush Avenue and Hutchinson River Parkway – DOT-453560-V8P0 is overdue. Ms. Cruz will inquire about this issue.

Mr. Cruz will check if the fallen signage at 3431 East Tremont Avenue, 311# 02471481, was repaired.

New York State Department of Transportation

Mr. Cruz reported that the New York State Department of Transportation deemed the Board’s request for repaving the Bruckner Expressway overpass on East Tremont Avenue unnecessary at this time and no work will be performed.

Department of Transportation – Bridges – A. Zhou; A. Bayer;

Westchester Avenue Overpass – Ms. Zhou reported that the project is ongoing. Most of the current work is on the water mains and painting under the bridge.

Mr. Cruz indicated that there were many potholes on the roadway and Ms. Zhou agreed to discuss this with the engineer.

Unionport Bridge Project - Ms. Bayer had no new updates. The project is ongoing and running smoothly.

Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) – J. Carter

Ms. Carter reported that ridership continues to increase on the subways as the city begins to reopen. There were 877,158 daily passengers on the subway which is 19% of the pre-pandemic number. The first week of the shutdown there were 735,747 riders.

Buses have over 900,000 passengers a day which is 42% of pre-pandemic numbers. More travelers choose to ride via bus than subway. Ms. Carter plans to ride the subway to evaluate conditions personally.

Trains receive round the clock cleaning and have had over 650,000 cleanings since March. Intense cleaning continues during an overnight shut down between 1 and 5 AM. A UV Light Pilot Program has been extended to include all trains as of June 12, 2020.

Buses have had over 210,000 cleanings since March.

Ms. Carter reported that several weeks ago she emailed the Agency's 13-point action plan which discussed all four phases of reopening.

Ms. Carter announced that she will be retiring on June 25th and that she had enjoyed working with Community Board #10 and agency representatives in serving the public. She introduced Mr. Charveys Gonzalez who will be assuming her responsibilities.

Mr. Cruz congratulated Ms. Carter, wished her the very best, and indicated that she will be greatly missed. He greeted Mr. Gonzalez and indicated that Ms. Carter was "a tough act to follow".

Department of Design and Construction (DDC) – M. Caminero; D. Aviles

City Island Project HED564 – Ms. Caminero reported underground drilling is ongoing mostly on the Pelham Bay Park side of the project, but also on the City Island side.

Consolidated Edison – R. Infante

Mr. Infante congratulated Ms. Carter on her retirement. He indicated that it had been a pleasure working with her.

Mr. Infante reported that the agency is in summer prep mode. With so many people at home due to the pandemic, usage is up. He urged anyone having trouble paying their utility bills to contact Con Edison. The agency will not disconnect service for failure to pay.

The Pennyfield Avenue mini bundle gas main replacement project is ongoing during Phase I of reopening. Mr. Infante noted that drilling is necessary and because it is a small street with bus access, noise is inevitable. He explained that the agency has done all it can to mitigate noise.

Department of Parks and Recreation – C. Acosta; K. Zagorski; V. Davis-O'Neal

Ms. Zagorski reported that Orchard Beach sand is opened, but swimming is prohibited. 26 ambassadors have been appointed citywide to remind people to social distance and wear a mask. Six (6) ambassadors have been appointed to Pelham Bay Park/Orchard Beach.

17,000 masks have been distributed since opening day by the Department of Parks and Recreation, with the assistance of the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Sanitation of New York.

The high number of requests to re-open exercise equipment was discussed. Due to the level of exposure to sweat and saliva droplets they will not be opened at this time.

It is unclear in which phase playgrounds will be reopened; the mayor will clarify reopening when it is appropriate.

The comfort station in Ferry Point Park is opened.

Ms. Rubin of Councilmember Gjonaj's Office inquired if golf courses were opened in New York City. Ms. Davis-O'Neal indicated that she would check with the Commissioner directly.

Department For The Aging (DFTA) – J. Melendez

Mr. Melendez reported that the Elder Abuse Campaign is wrapping up. The agency received 100 referrals.

Mr. Melendez reported that seniors can connect with others through virtual visits and phone calls while remaining safely at home through the Aging Connect Program. The agency can be contacted at Aging Connect: 212 244 6469 or NYC.gov/aging.

Mr. Melendez also thanked DOT for their good work in repaving area streets.

Ms. Joyce of Senator Biaggi's Office inquired about the air conditioning program. Mr. Melendez indicated that the agency is not managing the program but will help residents establish eligibility. Messages can be left on the aging connect line above.

Department of Social Services

Homeless Services – N. Jordan

Ms. Jordan responded to Mr. Cruz' inquiry as to the most expedient way to report a homeless issue. The agency does not have a hotline and 311 is the fastest way to obtain outreach. Incidents are tracked through 311. A valid 311 complaint number can be forwarded to Ms. Jordan of Homeless Services or Jose Rivera of Bronx Works.

Crystal's Place – R. Vazquez

Mr. Vazquez reported that there are no incidents of COVID-19 at Crystal's Place. Staff are back to working three days per week using masks and social distancing.

Pelham Grand – K. Mann

Ms. Mann indicated that there have been no cases of COVID-19 at Pelham Grand.

Cleaning and sanitizing coupled with enforcing visitor restrictions has been effective. Currently groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and the hot meal pantry are not permitted at the facility. The pantry now provides bagged take away meals.

Human Resources – J. Williams

Mr. Williams reported that HRA has increased the Burial Claims Program reimbursement payment from \$900 to \$1,700. Claims must be filed between 60 and 120 days after a death.

The air conditioner program for those with medical conditions has been revised so that recipients are eligible for review for a new machine after five years rather than ten years. Inquiries can be made by calling 212 331-3126.

Tenants experiencing housing crises should report issues to 311. They will be referred to legal services for assistance.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) – E. Ardizzone

Ms. Ardizzone had nothing new to report. The agency is following up on violations reported at the Pennnyfield Avenue project.

There have been no rate increase hearings.

Field operations address emergencies and are working with the Mayor's office to encourage social distancing in parks and public places.

New York Public Library (NYPL) – L. Brown, L. Marin, T. McCree; M. Torres; L. Velazquez

Commented [B(1)]:

Ms. McCree, City Island Branch, announced that the NYPL plans to open eight branches throughout the city in July. Masks will be required. The Summer reading Program began on June 8, 2020. NYPL.org/125/summerreading

Ms. Torres, Pelham Bay Branch, announced a book discussion on June 25th from 11 AM to 1 PM.

L. Brown, Co-op City Branch, greeted all and reminded all to refer to NYPL.org for updates.

M. Marin, Westchester Square Branch, reported that virtual programing continues: www.NYPL.org website.

Ms. Velazquez, Throggs Neck Branch, also invited all to check the NYPL social media pages and asked all to promote the Summer Reading Program.

Office of New York State District Attorney Darcel Clark – M. Santana-Tavarez

Ms. Santana-Tavarez announced that District Attorney Darcel Clark will be making a Public Announcement to address current issues. Ms. Santana-Tavarez will email specific information shortly.

Summer programs are on hold because of COVID-19.

Ms. Santana-Tavarez announced that she is commencing maternity leave and will return to her duties in early 2021. She will email information of the person assuming her responsibilities in the interim, when available.

Office of City Council Member Andy King – M. Martinez

Ms. Martinez thanked Mr. Cruz for his efforts in food and mask distributions throughout the community.

She reported that the Council member's talk show has been highly rated and thanks all who have been tuning in.

Office of New York State Senator Alessandra Biaggi – M. Joyce

Ms. Joyce reported that the Senator has had to discontinue her newsletters due to the upcoming election.

Ms. Joyce urged anyone needing assistance to contact her at mjoyce@NYSenate.gov

Office of New York State Senator Jamaal Bailey – A. Meza

Ms. Mesa discussed legislative reforms supported by Senator Bailey including the a Anti-Chokehold Act. Senator Bailey is the Chair of the Codes Committee. Senator Bailey stresses the need to improve relations between the police and the communities they protect.

The Senator has been busy with food distribution.

Early voting has begun.

Office of New York State Assemblyman Michael Benedetto – M. McKay

Mr. McKay reported that Assemblyman Benedetto's Office has been distributing masks and hand sanitizers and asked Mr. Cruz if the Community Board was interested in receiving either. Mr. Cruz indicated that the Board could assist with distributing these materials. He noted that he will be assisting Councilman Gjonaj who will be distributing masks at the Board office following the meeting, at noon.

Office of New York City Council Member Mark Gjonaj – F. Rubin

Ms. Rubin reiterated that Council member Gjonaj's Office will be distributing face masks outside of the Community Board #10 office at noon today.

Council member Gjonaj will be hosting two virtual town hall meetings: June 18th at 4 PM with Neighborhood Initiatives Development Corp.; and June 19th at 4 PM with the New York City Department of Sanitation. Please RSVP for these events.

Office of Emergency Management – A. Banks

Ms. Banks reminded all that as we enter hurricane season it is important to know your zone.

She inquired if Mr. Cruz had suggestions for spaces where cooling centers could be established and referred all to their newsletter which provides important information.

Mr. Cruz thanked all for their participation and announced that there will be no District Service Cabinet meetings held during July and August.

He again congratulated Ms. Carter on her retirement and Ms. Tavares on her pregnancy and wished all a happy and safe summer.

The virtual meeting concluded at 11:22 AM.