



**Ruben Diaz, Jr.**  
*Borough President*

## **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 October 20, 2020**

Attendance: CB10: M. Cruz; N. Kilkenny; Con Edison: R. Infante; Consumer Affairs: A Roldon; CCHR: B. Simmons; Crystal's Place: R. Vazquez; DDC: M. Caminero, L. Alfred; DEP: E. Ardizzone; DFTA: J. Melendez; DHS: N. Jordan; DoHMH: E. Peralta-Downing; DOT: D. Cruz; DOT Bridges: A. Zhou; DSNY: M. DiRusso; EMS: P. Miano; FDNY: R. Velez; NYCEM: L. Kirton; MTA: C. Gonzalez; HRA: J. Williams; Verizon: A. Horton; Mayor de Blasio's Office: M. Rondon; NYPL: L. Brown, T. McCrae, L. Velazquez; Parks: C. Acosta; K. Zagorski; V. Davis-O'Neill; Pelham Grand: K. Mann; Riverbay Corp.: M. Sajous; Assemblyman Benedetto's Office: M. McKay; Councilmember Gonaj's Office: F. Rubin; 12<sup>th</sup> Council District Office: M. Martinez; Sen. Bailey's Office: A. Meza; Borough President R. Diaz, Jr.'s Office: I. Gonzalez (35)

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

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

Ms. Peralta-Downing reported that the Agency is busy managing COVID 19 related issues and addressing orange and red cell areas. She stressed the importance of continuing to follow the COVID-19 protocols, getting the flu vaccine, and tested for COVID-19. New York City residents can call 311 to find their nearest testing site. Non-Covid-19 complaints are being logged and will be investigated in the future. Inspections remain temporarily on hold.

Ms. Peralta-Downing serves on the Emergency Response Team. E-mail responses may be delayed but will be answered.

Ms. Rubin of Council member Gjonaj's office inquired when community centers will be permitted to conduct socially distanced yoga and dance classes. Ms. Peralta-Downing will check and follow up with Ms. Rubin.

Mr. Cruz reported that CityMD, on Lane Avenue in Westchester Square now offers rapid testing with results in 15 minutes.

#### **FDNY – R. Velez**

Mr. Velez reported that from Oct. 26-31 Change Your Clock, Change Your Battery events will be held to remind the public to change fire alarm batteries and provide fire safety information. Flyers and safety guidelines will be sent to the Board Office for distribution.

Mr. Cruz requested smoke alarm batteries for distribution, if available.

#### **EMS – P. Miano**

Mr. Miano reported that in July District 10 EMS was divided into two groups. Bronx Community Board #10 is now Division 7. This action allows increased oversight, reduces the number of stations, and improves response times, which average 6 minutes and 42 seconds. Mary Aurrichio is the Division 7 Commander.

Overall, call volume is slightly down from this time last year.

#### **NYCEM – L. Kirton**

Ms. Kirton reported that the most active period of hurricane season is between August and October. She urged all to know their evacuation zone and be prepared. Costal storm information can be found on the NYS Severe Weather website: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/severeweather/index.page>.

October 29<sup>th</sup> marks the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hurricane Sandy. Ms. Kirton requested notification of events commemorating Sandy as the Agency will do their best to participate.

2020 NYC Cert recruiting and training information can be found at: [Intergov@oem.nyc.gov](mailto:Intergov@oem.nyc.gov). Cert Teams greatly aid communities during and after emergencies.

#### **Department of Transportation (DOT) – D. Cruz**

Mr. Cruz asked for help with road surface conditions on I-95 between exits 8 and 13 north and south bound. Ms. Cruz requested an email request from the Board for the DOT Borough Commissioner.

The Board's request for a speed camera at the three-way intersection of Bruckner Blvd., Buhre Avenue and Willow Lane was denied. A new request for a red-light camera was submitted: DOT - 478022- M2V2

Initially, the 311 filed for the cement blocks at 1404 Commerce Avenue in the parking lane, was forwarded to the Police Department rather than the Department of Transportation. The Agency is resending an inspector and violations should be issued.

The request for the approved lighting installation on Westchester Avenue from Middletown Road to Wilkinson Avenue and for East Tremont Avenue from Bruckner to Miles Avenue is being worked on.

An update on the request for the reconstruction of Revere Avenue from Dewey to Sampson Avenues, DOT-426667-M4S1, may be available next week. It is not on the Capital Needs list at present.

The repaving season is coming to an end. The repaving requests on the 2020 schedule: Ellsworth Avenue between Fairmount and Layton Avenues, DOT 400580-C1N5 and Barkley Avenue between Wilcox and Clarence Avenues may have been pushed to next year. Ms. Cruz will check for updates.

The Signals Department remains on pause with no available updates for the following Signal/Sign requests:

- Signal - Tratman and St. Peters Avenues – DOT-443718-F6T4
- Signal – Frisby and St. Peters Avenue – DOT 443719-M7G6
- Request for traffic controls at the intersection of Edison Avenue and Harrington Avenue - case # DOT-449247-X2X0.

- All Way Stop Sign – Frisby Avenue and Rowland Street – DOT-443721-Q6L5
- All Way Stop Sign – Seddon Street and Maclay Avenue – Dot-443725-G5C9

The installation of the No Parking Anytime 12 AM – 5 AM sign on Schley Avenue between Brush Avenue and Hutchinson River Parkway - DOT- 453560-V8PO is expected by the end of October.

**Westchester Avenue Overpass Rehabilitation – A. Zhou**

Mr. Cruz thanked Ms. Zhou for her speedy response to his request to clean up litter and cut overgrown grass in the vicinity of the project.

Ms. Zhou reported that the Westchester Avenue Overpass Project is proceeding well. Lane closures will be required during the upcoming protection beam installation. Detours and traffic enforcement officers will be on hand to assist. Next Friday the project will move into Stage 3. Traffic patterns will shift on Westchester Avenue. Walkways will be available starting next Friday.

**Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) – C. Gonzalez**

Mr. Gonzalez reported that subways continue to be closed between 1 AM and 5 AM for deep cleaning.

Currently subway ridership is 30% and bus ridership is 50 % of pre-pandemic numbers.

Mr. Gonzales reported that the Maskforce Taskforce continues to work to promote mask use on public transportation. Events this afternoon and Thursday are scheduled, and registration is open. Pink breast cancer awareness masks are being distributed in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

**Department of Design and Construction (DDC) – M. Caminero; L. Alfred**

Lisa Alfred - Burr Avenue Project – was present but may have had to leave the meeting early.

City Island Project HED564 – Ms. Caminero reported that underground drilling is ongoing, mostly on the Pelham Bay Park side of the project, but also on City Island. Assembly and welding of piping is taking place and 50 feet inland this area will be jointed to two microchannels of the new watermain.

**Consolidated Edison – R. Infante**

Mr. Cruz suggested that Con Edison differentiate their gas line inspection program from an ongoing Department of Buildings' gas inspection program: Local Law 152, which applies only to structures with three or more units. Mr. Infante was not aware of the Department of Buildings' program but will reach out to the public relations department.

The Con Edison program is a 10-year effort to replace area gas lines and inspect every structure regardless of number of units. The gas meter replacement program is a 3-year effort which will be completed at the end of next summer.

Mr. Infante noted that the cracks on Otis Avenue will be addressed, but the damaged curb opposite the work site is a pre-existing condition and is visible on pre-construction photos. If the homeowner persists, he can file a claim through the Comptroller's Office.

**Parks Department – C. Acosta; V. Davis-O'Neal, K. Zagorski**

Mr. Acosta reported that due to the warm weather, parks are being fully utilized and maintenance efforts are demanding. Clearing the parks is no longer an issue; people leave voluntarily because it gets dark earlier.

Mr. Cruz indicated that trucks parking along side of Park's Department facilities overnight and for extended periods should be reported by the Department to the Board Office for follow up. He also relayed complaints that the Orchard Beach parking lot is being used for drag-racing. Ms. Davis-O'Neill indicated that her office had not received drag-racing complaints but would bring the issue to the Commissioner's attention.

The status of the Trees and Sidewalks Program rating for 3714 Ampere Avenue and maintenance of high weeds and litter at the entrance to the bike path at the Hutch Service Road and Westchester Avenue will be updated and reported later today.

#### **Consumer Affairs – A. Roldon**

Mr. Roldon reported that domestic workers are now entitled to receive 40 hours of paid sick leave. Next year establishments with less than 100 employees will be entitled to seven (7) sick days.

Restaurants can now charge a 10% COVID-19 surcharge for outdoor dining. The customer must be made aware of the surcharge up front. It will continue until 90 days after COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

#### **Department of Sanitation – M. DiRusso**

Superintendent DiRusso reported that pre-registration is now required and underway for anyone interested in participating in snow removal during the 20/21 snow season. Anyone eligible to work in New York City who is over 18 years old may apply online at: [nyc.gov/snow](http://nyc.gov/snow). The Snow Removal Program pays \$15 per hour for the first 40-hour week and \$24 per hour thereafter.

Superintendent DiRusso reported that the homeless encampment on Westchester Avenue was removed.

DSNY is operating on the Night Plow Schedule from October 26<sup>th</sup> through April 5<sup>th</sup> in anticipation of inclement weather. Snow training is underway, and trucks are traveling routes. 50% of staff is working the day shift and 50% overnight. During this time, it is especially important to put trash out the night before collection day as many areas are collected during the overnight hours.

Superintendent DiRusso reported that his staff will monitor the grassy area on Balcom Avenue at Sampson for infractions.

The lot at Balcom and Edwards Avenues (block #5370) has been submitted to the Lot Cleaning Division. Superintendent DiRusso will keep the Board Office informed.

#### **Department For The Aging – Josue Melendez**

Mr. Melendez reported that as we enjoy the season of fall, the "Fall Prevention Program" is underway at the Department for The Aging. Home safety precautions and a checklist will be forwarded to the Board Office for circulation to the public.

A new program, "Friendly Voices" is underway. This program encourages older adults to reach out for companionship via phone.

Senior Centers remain closed, but the Agency is working with Directors and the Department of Health to facilitate reopening.

## **Department of Social Services**

### **Homeless Services – N. Jordan**

Ms. Jordan had no specific updates. The Blondell Avenue Project has no new developments; the Board will be informed of any developments.

Weekly calls with the Commissioner on Tuesdays at 4:00 PM as well as an emailed weekly bulletin continue to keep the community informed of Agency developments.

### **Crystal's Place – R. Vazquez**

Mr. Vazquez reported that Crystal's Place residents are well and had no announcements.

### **Pelham Grand – K. Mann**

Ms. Mann reported that the 91 tenants at Pelham Grand have a zero-positivity rate. Tenants are encouraged to follow the COVID-19 protocols, get tested, and register to vote.

Mr. Cruz indicated that he had masks to donate to Pelham Grand.

### **Human Resources – J. Williams**

Mr. Williams reminded all that Commissioner Banks continues open forum phone calls on Tuesdays at 4 PM. The Commissioner is very pro-active in assisting the public.

Most staff members continue to work remotely and there are a limited number of open centers. HRA encourages all to use the ACCESSNYC website to apply/renew services. The Agency is experiencing trouble with clients not answering their phone when they call to perform remote interviews. The Agency encourages staff to leave a message identifying themselves and their phone number and call again immediately thereafter. This practice should assist with clients who are screening their calls.

Mr. Cruz thanked Mr. Williams for his assistance with a constituent who was ultimately able to get her apartment.

### **Citizens' Commission on Human Rights – Belinda Simmons**

October is Domestic Violence Awareness month. Ms. Simmons indicated that the Agency is doing individual presentations for anyone who is interested.

Mr. Cruz invited Ms. Simmons to present to the Full Board Meeting on Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. Ms. Simmons will work to arrange the presentation.

## **Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) – E. Ardizzone**

Ms. Ardizzone shared the GI Map.

The Agency is working with the Department of Design and Construction with water shutdowns relating to the Burr Avenue Sewer Project.

Mr. Cruz inquired if the empty lot on the Hutchinson River Parkway Service Road at Colonial Avenue can be used to store Burr Avenue Project construction materials. Ms. Ardizzone explained that the Department of Design and construction must have gotten Department of Transportation permits for material storage. The Department of Transportation decides where materials are staged.

**New York Public Library (NYPL) – L. Brown, T. McCrae, L. Velazquez; M. Ramos**

Ms. McCrae had no updates. The New York Public Library is looking forward to offering more services and planning virtual programs for the community.

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Ms. Brown, of the Co-op City Branch, reported that virtual programming is wrapping up. She is hopeful that phase 2 will be worked out. Ms. Brown thanked Mr. Cruz for his support.

Ms. Ramos, of the Pelham Bay Branch encouraged all to view available programs at: nypl.org.

**Office of State Senator Jamaal Bailey – A. Mesa**

Ms. Mesa reported that the Senator's Office has begun accepting names for the November Turkey Give Away.

Senator Bailey is working on facilitating the Co-op City Gas Line Project.

**Office of Assemblyman Michael Benedetto – M. McKay**

Mr. McKay reported that due to COVID-19 the Annual Halloween Parade and festivities sponsored by Assemblyman Benedetto can not take place. Permits are not being granted for street events.

**Office of Councilman Mark Gjonaj – F. Rubin**

Ms. Rubin reported that Councilman Gjonaj's Office is also accepting names for his Turkey Giveaway. The turkeys are awarded on a first come first served basis while supplies last. Those interested should call 718 931 1721

Tomorrow, the Council Member is hosting a neighborhood clean up at Bruckner Boulevard and Country Club Road.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The Councilman will host a tele-town hall event on October 29<sup>th</sup>.

Food Boxes are distributed every Tuesday at 1478 Williamsbridge Road, Bronx, NY 10461.

**12<sup>th</sup> New York City Council District – M. Martinez**

Ms. Martinez indicated that the 12<sup>th</sup> City Council District staff are working remotely and can be reached at: 718 684 5509.

**Office of Bronx Borough President Rubin Diaz, Jr. – I. Gonzalez**

Mr. Gonzalez had no updates. The Borough President's office continues to be available to those needing assistance.

**Office of Mayor Bill de Blasio - M. Rondon**

Mr. Rondon reported that the Mayor's Office conducted several successful mask giveaways Bronx wide. Reducing the numbers in several COVID-19 cluster zones has been a recent focus, as well as stressing the need to follow core safety protocols of hand washing, social distancing, wearing a mask and staying home when feeling unwell. Currently, Bronx Community Board #10 is not at risk of becoming a hot spot.

Mr. Cruz reminded all that the November Full Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM.

He thanked all for participating and concluded the meeting at 11:23 AM

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