



COMMUNITY BOARD 11
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Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.
Chairman Albert D'Angelo
District Manager Jeremy H. Warneke

COMMITTEES

Leadership

Community Development & Budget Priorities

Economic Development

Education, Culture & Youth Services

Ethics & Disciplinary

Health & Social Services

Housing

Land Use

Parks & Recreation

Public Safety

Sanitation & Environmental Protection

Transportation

September 24, 2020 District Manager's Report

In June, I sent out an email regarding COVID-19 related price gouging violations for three businesses in our district. So far, a total of four businesses in our district have been violated, resulting in the following court hearing dispositions:

1. Relion Pharmacy, 1607 Williamsbridge Road: default penalty/decision of \$700.00 for two counts of price gouging
2. Allerton Hardware, 671 Allerton Avenue: settled for \$250.00
3. Live Well Pharmacy, 1432 East Gun Hill Road: default penalty/decision of \$350.00
4. 2918 Gas Corp, 2918 Boston Road: settled for \$1,750.00 for price gouging of hand sanitizer

It has been my general office policy that the public must take the first step by calling 311 about their issue of concern where and when possible. As stated on the CB11 website, "If you request assistance from Community Board 11 and your request involves another City of New York agency, please obtain a 311 service request number first and be prepared to provide us with the reference number(s)"

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/bronxcb11/contact/contact.page>).

There are quite a few reasons for this. If anyone needs or wants them, please let me know.

More importantly, while exemptions have been made to this policy for board members in the past, board members are no longer exempt, i.e. if you're a board member and you witness, for example, a pothole, you need to report it to 311 before calling the CB11 staff.

Because I think it is important that we better understand one another, especially those in our midst, especially now when race relations in this country seem to be at an all time low, I asked four black residents of CB11, who happen to be board members, the following questions: "As a black

American, do you feel safe in this country? And if not, why? Have you had any personal negative encounters with law enforcement or other authorities?"

Here is how each one chose to respond:

1. I do not feel safe in this country. I definitely have had negative encounters with law enforcement and other authorities.
I know when my partner and I were looking for an apartment to rent together in CB11, I had a positive experience with the broker over the phone. But when he saw me in person, I could feel his doubts. He wasn't up front about it. You could tell in his mannerism and how he spoke to the landlord over the phone. When my partner (a white person) finally showed up, it was as if the broker was relieved.
2. As black Americans, we [a married couple] feel safe where we live. When we visit family in Florida, Ohio, South Carolina or Virginia, we have to say we don't feel that safe. As children, we've had uncomfortable experiences with police pulling us over and searching us just because we may have looked suspicious to them. Personally, we're still uncomfortable going into areas like McLean Avenue in Yonkers, where it seems everyone looks at you different when walking into a UPS store. Lastly, we're always treated differently from when we wear business attire versus when we're wearing street clothes. And professionally, there are still subtle biases that exist where we feel we have to constantly prove ourselves not to be that stereotype of whatever the other person may think of black workers.
3. I literally don't want to walk my dog outside without ID just in case I get accused of something. I never leave the house without my phone fully charged just in case I have to capture something, or prove that I didn't do something. It's exhausting. Really, it is.
4. I agree with everything said [above], and I feel the same way...always and for most of my life. As a black American, I have never felt safe in America. When I was young, I was harassed by police officers when I went jogging at night. I was on the track team, training for the Olympics, but I felt unsafe while jogging. I have been stopped for no apparent reason by the police and asked what am I doing in this neighborhood. I always feel uncomfortable walking thru mostly white neighborhoods. America has never felt safe to me, even now as an adult. I am more equipped because I now have a better understanding of my rights, but even with that, I don't trust America to keep me safe in the way others are kept safe. Safe from being harassed, shot or arrested for something that I didn't do.

Not stopping there, I decided to ask some friends in other parts of the country (one in the Bronx, one in the Midwest and one in the District of Columbia area) the same questions.

Their responses:

1. Honestly, I don't feel safe and secure in America. What happened to Trayvon Martin, Philando Castile, Eric Garner or George Floyd could just as quickly occur to a family member or me.
I've had negative encounters with law enforcement, which range from the inconvenient to life-threatening.
2. I move about life in mostly all white spaces, especially here in [the Midwest] where I reside in a mostly white suburban neighborhood. I feel safe because I take precautions to ensure my safety. I never move about as if I am oblivious or have not a care in the world. I go for walks and watch every corner, intersection, every single car that drives by, and every walker and biker. I do not presume I am welcome in any space unless it's an all black space, and even then, there are some precautions. But they are not the same. I rarely feel my life is in danger or jeopardy when amongst BIPOC [black or Indigenous people of color].
No negative experiences per se with cops but definitely other authorities.
3. We [another married but mixed couple] have experienced racist and racist attitudes and actions, mostly in Brooklyn. But keeping ID on us and keeping our phones fully charged absolutely applies. We are quite on alert when driving in Westchester County.

This morning, I saw the following news article on social media: "World on track to overshoot warming limit without massive investments"
(<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKCN26F0DZ>).

This article is just one reason I send out an email in July directed at homeowners, which said:

If you're a homeowner, do you have solar panels on your house, or have you considered installing solar panels? If you don't have a flat roof and receive a lot of sun exposure, I highly recommend you explore the possibilities.

I personally purchased a solar energy system last year, which was the last year there was a 30% federal tax credit for it. (This year the credit dropped to 26%. Next year, it drops to 22%.) The federal tax credit coupled with the New York State one gave me half of my money back after I filed my tax returns this year, and unless I had an electric car, I couldn't be happier. My last electric bill, for example, was \$16.92, which is pretty good considering that I use an electric oven/stove on a daily basis.

I can go into further details and/or benefits, but let me just say that solar is not only good for the environment but it puts less stress on the power grid when things get really hot outside. And if you have the money (a solar system is not cheap, I know), you can buy battery backups that act as generators when the power gets knocked out like it did recently for way too many of us.

You may remember the following news stories about a French bulldog placed in a garbage can, while most likely alive, in front of Big Deal Supermarket on Morris Park Avenue:

1. News 12: <http://bronx.news12.com/story/42470227/dog-found-tossed-in-morris-park-garbage-can-dies>
2. *Bronx Times*: <https://www.bxtimes.com/graphic-images-morris-park-dog-thrown-in-trash-near-supermarket/>

The animal was found dead. Police were investigating the matter (waiting on an update), but the NYC Department of Sanitation (DSNY) said in response to me contacting them about whether or not is allowed to discard of dead animals in the trash: “DSNY does not allow New Yorkers to dispose of dead animals in corner litter baskets, however our personnel must witness the act in order to issue a summons.”

Disposing of dead animals in one’s regular household trash, however, is allowed. The DSNY’s guidance to residents regarding that is as follows:

residents should double bag, label and set out dead animals on their scheduled collection day (see link for reference: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/site/services/cleaning/cleaning-animals>). If residents do not want to dispose of their pet in the trash, Animal Care Centers of NYC offers cremation services at a relatively low cost and there are also private veterinarians that offer similar services.

As I posted on social media earlier this month, I don't want to speak badly about any other community board, but I don't understand some people sometimes.

Some people like to complain about a lack of transparency. While this does exist to a degree at CB11, I don't think one can really say that this is true of the BxCB11 website (nyc.gov/bxcb11).

Sure, the BxCB11 website is not perfect. It takes a lot of work to maintain, but the CB11 staff does its best to make our website perfect. Obviously, this can't be done without the help of board members and many others. A colleague of mine for example called me a couple of weeks ago about a broken link, which—thanks to CB11 Community Coordinator Chris Kirka—was promptly corrected.

Still, there are others who do nothing but complain. They complain about a lack of transparency. They complain about what other community boards may be doing that CB11 is not.

Question for everyone, particularly the complainers: Have you ever really looked at a community board website? Have you compared CB11's to another CB's? If you answered

no to either question, I encourage you to explore. Some community boards don't publish minutes, their list of board members, etc.

CB11 on the contrary publishes the names of its board members, the number of how many members it currently has, and much more.

This may not seem like a big deal to anyone, but it can be. We get the complaints, and then we get emails like this one from a member of the public this month:

I found tomorrow's meeting link via the 'agenda' tab on the Community Board website, easily. I very much appreciate how easily I can navigate your webpage. In my experience these last few weeks, most gov't sites have not managed to keep up with technology and the sites are too outdated to be of service. This one is a breath of fresh air!

In response to my post on social media, a member of Community Board 8 said: “Actually the CB11 website is WAY more detailed and better updated than other Bronx CB websites!” And one of our own board members said: “It’s true though! When I was doing research on becoming a board member, I remember looking at other websites and being like what the hell do CBs really do?!”

As I stated last week, the CB11 Office has, or had, new interns under our wing. Unfortunately, one intern is no longer with us. The remaining one, Citlali Carrillo Garzon, will be working from home on Thursdays and in the office with Chris on Wednesdays until December 11.

She is a recent college graduate with a BA in East Asian Studies and a minor in General Linguistics. She has previously interned at We Stay/Nos Quedamos as part of the City’s Summer Youth Employment Program, where she answered phone calls...and helped with block events the organization held. She has also worked seasonally during the summers at an insurance and income tax business, helping the owner organize her files, make calls, and update the owner’s list of clients.

On September 17, I attended a workshop by the Parliamentarians of Metro New York and NYC Civic Engagement Commission called “Parliamentary Procedure Secretary Training,” having missed a prior workshop in August by them called “Nominations and Elections.”

Key takeaways from the Secretary Training:

1. Our by-Laws—outside of laws or regulations higher in rank such as state or federal ones—are supreme.
2. Each committee should have minutes of its prior meeting as its first agenda item, i.e. they should be reviewed and/or discussed for corrections.

3. Opinions/discussion details should not be included in any minutes, i.e. no he said, she said. Only actions and/or key points should be included.

According to a colleague of mine, who attended the August workshop, a key takeaway from that was that members of a community board's elections and/or nominating committee should not be appointed to their position. They should be elected so as to avoid the any conflict of interest allegations or perceptions.