

**COMMUNITY BOARD #5***Honorable Vanessa L. Gibson, Bronx Borough President***Chairperson**  
**Angel Caballero****District Manager**  
**Kenneth Brown****Bronx Community Board 5**  
**General Board Meeting Minutes**  
**November 13, 2024**

**Attendance:** Mario Acosta, Nekeisha Afful, Chantal Allison-Konteh, Eloise Bennett, Wilfrido Bonilla, Erachie Brown, Angel Caballero, Bakary Camara, Julian Cleveland, James Coger, Carrie Cuthbertson, Lucia Deng, Osiris Guzman, Tisha Hatch, Michele Heath, Marlene Jimenez, James Lin, Maribel Maria, Nanette Matthews, Theresa Mims, Robert Nieves, Juan Parra, Dilletta Pina, Shenita Rudolph, Argenis Santiago-Payamps, Beverly Smith, Cheryl Westbrook, Chef Geneva Wilson

**Excused:** Bobby Akumah, Catherine Cudjoe, Annette Dejesus, Brenida Parsons, Patricia Rojas, Charles Shorter, Stacy Infante, and Benjamin Richardson.

**Absent:** Yazmin Benitez, Phyllis Bowdwin, Felix Ceballos, Roxana Gonzalez-Jimenez, Gail Hill, Suri Medina, Tierra Pais, Carlos Veras

**Meeting start:** 6:11pm

**Quorum:** 6:16pm

**Approval of Minutes**

- James L. motions to approve the minutes with corrections, Carrie seconds. The motion passes with a verbal vote.  
Correction: Correct the title of the first section to the correct fiscal year (2026)  
"Public Session for the Fiscal Year 2026 New York City Capital and Expense Budget"

**Report from Chairperson, Angel Caballero**

- This meeting is the second week of the month due to the holiday season. The same will apply for next month.
- Food pantry at the Davidson Center: There will be no turkey handout this year for the Thanksgiving holiday. Families who are looking for food supplies for the holiday are asked to sign up at the Davidson Center.

BCC Campus \* Gould Hall, Room 200 \* 2155 University Avenue \* Bronx, New York 10453  
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Serving these Neighborhoods:  
Fordham, Morris Heights, Mount Hope, University Heights

### **District Manager's Report, Kenneth Brown**

- Turnaround time between these next two months' meetings is tighter due to holidays.
- Citywide conference on AI and its consequences for the city's workforce. Panel discussion included Center for an Urban Future and Tech NYC.
- Success Summit planning meeting with CUNY: Panel hosted at Bronx Community College, inviting high school students and parents to discuss their futures. Also, will highlight assets and resources in the borough.
- Friends of Echo Park: There are plans for a mural at Burnside/Valentine Avenue. The overall mission of Friends of Echo Park is to make the park more welcoming to the public.

### **Voting Item: Letter of Support for High Class Limo & Car Service base license renewal**

- Remarks from Lucia Deng, chair of the Municipal Services committee:
  - Asking for a letter of support. Business is located at 1706 Jerome Avenue. During their presentation to the committee, they talked about how they have employed members of the community, with about 75 drivers from CB5.
  - The committee voted to recommend that the board offer a letter of support
    - Osiris motions to provide a letter of support; Dilletta seconds the motion
    - Vote: 27 yes, 1 abstention. The motion to provide a letter of support passes.

### **Public Session:**

- Sally Smith: States that her grievances are the same, including the replacement of the restroom at Echo Park and the bus stops at either side of the Grand Concourse. Expressed that a new concern is the state of the concrete barriers on the Grand Concourse and all the litter there. Considering the brush fires, this is a matter of concern.
  - Visited a City Council member's office. Her concern was that you cannot walk on many sidewalks due to the litter caused by the vendors on these streets. She is not against entrepreneurship.
- Melissa, Family Enrichment Center
  - Introducing Erica, the new family liaison.
  - Hosting a family game night on 11/14 from 5-7 pm, pizza will be served.
    - Asking that people RSVP in advance.
  - Chic Boutique on 11/19, will be offering free clothing
  - Cell phone: 646-477-9842. Address: 2001A Creston Avenue
- Miguel Alvarez and Secretary Dorseman, PW School of Art
  - An independent art school for marginalized artists that teaches the discipline of branding and collection. So that all artists, regardless of background, can compete with more resourced artists
  - Seeking volunteers. Contact: 332-400-6763 or [Poseidonswave2013@gmail.com](mailto:Poseidonswave2013@gmail.com)
- Shawniese Holman, resident
  - 54 Featherbed Lane: homeless people have set up shacks in her area
  - Has not seen police in area. Concerned because she does not know who is residing in the shacks.

- Comment from Beverly, board member: she and Ken, District Manager, have previously reported this to 311. Has to be a joint effort with sanitation and NYPD. The board is working on it.
- Carmen Angeles, resident
  - 1901 Grand Concourse: This is turning into a commercial area and the public is becoming tired of it. People are selling cooked food, causing a large amount of noise and smells. It has been reported to the police; they helped by removing it initially but now it seems the police are permitting them to be there. She is asking for help. She wanted to bring photos to show.
    - Wilfrido, board member: these issues are no longer handled by NYPD, it is now Sanitation
    - Beverly, member: suggesting that she tread lightly since she lives there. Go through measures like 311.
      - Lashawnda: the office has been investigating why 311 has closed these cases
- Richard Sierra, Davidson Community Center
  - 12/6 from 5 pm: Celebrating annual Christmas lighting and hot chocolate, held at Devanney Triangle Park.
  - For information: Call 347-219-0488
- Ariel Amaya, Resident
  - Local street cleaning into community hands, interested in more community resources that promote wellbeing.

#### **Elected Official's Reports:**

- Leonardo Coello, Mayor's Office
  - Reminding the public of fire season: especially as the weather gets colder and with the added concern of e-bike safety:
    - Two million dollars for a program to trade in faulty e-bikes and receive a certified bike/battery. Bike has to be registered with the city to be eligible.
  - PATH program: Partnership assistance for transit homelessness. Speaking to people in train stations.
  - Containerization starting this week. Warning tickets will go out until January 2. After, buildings will receive fines that will increase incrementally. Home Depot has containers.
    - Theresa: can we report people for lack of compliance?
      - Homeowners will start to receive warnings and then fines.
    - Bakary: His understanding is that bins are just for garbage, not recycling.
      - Correct: just trash in these bins. Compost gets put in brown bins.
- Kenneth Agosto, Borough President Vanessa Gibson
  - Working to spread the word about 311 and using it to document issues. Recommends everyone use the service
  - 11/14: Celebration of Puerto Rican heritage at the Bronx Music Hall
  - 11/14 10 am-2 pm: Free paper shredding event with Landon Dais
  - Office: 851 Grand Concourse Phone: 718-590-3500
  - 12/7: Office will be present at the Chess Masters Cup at PS 70
    - chessintheschools.org

- Jack Shaevitz, Assemblymember Yudelka Tapia
  - o 11/26 1 pm: PS 363 Turkey Giveaway. Please RSVP with the office.
  - o Preparing to head to Albany for the next Legislative Session.
- Abou-Bakhr Meite, Assembly member Landon Dais
  - o Held a coat drive in October.
  - o Will host a turkey giveaway next week.
  - o Please sign up for his newsletter: events, jobs from around the district-  
<https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Landon-C-Dais/enews/>
  - o Office: 910 Grand Concourse Suite 1JK Phone: 718-538-2000
- Lia Guzman Genao, State Senator Gustavo Rivera
  - o Office will close 12/16 through 1/1 for the holiday
  - o Office: 2432 Grand Concourse Suite 506 Phone:
  - o Contact the office for food supplies: 718-933-2034
- Joanna Rivas, Congressman Ritchie Torres
  - o Introduced the Affordable Remittance Act. Bill seeks to drive down transaction costs of cross-border remittances.
  - o 10/30: Sent a letter to Molly Wasow Park, Commissioner of NYC Department of Social Services, regarding Fair Fares expanded benefits.
  - o Office can assist with many federal-related issues
    - Open: 10 am-5 pm, Monday-Friday. Phone: 718-503-9610
- Trevon Blondet, District Attorney Darcel Clark
  - o Office is holding a Canned Food drive. Please bring to the next board meeting or call to set up a time for pickup
  - o Cell: 917-946-3438
- Council Member Pierina Sanchez
  - o Legislation: pass tax incentive J-51 to improve quality
  - o Hearing on tenant safety and illegal lockouts
  - o Hearing on deed theft: to be held next week
  - o Housing and City of Yes: zoning text proposal to bring housing to every district
    - Responded to City of Yes: the current proposal offers no affordability restrictions, no conversations on who housing is for
      - Counter proposal: City for All, released about two weeks ago:
      - Will not pass the City of Yes if City for All is not funded
    - o Plan is being costed out and reviewed.
  - o Legislation introduced to take buildings away from the worst landlords
    - If tenants in a particular building want to become homeowners, there will be a process to turn the building into a cooperative
    - If residents don't want to be homeowners, there will be a process to sell to a nonprofit.
  - o Crimes are not down in the 46/52<sup>nd</sup> precinct CB5
    - Convening with the new head of NYPD, Jessica Tisch, Commissioner for Youth and Community Development, Keith Howard, to discuss investments in kids, historically high unemployment in young people, very high in CB5
    - Shawniese Holman, resident:
      - Knows of a senior with no heat and no hot water. She went to 311 and the CM's office

- Can send HPD to do a roof-to-cellar inspection of the building (present)
  - Her staff member, Maria, will follow up directly with Ms. Holman.
- Osiris: comments regarding young people and skills training
  - Pierina: There are a lot of moving pieces, but there are a lot of empty programs. There needs to be efficiency in how these programs are set up.
    - Bakary: DYCD has also acknowledged the issue of empty seats
      - CM Sanchez: Youth Councils meet every month. Councilmember Althea Stevens has held hearings on youth services.
      - DYCD, afterschool programs that are not held in the schools.
- Comment from the Public: Some programs were well attended, but they have since closed down. Kids don't go to these DYCD programs, to the parks.
  - Elected officials are here to listen, and she encourages people to attend these meetings and hearings.

#### **Committee Reports:**

- Municipal Services: Lucia
  - Presentation from DOT about the Cross Bronx reimagining
    - Not set in stone. Look out for community feedback sessions
  - Tremont Busway: signal priority at Tremont and Grand Concourse: are assessing how it could impact traffic flow
  - Next meeting on December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6 pm
- Housing Committee: Nanette
  - Displacement risk assessment described by the Department of City Planning
    - When developers come in and create new projects, it displaces citizenry
    - Sometimes owners are offered money to remove residents from property
    - Assessment determines the risk of displacement in the area. CD 4, 5, 6 at around 90% displacement risk.
    - Reached out to Dept. of City Planning's Winnie Shin for a list of buildings and developments required to submit a racial equity report
      - Found that no developers had submitted that report. None of the buildings she looked at met the criteria.
    - Currently a new development of about 250 apartments. But no such report. There is nothing we can do once plans are approved, and money changes hands.
  - Meets every 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday around 6:45pm
  - Discussion about whether this can be taken to district services report meetings, which are attended by the DM. To be discussed at the next committee meeting.
- Immigration Committee: Mario
  - Meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month
  - Will be working on emailing elected officials regarding the concerns brought forward by residents.
  - Will have stakeholders and organizations that have reached out about helping.

- Parks Committee: Erachie
  - o Meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday. Invites members of the community to attend and share resources and ideas about enhancing parks.

#### **Old Business:**

- No old business

#### **New Business:**

- Personnel Matters. Councilmember Pierina Sanchez was present for the Executive Session
- Start: 8:10pm
  - o Cheryl read the motion from last week: The motion was to remove Benjamin Richardson as treasurer, with the stipulation that if his conduct continues, he will be up for removal.
  - o Officers and members do their best to act as instructed by the bylaws. However, there was an error in the conduct. We met the following requirements: Notification to Benjamin, allowing time for Benjamin to respond.
  - o We did not meet the following requirements: Create an ad-hoc committee to investigate the allegations.
    - To rectify this an ad-hoc committee has been created: consisting of Maribel Maria, Michele Heath, Mario Acosta
  - o Nanette: what stipulations will be in place to see if he can be reinstated?
  - o Bakary: will the ad-hoc committee listen to both sides and go forward? Benjamin should be given the opportunity to speak. Bakary's concern is that the people who provided statements did not have the opportunity to hear from Benjamin.
    - Mario: Benjamin has not been in communication with the office or the board. If he wants to defend himself, he will have the opportunity to do so.
    - Bakary: Benjamin expressed that he feels that he has been annoying.
  - o Beverly: has sat in on meetings when she has seen Benjamin act out of order.
  - o Nanette: there is a specific set of guidelines for other procedures (outside of the board). Now, it seems that Benjamin has been targeted in the past few months.
    - Juan: The back and forth is due to the fact that prior incidents were not documented.
    - Acknowledges that she may have responded to issues Benjamin faced differently from how he responded. Everyone has different personalities, methods of communication.
  - o Argenis: has only been on board for a few months. However, he has only seen Benjamin once. Is he able to carry out his duties?
  - o Dilletta: Emphasized that we need to do this fairly.
  - o Wilfrido: Same background as Juan. He has been the subject of investigation in his professional career. It is nothing personal.
  - o Chantal: Emotions are high.
  - o Angel: The ad-hoc committee will meet and come up with criteria
  - o Bakary: he is looking for a preamble. The committee should not be in charge of coming up with the criteria for what they will look at
  - o Pierina Sanchez: Roberts Rules, she is an ex-officio member of CB

- She was also a member in 2016-2018.
- It is fair for there to be criteria.
- He [Bakary] can put a motion forward to say they want criteria put in place. And those criteria can be used
- Lucia: We're all adults; we should follow the bylaws. But nothing in bylaws about this process
  - Allow the committee to put forward recommendations about criteria.
- Dilletta: let ad-hoc come up with criteria
- Juan: all the committee will do is make a recommendation.

**Meeting adjourned: 8:50pm.**

- The next meeting is on December 11, 2024.