



**THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**BOROUGH OF THE BRONX**

**COMMUNITY BOARD #5**

**Honorable Vanessa Gibson., Bronx Borough President**

**Chairperson  
Osiris Guzman**

**District Manager  
Kenneth Brown**

## **Bronx Community Board 5 General Board Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** November 12th, 2025

**Location:** P.S. 279

**Presiding:** Mr. Osiris Guzman, Chairperson

**Board Members Present:** Nekeisha Afful, Bobby Akumah, Allison Chantal-Konteh, Phyllis Bowdwin, Erachie Brown, Bakary Camara, James Coger, Carrie Cuthbertson, Lucia Deng, Roxana Gonzalez-Jiminez, Osiris Guzman, Michelle Heath, Nanette Matthews, Juan Parra, Sharline Parker, Norma Perez, Dilletta Pina, Sheniah Rudolph, Charles Shorter, Beverly Smith, Chef Geneva Wilson.

**Board Members Excused:** Eloise Bennett, Angel Caballero, Gail Hill, Marlene Jimenez, James Lin, Theresa Mims, Robert Nieves,

**Board Members Absent:** Mario Acosta, Yazmin Benitez, Catherine Cudjoe, Raidiris Dominguez, Tisha Hatch, Benjamin Richardson, Argenis Santiago-Payamps, Mariama Touray,

**Meeting Called to Order:** 6:25pm

**Quorum:** 6:20pm.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 7:51pm

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## 1. Call to Order

Chairperson Osiris Guzman called the November General Board Meeting of Bronx Community Board 5 to order at 6:25pm. A quorum was confirmed.

The Chair thanked P.S. 279 for hosting the meeting and welcomed board members, staff, agency representatives, and community members. Spanish interpretation was made available for attendees who required it.

The Chair reminded all speakers to address their comments through the Chair in order to maintain order and respect during discussion.

## 2. Approval of Minutes

The Chair moved to the approval of the minutes from the October General Board Meeting. Members were reminded that copies had been distributed in advance and were asked to confirm that they reviewed them.

The Chair opened the floor for corrections or edits. A correction was noted regarding the placement of elected official reports and committee reports, which required adjustments in the draft minutes.

A motion to approve the October minutes with corrections was made by **Dilletta Pina** and seconded by **Juan Parra**.

The Chair called for a vote.

- **Ayes:** Majority
- **Opposed:** None
- **Abstentions:** Two

**The ayes had it. The motion carried.**

The minutes of the October General Board Meeting were approved with corrections.

### **3. Chairperson's Report**

Chairperson Guzman thanked all board members for their continued commitment and participation. He noted that the work taking place within Community Board Five is gaining momentum and that people across the district is beginning to notice the difference in how the board operates. The Chair spoke about the new membership plan and explained that once committee appointments are finalized, the plan will officially take effect. He stated that the new structure is designed to strengthen participation, track member engagement,

and ensure that every committee remains active and accountable. He described this as an important step toward creating more structure and efficiency at the committee level.

Over the next several weeks, the Chair will be working closely with executive officers and committee chairs to set clear expectations and improve coordination with the district office. He emphasized the need for consistent follow up, clear communication, and proper documentation of deliverables.

The Chair also encouraged members to stay engaged with their committees and to bring forward issues they encounter in their communities. He reminded the board that members do not need to wait for monthly meetings to report concerns and that early communication helps the board move matters forward more effectively.

The Chair closed his report by thanking members for their time and dedication, noting that together the board is building a body that is active, and reflective of the community it serves. The Chair then yielded the floor to District Manager Ken Brown.

### **4. District Manager's Report**

District Manager Ken Brown thanked staff member Lashonda Dodson for her continued work and support and acknowledged the availability of Spanish interpretation for attendees.

He reported on a recent virtual meeting with the Department of Health focused on rat mitigation efforts. He noted that Community Board Five currently has the highest level of rat activity in the Bronx, and the Department outlined the ongoing steps being taken to address this issue.

The District Manager also shared updates from a virtual meeting with State Senator Robert Jackson. Senator Jackson announced that forty-one million dollars has been allocated to

support food pantries. Additional updates were provided on SNAP benefits, HEAP assistance, and available programs for residents facing utility challenges. Contact information was shared for individuals who may need help applying for benefits or navigating service issues. Mr. Brown encouraged residents to reach out to the district office for assistance with 311 concerns, benefit questions, and agency follow up.

## 5. NYPD Report

Captain Soriano from the 46 Precinct delivered the monthly public safety update. He reported that overall crime in the precinct is down by fifteen percent, noting that the improvement is due in part to the work of the newly formed Q Team and increased patrol presence throughout the district.

The captain introduced Sergeant Kelly, who oversees the Q Team as well as traffic enforcement operations. He encouraged residents to contact the team with any quality-of-life concerns and stressed the importance of sending photos or videos, when possible, as they help officers respond more effectively.

The captain also mentioned two recent incidents in the community involving a fire and a shooting. He stated that the shooting victim remains in the hospital but that the case is progressing and close to being resolved.

The NYPD closed its report by reminding residents that the precinct is available to assist with concerns related to public safety, traffic issues, and ongoing investigations.

## 6. Street Co Naming Guidelines

The Chair introduced the Street Co Naming Guidelines, noting that the Executive Committee had reviewed the document and that the goal was to create a fair and consistent process for reviewing future co naming requests. The floor was opened for comments.

**Michele Heath** expressed concerns that the required number of years for organizations might exclude long time community members and older pioneers who contributed significantly but may no longer be active. She suggested revisiting the thresholds to ensure they reflect current community realities.

**Lucia**, former Municipal Services Committee Chair, explained that the guidelines were created by reviewing criteria from other community boards and adapting what fit CB5. She

emphasized that the guidelines are not strict rules and are meant to provide structure while allowing flexibility.

**Beverly Smith** spoke about her long history in the district and voiced support for honoring community members who have served CB5 over many years.

**Roxana** recommended moving forward with the guidelines as written, noting that they are flexible and allow applicants to explain any gaps. She also pointed out that delaying the vote further would push the process into the new year due to the holiday schedule.

With no further comments, the Chair called for a motion.

A motion to approve the Street Co Naming Guidelines was made by **Lucia Deng** and seconded by **Dilletta Pina**.

The vote, conducted by a show of hands, resulted in **8 in favor, 8 opposed, and 3 abstentions**.

Because the motion did not receive a majority, **the motion did not carry**, and the guidelines were not approved.

## **7. Letter of Support: Creston Avenue Community Garden**

The Chair introduced the letter of support for the Creston Avenue Community Garden, located at 2242 Creston Avenue. The Parks Committee reviewed a request from the New York Restoration Project seeking the Board's support for transferring the site to the NYC Parks Department's GreenThumb program. The transfer would ensure that the garden remains permanently open to the public and protected from future development.

Key points from the committee discussion included the New York Restoration Project's twenty-four years of maintenance at the site and their commitment to continue upkeep during the transition. Once transferred, NYC Parks would assume full maintenance responsibility under GreenThumb, with ongoing involvement from local volunteers. Committee members also requested confirmation regarding ADA accessibility and long-term accountability from Parks.

The item had been reviewed by the Parks Committee and discussed at the Executive Committee before being brought to the full Board.

With no further questions or comments, the Chair called for a motion to approve the letter of support.

A motion to approve was made by **Dilletta Pina** and seconded by **Beverley Smith**.

A show of hands resulted in **19 in favor, 0 opposed, and no abstentions**.

The motion carried, and the letter of support was approved.

## **8. Committee Membership Plan**

The Chair provided an update on the committee membership appointments approved by the Board at the previous general board meeting. He announced that the Housing, Land Use, Governance, and Immigration Committees now have full membership. The Chair thanked all members who have already confirmed their participation.

Several committees still have open seats, including Education, Municipal Services (one seat remaining), Health and Human Services, Economic Development, Youth Services, Parks and Recreation, Cultural Affairs, Veterans Affairs, and the Jerome Avenue Committee. Members were reminded that tonight was the final opportunity to select and confirm committee preferences before the new membership plan goes into effect.

The Chair emphasized that when a business item is referred to a committee, members of that committee must be present to meet quorum and move recommendations to the full Board. This requirement is stated in the Board's bylaws and ensures that all items coming before the general board are properly reviewed.

The Chair opened the floor for discussion. A question was raised regarding the possibility of adjusting committee meeting times. The Chair responded that meeting times are set at the discretion of each committee chair, though recommendations can be brought to the Executive Committee.

A question was also raised about the potential for virtual committee meetings. The Chair stated that the Board is exploring this option, but any shift to virtual meetings would require review and guidance from the Governance Committee and may involve amending bylaws or establishing a clear board policy consistent with the Open Meetings Law.

Roxana clarified that members are not restricted to only the two committees they select; members may attend any committee meeting throughout the month. The purpose of assigning members is to ensure each committee has a reliable group present when

business items require quorum. She noted that several committees often struggle with attendance, which delays important recommendations from moving forward.

The Chair reaffirmed the importance of participation and encouraged all members to stay active in their assigned committees.

## **9. Public Session**

The Chair opened the public session and reminded attendees that this portion of the meeting allows community members and organizational representatives to share comments, updates, and concerns with the Board. Speakers were asked to state their name and affiliation for the record.

**Sally Smith** : spoke about her ongoing concern regarding the relocation of the Grand Concourse bus stop near Burnside Avenue. She explained that the previous stop had served the community for many years and that its removal has created significant hardships, especially for seniors and individuals with mobility issues. She stated that the current distance between stops makes it difficult for residents to safely cross the Grand Concourse. She requested strong board support for reinstating the stop.

The Chair responded that the issue was raised earlier that day at the District Service Cabinet meeting with the MTA and that the Board is awaiting a written update regarding the status of the bus stop and the reasoning behind its removal.

**Ericka Diaz**, Community Liaison for the Harmony Hub Family Enrichment Center: provided information on food pantry resources available within Community Board Five. She noted that many residents face barriers to traveling outside the district and shared a compiled list of local food pantries, including schedules and contact information. She also announced the center's community boutique, which provides clothing and essential items at no cost, supported through donations from the community.

**Beverly Smith** : encouraged younger residents to participate in the work of the Board and its committees. She emphasized the importance of youth involvement and the need for new voices and perspectives, even from individuals who are not board members. She

urged younger generations to attend meetings and contribute to the work taking place across the district.

**Chef Wilson** : announced an upcoming DYCD public hearing scheduled for November 18 at Bronx Works, where residents will be able to share feedback and complete surveys. He also referenced an invitation to a community day at Mi Oh Mi, a program focused on mushroom cultivation and microgreens that will be offering hydroponics education to local schools.

**Cheryl Simmons**, representing Essence Healthcare, provided an overview of services available through the organization, particularly in light of recent federal health legislation. She explained that Essence offers a house call program for eligible seniors, allowing medical providers to conduct visits, diagnostics, and assessments directly in the home. She also described NY Reach, a workforce initiative that supports individuals interested in pursuing careers in the health field. Attendees were encouraged to ask questions or reach out for more information.

**Linda Pedrosa** addressed the Board to express gratitude for the assistance provided at a recent election event at P.S. 33. She noted that concerns she previously raised regarding malfunctioning voting machines were resolved, and this year there were no issues for her or other voters with disabilities. She thanked the Chairperson, the District Manager, and the elected officials' offices for their support and follow up.

## **Elected Officials Report**

Jacquelin, Office of Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson

- Several upcoming events and opportunities were announced for the district.
- A "Mind, Body and Community" event focused on men's mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing will be held on November 25. The event will include a free boxing workout, workshops, and community resource tables.
- Members were also encouraged to help promote the upcoming community board application period by sharing the opportunity with friends, family, and community networks. Flyers will be distributed once the application period goes live.

## **Council Member Oswald Feliz, District 15 by Esperanza Diaz, Chief of Staff**

- Turkey and produce giveaway on Tuesday, November 25 at 2:00 p.m. in front of the district office at 573 East Fordham Road. Turkeys, pork, chicken, and fresh produce will be distributed while supplies last.
- Recent legislation passed to improve support and transparency for small businesses, so they are better informed about regulations and less likely to incur unexpected fines.
- New legislation introduced to require a white and red warning label on certain food items at chain restaurants that contain more than 1,800 milligrams of sodium, in order to help residents make informed health decisions.
- Additional legislation introduced to require street medians to be properly paved.
- Constituents with questions about legislation or district matters were invited to contact the council member's office at 718 842 8100 and ask for Chief of Staff Esperanza Diaz.

## **Assembly Member Yudelka Tapia, District 86, Report delivered by Jack, Chief of Staff**

- Turkey distribution will take place on Tuesday, November 25 at P.S. 363 on Moulton Avenue between 184 Street and 183 Street. Community members must visit the district office at 2175 Jerome Avenue in advance to obtain a ticket.
- On the following day, the office is hosting a panel with Senator Sepulveda and Council Member Rita Joseph focused on education and protecting students with disabilities in light of federal changes. The event will be held at JHS 118 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- The office continues to host regular resource clinics, including monthly HRA visits to assist with one shot deals and cash assistance, legal housing support with NIMIC, and upcoming Housing Connect appointments in partnership with CHCF.
- Residents were encouraged to call the district office at 718 933 6909 for information, appointments, or to sign up for services. Flyers for the turkey distribution and the education panel were made available on the resource table.

## State Senator Gustavo Rivera, Report delivered by Lia Guzman, Constituent Services Director

- The office has prepared a list of local food pantries in the district for residents affected by the federal government shutdown and other hardships. Community members can speak with Ms. Guzman to obtain the list.
- The office can assist constituents who are experiencing problems accessing benefits or dealing with state government agencies. Residents were encouraged to contact the office for advocacy and follow up.
- Monthly immigration and housing clinics continue to be held at the district office. Constituents can call 718 933 2034 to schedule an appointment.
- A turkey distribution event will take place within Community Board Five. Details and flyers will be shared once finalized.
- The office is distributing “Know Your Rights” palm cards and will be launching an outreach team to visit small businesses across the district to ensure they are informed and prepared in case of any enforcement encounters.
- Senator Rivera’s office was pleased that on November 25 the City Council voted to approve the Kingsbridge Armory redevelopment project, a long-standing priority for the Senator. The office extended thanks to Council Member Pierina Sanchez for her leadership on the project.

## Congressman Ritchie Torres, United States House of Representatives Report delivered by Rochelle Muniz, Constituent Services Liaison

- Congressman Torres called on the President to negotiate a compromise to sustain SNAP benefits during the federal government shutdown. Congress is currently voting on legislation that may end the shutdown, and updates will be announced once confirmed.
- The Congressman is prioritizing the Penn Station Access Project, working alongside Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio Cortez to urge Amtrak to keep the project on schedule. The project will bring four new Metro North stations to the East Bronx and directly connect the borough to Penn Station. Recent delays to 2030 have raised

concerns, and the congressional delegation is pushing to restore the original 2027 completion timeline. The project is expected to reduce commute times by up to fifty minutes and improve regional job and transit access for more than half a million Bronx residents.

## **Committee Reports**

### **1. Health and Human Services Committee, Chair Chef Wilson**

The committee met on November 7 and heard presentations from BronxWorks on housing and youth jobs, from Iris Diaz of UCHC on diabetes resources, and from Essen Health on available health services. In December, the committee will meet on the first Friday from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Beginning in January, the regular meeting time will be 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. BronxWorks will return next month to present on the Energy Hub program and will distribute home weatherization supply boxes to residents who register in advance.

### **2. Governance Committee, Chair Lucia Deng**

The Governance Committee did not meet this month. The Chair reported that the committee will meet next month to work on a resolutions template that will help the board clearly document and formalize its positions on key community issues. She invited board members, especially those who voted against the street co naming guidelines, to share specific feedback and suggestions for changes so they can be incorporated into a revised draft. She reminded members that most of the detailed work happens at the committee level and encouraged everyone to attend meetings, read the materials sent by email, and provide comments in advance so the committee can bring forward guidelines and policies that the full board is prepared to support.

### **3. Education Committee, Chair James Coger**

The Education Committee held its first meeting last month and the Chair reported that it went very well. The next meeting will take place on Monday, November 24 at 5:30 p.m. at Bronx Community College. The committee will hear a presentation from the Hostos Community College Fatherhood Academy along with other

community partners. The Chair invited board members and community members to attend and noted that an update will be provided at the next general board meeting.

#### **4. Economic Development, Chair Charles Shorter**

The Economic Development Committee held its first meeting on Monday, November 10 at Union Community Center. The Chair reported that the committee is focused on understanding current and future economic activity in the district, including which businesses and projects are coming in, who the key players are, and how to bring them to the table. The committee is exploring workforce development opportunities, the status and ownership of vacant lots, and how those sites can benefit the community. Members also began discussing food trucks and whether they pose challenges or opportunities, including related licensing issues. The next meeting will be held on December 8 at Union Community Center, and board members and residents were encouraged to attend.

#### **5. Youth Service Committee, Chair Diletta Pina**

The Youth Services Committee did not have a formal report this month. The Chair announced that the committee is meeting tomorrow at 6:00 p.m. at the Davidson Center with the Executive Director of the School for the Arts to discuss youth arts programming and services. The next Youth Services Committee meeting will be held on December 11.

#### **6. Park & Recreation , Chair Erachie Brown**

The Parks Committee reported that it met in October and received a presentation on planned renovations to Creston Playground. The goal of the project is to restore and upgrade the playground for community use and then transfer it fully to the Parks Department. The committee also noted concerns raised about sidewalk and street safety for people with disabilities and about rat activity reported at a local playground near 181 Street. The Parks manager committed to looking into these issues. The next Parks Committee meeting will be held at BronxWorks Senior Center at 4:00 p.m., and community members are invited to attend and share ideas and concerns about parks, playgrounds, and gardens in the district.

## **7. Housing Committee, Chair Osiris Guzman**

The Housing Committee Chair announced that the committee will meet next Thursday at 6:00 p.m. at the Davidson Center. The committee has a full membership, and members are expected to attend and engage in addressing housing issues affecting the community.

## **8. Land Use Committee, Chair Beverly Smith**

A report was given for the Land Use Committee. The committee meets jointly with the Housing Committee and will be meeting at the next scheduled Housing Committee meeting. The main agenda item will be a proposed development of Davidson community center, which is a city owned building, including plans to renovate the second floor and install an elevator. Members and residents were invited to attend and learn more about the project.

## **9. Veterans Committee, Chair Juan Parra**

The Veterans Committee Chair reported that on October 29 he received a Bronx Borough President citation during a Veterans Appreciation Month event. He also attended the Bronx Chamber of Commerce annual veterans' luncheon and noted the recent celebration of the 250th birthday of the United States Marine Corps. The next Veterans Committee meeting will take place on December 9 at 5:00 p.m. at the Jericho Project, 2065 Walton Avenue. The Chair invited individuals interested in the military and those who wish to serve on the committee to attend and get involved.

## **Old Business**

### **Social Media and Board Outreach**

The Chair noted that social media now plays a major role in how organizations communicate and highlighted that Community Board Five should be more visible online. He stated that the Board should be using social media to publicize meetings, committee work, events, and photos from activities in the district. He referenced other community boards that regularly post updates and said that CB5 should work toward a similar presence.

The Chair expressed his interest in working with the Board to develop a clear plan for using social media platforms to strengthen communication and outreach.

## **New Business**

No New Business was brought before the board.

## **Adjourned**

7:51 PM EST