



THE CITY OF NEW YORK BOROUGH OF THE BRONX
COMMUNITY BOARD 5
Honorable Ruben Diaz, Jr., *Bronx Borough President*

Chairperson
Dr. Bola Omotosho

District Manager
Xavier Rodriguez

Bronx Community Board 5

General Board Meeting

September 24, 2008

Members Present: A. Chase, C. Bess, D. Caraballo, J. Caraballo, J. Allah, M. Dumont, T. Garcia, L. Johnson, N. Montilla, B. Moore, B. Omotosho, K. Speller, D. West Williams, B. Williams

Members Absent: A. Caballero, C. Charles, S. Dowling, M. Estrella, F. Morales, J. Reyes, J. Roman, B. Smith

Excused Members: Ann Dawson

- I. Welcome/Approval of Minutes
 - A. The chairperson called the meeting to order at approximately 6:20 pm and welcomed all to the meeting.

- II. Elected Officials Report
 - A. Representatives from the Bronx Borough President's Office and Senator Serrano have respectively made their reports to the board members and the audience. (See attached reports for details)

- III. Chairperson's Report
 - A. The chair identified Mr. Nestor Montilla as a new board member and asked that he introduce himself to the other board members and the community residents.

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- B. The chair thanked the board members for their participation in the June election process resulting in the appointment of new officers to the board and reappointment of others including him. The chair also shared in some future challenges he foresees with respect to community issues and problems. He called for unity to tackle problems.

As part of his vision for the board, the chair envisions a vibrant economy driven by business improvements and construction jobs for community residents. Given the many construction projects in the community, the chair stated he plans to monitor all construction underway in the community carefully.

- C. The chair informed the audience about the executive committee meeting held on September 10th. At this meeting a lengthy discussion ensued regarding concerns of a couple of incidents in which there were overt displays of hostility and threatening behaviors while board meetings were in session.

He stated the members at the meeting unanimously agreed that there is a behavior protocol that must be adhered to by all those who attend board meetings. Even though it's acceptable to have differences of opinions, people cannot conduct themselves inappropriately. He warned everyone that future outburst of hostility and/or menacing behavior will not be tolerated and if necessary, the police will be called to deal with any unruly disturbances.

- D. The Chair stated he looked into local residents' concern about asbestos being released during demolition work at the construction site where the new school is to be built on University Avenue. After looking into the matter he reported that the allegations proved to be unfounded.

- E. The Chair informed the audience and board members that with the exception of three committees (e.g., Economic Development Committee, Sanitation Committee & Cultural Committee) the chairs for the other committees will remain incumbents.

- F. The Chair acknowledged and thanked Bernice Williams for attending the Borough President's consultation meetings on a consistent basis. She will be heading an Ad Hoc committee that will review and make recommendations to board following discussions in these meetings. (The next Bronx Borough Consultation meeting is scheduled for September 25th)

In closing, the Chair reported on the following:

- He along with several board members (B. Williams, L. Johnson, and C. Bess) attended the annual Budgetary Consultation meeting on September 22nd.

- B. Smith represented CB #5 at CB #6's general board meeting on September 10th. One of the voting items at this meeting involved the renaming of East 188th Street and Webster Avenue where a traffic enforcement officer was struck by a car and pinned under a bus resulting in her death. Since the street locations fall within CB #5's boundaries, the chair asked that we support the renaming of the street which was initiated by Councilmember Joel Rivera.

IV District Manager's Report

- A. The district manager distributed copies of this year's Capital Budget Priority list to the board members. He asked that the board member review the listing and come prepared for discussion at the public hearing scheduled for October 22nd. He also urged the residents in the audience to attend.
- B. The district manger informed the audience about a grant that was received following an application submitted to the Department of Small Business Services. The Davidson Community Center has been designated to oversee and management of the grant. The goal for awarding the grant is to provide improvements to the business district corridor along Burnside Avenue. The Burnside Steering Committee will monitor the progression of improvements made.
- C. The DM stated that over the summer he attended several ground breaking ceremonies including Aqueduct Park, MASA and Mount Hope.
- D. The DM announced that the next Bronx Borough President's Consultation meeting is scheduled for October 3rd. He would like to see more board member representation but understands many cannot attend given the time of day when the meetings are held.
- E. The DM informed the audience about a public hearing being planned for October to meet with representations from the NYC Department for the Aging and NYCHA. According to the DM, the NYC Department for the Aging entered into agreement with NYCHA to provide a 30 million dollar grant for the development and operation of senior citizen programs within city housing projects in CB #5, but due to cutbacks the initial dollar amount was reduced to 18 million. The drastic cuts will now make it difficult for the proposed projects to move forward.

*Prior to the introduction of the guest speakers, the Chair made an amendment to the agenda in order to allow the community affairs officer (Luis Melendez) from the 46th precinct to give his report to the community.

- Officer Luis Melendez offered a statistical report on crime reduction in the community. He also reported that community complaints are down 10%.

- Officer Melendez warned the audience about openly carrying “IPhones” and “Sidekicks.” Robberies linked to these particular phones have increased.
- Officer Melendez announced that the Police Community Council has a new group of board members. He encouraged residents to come to the monthly meetings which are held on the third Tuesday of every month.
- Officer Melendez reminded the residents that street activity permits require approval from both the community board and the police precinct. While they would like to approval all the requests they receive for permits, Officer Melendez stated it was not always feasible for various reasons. The officer offered a couple of examples in which permits could be denied:
 1. The date requested may conflict with a police activity which requires reassigning precinct officers to other venues, thus reducing local police manpower, and or;
 2. The neighborhood designated for the activity is considered a high crime area.

Following his report there were no questions for Officer Melendez from the audience.

V. Guest Speakers

- A. Ethel Sheffer from Insight Associates offered a comprehensive planning process report to the board members and residents. The presentation provided information regarding the progress and accomplishments of the plan over a five year period. The plan highlighted key geographical areas within CB #5 district including Morris Heights, Fordham/University Heights and Mount Hope. Next steps should ultimately lead to preparing and submitting the application for a 197-a plan. Ms. Sheffer emphasized the importance for residents and board members to get involved in the process of developing the plan.
- B. Wilma Alonso, Executive Director made a presentation to the community board regarding her agency - the Fordham Road Business Improvement District. Ms. Alonso spoke about an analysis conducted by the RBA Group (a consultant group) which focused on the beautification of Fordham Roads’ streetscape, while at the same time improving pedestrian safety along the corridor. The recommendation for the implementation of the street measures are divided into three phases – Phase I – Immediate implementation, Phase II – BID/merchant coordination and Phase III – Capital & Long –term Improvements.

VI. Committee Reports

There was no committee reports submitted.

VII. Public Session

Three community residents addressed the board during the public session.

VIII. Old Business

No old business reported.

VIII. New Business

A. The Chair announced that two general board meetings in 2009 will be held at separate locations including:

- Union Community Health Center – March 25, 2009
- Mt. Hope Cultural Center – April 22, 2009

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:22 pm.