



THE CITY OF NEW YORK

BOROUGH OF THE BRONX

COMMUNITY BOARD #5

Honorable Vanessa Gibson.. Bronx Borough President

**Chairperson
Angel Caballero**

**District Manager
Kenneth Brown**

Date: January 24, 2024

Time: 6:00 pm

General Meeting Notes

Attendance: Nekeisha Afful, Bobby Akumah, Phyllis Bowdwin, Erachie Brown, Angel Caballero, Bakary Camara, Felix Ceballos, Catherine Cudjoe, Carrie Cuthbertson, Shannon Goodson, Michele Heath, Esmeralda Herrera, Marlene Jimenez, Maribel Maria, Nanette Matthews, Suri Medina, Theresa Mims, Robert Nieves, Brenedia Parsons, Juan Parra, Benjamin Richardson, Patricia Rojas, Shenia Rudolph, Charles Shorter, Beverly Smith, Carlos Veras, Cheryl Westbrook, Chef Geneva Wilson

Excused: Eloise Bennett, Wilfredo Bonilla, Lucia Deng, Annette DeJesus, Roxana Gonzalez-Jimenez, Basil Moore

Absent: Catherine Cudjoe, Alisha Jackson, Kay Lopez, Julius Roberts

Quorum reached: 6:07pm

Approval of Minutes from General Board Meeting on December 13

- Charles Short motions to approve the minutes from December 13, Theresa Mims seconds
- Shannon Goodson: Recommends the following corrections: Page 1: List "Shannon Goodson" under the attendance. Page 2: Shannon misspelled as Sharon
- 26 y, 0 no. Verbal vote. The motion passes, and the minutes have been approved with edits.

Inspector Jeremy Scheublin, new commanding officer

- Pronounced "shoe-blin"
- Over 20 years of experience, is very appreciative of being able to stay in the Bronx. Is a resident of the Bronx, lives slightly outside of the 46th
- Goals: increase quality of life and decrease violence. Feels that this can only be done in partnership with the community.
- Christmas Toy Giveaway: Mainly put together by Officer Kennedy. Opportunity for officers to have positive interactions with the community.
- Cell phone: 646-306-9701
 - Welcomes the community to call this number if they feel they are not getting adequate service.
- Question from Member Chef Wilson: What is being done about the illegal dispensaries?
 - Currently, the Sheriff's office handles this. Yesterday, they visited four locations with the Sheriff's office.
 - The process is mostly a civil process

BCC Campus * Gould Hall, Room 200 * 2155 University Avenue * Bronx, New York 10453
Telephone (718) 364-2030 * Facsimile (718) 220-8426 * bx05@cb.nyc.gov

Serving these Neighborhoods:
Fordham, Morris Heights, Mount Hope, University Heights

- Member Chef: Where do people send complaints, especially for oversaturated areas such as 183rd and Grand Concourse? What type of relief is there as we wait for the sheriff's office to take action?
 - When they are selling on the sidewalk, we can bring in the sanitation department. A big issue is that sellers often come back
- Question: People who are using PayPal and other virtual wallets have been getting their money stolen; what can be done?
 - They can be referred to the police, it would be treated as a financial crime
- Member Bakary: What is your opinion on legal dispensaries?
 - His role as an officer is to support but not share his opinion. So far, the unlicensed ones have presented the most issues.
- Member Michelle: Initiative that will be fining landlords that are leasing property to illegal dispensaries.
 - Is not very familiar; it is handled by the sheriff. Fines can be very effective as just shutting sites down often leads to illicit shops reopening under a new name.

Ciara Gannon, Borough President's Office

- Community Board applications are open, available in English and Spanish
 - Reappointments will be emailed, will be called in for interviews
- Fire safety education workshop at the Bronx Zoo: Saturday, January 27, 11-2pm
- Illicit smoke shops:
 - Office of Cannabis Management wants to know where these sites are located
 - Can be referred to an email provided by DM Ken Brown
- Question from Carlos: What can be done about agencies closing 311 cases without addressing the concern?
 - Ciara: Send details to her; someone from the office will follow up
- Member Beverly: Learned that the sheriff's office is made up of 12 people; how can that team handle all these illicit shops?
 - Ciara: is unfamiliar with how many employees the office has, but they team up with the NYPD.

Councilmember Pierina Sanchez

- Highlighted efforts of her staff during many tragedies this past year
 - Her Constituent Services staff saw 6K people in these past 2 years
 - CM Sanchez was reappointed as Housing Committee chair
 - Office: 2065 Morris Avenue, 347-590-2875
- Member Bakary: Fire on Valentine Avenue. The fire was started by the use of outdated hot plates for several months.

- CM Sanchez asks that members of the community share these stories and this background as they are used to push the administration on safety issues

District Manager's Report

- Lashawnda Dodson has been out due to a family emergency and health concern.
- Friends of Aqueduct Walk
 - Meetings are held at 6pm on first Thursday of the month
 - Organization does one event per season, the winter event is a gift-giving event for the community
- Friends of Echo Park
 - Meetings are held at 6pm on last Thursday of the month
 - Group held a walkthrough event on 1/12
- Family Enrichment Center
 - The FEC is hiring
 - Have virtual planning meetings. Any interested are asked to email Ken to have their info forwarded to their contact list
 - Holding an informational town hall event on 1/31, 5pm at Francis Martin Library

Voting Items

Letters of Support for Three Cannabis Dispensaries, City of Yes for Economic Opportunity, and Galileo Park

- Remarks from Shannon Goodson, chair of the Economic Committee, provided a summary of the committee meeting.
 - The committee and attendees heard from applicants and asked them questions. The applicants are seeking letters of support. The voting decisions were as follows:
 - 2431 Grand Concourse: the committee recommends a letter of support
 - 372 East Fordham Road: the committee recommends a letter of support
 - 1831 Grand Concourse: the committee does not recommend a letter of support
- Voting decisions:
 - 2431 Grand Concourse
 - Benjamin motions to vote for a letter of support; Robert seconds the motion
 - Vote: 11 yes, 10 no, 5 abstained. The motion passes and CB5 will provide a letter of support for the dispensary at 2431 Grand Concourse.
 - 372 East Fordham Road
 - Benjamin motions to vote for a letter of support; Marlene seconds the motion
 - Vote: 14 yes, 7 no, 3 abstained. The motion passes and CB5 will provide a letter of support for the dispensary at 372 East Fordham Road.
 - 1831 Grand Concourse
 - Benjamin motions to vote for a letter of support; Patricia seconds the motion

- Vote: 22 no, 1 yes, 2 abstained. The motion does not pass and CB5 will not provide a letter of support for the dispensary at 1831 Grand Concourse.
- Letter of Support for City of Yes for Economic Opportunity, text amendment
 - Overview of City of Yes for Economic Opportunity: 4 main goals
 - Make it easier for businesses to find space and grow, support growing industries, enable more business-friendly streetscapes, new opportunities for businesses to open
 - Remarks from Shannon Goodson, chair of the Economic Development Committee
 - The committee recommends a letter of support
 - Chef motions to vote for a letter of support; Beverly seconds the motion.
 - Vote: 25 yes, 0 no, 0 abstained. The motion passes, and CB5 will provide a letter of support for the text amendment.
- Letter of Support for Galileo Playground scoping
 - The Parks committee received a presentation in October 2023. Due to the holidays, they were unable to bring their recommendation to the general board until January meeting.
 - Patricia motions to vote for a letter of support, Erachie seconds.
 - Vote: 25 yes, 0 no, 0 abstained. The motion passes, and CB5 will provide a letter of support.

Public Session

- Ms. Sally Smith
 - Shared concerns about people growing cannabis inside their apartments.
- Melissa Mejias, Director of the Family Enrichment Center located in CB5
 - All decisions have to receive support from the public
 - Town hall: January 31, 5-6:30pm Francis Martin Library
 - Will discuss what is needed in the community
 - Location of the FEC: potentially looking at Creston, in the Tremont area, possibly off the D train
 - Question from Member Benjamin: Have you involved the local schools in the planning process?
 - Mejias: Asks that people recommend who to contact at schools and other institutions.
- Dr. Bola Omotosho
 - Working with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
 - Not 62 campaign. The Bronx has the poorest health outcomes in all NYS counties
 - Black History Month - Black Men's Health event with Montefiore Hospital
 - Saturday, February 3 at 11-3pm
 - Crawford Memorial Methodist Church at 3757 White Plains Rd
- Eugene Billy, founder of Billy Ball
 - Building a basketball league for youth, will also teach economic literacy

- Phone: 404-547-9804

Elected Official's reports

- Leonardo Coello, Mayor's Office
 - Mayor announced that over 500K NYers will receive over \$2 billion in medical debt
 - Financial Crisis: Budget projections are better than were expected in the fall, several projects are being restored.
 - NYPD graduating class of 600 officers
 - Additional firefighters restored
 - SYEP
 - Governor's budget: promises about \$2.4 billion to NYC to handle support migrants
 - Recent vetoes: How many stops act
 - Mayor's office believes it will add to paperwork and increase overtime costs
 - Question from the public: How long does the override process take?
 - City Council will likely vote on it again within the next week. After that, it becomes law
 - Question from Member Carlos: 311 question from earlier
 - There are a lot of technological challenges- if many people report, tickets are closed while one remains open.
 - Recommends people keep reporting to 311 as the mayor's office uses these as a metric for agencies
- Vincent Sepulveda, State Senator Sepulveda's Office
 - Move to new location has been postponed, the office is still on Rogers Place
 - Office works with NYLAG for community legal support
 - Also offers SCRIE and DRIE support
 - [Bridge Builders](#) visits on a weekly basis; can assist with benefits applications
 - Phone: 718-991-3161
- Leah Guzman, State Senator Gustavo Rivera's office
 - Legislative session is open
 - February events:
 - Satellite Hours at offices in different neighborhoods
 - Monthly immigration clinics with [NMIC](#)
 - Enrollment day with HRA on February 8
 - Fair Fares enrollment on February 22
 - [SCRIE](#) Senior Citizen Homeowners' Exemption assistance
 - Phone: 718-933-2034
- Lucia Bradshaw, State Senator Jackson
 - In collaboration with NY Cares, have donated coats to several public schools in the Bronx and in the Heights
 - Encourages people to sign up for constituent newsletter

- Joanna Rivas, Congressmen Ritchie Torres
 - Billingsley building collapse: Espailat and Torres introduced two bills about building safety: Building Collapse Prevention Act and the LIHTC Landlord Accountability Act.
 - Internship with Wildlife Conservation Society
 - Phone: 718-503-9610
- Trevon Blondet, Bronx DA Darcel Clark
 - Holding a Youth Council: 14-21 years old, will discuss the influence of drill music/social media/gun violence
 - Assistant District Attorney training
 - Job Re-Entry Fair: January 30 Bronx River Community Center

Committee Reports

- Education
 - Return to College Fair on Thursday, January 25, 4-6pm
 - Resources for new and returning adult students
- Land Use
 - 1/22 (11/22?) members received an email: has 4 workshops that reference housing
 - Recommends that people register for a webinar
- Cultural Affairs
 - February is Black History Month. Events are listed on a Google Doc: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kW5VSTj5PIiTgJRKJao-8RPGcb_KmATNLZcdl15Uh2g/edit
 - Mural on the Tremont Underpass at “Tremont Triangle”
 - Community partner: Davidson Center, Richard Sierra, MPH, is the support lead
 - Public sessions on February 6, and February 20 at 6 pm at Davidson Center
 - Richard: 646-400-7761
 - Artist: Royal King Bee, a well-known local graffiti artist
- No old business
- No new business

End: 8:20

Public Hearing Notes

Regarding the opening of cannabis dispensaries at three locations in CB5

- Ms. Sally Smith:
 - Expressed disappointment with the turnout at the hearing
- Ms. Pooi Stewart
 - Legal dispensaries compared to illegal dispensaries
 - Illegal dispensaries can be found across the Bronx
 - Feels that there is no control over the illicit dispensaries, and it will be up to the state/governor to close them down
 - Feels upset that there weren't many community members at the hearing, although they expressed concern in daily life.
- Mr. Allen Miller
 - New to the Bronx
 - Co-owns a building in Morris Heights
 - Is indecisive about whether opening the mentioned dispensaries is a good or bad idea, but thinks the community knows best
- Ms. Yvonne Miller
 - Is concerned about the effects of this type of business in the community.
 - There are over 1,500 illegal smoke shops in NYC.
 - These people are profiting from the community and putting people at risk.
 - Had many questions for the applicants but was disappointed that none were present for the public hearing.
 - She is urging community members to support her if/when it is necessary to speak out/protest the new shops that are opening. Legal and illegal

Regarding City of Yes! for Economic Development

- Ms. Pooi Stewart
 - Believes the City of Yes proposals are needed across the Bronx as many shops are closing, which makes neighborhoods less safe
 - Is concerned about who would support the community as it implements these proposals
 - Hopes that the CB will vote to provide a letter of support
- Mr. Martin Ortiz
 - Spoke in Spanish and was interpreted by Board Chair Angel Caballero
 - Devaney Park on Burnside Avenue needs a lot of attention
 - Sidewalks and walkways do not have grass
 - He hopes to gather some community members to attend CB5 meetings
- Ms. Sally Smith
 - Has been a member and investor of the community for over 50 years

- Experienced zoning issues when she first arrived at this community – was unable to open a business in a property she bought 50 years ago due to it being in a residential area
- This community had many conveniences in the past that no longer exist – such as theaters
- Divided we cannot stand
- Ms. Tara Carr
 - Regarding City of Yes!
 - Was present at the presentation for the City of Yes! proposals and liked most of the proposals
 - Is very aware that many new buildings and businesses that open up do not always benefit the community members.
 - Would want to see more bathrooms and cleaner and greener parks. Wants the same opportunities and amenities available in the Bronx
 - Regarding cannabis dispensaries
 - Feels that the marijuana industry is very unregulated. Many new shops
 - Feels that people have become more brazen with how they consume cannabis in public
 - Choices need to be made that benefit the community and put aside personal feelings/strong emotions
- Mr. James Lin
 - Has been a resident since 2017
 - Thank you to the DCP for attending the hearing
 - The zoning rules that exist are very old. The City of Yes proposals would update many of these rules to match modern time
 - Wants businesses to be more neighborly and human, connected to the community
 - Hopes that the CB will vote to provide a letter of support
 - Agrees with many of the proposals in the City of Yes! package