



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**

Community Board 5

City Planning City of Yes for Housing N240290ZRY

Public Hearing Minutes

May 22, 2024, 5pm-5:59pm

Testimony

- Sallie Smith, Resident:
 - Feels that this initiative is not for her and other residents like her
 - Initially, outreach that was done focused on converting commercial buildings. However, during the most recent outreach from DCP, the focus shifted to adding more density to lower-density areas.
 - As a private homeowner, she has experienced the negative effects of urban renewal. Targeting from developers, aggressive towards seniors.
 - Developers have tried to uproot her, she is not willing to sell

General Board Meeting Minutes

May 22, 2024, 6pm

Board Members Attendance: Nekeisha Afful, Bobby Akumah, Eloise Bennett, Wilfrido Bonilla, Phyllis Bowdwin, Erachie Brown, Angel Caballero, Bakary Camara, Catherine Cudjoe, Carrie Cuthbertson, Annette Dejesus, Michele Heath, Marlene Jimenez, Maribel Maria, Nanette Matthews, Robert Nieves, Juan Parra, Brenida Parsons, Shenita Rudolph, Charles Shorter, Beverly Smith, Cheryl Westbrook, Chef Geneva Wilson

Excused: Theresa Mims, Benjamin Richardson, Carlos Veras

Absent: Felix Ceballos, Lucia Deng, Roxana Gonzalez-Jimenez, Suri Medina, Patricia Rojas

Quorum: 6:10pm

Remarks from Inspector Jeremy Scheublin, 46th Precinct

- Concerns about smoke shops

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

- Some recent changes to legislation now allow officers to be deputized by the Sheriff, whose office is able to shut down illegal shops. These select officers can now shut down illegal shops, so this should speed up the process.
- Illegal parking
 - Precinct has towed over 100 cars in 2 weeks. Collaborate with the Department of Sanitation.
 - Asking the public to please reach out to the precinct if there are abandoned cars in their area.
- Inspector Scheublin also introduced two new high-ranking officers in the precinct. Neighborhood Coordinator Sergeant Jorge Rosa as well as Lieutenant Edward T. Lawyerr
- Question: BM Chef- Community Resilience Network is trying to share resources with people in the community. Who do they connect with regarding permitting?
 - Inspector: Please reach out to the precinct to share the dates they plan to hold event/conduct outreach
- Question/concern: Chair Angel- Burnside Avenue is flooded with vendors, which makes it difficult for children/seniors to feel safe in the streets
 - Inspector: Reach out to share the specific areas of concern
- Question: Pastor Stanley, East 188 St, Creston Avenue Baptist Church
 - Workers in the church pantry had their car towed on Monday. Wants to know what should be done to make sure this doesn't happen. They have had issues with other cars parking illegally.
 - Inspector: It likely wasn't precinct, but they are happy to guide
- Question: BM Catherine:
 - Issue at 181st and Ryer: They were previously allowed to double park/park illegally but were not given a warning of the fact that they could no longer do so. There's also an issue with officers taking up parking spots.
 - Inspector: Parking is a major concern in the general area. It's a tough issue and agreements block by block can be an issue.
- Question: BM Michele
 - Incident at University Avenue last Thursday, 5/16: A 13-year-old was harmed during an altercation with a group of young people. Group tried to get into a store with knives to reach the 13-year-old. Wants to follow up about the incident.
 - Inspector: thinks it was a gang-related incident. There were some related incidents about five months ago, and they are picking up again.
- Question/concern: BM Phyllis
 - Vendors on the streets. Received a complaint from a local business owner; vendors are setting up right outside his store. They block parking and foot traffic, and this is hurting his sales. What role does the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection play, and what can the owner do?
 - Sanitation and DCWP both have a role. The departments have had joint initiatives with NYPD to make sure they are safe. Generally, the business owner

should reach out via 311 to make sure DCWP is aware. Since Phyllis brought it up, he will try to support and see what the precinct can do.

- Comment: BM Eloise: Wanted to commend the Inspector on his follow-up during the past few months.
- Inspector cell phone: 646-306-9701

Voting Item: Letter of Support for 1% for Parks

- Daniel Abrams, Project Manager at New Yorkers for Parks- The Parks Department currently receives about 0.5% of the city budget. The letter would support asking the city to raise the budget to 1%.
 - Has been at this level since the 1960s. The Parks Department's budget is currently facing additional cuts in the Executive budget
 - CB5 has little park space. About 700 acres are not covered by tree canopy (for heat/climate resilience).
- Parks Committee recommends a letter of support for 1% for Parks.
- Vote: Beverly motions to provide a letter of support for the 1% for Parks campaign, and Michele seconds the motion.
 - The motion passes unanimously, 22 yes [1 member arrived after this vote], 0 no. The board will provide a letter of support for 1% for Parks.

Voting Item: Letter of support for City of Yes for Housing

- Department of City Planning
 - Remarks from Brenna Hemmings, standing in for Cassandra: Zoning has historically been very restrictive for creating new housing. What City of Yes for Housing aims to do is amend the City Charter to reconcile some of these issues and fix outdated laws. New housing is disproportionate across districts. Transit-oriented development, ADU, etc.
- The Housing Committee recommends that the board not provide a letter of support
 - The committee felt certain questions were unanswered. How will this impact us in the future? Questions about the unintended consequences.
 - Issues: Tax increases, certificate of occupancy, displacement, racial equity, parking
- Vote: Beverly motions to deny a letter of support to the City of Yes for Housing opportunity, Eloise seconds
 - One refusal, 22 no, 0 yes. The motion passes, and the board will not provide a letter of support for the City of Yes for Housing initiative.

District Manager's Report

- Chase Bank: Chase opened a new bank branch at 125 East Fordham
 - Full-service bank. It also has a community engagement office that will do outreach and a community room with an 80-seat capacity.
- ConEd: At the beginning of every summer, ConEd has a summer preparedness meeting

- The forecast is for a hot, dry summer with more severe storms. There will be a 10.9% hike for residential services and a 7% hike for commercial customers.
- Career readiness event: Job interviewing class at the South Bronx Job Corps.
- NYCHA waitlist: For the first time in 15 years, NYCHA will open up its waitlist. Applications can be submitted from June 3 to June 9th.
- The Department of Social Services announced there is an issue with EBT that may cause issues using EBT cards. For support, call 888-328-6399
- The report is also in Board Member's packets

Public Session

- Leonardo Coello, Community Member
 - Not speaking on behalf of the mayor. Wanted to take a moment to reflect on the people who have fought for our right to vote.
 - Voter turnout in New York is low, especially in the Bronx. Lack of civic engagement has many negative impacts, including lack of representation and resources. Upcoming election on June 25
- Melissa Mejia, Director of the Family Enrichment Center
 - FEC has signed a lease, will be located at 2001 Creston Avenue
 - Community event on May 29th, 5:30pm at the Bronx Library Center
 - Community sessions will decide the name of the center, design, brand colors etc.
 - Melissa Mejias: 646-477-9842
- Sallie Smith, Community member
 - Sanitation Department: has not been sweeping her neighborhood
 - Parked cars: Cars are parking on sidewalks and illegally in general. It's difficult for residents, senior citizens, parents with carriages, etc. to navigate
 - Concerns about the displacement of residents/homeowners: Has seen this throughout the years. Is concerned about the City of Yes Housing initiatives.
- Maria David, community member
 - A volunteer at Odyssey House. Came to the general meeting to talk about mopeds and scooters. Drivers don't respect signals and don't have license plates. These mopeds run at 40 mph; they are very dangerous. Would like support to form legislation to bring them under control.
- Michael Pimentel
 - A member of South Bronx Cares- Formed trying to save a local church, La Resurreccion United Methodist Church. Did not have their voices heard/couldn't save the building despite reaching out to electeds, receiving promises from some electeds.
 - At the general meeting to announce a rally against another supportive housing development
 - Instagram handle: @Southbronxcares and southbronxcares@gmail.com
- Dilletta Pina, Friends of Echo Park

- Wants to remind people they have until June 15 to register for election
- Next meeting on Thursday, 5/23
- Samuel O. Ansah, Manager at Sedgwick Library
 - Reminding the public that the library holds programs for children like Nintendo Switch Club, Lego club, and Preschool story time
 - It also has programming for teens like creative clubs
 - Programming for adults includes: technology assistance, NYS government class, NYC government class, and citizenship class
 - Mayor's budget cuts have cut millions in programming and have made libraries have to cut hours. NYPL libraries are not open on Sundays at the moment, and many libraries are looking at another day to cut.
- Enrique Colon, CASA
 - Rent Guidelines Board (RGB) is planning rent increases between 2-6.5% in the next year.
 - Public hearing on Monday, June 3, at Hostos Community College, 450 Grand Concourse at E 149th Street. Rally/press conference will start at 5pm, with public testimony immediately after.
 - CASA: 347-941-3281

Elected Officials

- Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson Office, represented by Ciara Gannon signed up to speak but left before being called.
- Councilmember Oswald Feliz Office, represented by Juan Lopez
 - Office number for constituent work: 718-842-8100
 - Immigration assistance: the office schedules visits with a lawyer through CUNY Citizenship project
 - Mother's Day brunch at the Botanical Garden on 5/31. RSVP to attend
- Councilmember Pierina Sanchez Office, represented by Maria Villalobos
 - Office: 2065 Morris Avenue
 - Services include housing assistance, application assistance for Cash Assistance and EBT, and referrals for immigration and domestic violence. Office will be assisting the public during the week the Section 8 waitlist is open. Call the office to make sure you qualify for their help.
 - Office: 347-590-2874
- State Senator Gustavo Rivera Office, represented by Lia Guzman
 - State budget updates: Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act, will help with closing illicitly cannabis shops and promote equity for CAURD and Social Equity licensees by eliminating illicit competition, gives localities more power on the enforcement the law. The state budget also provides funding for Kingsbridge Armory, the botanical garden, and zoo. Funds for Bronx Legal Services, NMIC.

- Housing and Immigration clinic event in office on June 14, 10am-3pm. Appointments required. In collaboration with NMIC.
- Virtual office hours event: Friday, 5/31, 10am-12pm. Call office for an appointment.
- Office: 718-933-2034
- Assemblymember Landon Dais Office, represented Abou-Bakhr Meite
 - “A safe community is a clean community” – Assemblyman and office have participated in community cleanups
 - Office: 718-538-2000
 - Local address: 910 Grand Concourse. Walk-ins on Monday and Tuesday, By appointment on Wednesday through Friday.
- State Senator Robert Jackson Office, represented by Edgar Tavaréz
 - Encouraging tenants to attend the RGB hearing on June 3
 - Share the Savings Act (S2393-B): Savings for people with medical bills, lowering prices for medications for seniors.
 - Tenants’ rights clinic on May 28, at 5030 Broadway
 - Office: 212-544-0173
- Congress Member Ritchie Torres Office, represented by Joana Rivas
 - Worked with Reps. Stevens and Colon to address affordable housing shortage
 - Healthy Affordable Housing Act
 - 100 million \$ a year for the next 5 years for a grant and loan program at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
 - Neighborhoods must have certain amenities
 - Setting Consumer Standards for Lithium-Ion Batteries Act- would require the Consumer Product Safety Commission to establish a final consumer product safety standard for rechargeable lithium-ion batteries used in micro-mobility devices
 - Office: 718-503-9610
 - Address: 540 East Fordham Road Suite 2A
- District Attorney Darcel Clark Office, represented by Trevon Blondet
 - Office will host court tours during the summer
 - Holding a re-entry fair at the PAL on Webster Avenue
 - Domestic Violence 5K will be held on October 19th 2024
 - Cell phone: 917-946-3438

Committee Reports

- **Parks committee:** There will be an event at Echo Park on June 15. There will also be clean-ups on Saturdays in June leading up to the event. Entertainment, giveaways, information tables. Contact Angel if you have any questions: 718-731-6360
- **Housing Committee:** Nanette wanted to thank board members who stepped in to hold the last meeting and presentation from Dep. of City Planning
- **Youth Committee:** Eloise- Next meeting will be June 5th
- **Cultural Affairs Committee:** Erachie- reiterated the June 15 event

- Wants to encourage all committees to attend/share information
- **Governing Committee:** Charles- the committee members have been reviewing bylaws, will discuss updates from BP at the next meeting.
 - June 13, final meeting before break
 - Voluntary Code of Conduct: Be respectful and be kind; Do not be rude; Be present; Allow the person to complete speaking; Attack the problem, not the speaker; Stay on topic; Minimize distractions and fidgeting; Turn cellphone off or put on vibrate; Hold yourself and each other accountable.
- **Veterans Affairs Committee:** Juan- NYS Department of Veterans Services has expanded healthcare eligibility benefits under the PACT Act. Law now includes those who served in Iraq/Afghanistan, or other zone after 9/11. Also includes veterans discharged under other than honorable discharge.
 - Will provide vets and surviving families with necessary care
 - May 13: Juan was recognized as a veteran honoree at the Borough President's Veteran's Appreciation Day luncheon.
- **Health and Human Services:** Annette- Next Meeting is on June 5 at 6pm at Davidson Community Center, 2038 Davidson Avenue. Will discuss programs for the community.

Old Business

- None

New Business

- BM Beverly- tomorrow (5/23) there will likely be hectic traffic, Trump is holding a rally in Crotona Park at 6pm

Meeting adjourned: 8:07pm

Next meeting: Wednesday, June 26, 2024