



**THE CITY OF NEW YORK
BOROUGH OF THE BRONX
COMMUNITY BOARD 7**



VANESSA L. GIBSON, BOROUGH PRESIDENT

YAJAIRA ARIAS, CHAIRPERSON

VACANT, DISTRICT MANAGER

GENERAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Chair:	Yajaira Arias, Chairperson
Meeting Date:	April 25, 2023
Meeting Time:	6:30 PM
Meeting Location:	Via Zoom Video/Teleconference
Meeting Recording:	https://youtu.be/La1lun57Iac
Minutes done by:	Ruth D. Caraballo

Minutes:

- I. Guidelines & Code of Conduct for the meeting read by the Deputy DM.
- II. **Public Hearing/Public Session:**
 - A. **Elected Officials and/or Representatives/Agencies/General Public**
 - 1. **Mayor's office- Alina Dowe**
 - a) [Summer Youth Employment Program \(SYEP\)](#) ends 05/26/23; asks if any business programs can join the program to employ youth.
 - b) Send locations of rat sightings so she can flag to the “[Rat Czar.](#)”
 - c) [Request for Expressions of Interest \(RFEI\)](#) - [Neighborhood Support Teams \(NST\)](#)
 - d) Sign up for the Mayor’s Podcast and Newsletter.
 - e) Alina Dowe, MBA, Bronx Borough Director, Desk Number: 212-346-5792, Mobile Number: 914-446-8393, Email: adowe@cityhall.nyc.gov
 - 2. **Bronx Borough President's office- Kenny Agosto**
 - a) Held Iftar to break the fast- Wishes everyone a Solem Ramadan
 - b) Birthing Center to address high infant mortality rate
 - c) Fire Education Efforts to business- CM Feliz and CM Sanchez
 - d) NYCHA— Leadership Meeting with Presidents and Boards

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e) Interview and vetting 560 applicants for reappointment and appointment

f) Bronx Week Parade and Festival

Helene Wilson: Resident Leader at Bailey Houses expressed she did not get an email about the NYCHA Forum.

Kenny Agosto: Will put contact information on chat.

3. Bronx District Attorney's office

a) Not Present

4. 52nd Precinct-Officer Echevarria

a) 28-day period for the 7 majors

(1) 182 index crimes compare to 168 last year, an 8.2% increase

(a) Felony Assaults-Last year: 46; This year 50

(b) Grand Larcenies-Last year: 47; This year 50

(c) Grand Larceny Auto: 24; This year 25

b) Fire Disaster Relief Items Collections will end on 4/26/2023

(1) Thanks everyone who donated

(2) Items out to the families affected by the fires.

(a) Distributed out of CB7

c) Council Meeting on Thursday in person at 7pm

5. [NY State Senator Gustavo Rivera](#)'s Office- Sari Mendoza

a) Kingsbridge Armory Survey will close at the end of April

b) Satellite Office Hours- 4/26/2023 RSS 11am to 430 pm in Riverdale- 2nd and 4th Wednesday; Bronx House Inc on 2nd Tuesday and Thursday of each month.

c) IDNYC POP UP Event to renew or get a new IDNYC

d) Office Number: 718-933-2034



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6. **NY State Senator Robert Jackson**'s Office-**Caridad Figueroa**
 - a) Present but unable to speak (problems with microphone)
7. **Assembly member George Alvarez**'s Office
 - a) Not Present
8. **Assemblymember Jeffrey Dinowitz**'s Office-**Donella Smith**
 - a) Sunday, May 7, 2023 Shredding Event on West 235th and Johnson Avenue
 - b) Shredding Event on June 11, 2023- 3107 Kingsbridge Avenue
9. **Assembly Member John Zaccaro Jr.**'s Office- **Ana Sacerdote**
 - a) Friday, May 5, 2023 at 3pm- Autism Awareness Webinar
 - (1) Early advocacy and support
 - b) Co Hosting a shredding event at Tracey Towers with Assembly Member John Zaccaro Jr on Sunday, April 30, 2023 11am to 1pm at building 40.
 - c) Constituent Liaison Anna Sacerdote email:
sacerdotea@nyassembly.gov Phone: 718-409-0109
10. **Assembly Member Yudelka Tapia**
 - a) Not present
11. **Council Member Oswald Feliz**'s Office- **George Cooke**
 - a) Job Fair 11 am 2:30 pm at Serviam Gardens-2848 Bainbridge Avenue.
 - b) Legislation Bills Update
 - (1) **Int 0987** -Prohibiting the operation of a motor vehicle with fraudulent or expired license plates.
 - (2) **Int 0988** - Prohibiting the sale or distribution of fraudulent license plates.



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- (3) For additional information/questions on legislation, reach out to Chief of Staff Guillermo Rodriguez at grodriguez@council.nyc.gov

12. Council Member Pierina Sanchez

- a) Kingsbridge Armory Update (s)
 - (1) Thanks Senator Rivera's Office for promoting the Kingsbridge Armory survey
 - (2) Community Engagement Efforts
 - (a) 2,000 people have been engaged by EDC and CWG; 500 people at Public Workshop 3 at Lehman College
 - (3) EDC gives regular updates on the results of the engagement efforts at the Housing, Land Use and Economic Development Committee
 - (4) Hosting a Town Hall with a local mosque
 - (5) Hosting a residents-only public workshop
 - (6) Getting ready for the ULURP Process
- b) City Council Hearing on lead laws
 - (1) 1960; 1970; 1982; 2004
 - (2) 80% of cases are among people of color
 - (a) 45% of those cases are in The Bronx, a health disparity
 - (b) Goal is to create legislation to drive that down to 0%
- c) May 3, 2023- Homeownership Public Hearing
- d) It is Budget Season, the Executive Budget Hearings will begin the first week of May.
- e) Fordham Busway Proposal

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- (1) Drastic changes to Fordham Road
- (2) CM Position is that the buses does need to go faster
- f) Street Vending in our Community
 - (1) Fordham Road- City has been working with Street Vendor Project to educate vendors on city regulations
 - (2) Kingsbridge- DSNY sweep of street vendors. CM understands the pedestrian experience
 - (3) Education and Education- Access to Education
 - (4) Legislation to support the street vendors
- g) Collaborated with DC37 to host a Hiring Hall at Monroe College- 800 People attended it.

Sirio Guerino: Developers are taking over Bedford Park, and the regular person will not be able to purchase a home.

CM Sanchez: Understand the challenge. There are programs that assist communities of color to purchase a home. Wells Fargo, has a program for people of color to make it accessible to purchase a home.

13. **Council Member Eric Dinowitz**

- a) NYC Council Response to the Fiscal Year 2024 Preliminary Budget: [The City Budget - Budget \(nyc.gov\)](#) ; [response-prelim-budget-24-v9 \(nyc.gov\)](#)
 - (1) Chair of the [Higher Education Committee](#)
 - (a) Pushed back against cuts to the City University of New York’s budget; instead advocated to increase its funding for Counselors, Paid Internships and Tutors.
- b) Discretionary Budget: allows city council members to fund neighborhood clean ups, mental health centers, and community



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centers like Mosholu Montefiore Community Center, and the Jerome Gun Hill Business Improvement District.

- c) Regarding fixing the pool at Dewitt Clinton High School
 - (1) Researching how much it would cost to fix
 - (2) Will advocate to fix the pool at NYC Parks Hearing
- d) CitizenNYC APP
- e) [Norwood Farmstand](#) | [GrowNYC](#)
 - (1) CM is funding them
- f) Attended Friends of Mosholu Parkway and Jerome Gun Hill BID Earth Day event on 4/22/2023.
- g) Gun Hill Bus Redesign
 - (1) Should ease traffic
- h) Has contacted the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) regarding the Bus Vending Machines on Webster Avenue.
- i) Co Hosting a shredding event at Tracey Towers with Assembly Member John Zaccaro Jr on Sunday, April 30, 2023 11am to 1pm at building 40.
- j) Introduced legislation to make it easier for Mitchell-Lama tenants to automatically apply for Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE).
 - (1) Specially important for Tracy Tower tenants who are facing rent increases.
- k) Office is being renovated- Staff is available at the following locations:
 - (1) Mosholu Library on First Mondays of Each Month
- l) New staff update: Warm welcome to Julio Gutierrez



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Betty Arce: Does not believe the MTA vending machines should be moved. She recommends instead removing the restaurant's 2 sheds, one on 205th Street and one on Webster Avenue. Does not understand why one restaurant can be allowed to have 2 sheds. Has personally seen that the outdoor sheds aren't used as much as they were during the pandemic.

CM Erick Dinowitz: MTA Vending machines are not ADA compliant. Regardless of the shed. Legislation is needed to codify the rules of outdoor dining. The community board should be given a 45-day notice to review.

14. **Department of Environment Protection-Effie Ardizzone**

- a) Deadline for the Water Amnesty Program is 4/30/2023
- b) Effie Ardizzone NYCDEP eardizzone@dep.nyc.gov
- c) The amnesty program, authorized by the New York City Water Board, will only run for 90 days, from Jan. 30, 2023 to April 30, 2023. To receive amnesty and confirm eligibility, or for more information, customers should visit DEP's water amnesty website or call (718) 595-7000.

There are nearly 200,000 DEP customers with delinquent water bills, owing a combined \$1.2 billion, and approximately 85 percent of that debt is from residential properties. For customers with a seriously delinquent balance of more than \$1,000 for over a year, DEP will offer three amnesty options:

- If 100 percent of the principal bill is paid, 100 percent of interest will be forgiven;
- If 50 percent of the principal bill is paid, 75 percent of interest will be forgiven; or
- If 25 percent of the principal bill is paid, 50 percent of interest will be forgiven.



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Customers who owe less than \$1,000 are still eligible to receive amnesty on 100 percent of their interest if they pay their total

15. **Guerinos Against Graffiti**

a) MPC Graffiti Remover and Ambassador Update

- (1) A lot has been done on business corridor
- (2) Wants to thank NYPD- 204 and Webster for having their in person Community Council Meeting on 4/27/2023
- (3) George Alvarez will be having an open house on Sunday, April 30, 2023
- (4) Thanks to everyone who works together to resolve community issues.

16. **Armando “AJ” Ramos**

a) States that the community board has 30 unanswered Freedom of Information Requests

b) Supports motion A- to hire Ms. Karla as District Manager

c) Comments on motion B - Request and Presentation was about putting flags at Bronx Victory Memorial

- (1) Mentions Article 78- Appeal the board’s vote of not selecting Bronx Victory Memorial.
- (2) Presentation explained why flags would
- (3) Advocates for flags at Bronx Victory Memorial or the 52nd Precinct
- (4) Presentation explained why placing a pride flag at the Bronx Victory memorial is important as LGBTQ+ soldiers faced discrimination during the war.

Karla Cabrera Carrera: the moment to express disagreement on a motion is at the committee level while the discussion on a motion is on the floor.



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Armando Ramos: Advocates strongly that the motion should have a location.

III. Public Hearing Session Closes

IV. Meeting called to order by Chairperson Yajaira Arias

V. District Manager's Updates

A. Access the DM's Updates here: <https://bit.ly/3n60x86>

Jean Hill: Concern about the process of hiring a new Secretary for the office.

Yajaira Arias: Dealing with that process in the upcoming weeks.

Hugo Gonzalez: Any updates on the website. Has observed other community boards have websites that are easier to navigate and update.

Yajaira Arias: The Borough President's office is going community board by community board.

Karla Cabrera Carrera: Website will be updated.

Hugo Gonzalez: Used to have a Public Relations Committee. Requests regular updates on the website updates.

Yajaira Arias: Send all items related to the website send them to Karla at kcabreracarrera@cb.nyc.gov.

VI. Chairperson Remarks:

A. Civic Engagement Commission Trainings: Parliamentary Procedure

B. Old bylaws and proposed bylaws email. Email Yajaira Arias at yarias@cb.nyc.gov with any feedback.

C. Nominating Committee:

1. Myrna Calderon

2. Helene Redd

3. Erick Ascensio

4. Sandra Erickson

5. Tasha Andrews

D. Submit Youth Nominations for the NYA Awards

Tobie Buford: Has not received any emails regarding training.

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Yajaira Arias: Board staff will resend the information.

Chad Royer: thanks Jade Guzman for her work.

- VII.** Attendance (Roll Call) by Samantha Souvatzis—**Quorum is met.**
VIII. The March 2023 General Board Minutes will be reviewed in May

IX. New Business:

A. Executive Session

1. Chad Royer makes a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter.
2. Barbara Stronczer seconds the motion.

B. Back to Public Session.

X. Motion (s):

- A. **Ad Hoc District Manager Screening:** Hire Karla Cabrera Carrera for the position of Bronx Community Board 7 District Manager at a salary of \$96,000.

1. Myrna Calderon seconds the motion.

2. 20 board members voted “Yes” to approve the motion

- a) Betty Arce, Yajaira Arias, Emmanuel Asamuah, Michelle Avila, Tobie Buford, Myrna Calderon, Hugo Gonzalez, Alfred Grant, Helene Hartman-Kutnowsky, Mahbubur Jewel, Andrew Laiosa, Rosalie Leslie, Edgar Ramos, Chad Royer, Victor Saldana, Maharanie Sewbhajan, Carlos Sosa, Samantha Souvatzis, Barbara Stronczer, and Helene Wilson.

3. 6 board members “Abstain” from voting on the motion.

- a) Erick Ascensio; Lowell Green, Jean Hill, Daisy Perry, Helene Redd, and Adaline Walker-Santiago.

- (1) Adaline Walker-Santiago wished to be noted because she feels strongly that 2 candidates should have been



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presented to the full board for a vote. States that in the past, 2 candidates have been presented to the full board for a vote.

4. Motion passes.

Lowell Green: Do the number of votes match the board members present at the meeting?

Yajaira Arias: Samantha Souvatzis shared her screen for full transparency.

Jean Hill: Samantha Souvatzis stated there were only 22 board members present at the beginning of the meeting.

Yajaira Arias: All board members in attendance have been accounted for.

Jean Hill: would like the amount of board members said out loud.

Samantha Souvatzis: 27 board members in attendance.

Yajaira Arias: Congratulates Karla Cabrera Carrera as the Bronx Community Board 7's District Manager.

Karla Cabrera Carrera: thanks the board for electing her as District Manager.

B. **Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs**: The Committee recommends the raising of a Pride flag during the month of June somewhere in Bronx Community Board 7's district.

1. Tobie Burford seconds the motion.

2. Open Discussion/Q&A

a) **Myrna Calderon:** agrees with the location being open.

b) **Barbara Stronczer:** location will be based on where the city grants the permit.

c) **Jean Hill:** has concerns about assuming WWI veterans sexual orientation. Concern about why the flag cannot be at Bronx Victory Memorial.



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- d) **Barbara Stronczer:** committee felt it would be proper to place flag closer to street rename after
- e) **Alfred Grant:** expresses support for LGBTQ+ soldiers who died for the United States of America.
- f) **Betty Arce:** Believes no other group will come before the community to request to have their flag raised at the monument. Placing it at the Bronx Victory Memorial will honor the LGBTQ+ soldiers who died for our country.
- g) **Andrew Laiosa:** location discussion should have happened at the committee level, the motion does not state location.
- h) **Helene Hartman-kutnowsky:** supports having the flag at Bronx Victory Memorial.
- i) **Jean Hill:** Ask if the flag can be at Bronx Victory Memorial.
- j) **Barbara Stronczer:** NYC Department of Parks and Recreation would need to grant any permits that come from the community board.

3. Motion Passes

- a) 19 board members “Approve” the motion
- b) 3 board members “Abstain” from voting
- c) 1 board member votes “no”

Yajaira: Once quorum is established board business can start, board members can exercise their right to vote: “yes”, “no”, “abstain”, or not vote at all.

XI. Board Chairperson calls on Committee Chairs for updates:

A. Budget, Personnel & Ethics – Andrew Laiosa

- 1. Next meeting: April 27, 2023
- 2. Discuss internal budget for Fiscal Year 2023



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a) The board's fiscal year began on July 1, 2022 and ended on June 30, 2023.

B. Education, Youth & Libraries – Leurys Acosta-Update by Adaline Walker-Santiago

1. Imagination Library

a) Free books for children 0-5 years old mailed to their homes.

C. Environment & Sanitation – Betty Arce

1. April 4, 2023 meeting;

2. Sat, April 29, 2023- 12 pm to 3pm- Safe Disposal Event at Orchard Beach.

3. May 2, 2023 next meeting.

D. Health & Human Services – Michelle Avila

1. Reviewed agency responses to our expense and capital budget requests.

2. Awareness of senior scam and fraud alerts.

3. Next meeting date: May 9, 2023.

E. Housing, Land Use & Economic Development – Erick Ascensio

1. Next meeting is May 16, 2023.

2. Fordham Landing South Presentation is expected on that date.

F. Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs – Barbara Stronczer

1. Next meeting is May 10, 2023.

2. More in minutes.

G. Public Safety & Quality of Life – Victor Saldaña

1. Fire Safety Presentation by FDNY.

2. Monthly Updates by NYPD.

3. Next meeting is May 11, 2023.

H. Traffic & Transportation – Edgar Ramos

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1. Next meeting is May 4, 2023.

I. **Veterans Affairs – Chad Y. Royer**

1. Next meeting- May 17, 2023

2. May 13, 2023 - Bronx Victory Memorial Flagging Event

3. May 24, 2023- Flagging of Gravesites at Woodlawn Cemetery

4. June 3, 2023- Veterans Resource Fair

J. **Ad Hoc Bylaws – Myrna Calderon**

1. Bylaws will be emailed to everyone.

2. Voting will happen in May.

XII. Board Members question and comment:

A. **Jean Hill:** Requests budget recording as she had another conflicting meeting and won't be able to attend the Budget, Ethics and Personnel meeting.

B. **Yajaira Arias:** Meeting will be recorded and posted on Youtube. The meeting link will be sent out to all board members.

XIII. Board business closes.

XIV. Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, May 23, 2023 at 6:30 pm

XV. Chad Royer makes a motion to close the meeting.

A. Barbara Stronczer seconds the motion to close the meeting.

XVI. Meeting is Adjourned.

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