



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



VANESSA L. GIBSON, BOROUGH PRESIDENT

YAJAIRA ARIAS, CHAIRPERSON

KARLA CABRERA CARRERA, DISTRICT MANAGER

## GENERAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

<b>Chair:</b>	<b>Yajaira Arias</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>January 23, 2024</b>
<b>Meeting Time:</b>	<b>6:30 PM</b>
<b>Meeting Location:</b>	<b><u>Monroe College</u> - King Hall 2501 Jerome Ave, Bronx, NY 10468</b>
<b>Meeting Recording:</b>	<b><a href="https://youtu.be/aWkdY7xPTNU">https://youtu.be/aWkdY7xPTNU</a></b>
<b>Minutes done by:</b>	<b>Helene Hartman-Kutnowsky</b>

**Minutes:**

- I. Meeting Guidelines & Code of Conduct read by Chair Yajaira Arias**
- II. Public Hearing facilitated by District Manager Karla Cabrera Carrera**
  - A. Mayor's office- *Not Present***
  - B. NYC Public Advocate's Office- *Cerimar Olivares***
    - 1. A big year where eleven bills were passed, such as;
      - a) Intro 586 How Many Stops Act (NYPD 1-3 level stops). This bill will allow greater accountability and data transparency
      - b) Intro 549- Bill to Ban Solitary Confinement at Rikers Island.
      - c) Both of the above bills were vetoed by the Mayor, but they will be reintroduced.
    - 2. The Public Advocate has created the “Annual Worst Landlord Listing.” Access it by going to LandlordWatchlist.com or (212) 669-7250
  - C. NYC Comptroller's Office- *Greer Mayhew & Eduardo Perez***
    - 1. Under Brad Landers, the office now covers Worker's Rights and Benefits too.

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2. Stolen wages were recovered for constituents when Contractors did not pay prevailing wages.

## **D. Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson & Ciara Gannon -**

1. Ciara Gannon introduced herself, as she is replacing Tom Lucania who has been promoted to another position. Ms. Gannon was formerly the District Manager of Bronx CB8.
2. The application for appointment and reappointment to the Board is now on-line and the deadline is March 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - a) This is the only borough that has an application in both English and Spanish. A reflection of the diversity of the borough
  - b) Ms. Gibson encourages seeking out 16 year olds as well as individuals in diverse careers, orientations, different backgrounds, etc. to apply for the Board.
3. Work on the Kingsbridge Armory is continuing where over 4,000 ideas were received. Visit [www.TogetherKingsbridge.com](http://www.TogetherKingsbridge.com)
4. Events:
  - a) Fire Safety Workshops beginning on 1/27/24 at the Bronx Zoo. Free entry from 11am to 2pm with FDNY & Red Cross.
  - b) Department For The Aging (DFTA) will present Living Wills, Trusts, Power of Attorney, and End of Life planning. This event is for Everyone at the Borough Hall Rotunda from 11am to 3pm on 1/24/23 This is the first of events to be done.
  - c) Bronx unemployment continues to go down from 24% to 6.5% post pandemic and on 2/15/24, DOL will hold a job fair

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at 851 Grand Concourse. Some employers will be hiring on the site and jobs in Tech and Healthcare will be highlighted.

5. The Executive was presented with the September 2023 Strategic Policy Statement from the Borough President's Office.

## **E. Bronx District Attorney's Office - *Trevon Blondet***

1. The application deadline for the Youth Council is 1/26/24
2. The "Bronx Mock Juror Trial" Training will be held on 1/29/24, where this will help new DAs in their job skills.
3. On 1/30/24, there will be a Re-Entry Fair for formerly incarcerated individuals where they will get help with resumes.
4. There will be a Housing and Healthcare Fair sometime in May.

## **F. 52nd Precinct - *PO Jessalynn Capo***

1. The next Council meeting will be Thursday 1/25, at Plaza Rehab 100 W. Kingsbridge Road at 7 PM.

## **G. Congressman Ritchie Torres' Office - *Ron Jordan***

1. He gave a recap of the year where 2,645 Constituents were assisted
2. The CM acquired \$6 million for 10 Bronx bus stops and \$50 million for Fordham University Environmental Justice Project
3. The CM awarded \$1.7 million to the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) for JIVE Job Internships. There will be an event on 2/3/24 held at the Bronx Zoo for people to apply
4. \$800,000 was awarded for classrooms in the Bronx to study Hydroponics
5. \$150 million was awarded for the Cross Bronx Expressway
6. Assistance was given for Montefiore to receive \$25 million in FEMA reimbursement

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7. \$10 million dollars was secured for small businesses

## **H. NY State Senator Gustavo Rivera - *Sari Mendoza***

1. 2 big wins for the Senator-
  - a) On 12/13/23, Governor Hochul signed S4907A the Hospital Healthcare Bill which prohibits hospitals from reporting Medical debt
  - b) Governor Hochul signed into law a part of the proposed “Coverage for All Bill” where undocumented Senior Citizens are now eligible for Medicaid.
2. On Friday 2/2, they will partner with Part Of The Solution (POTS) to give assistance on DRIE, SCRIE & SCHE
3. On Thursday 2/8, there will be a representative from HRA to assist with HRA issues, such as Cash Assistance, One shot Deals and Medicaid.
4. Fair Fares Enrollment through HRA will also be held at the District Office.

## **I. NY State Senator Robert Jackson - *Caridad Figueroa***

1. The senator is back in Albany working on Public Safety reform, Education and Health Care.
2. On 2/13, the Met Council will partner with the Senator to give a workshop on Tenant Rights.
3. The senator is also advocating for parents to have a say in the Public School system. and they can get involved with The Panel for Educational Policy.
4. The office is located at 5030 Broadway, office hours are 9-5PM, Phone is (212) 544-0173

## **J. Assembly member George Alvarez - *Not Present***

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## **K. Assemblymember Jeffrey Dinowitz - *James Dezell***

1. The Henry Hudson Bridge will be free to Bronx residents with fully funded E-Z passes effective 2/3/24.
2. The Assembly Member proposed Bill A3289 Insurrectionist Act to prevent this in the Assembly and Bill A1940, which lifts the statute of limitations on Sex Trafficking from 5 years to an unlimited time.

## **L. Assembly Member John Zaccaro Jr - *Ana Sacerdote***

1. There will be a Shredding event held in April
2. Free tax service available in the office
3. NIDC will be in the office twice monthly for housing issues
4. On, 2/3/24 Groceries will be given away

## **M. Assembly Member Yudelka Tapia's Office - *Not Present***

## **N. Council Member Oswald Feliz's Office - *George Cooke***

1. Office located at 573 East Fordham Road
2. Contact [RRodriguez@council.nyc.gov](mailto:RRodriguez@council.nyc.gov), phone (718) 842-8100

## **O. Council Member Pierina Sanchez & Adrian Cacho**

1. The Armory was awarded \$200 Million and there are a handful of excellent applicants to choose from. The application process is currently in progress.
2. The council member was on site at a collapsed building in the district and preliminary assessment appears to show that it was an engineering error.
3. Office visits totaled approximately 6,000 for the year; the office has two Constituent services staffers. The office is open Monday-Thursday 10-4PM and Legal Service help is also available in the office.

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4. The Council is working with the Mayor regarding FHEPS Vouchers. These vouchers help the community stay in their homes.

## **P. Council Member Eric Dinowitz**

1. He gave a description of what the “Many Stops Bill” aims to do and what it encompasses. It has three levels, where level 3 is the most serious.
  - a) The NYPD should turn on their cameras and document race and gender. The new bill collects data on the need to stop people and the new data will be shared with the City Council. The Mayor vetoed the proposed bill but the City Council will override.
2. If the program is implemented, Councilman Dinowitz believes it will be implemented in 6 months.
3. The HOPE Count event is tonight and the Councilman will be participating, where he and his team will count the number of unsheltered people living on the streets.
4. The Bronx Fellowship Against Hate (WATBFAH) is an initiative launched by the Riverdale Y that Councilman Dinowitz sponsored with the NYC government. He encourages people to get involved.
5. Board member Kazi Noor expressed her concerns about the 30,000 deaths in Gaza and she had not heard from the Council Member about those deaths.
  - a) Councilman Dinowitz gave a summary of the terrorist attack in Israel by Hamas on October 7th and the subsequent invasion by Israel into Gaza. He said that any amount of death is awful. He listed out his two major roles in NYC on this issue:

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- (1) Hate crimes in NYC against Jewish people have gone up 400% and there's been a rise in Islamophobia..
- (2) He is also on a task force with other City Council members to bridge people together, through The Bronx Fellowship Against Hate at the Riverdale Y.

b) After a while, the conversation ended due to time constraints and the fact that this was a local board meeting. Chair Arias invited everyone to have a public session, but not necessarily at the Board, to discuss this important topic.

## **Q. The Jewish Board - Kyshonna Hollington Project Director**

1. She reported that the Jewish Board received two grants for Certified Behavioral Health clinics in the Bronx. They are looking to expand their OASAS license to give substance abuse treatment to Bronx residents, as they are already doing this in Brooklyn and Staten Island. These clinics will offer Mental Health and Substance Abuse treatment.
2. She is also looking for people to join their Community Advisory Board. Clinic is located at 2488 Grand Concourse. Contact phone number is (917) 410-5235

## **R. Arms Acres - Patrice Wallace-Moore CEO**

1. The program has treated individuals with Alcohol and Substance Abuse at 3584 Jerome Ave since 2006. The CEO has great concerns over the proposed opening of a legal Cannabis Dispensary in their building. Their clients have fought long and hard in their journey towards recovery, and cannabis can be a

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gateway drug or a relapse trigger for them. She asks that the Board do the right thing. For some, this is life or death.

## **S. Mosholu-Montefiore Community Center (MMCC) - Sabrina Castro**

1. She invites the public to join the Crime Prevention and Safety Awareness Council.
2. The program is available for free, for youth aged 18-24 and they are having trouble filling up 25 slots.
3. A GED is not required. What is required is a 7 day commitment, to sit for 6 HRS a day. The class is held at the MMCC on Dekalb Ave; contact the center for an application.

## **T. Woodlawn Conservancy-Meg Ventrudo Executive Director**

1. Last year, they received a grant from the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for \$94,000 to plant 100 Large trees. The proposed location is Woodlawn on Webster Ave & 233<sup>rd</sup> Street where it is close to two major highways.
2. This year they are hoping to receive \$300,000-400,000 for their Urban Forest program and they are asking for community support for this program. Woodlawn is home to 6,000 trees and 17 miles of trails. Woodlawn is free to the public daily from 8:30-4:30 pm.
3. The Environmental Stewards Program is a program where students learn about landscape restoration. They will be participating in the projects made available through the grants. All are invited to Woodlawn!

## **U. New York Public Library (NYPL)- Tisha Williams of the Bronx Library Center**

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1. The library will face mid-year cuts, in addition to cuts originally added in the beginning. These budget cuts will not affect the Melrose and Hunts Point Libraries. The library will remain open with the exception of Sunday.
2. Library staff will be visiting Albany on 2/7 to lobby for funding and no additional cuts.
3. The Bronx Library Center will have Tax Prep help beginning on 1/29/24 from Mon, Wed & Sat, 10am to 1PM.

## **V. Mosholu Library- Jane Addison**

1. Ms. Addison wanted to remind the public that they have free afterschool programming for students aged 6-12. They also have impressive programming for adults as well.

## **W. Armando Ramos - Constituent**

1. He expressed the need for a ceasefire in Gaza and public censorship concerns as to when the public is allowed to speak in both the General and committee meetings. Mr. Ramos expressed that he felt he was singled out at the Traffic and Sanitation committee meetings.
2. He also said delay regarding his request for the Comptroller's audit is unacceptable. He reported that the current Board administration is not to blame for the delay. He cited the former DM and the past administration. This is not 1984.

## **X. Kazi Noor - Board Member**

1. Ms. Noor expressed her concern about the rate of drug addiction and mental illness in the community and the proliferation of the illegal smoke shops in the community; particularly around the schools. Ms. Noor recalls that at the last meeting, the Principal

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shared her experience with the Board and the drug related activities on the steps of her school.

2. Ms. Noor asks that the representatives who are in the meeting today to please take notes. Otherwise, she feels it is disrespectful of the public's time. She said the board and the public are here to communicate their needs to them and it will be good if those concerns are acknowledged.

### **III. District Manager Karla Cabrera Carrera closes public hearing and gives her updates**

- A. The Community Board applications and re-applications are due March 1<sup>st</sup>.
- B. The applications are on-line and commitment runs 6 hrs per month.
- C. The office has public surplus items that can be viewed for sale. Most items run from \$5 to \$10. The office is open Monday-Friday from 9 to 5PM.

### **IV. Chairperson Yajaira Arias Remarks**

- A. Community Board applications are open and she encouraged all to apply.
- B. The Civic Engagement Commission (CEC) sent out info on informative training and she encouraged all to apply

### **V. Attendance (Roll Call) by Chairperson Yajaira Arias:**

- A. Attendance was taken and a quorum was reached.

### **VI. Election for Secretary -**

- A. Barbara Stonczer made a motion to appoint Helene Hartman-Kutnowsky to the position of Secretary. Betty Arce seconded the motion. As there were no abstentions and no opposition, it was a unanimous vote.

### **VII. Review of Previous December 2023 Minutes:**

- A. The minutes were read and Chad Royer made a motion to approve the minutes and Betty Arce seconded the motion.

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## VIII. Motions

### A. Executive: <https://bit.ly/3TdTJ5C>

1. Yajaira made a motion to vote and Jean seconded the motion.
2. This was originally put to the Health Committee but they did not have a quorum, so the vote was discussed and made by the Executive Committee.
3. At the General Board meeting much discussion ensued. Betty Arce and Chair Yajaira Arias explained the guidelines that were used for approval to send a letter of support for the Cannabis establishment. The discussion continued around the fact that the location shares a hall with the Arms Acres Program; amid other concerns from the Board members. A question came up as to whether five or ten years down the road, would a review of the safety/legal guideline be done? Does anyone go back to review the criteria again? The Chair said the answer is not known at this time. **The vote was turned down**

### B. Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs: <https://bit.ly/3SXdU6D>

1. The Chair made a motion to vote and seconded by Helene Hartman-Kutnowsky. **The vote to send a letter to the City Council was unanimous.**

### C. Budget, Personnel & Ethics:

1. At 8:45PM, Betty Arce made a motion to go into Executive session and Helene Hartman-Kutnowsky seconded the motion.
  - a) This motion is to approve the hiring of a Community Associate for the Board. The Executive session ended at 9:07 after the vote was taken and **the hiring was approved.**

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**IX. Next Meeting Date:**

A. February 27, 2023, 6:30 PM, CUNY on the Concourse, 2501 Grand  
Concourse 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Bronx, NY 10468

**X. Meeting is Adjourned at 9:15pm**

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