



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



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RUBEN DIAZ, JR., BOROUGH PRESIDENT

PAUL FOSTER, CHAIRMAN

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**GENERAL COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012 @ 6:30 PM**

**Held at: Scott Towers ♦ 3400 Paul Avenue ♦ Bronx, NY 10467**

- I) Meeting opened at 6:40 PM. Ms. Adaline Walker presided over the meeting in place of Mr. Paul Foster
- II) Public Session began with the following speakers:
- A) Christina Pena, Friends of Woodlawn Cemetery:
- 1) Introduced the program offered by Woodlawn Cemetery. Pamphlets distributed
  - 2) Volunteers needed to help at the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- B) Mohammed Ali, CB7 Member:
- 1) Reported on problems at PS 340 Kindergarten; The move of children to another school outside their area. Wants DOE to reconsider these actions. There are large class sizes and overcrowding that need to be addressed
  - 2) Asking for support from the community to oppose DOE's actions. Problem will be referred to the Education Committee
- C) Inspector Joseph Dowling, 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct:
- 1) Talked about the effects of the hurricane on the community-at-large. The question of the Apex Center at Lehman for affected victims was discussed
  - 2) The stats were reported on. Crime is down except for burglaries
  - 3) Arrests were made on the recent shootings in the precinct
  - 4) Homicides are down for the year
  - 5) Inspector Dowling reported on various crimes throughout the community, which have been solved
  - 6) Warnings were made about leaving valuable things visible in cars to avoid break-ins
  - 7) Inspector Dowling answered questions, and then introduced Eamon Deary, the new Captain at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Pct.
- D) Councilman Oliver Koppell:
- 1) Spoke about the Council and their involvement in the recent hurricane
  - 2) He complained about the lack of response by ConEdison throughout the community
  - 3) He also spoke about preparedness and the effects of climate control
  - 4) The NYC budget was discussed. He spoke of the 5-year school construction budget. P.S.177 will be funded soon and P.S.56 will have a new addition
  - 5) Disaster relief needed to be funded with hopeful reimbursement from the Federal Government



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- 6) The construction of the Filtration Plant is approaching the end
  - 7) Oliver introduced his Aide, George Diaz, who attends CB Meetings faithfully
  - 8) Questions were responded to by the Councilman. Schools were of great concern to the audience
- E) Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz:
- 1) Discussed the MTA meeting that he attended and presented testimony
  - 2) Fare increases were opposed, and he feels that NY State needs to financially support the MTA
  - 3) Concern for the minimum wage and needs reform
  - 4) Coop Tax abatement was a concern and needs reform
  - 5) The Title 20 funds were of great concern and is safe for the time being
  - 6) The Assemblyman introduced Andy Cohen who will be working on Senior issues
- F) Assemblyman Elect Mark Gjonaj:
- 1) Greeted the audience and spoke of the damages from the recent hurricane
  - 2) He invited all to visit his office, which is opened to address issues even before he is officially sworn in
  - 3) Mark Gjonaj promised a consistent presence in the community
- G) Sonia Lappin, Scott Towers Resident:
- 1) Sonia welcomed all to Scott Towers and expressed her concern about the need to know the procedures in the event of a catastrophe
  - 2) Expressed her objections to the proposed housing at Villa Avenue. Ms. Lappin distributed a statement that described the inability of the organization to conduct a housing development of the nature described. The audience voiced their concerns about this project
    - a) Oliver Koppell spoke up about the housing and will be in touch with community residents to review the projects. He stated that the group may build the housing "as of right"
    - b) Oliver will arrange for Seniors and interested parties to visit other facilities run by this organization
  - 3) The question of funding was raised and will be pursued
- H) Phillipe Della Santo, Team 16:
- 1) Economic Issues and the Ice Skating rink proposed for the Armory was discussed
  - 2) Wants to raise awareness about issues and solutions to address them
  - 3) Can be reached at (718) 825-7037
- I) Ricky Martinez, Community Resident:



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- 1) Thanked the Community Board for approving his annual Block Party
  - 2) Collecting coats for the hurricane victims. Contact (212) 470-4784 for information on where to drop off coats
- J) Jay Shuffield, Friends of Williamsbridge Oval:
- 1) He described the long working relationship the Friends of Williamsbridge Oval has had with the Community Board, and said it was important for us to discuss issues when our relationship is strained
  - 2) He apologized to members of the Board for an email that did not recognize the work they have done in the past, and then publicly recognized some of those efforts
  - 3) He expressed frustration with the Community Board for not working more closely with the Friends of the Williamsbridge Oval and our elected officials. He advocated for meetings in the evening so members of the community can attend, and urged the Board to be more assertive in holding City agencies responsible when they fail to perform services for our community

III) Public Session ended at 7:50PM

- A) Attendance taken
  - 1) Quorum present
- B) Approval of Agenda / Minutes
  - 1) Unanimously approved

IV) Announcements:

- A) Paul had said he would like the Board to possibly collect items that were needed and then give them to areas affected in the Bronx
- B) Praise was given to Maria Baez and Londy Ramirez for their outstanding work at the Board office during the hurricane
- C) Job opening for a District Manager was mentioned
- D) Pictures are needed for the Web Site

V) District Manager's Report by Tom Lucania:

- A) Storm issues were discussed
- B) Downed trees had the greatest impact
- C) Praised Maria Baez and Londy Ramirez for all the work they do at the Community Board Office, and especially during emergencies
- D) Mentioned that Committee Minutes need to be submitted timely, and e-mails should be sent to both, Maria Baez and Londy Ramirez. Also, copy of emails sent to them should also be sent to Tom Lucania
- E) Search Committee was mentioned



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#### VI) Committee Reports:

- A) Budget / Personnel by Andrew Laiosa:
  - 1) Working on communication
  - 2) Tree lighting was mentioned
  - 3) Search Committee report was provided
- B) Community Relations / Long Term Planning by Nelson Cruz:
  - 1) Improvement plans are a focus
- C) Economic Development by Andrew Laiosa:
  - 1) Possible Express bid for the Bainbridge Avenue BID
- D) Education / Libraries by Chris Singh:
  - 1) P.S.340 issue was discussed
  - 2) Will contact schools in the district
- E) Environment & Sanitation by Helene Hartman:
  - 1) Discussed the contamination issue at the New School
  - 2) Will concentrate on recycling issues
- F) Land Use / Zoning by Lisa Sills-Short:
  - 1) The next Land Use / Zoning Meeting will be held on Thursday, November 29, 2012 at 6:30PM. Kingsbridge Armory to be discussed at the meeting.
    - a) Review of the 2 submitted proposals
  - 2) Oliver Koppell stated his support of the ice skating rink and his reasons for his support. He suggested that the CB to endorse this decision as a positive proposal
- G) Housing by Jean Hill:
  - 1) Ms. Hill read the Housing Committee Minutes
    - a) In the Tracey Tower report, add: "Jean Hill thanked Oliver Koppell for his support".
  - 2) Mark Gjonaj helped the tenants in their struggle for which they are eternally grateful. She also mentioned his assistant and their struggles
  - 3) Housing issues were raised and a spirited discussion ensued about Section 8 and the J51 law
- H) Parks & Recreation:
  - 1) Follow-up on storm damage in parks
  - 2) Tree lighting to be held on Thursday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 PM
- I) Traffic & Transportation by Lowell Green:
  - 1) Traffic issue at Holt Place and Williamsbridge Oval was discussed
  - 2) Meeting was held today with the Parks and DOT Commissioners regarding issues of safety at the Oval. It was proposed that workshops be held on possible projects around



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Williamsbridge Oval issues to seek solutions to the problems of safety and traffic issues that concern the community

- a) The Parks Commissioner stated that the fire department as well as the police need to be able to get their vehicles thru the street

#### VII) Elected Official Reports:

##### A) Borough President's Office Report by Tom Lucania:

- 1) Applications for membership are being accepted; February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012 is the deadline
- 2) Information regarding hurricane losses was provided
- 3) PR heritage celebration was discussed
- 4) Southern Boulevard to be co-named "Infantry"

##### B) Senator Gustavo Rivera by Maryann Rosa:

- 1) Reported on Job Fair
- 2) Civic classes came to an end and were successful
- 3) Holiday Party to be held on Monday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from 4:00PM to 7:00PM at the District Office across from Paradise Theater on the Grand Concourse. They can be contacted at (718) 933-2034 and (917) 312-4525
- 4) Reported on donations for hurricane victims at the Armory

##### C) Assemblyman Nelson Castro by Rosalba Luna:

- 1) 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Event will be held on December 19<sup>th</sup>, between 6:00PM to 12:00AM at Luna Lounge located on Webster Avenue
- 2) Immigration Services available on Wednesdays at M.S.319

##### D) Mayor's Office by Nivardo Lopez:

- 1) Reported on Hurricane Sandy
- 2) Repair programs are available. For additional information, call 311. He can also be contacted by calling (212) 788-8466
- 3) Home improvement licenses are being expedited
- 4) Emergency loans for businesses are available
- 5) Tax exemption available for businesses
- 6) Need donations for storm victims
- 7) Gas rationing suspended as of Friday
- 8) Questions from the CB members were fielded; such as Mr. Lopez position in Mayor's Office, i.e. as a liaison and his relationship to the community

##### E) Councilman Fernando Cabrera by Gregory Faulkner:

- 1) 300 tons of goods were delivered to victims from Armory
- 2) School issues were discussed where families are split when going to different schools



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- 3) Immigration lawyer available on Wednesdays from 9:00AM to 5:00PM
  - 4) Express bus to take place on Webster Avenue
  - 5) Housing forum to be held on December 13<sup>th</sup>, at St. James Park Recreation Center between 6:00PM and 8:00PM
  - 6) Kingsbridge Armory report; the Councilman has not stated his position on this issue
- VIII) Closing remarks by Adaline Walker:
- A) Reported on the opening of the Ice skating rink at Van Cortlandt Park
  - B) Ms. Walker thanked the Board Chairs for their work
- IX) Meeting adjourned at 9:15PM