



BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARD 13
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ANTONIO REYNOSO
Borough President

LUCY MUJICA DIAZ
Chairperson

EDDIE MARK
District Manager

**COMMUNITY BOARD 13
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES**

Date: Wed., Feb. 22, 2023

Time: 7:00 P.M.

Loc.: Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Lucy Mujica Diaz
Lakeisha Bower
Lolita Divilova
Ronald Greenberg
Amarilys Herrera
Cynthia Leveille
Robbin Wright Paraison
Milagros Quiles
Michael Silverman
Barbara Teitelbaum
Gregory Vayngurt
Svetlana Zelinskaya

Zunera Ahmed
Marion Cleaver
Susan Flaschenberg
Erum Hanif
Queenie Huling
Yelena Makhnin
Nodira Pirmukhamedova
Michael Russo
Pat Singer
Fanya Vasilevsky
Dennis Vourderis

Dionne Brown
Patricia Brown
Olga Fort
Pat O'Brien
Jeff Sanoff
Allen Newman
Jack Suben
Tatyana Segal
Gloria Watkins
Joann Weiss
Kumali Zairee

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mario Caggiano
Asad Dandia(exc)
Michael Quinn
Pervez Siddiqui
Annette Wesley

Joe Corace(exc)
Bernard Kaufman
Sam Rinkovsky(exc)
Evelyn Strasser
Edita Volovodovskaya

Selina Grant
Boris Pincus
Fran Schwartz
David Wynn

GUESTS:

Michael Colacurto(DSNY), Christopher Greif, Alex Gurevich(Bklyn D.A.Office), Lana Bind, Raisa Chernina, Olga Fiore(SS Spanton), Ida Sanoff, Ozzie Heymann, Craig Hammerman, Daniel(Alliance for C.I.), Mark Mernyk, Olar Pargulf(Construction), Arthur Melnick, Alex Sommer(DCP), Anastasia Yaskova(CAU), Rey Carrero(CAU), Heidi Amato, AM Alec Brook Krasny, Bobby Ferazi, Charlene Batts(CM Brannan), Amelia Clark(DCP) Chris McCreight(CM Brannan), Angela Kravtchenko, Hassan Chaudry(BP), Ken Lazar(DOB) Sergey Chuprik(Comptroller's Office)

STAFF PRESENT:

Eddie Mark, D.M., Hanna Glikman, Community Assoc., Lucia Knizhnik, Community Asst., Barbara Santonas, Community Coordinator

Board Chair Lucy Mujica Diaz opened the February meeting of Community Board 13 and welcomed everyone in attendance. She made a brief statement that Yelena will translate into Russian the statement Lucy will make about the street co-naming. Lucy asked that all in attendance be respectful during the meeting, if there is a problem, the speaker will be muted by the staff. Numerous people want to speak about the street co-naming for Victor Topaller. According to protocol In order to speak, the person must send an email to Hanna or Lucia at the board office no later than 4 p.m. on the day prior to the meeting. For this public session each speaker will be allowed 2 minutes.

ELECTED OFFICIALS/REPRESENTATIVES:

Anastasia Yasakova – CAU – She brought greetings from the Mayor. She has no updates at this time. She introduced Ray Carera, Director Quality of Life. He spoke briefly. He has 21 years with CAU and is glad to work with us. He asked that we continue to give any issues to Anastasia and she will pass them along to him. He is currently working with Yelena to address illegal vendors. He knows that C.B. 13 has a lot of issues with illegal vendors.

AM Alec Brook Krasny – He thanked Liberation Diploma Plus H.S. Principal, April Leong for hosting the grandson of Nelson Mandela who spoke to her students. He also thanked Isaiah Whitehead who spoke about drug abuse issues. He also thanked Rodney Knight for inviting him to the Black History Event with the Sharks and Sharkettes. He was happy to see Rabbi Brickman and Pat Singer in Albany and thanked them for coming. He is working with tenants from Public Housing (NYCHA) to avoid changes being made without tenants voting for the changes. If the residents decided to vote, it should be done at one time and in person. In reference to the Bus Rerouting Project, Alec believes we need to have a united front to fight the MTA. He invited everyone to his Swearing In Ceremony on Sunday, February 26th at 3 p.m. at Lincoln High School. There will be a Show at the Millennium Theater to commemorate the First Anniversary of the Russian Invasion of the Ukraine. The Assemblyman has free tickets. Anyone interested in going should let Eddie or Lucy know. On the subject of the Casino, he feels that if the casino comes to our community, there should be some give backs to the community.

Sergey Chuprik – Comptroller’s Office – There is a new initiative – Language Access NYC all city agencies are required to provide information in ten languages.

Olga Fiore – representing State Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton – The Senator passed two pieces of legislation 1442 – additional equipment to be placed in stretch limousines and 2223 – Plans for delivery of medical supplies during a state of emergency. Her office is still mobile, working on getting an office in our community.

Haasan Chaudhary– representing Brooklyn Borough President – The BP is having a Information Event for the Proposed Casino in partnership with C.B. 13 on Monday, March 6th at the CI YMCA – 2 sessions 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. The goal of the event is to obtain public input and information sharing. There will be translators available – Russian, Spanish and Chinese.

Zunera Ahmed – representing State Senator Iwen Chu – She reported on the in person meeting between the Senator and Eddie, Lucy and the office staff of C.B. 13. Quality of life issues were discussed.

Alex Gurevich – representing Brooklyn D.A.’s office – He reported on the incident in C.I. where a 17 y.o. young man was stabbed to death. 13 y.o. was charged with 2nd degree murder and the 14 and 16 year olds were charged with manslaughter. No names will be released as they are all minors. No bail for the 13 y.o. The 14, 15 year olds are out on bail. Tomorrow evening the D.A. will host a Black History Month event at St. Francis College at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

Charlene Batts – representing CM Justin Brannan – She brought greetings from the CM. Their office is opened daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 8203 3rd Avenue. 718-748-5200. On Feb. 16th a Bill was passed to amend the term Victim of Domestic Violence to include economic abuse.

Ozzie Heymann – He discussed why the street should be names for Victor Topaller. He did many things for the Russian speaking community.

PUBLIC SESSION

Amelia Clark – DCP – She is working on The Community Fund for Coney Island North. It has to do with climate changes to Land Use. They will hire a Planner to work on the study and develop a plan.

Michael Colarurto-DSNY – There is a time change for garbage pickups beginning 4/1/2023. Businesses - Bin with a lid can be put out at 6 p.m., garbage bags can be put out after 8 p.m. Apartment buildings – garbage out between 4 and 7 a.m. Customer Service – DSNY.nyc.gov. He will find out fines and forward amounts to board tomorrow.

Christopher Greif – He announced the opening of the Customer Service Center in the Stillwell Terminal. On the MTA website you can look up the status of elevator repairs, installations at stations throughout the city.

Craig Hammerman – A.C.E. Harbor and Tributaries Study, or HATS proposes to install a tidal gate at the contaminated Coney Island Creek, a floodwall and seawall around Sea Gate, and an elevated promenade at the Riegelmann Boardwalk. We've already heard that the Parks Department would like to replace our wooden boardwalk with concrete, and build a vehicular on-ramp at W. 27th Street, at a total cost that they've estimated to be somewhere between \$700 mil-\$1 billion.

We deserve a boardwalk that is safe and inviting. Right now, it clearly is not. Our (Riegelmann) Boardwalk Working Group and Coney Islanders for an Ocean Side Ferry have been discussing these issues and has concluded that the city should abandon its misguided Capital plans until such time as the Federal plans become clearer, and instead put all of the resources they are planning to use into an emergency contract to perform immediate in-kind repairs to the boardwalk to bring it back into safe condition. (In-kind repairs means that where there were wooden planks, they should repair the wooden plans, and not look for design the boardwalk at all at this time.)

I'm asking the Community Board to consider taking positions on both of these matters by going on record with positions that support the community:

First, I'd like the Community Board to consider taking a position on the USACE HATS study to tell the Feds that we need them to develop a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to take a deeper look into some of the proposed remedies for our area, specifically, (1) to study other alternatives to an elevated promenade, like a flood wall covered in sand dunes, an idea that I know others in the community would like to see studied further, (2) to study how they will be addressing the documented contamination in the Coney Island Creek which is still under consideration for a Superfund clean up since they are proposing to build a tidal gate, floodwall and seawall there and (3) to demonstrate to us how 40 percent of their proposed remedies will specifically and directly benefit our Environmental Justice community, which has suffered from decades of government neglect, as the White House's Justice 40 Initiative requires them to do.

Second, I'd also like the Community Board to rescind its previous support given to the Parks Dept. for their proposed Capital projects on the boardwalk and instead urge the Parks Commissioner to (1) use all of those funds already allocated for the boardwalk to issue an emergency repair contract to perform a comprehensive in-kind repair of the boardwalk instead, (2) issue an agency wide order to stop their agency vehicles from driving on the boardwalk, and (3) increase the department's maintenance budget for the boardwalk as a 2 part-time carpenters has proven to be insufficient to maintain the 1.3 million planks and 15.6 million screws and nails. (Thank you, Lucy for allowing me to exceed the two minute limit!!!)

Ida Sanoff – She reported on a Zoom meeting with Army Corps of Engineers that she attended, in reference to the flood control project plans for Coney Island Creek which will make the situation worse. It will not address flood water that can come up through the storm drains, etc.
Raisa Chernina – She said she is against the street co-naming for Victor Topaller. There are rules; must live/work in the community for a minimum of ten years. There are others who have been more important to the community who are not represented. Why should we co-name a street for him?

Ozzie Heymann – Victor Topaller was a talk show host on radio and T.V. He also produced plays in Brighton Beach. He was an icon for the Russian community. His life should be recognized. His work had a positive effect on the lives of Russian speaking immigrants. He said that the petition with 800 signatures will be brought to the Board office within 5 days.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Joann Weiss and seconded by Zunera Ahmed.

VOTE: In Favor: 34 Opposed: 0 Abstention: 0

Motion carried (quorum present) Roll call on file at C.B. Office

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:

Lucy thanked everyone for being responsible during the first part of the meeting. She also thanked Yelena for translating. In the last few days the office received more than 500 calls in reference to naming the street after Victor Topaller. After a while, the calls were harassing, and the office sent all the calls to voice mail. The calls were documented. This is not the way we do things. Now you say we will have the petitions in five days, we were promised to have them sometime in October. Also, Boris is not here now and we know all the calls did not come from this community. In addition, one of our board members was threatened because she was against the street co-naming. Victor was not a resident of the community. It is not about whether this person should be honored, but that a street co-naming is not the method of honor this person should get. We are here for the community and make decisions according to how the community feels.

Lucy said she is also disappointed that the community did not turn out yesterday for the MTA meeting for the Proposed Bus Project. There were 67 people on the Zoom meeting, 14 were from the MTA. We were asking the public to give their opinion as to whether the changes to the bus route should be made. At least 40 of the board members should have been at the meeting, this was not the case. The deadline to submit written testimony on the Bus Reroute is March 6th. Call the office for the link to use. It seems that with the changes, bus stops will change from one to five blocks. Reach out to the new elected officials to tell them your feelings. Call the board office to get their information, if you don't already have the information.

Removal of a Board Member – Mr. Doyin Isaac only attended one meeting since he was appointed in June 2022. By Laws said email should be sent to advise. Lucy said she called and texted him and after he promised to attend the next meeting, he did not show up. Letter was written to the Borough President and requested he remove Mr. Isaac. Lucy said she will continue to monitor attendance, not only at monthly board meetings, but at committee meetings as well.

DISTRICT MANAGER’S REPORT:

Mayor has extended the State of Emergency until March 30th. Therefore, our March Board meeting will be held on Zoom. We have received the response from our District Needs Statement. Website is in the chat. Meeting of 60th Pct Community Council will be held on Tuesday, February 28th. It will be in person at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church. There will be free ice skating this week, at Abe Stark Rink sponsored by CM Kagan. The first 200 children will be admitted. It is from 9-11 a.m. On March 1st both CM Kagan and CM Vernikov will have events. CM Kagan will have Town Hall meeting at P.S. 216 and CM Vernikov will give State of the District at P.S. 153. There will be a Casino meeting on Monday, March 6th at the Coney Island Y. Two session 10-1 and 5:30-8. All are invited to attend. The community residents must make their feelings known. The Treasurer’s Report will be given next month.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

Street Closing Committee

Yelena Makhnin, Chair

Yelena it was a successful committee meeting. A quorum was present, that was important, and she thanked all the committee members for attending. Five applications were submitted, and one vote was taken for all the applications.

- Brighton Jubilee – 8/27 – Vote: In Favor: 4, Opposed: 0, Abstain: 0 Recused: 1
- C.I. Kids Day - 4/29 – Vote: In Favor: 5, Opposed: 0, Abstain: 0 Recused: 0
- Bay 44th St. - 8/19 – Vote: In Favor: 5, Opposed: 0, Abstain: 0 Recused: 0
- Church Festival - 8/26 - Vote: In Favor: 4, Opposed: 0, Abstain: 0 Recused: 1
- BB Family Day - 5/21 - Vote: In Favor: 4, Opposed: 0, Abstain: 0 Recused: 1

Motion: carried (quorum present) Roll call on file at C.B. office.

NEW BUSINESS: None

GOOD & WELFARE: None

Land Use Committee

Marion Cleaver/Shimon Rinkovsky, Co-Chair

The Committee discussed the co-naming of Brighton 1st Road in memory of Victor Topaller. The board member who brought this issue to the board, Boris Pincus was not present at the time of the meeting. Ozzie Heymann, who was present at the meeting advised that Boris was in Israel at the time of the meeting, taking care of a family emergency. Boris did not reach out to anyone at the C.B. to advise them of that. The committee discussed the pros and cons of the issue and whether or not this should be done. Other suggestions on how to honor his were discussed, including placing a plaque at the radio station. The radio station is not within the confines of C.B. 13.

Motion was made to co-name BBA and B. 1st Road in memory of Victor Topaller.

Vote: In Favor: 3 Opposed: 3 Abstention: 4

Motion failed (denied). Quorum present. Roll call on file at C.B office.

Councilmember Kagan spoke about why he believed BBA and Brighton 1st Road should be co-named for Victor Topaller. He worked closely with Victor, and he did a lot for the Russian speaking community in Brighton Beach. CM is in favor of the co-naming. He also mentioned about the free ice skating on Thursday and Friday for children and that he will be hosting a Town Hall Meeting on Wed., Mar. 1st at P.S. 216 at 6 p.m.

Fanya Vasilevsky said she is against the suggestion to change the street location or change the type of memorial. She feels that doing so would diminish Victor’s stature in the Russian speaking community. Tatyana Segal said that Victor contributed in many ways to the Brighton Beach community. Her family supports the street co-naming.

Yelena said she is the only committee member who knew who Victor Topaller was. The C.B. has tradition in this community for ceremonial street co-naming for a person only who lived and/or worked in this community and volunteered their services for this community.

Lucy said Victor was known most for his work at the radio station, he should be honored by them. This street co-naming is not acceptable to her. She suggested that they place a plaque at the radio station. Eddie checked at the BB Library and no one who works there ever heard of him.

At the next Land Use Committee meeting, the committee will discuss guidelines for Street Co-Naming.

Jeff Sanoff made a statement: "I am speaking as an individual, not on behalf of the board. As community board members, we represent the entire multi ethnic, multi cultural community within the boundaries of this district. We co-name streets for people because they have been involved with serving the community and working with the community. We have approved dozens of applications for street co-namings for people who worked in the community, who had businesses in the community and who volunteered in the community. We voted to honor the memory of police officers and firefighters who saved lives in our community. Our street signs represent the diversity of this community. They honor people of many religions and ethnicities, people who were born in the USA and people who immigrated here from countries all over the world. With respect to the street co-naming for Victor Topaller, there is no doubt that he was a very talented journalist who was well known in the Russian language media. But his direct involvement in the community and specifically, to the corner of BBA and Brighton 1st Road is just not there. While many in our area enjoyed Mr. Topaller's work, it should be noted that he did not live in this community and was not even a resident of New York City. In her recent letter to the Community Board, CM Inna Vernikov wrote that she could not find any record of his community involvement. We were told that this corner was chosen because Mr. Topaller gave a few speeches and presentations at the library on this block as well as at the other libraries throughout NYC. In fact, the Brooklyn Public Library has a borough wide program to bring well known authors and artists, as well as musical performances and art exhibitions, to all of their branches. Many highly accomplished people have given library talks. While this is a wonderful thing to do and it is appreciated, it certainly does not justify a street co-naming. In addition, it should be noted that the radio and TV station where Mr. Topaller worked is NOT memorializing him in any way, but has only embarked on a campaign to urge its listeners, many of whom live out of state, to ask for this street co-naming instead. There are other well-known journalists in the Russian language media, just as there are talented journalists who are known for their work in the other foreign languages that are spoken by many in our community. But just because people in the area are familiar with someone's work is not justification to name a street after him.

Barbara Teitelbaum asked if there are any rules from the Borough President Office. Lucy said that the new guidelines are partly the guidelines that are followed from the City Council and advised we have reached out to other community boards.

Motion was made by Pat Singer, seconded by Lucy Mujica Diaz to approve the street co-naming for Victor Topaller.

Vote: In Favor: 12 Opposed: 20 Abstentions: 2 Recusals: 0
Motion Failed (quorum present) Roll call on file at C.B. office.

Barbara Santonas
Community Coordinator

