

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 – February 28, 2006

Attendance

Rev. Reuben Akinfime (A)
David Alexander
Joyce Anderson (E)
Josephine Blakeley
James A. Bowens
Helen Brown (A)
Hazel Clark
Esther Cobb (A)
Adrainer Kim Coleman
Roger Dixon (A)
Essie Duggan
John Frederick (A)
Sam Gardner (A)
Shirley Gonsalves (E)
Sarah Hall
Atikay Henry
Henry Hill
Philip Hogan (A)
Kofi Hormeku (A)
Michael Howard (A)
Hattie Hunt (A)
Allene Ingram
Wordell Johnson (A)
Dr. Cade Jones, III
Eula Key

Danny King
Bettie Kollock-Wallace (E)
Deborah Mack (A)
James Mack
Rev. Thelma Martin (E)
Yolanda Matthews
Sadie McNamara
Joseph Norton (A)
Bishop Landon Penn (E)
Elder Devon Ponds (A)
Mattie Pusey (A)
Isaiah Simmons (E)
Ernestine Turner
Rev. Miran Ukaegbu (E)
Alice Vines (E)
Annie Walkes (A)
Herman Winston
Hazel Younger
Viola D. Greene-Walker, DM
E. Jane Coleman, ADM
Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
Johnnie Joyner for Sen. Martin Dilan
Edna Johnson for Sen. Velmanette Montgomery
Councilmember Darlene Mealy

MEETING HELD AT BROWNSVILLE MULTI-SERVICE CENTER, 444 THOMAS S. BOYLAND STREET, BROOKLYN

First Vice Chairperson Hazel Younger convened the Public Hearing at 7:08 p.m.. An invocation was said by Dr. Cade Jones, III.

IN THE MATTER OF the City's Statement of Needs for Fiscal Years 2007 and 2008 on facilities that the City expects to site, replace, expand or reduce during the next two fiscal years (A copy of the Citywide Statement of Needs is available for review at the Office of Community Board #16 as well as on the distribution table).

District Manager Greene-Walker stated that even though Community District #16 was not sited for any of the proposals, she extracted those that could possibly be sited in our community, based upon the criteria of the proposals and what has historically been sited within Community District #16. The purpose of tonight's Public Hearing is to seek public comment.

There being no comments, the next item was read.

IN THE MATTER OF the City's Preliminary Budget Statement and Community District Register for Fiscal Year 2007. The Hearing is to obtain public comments on City agencies' responses on the Capital and Expense Budget Priorities for Fiscal Year 2007 (A copy is available for review at the Office of Community Board #16 as well as on the distribution table).

First Vice Chairperson Hazel Younger requested that the members of the Community Board review both documents again and call District Manager Greene-Walker with any comments in order to assist her in her reply to the City's Administration.

Mr. James Bowens stated that he often hears people in the community complaining about different issues. He urged them to take the opportunity to do something other than complaining.

Ms. Ernestine Turner asked what is being planned for the Brownsville Multi-Service Center building?

District Manager Greene-Walker stated that one of the Capital Budget Request items is to rehabilitate the Brownsville Multi-Service Center. Due to age and years of inadequate maintenance, this structure has fallen into disrepair. The HVAC system and elevator need

replacing, new front doors; perimeter fencing and surveillance equipment are also needed to enhance security.

The agency's response is: "The agency will try to accommodate this issue within existing resources".

The issue is funding. The Board continues to include the request in its list of budget items and gave it a priority four this year in order to emphasize its importance. Some of the work has begun. New windows have been installed on the second and third floors, they are looking to replace the windows in the lobby area. They have begun painting the building. Work has been done on the elevator, however, further work needs to be done. A new entry door is needed as well as work to remove the puddling condition in front of the doors when it rains. Perimeter fencing is also being requested along with landscaping.

There being no further comments, the Public Hearing was closed.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

A motion was made by Ms. Sarah Hall, seconded by Dr. Cade Jones, III and carried to dispense with the reading of last month's minutes.

A motion was made by Dr. Cade Jones, III, seconded by Ms. Eula Key and carried to dispense with the reading of the District Manager's report.

First Vice Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Charise Lawrence, Director of Brooklyn Community Outreach for the Department for the Aging.

Ms. Lawrence stated that she is here this evening to discuss Medicare Part D. It is a topic that affects many of our seniors.

Medicare Part D is revolutionary in that for the first time Medicaid is covering the cost of prescription drugs. Seniors 62 years of age and older, recipients of Medicare Part A (covers doctors' visits) and/or Part B (covers hospitalization) are eligible for enrollment into a Medicare Part D plan. The plans are provided by private insurers. In New York State, there are over forty-five such providers.

The Department for the Aging is hearing that many seniors are having difficulty deciding on a plan. They are trying to assist in that effort by establishing forty sites throughout the City where people can meet with a counselor and determine which plan is most appropriate for their prescription needs. Each plan contains a list of prescriptions that it covers called a formulary. Information on the enrollment sites can be found in pamphlets on tonight's distribution table or at their website which is www.nyc.gov/aging. Information on the plans is available on Medicare/Medicaid's website at www.medicare.gov.

She is here tonight because the enrollment deadline is approaching and those seniors who have not enrolled by the deadline of May 15, 2006 will be assessed a penalty. The penalty is one percent per month after the initial enrollment period. Persons who have what is termed as "credible coverage" are exempt from the penalty. Credible coverage is a policy that meets or exceeds coverage that would otherwise be covered by Part D. If you have credible coverage you should have received a letter from your insurance company stating that and are urged NOT to enroll in part D as this will cancel out what you already have.

Those who elect to enroll in a plan will have to pay an average premium of \$32.20, either directly to the plan or through deductions from their social security checks.

First Vice Chairperson Younger asked for a clarification of the deductible.

Ms. Lawrence stated that there is a \$250 deductible per year that must be reached before Part D begins to payout. Once the deductible has been reached the plan will pay 75% of the cost of covered prescription drugs from \$251 to \$2,250 with the insured paying the remaining 25% as a co-payment.

First Vice Chairperson Younger stated that the Department for the Aging to a degree is mandated with protecting our seniors. She does not see that the Agency is doing enough on this issue as seniors in some cases are unable to obtain their medication because some insurers are not paying. Some who are accustomed to getting their medication at their local pharmacies are being forced to get it through the mail. She is also concerned that the cost may be prohibitive for some seniors.

In a search to get answers and have changes made, the Senior Citizens Affairs Committee of Community Board #16 will sponsor a Town Hall Meeting with Congressman Ed Towns on March 20th at the Patrick E. Gorman Houses. Fliers will be distributed with details of this event.

Ms. Lawrence noted that the Department for the Aging is a City agency and the Medicare Part D Plan is a federal program. They do have a responsibility to act on behalf of the seniors of this City and that is one of the reasons that they have collaborated with the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty to open the enrollment centers.

Ms. Edna Johnson, representing State Senator Velmanette Montgomery, stated that the Senator has published a brochure that is available on tonight's distribution table, entitled: "Medicare Part D: Choosing the Best Plan for You". The brochure explains the plan and list different resources in order to assist you in making a decision.

Someone asked how does EPIC (Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage) fit in with Part D.

Ms. Lawrence stated that at one point it was said that EPIC was accepted as credible coverage. She is now hearing that EPIC subscribers are being asked to choose a plan and that EPIC will then wrap around any uncovered drugs. She suggests that if you have EPIC you contact a counselor at EPIC to determine what will work best for you.

Someone asked about those seniors who are currently not in need of any medication. What should they do?

Ms. Lawrence stated that this is a question that comes up often. All she can say is that the formularies are based on the subscribers' current needs. She theorized that Medicare is expecting those not currently taking medication to anticipate what prescriptions they may need in the future and chose a plan accordingly.

Mr. Bowens encouraged everyone to get a full understanding of what they are signing up for before they enroll in any prescription plan.

First Vice Chairperson Younger thanked Ms. Lawrence for her presentation and recognized Mr. William Boone of the Educators for Children, Youth and Families Beacon Program.

Mr. Boone stated that in celebration of Women's History Month they will present an award to Brownsville's Woman of the Year as selected by their Youth Advisory Board on March 25th, 12:00 noon at I.S. / P.S. 323 located at 210 Chester Street.

He introduced a delegation from the Beacon's Youth Advisory Board who presented public service recognition awards to Dr. Cade Jones, III, Senator Velmanette Montgomery (accepted by Edna Johnson), and District Manager Viola Greene-Walker. They also presented the dais with tokens of appreciation.

First Vice Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Sadie McNamara, Chairperson of the Health and Human Resources Committee.

Ms. McNamara reported that the Committee met on February 9, 2006 with Ms. Christiana Larkin and colleagues from the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Brooklyn District Health Office. They are one of three such offices in the City – the others are in East Harlem and the South Bronx. These offices gather data and prepare neighborhood health profiles.

The Brooklyn Office opened about 2 years ago and had been concentrating on the Bushwick and Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhoods.

One of the areas they have been interested in working on is food and fitness. The Department of Health has been supporting adult and children exercise programs in Bushwick and Bedford-Stuyvesant. They've begun working with the Brownsville Recreation Center by supporting the Parks Department to offer free fitness classes for adults. They've also helped to start and support 5 small fitness rooms where they've given grants to local organizations such as the PAL Beacon Program, located at 985 Rockaway Avenue, to start a small fitness room (with 6 pieces of equipment). This spring, they hope to deliver a universal to the PAL Beacon Program which will enable 4 people to work out at the same time.

At the Brownsville Recreation Center, they provide funding to the Parks Department to hire one person to run the shape-up class.

They have also contracted with a professional program called SPARC (Sports Play and Active Recreation for Children). They've trained every grammar school physical education teacher in Bushwick and Bedford-Stuyvesant in the curriculum and the Health Department has provided between \$800 and \$1600 worth of equipment to the schools so that they can implement this curriculum in gym class.

Every Pre-k teacher in Region 5 schools has been trained to implement an enhanced physical activity program.

Over the next 3 years, they expect that children in day care and schools will be more active during physical education classes.

The Department of Health did offer the same physical education training to teachers in Brownsville schools, however, they could not come to an agreement. In Bushwick and Bedford-Stuyvesant, the principals and the Department of Education thought it important enough to get their teachers trained and they give up a day during the week. In Brownsville, they wanted to do the training on a Saturday and it was going to be voluntary but they were not able to come to an agreement.

About a year ago, the Health Department started a small newborn visiting program where trained community health workers will visit new mothers. They are hoping to start the program in Brownsville this spring.

The Department of Health (DOH) has also been working on issues of lead poisoning control to provide community training. DOH supports HPD which offers training to residents, superintendents, and property owners in an 8-hour class. If enough interest is expressed by a community group, the tuition will be waived and HPD will offer the class in the community.

Also at this meeting, Ms. Hazel Younger, Community Board #16's representative on the Ambulatory Care Board at Brookdale Hospital, informed the Committee of measures being taken to improve service in the Emergency Room, such as staff sensitivity training to calm the patient and obtain vital information in a very emotional setting.

The Ambulatory Care Board is concerned about the pediatric unit which is too small. They are trying to find ways to expand the unit.

The Triage Unit at Brookdale Hospital also needs improvement and the Ambulatory Care Board has been working to get some kind of enhancement for the unit.

The next Health and Human Resources Committee meeting is scheduled for March 16th, 3:30 p.m. at the Community Board Office.

A motion was made by Mr. Henry Hill, seconded by Ms. Josephine Blakeley and carried to accept the report of the Health and Human Resources Committee.

Mr. Henry Hill, member of the Senior Citizens Affairs Committee, reported that the Committee met on Wednesday, February 21, 2006 with a representative of Congressman Ed Towns' office who gave the Committee an update on the Congressman's legislative initiatives:

- 1) Medicaid Obesity Treatment Act of 2005 (H.R. 286)

This bill would mandate that a State's Medicaid Prescription Drug plan cover drugs necessary for treating obesity

- 2) Legal Immigration Health Restoration Act of 2005 (H.R. 287)
This bill would provide health coverage for legal immigrant children and pregnant women under Medicaid and the state's Children Health Insurance Program.
- 3) Improving Access to Nurse-Midwifery Care Act of 2005 (H.R. 872)
This bill would broaden access to midwives by low-income women by providing and increasing reimbursements to certified nurse-midwife services.
- 4) Covering Kids Act (H.R. 3050)
The President proposes to increase coverage of uninsured, low-income children by spending \$100 million a year for 5 years on an outreach campaign in Medicaid and SCHIP (State Children Health Insurance Program). This outreach will result in additional Medicaid enrollment and additional SCHIP enrollment.
- 5) Healthy Start Initiative (H.R. 3131)
Requires the Department of Health and Human Services to consider factors that contribute to infant mortality such as low birth weight when considering grant applications for Healthy Start Initiatives.

New York AIDS advocates are very concerned that the proposed Presidential recommendations would abruptly divert funding from major metropolitan areas to smaller locales, which would greatly limit the amount New York receives from the Ryan White Care Act funding.

The Committee also shared their concerns about the Medicare Prescription Drug coverage which might not be the best for seniors.

A town hall style meeting with Congressman Towns is tentatively scheduled for March 20th, 1:00 p.m. at the Gorman Community Center, located at 1381 Linden Boulevard. Once the date has been confirmed, fliers will be circulated to invite all senior citizens to attend and voice concerns about the Medicare Prescription Drug coverage.

Applications are available for the Bishop Richard Martin Senior Houses on East New York Avenue at Legion Street. You must be 62 years of age to apply. You may obtain an application from the Community Board Office, Monday thru Friday between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or by writing to Shinda Management Corporation, 217-02 Jamaica Avenue, Queens Village, New York 11428, Attention: Occupancy Dept. – BRBM SH. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your request. Application requests must be received no later than March 15, 2006. Completed applications must be sent by regular mail only to the P.O. Box address indicated on the application. Applications must be received by March 24, 2006. Applications will be drawn by lottery on March 27, 2006.

The Kings County Senior Residence at 546 Albany Avenue is nearing completion and will consist of 172 one-bedroom apartments (with 9 units specifically designed for wheelchair accessibility). The advertisement will begin on March 3, 2006.

Applications can be obtained by calling (718) 240-4176 or by writing to: Kings County Senior Residence LLC, c/o Grenadier Realty Corporation, 1230 Pennsylvania Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11239 as of March 3, 2006. The deadline for applications is April 5, 2006.

A motion was made by Ms. Hazel Clark, seconded by Ms. Eula Key and carried to accept the report of the Senior Citizens Affairs Committee.

First Vice Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Ronald Lewis of Habitat for Humanity New York City (Habitat).

Mr. Lewis stated that Habitat is an organization that builds homes for families in need, using

volunteer labor and sweat equity of the prospective owners. They are here tonight to provide an update on a project that they are planning for Sherlock Place and Atlantic Avenue (Block 1571). He introduced Ms. Gina Buffone and Ms. Petra Ann Van Buckley who explained the design of the project and went over the selection process.

Ms. Buffone displayed a series of architectural drawings depicting the layout of three 4 story-buildings to be built along Atlantic Avenue and Sherlock Place. There will be a total of 41 living units with community space and laundry rooms on the ground floors. The units will consist of 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom units. The buildings are to be built using environmentally friendly materials. Construction is slated to begin in 2006 with a completion date in the winter of 2008.

Ms. Van Buckley stated that the selection process begins once they have all approvals for the homes and starts with the advertising of the availability of the home on HPD's (New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development) website (nyc.gov/hpd) as well as their own website (www.habitatnyc.org). Notification will be sent to the Community Board, local elected officials, and community leaders advising them of the availability.

The Family Progress Division is responsible for the selection of the families. Once applications are received they are processed. They review the applications to determine which can be underwritten. Home visits are done by their Leadership Committees to verify that what is on paper is factual. There are several criteria that each family has to meet. One is that they live in sub-standard or over-crowded conditions or pay over fifty percent of their household income towards housing cost. They must also have a household income of between fifty and eighty percent of the "Area Median Income". Priority is given to persons living within the community in which they are building.

They have a hotline number (1-866-692-4687) that can be called at anytime to find out what homes are available. You may also call (718) 246-5656 EXT-324 to leave your contact information in order to receive an application when they become available.

Mr. David Alexander asked if anyone from Brownsville will be involved in the construction of the buildings?

Mr. Lewis stated that as with any of their sites, they try to have as much community involvement as possible.

First Vice Chairperson Younger thanked the presenter for the information presented to the Board.

She recognized Captain Jeffrey Maddrey, Commanding Officer of the 73rd Precinct.

Captain Maddrey reported that year-to-date, the Precinct is up 2% in crime. The biggest thing that concerns him at the moment is youth driven robberies. Last Tuesday at approximately 2:30 a.m., officers from the Precinct arrested three young men, two aged 14 and one 15 years old. They believe that the same group is also responsible for a robbery the previous night.

One of the things that he has done since his arrival at the Precinct is the addition of another youth officer. He wants to institute a follow-up policy with youth offenders whereby they will go to the homes and schools to speak to the parents and principals in the hopes of keeping the youth from becoming repeat offenders. They have also added two more officers to work in the schools to try and reduce truancy. Last Friday, with the assistance of several other precincts, they picked up 103 truant children in the precinct. While only a small number of the children are committing crimes, the rest may well become victims of crime.

They have instituted an anti-crime corridor on Rockaway Avenue from Pacific Street to Riverdale Avenue from 12:00 noon to approximately 5:00 p.m.. Nine officers are posted along the route during those hours.

Mr. Alexander stated that he feels that the Precinct is doing a good job and asked what was done with the truants?

Captain Maddrey stated that there is a TRACK (Truancy Reduction Alliance to Contact Kids) Center, located at 565 Riverdale Avenue. TRACK is a program administered by the District

Attorney's Office. At the center are representatives from the Administration for Children's Services, the Office of School Safety and the Police Department. The truants are brought to the TRACK Center and are assessed to determine if there is a problem in their home environment or other issues. Their parents are contacted to come and pick them up.

Someone stated that there appears to be some "wheeling and dealing" in the vicinity of Rockaway and Livonia Avenues and that when police officers are visible they simply move to a different location.

Captain Maddrey acknowledged that there is crime activity at Rockaway and Livonia Avenues and that they make many arrests in that area. He also admitted that it is a "cat and mouse game" and that they are working to reduce the crime in the area.

Captain Maddrey relinquished the floor to Police Officer Dawn Townsend who disseminated information about a level 2 sex offender who escaped from a Manhattan psychiatric center. The offender did not commit his crimes within the confines of the Precinct, however he is known to frequent the area. She also stated that they try to keep the Board updated with information concerning sex offenders but the information is constantly changing. On the distribution table are pamphlets that contain information on websites where you can obtain information concerning level 3 sex offenders. Level 3 offenders are considered to be the most prone to recommit sexual offenses.

Their gun initiative has allowed the Precinct to remove over forty-seven firearms from the streets this year. This is due to good police work as well as information provided by the community. Information provided to them can lead to a reward of as much as \$1,000 upon the arrest of the person with the gun.

First Vice Chairperson recognized Mr. Randy Hudson of the Hudsonic Organization who stated that they have inherited the IRT #3 Campaign. The Campaign seeks to have the Transit Authority create a connecting passage between the IRT #3 line and the Canarsie "L" and install an express track between New Lots Avenue and Utica Avenue with stops at certain key stations.

First Vice Chairperson Younger recognized Councilmember Darlene Mealy.

Councilmember Mealy thanked the audience for their support in the most recent election. She is in the midst of establishing a District Office at 1757 Union Street (between Utica and Schenectady Avenues). She may be reached at the City Council Office at (212) 788-7387 and her fax number is (212) 442-0292. She ask that while they are organizing that any civic organization with concerns contact her staff person, Ms. Starr Butler, to inform her of the concern as she cannot work on resolving a problem that she is not aware of.

First Vice Chairperson Younger invited Councilmember Mealy to join her at the Town Hall Meeting scheduled for March 20th.

There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Ms. Eula Key, seconded by Ms. Sarah Hall and carried to adjourn the meeting.