

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 – March 28, 2006

Attendance

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

Deborah Mack
James Mack
Rev. Thelma Martin (E)
Yolanda Matthews
Sadie McNamara (E)
Joseph Norton
Bishop Landon Penn
Elder Devon Ponds
Mattie Pusey (A)
Isaiah Simmons (E)
Ernestine Turner
Rev. Miran Ukaegbu (E)
Alice Vines (E)
Annie Walkes
Herman Winston
Hazel Younger
Viola D. Greene-Walker, DM
E. Jane Coleman, ADM
Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
Senator Carl Andrews
Zo Mpofo for Congressman Major Owens
C. Sanders-James for Mayor Michael Bloomberg
Edna Johnson for Sen. Velmanette Montgomery
J. Tillmon for Assemblywoman Dianne Gordon
Starr Butler for Councilmember Darlene Mealy

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

First Vice Chairperson Hazel Younger called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.. An invocation was said by Dr. Cade Jones, III.

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 Mr. Jim Holden of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

Mr. Holden stated that the Parks Department is seeking young men and women to serve as lifeguards at the City's nine miles of beaches and fifty-two outdoor pools. They want to hire about four hundred lifeguards for the summer season. It is a good summer job for a high school or college student, offering them an opportunity to learn valuable skills.

Free qualifying exams are given Monday through Friday from 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at their facility on West 59th Street in Manhattan. Some of the qualifications are: be 16 years old or older, be able to swim 50 yards in 35 seconds, at least 20/30 vision in one eye and 20/40 in the other without corrective lens. The position pays \$10.71 per hour in the first year and rises to about \$13.86 per hour in the third year. The lifeguards have a 48 hour work week (8 hours a day – 6 days a week). Time earned as a City lifeguard is pensionable should they be re-employed by the City.

Flyers and fact sheets are available on tonight's distribution table. Further information may be obtained by calling 3-1-1.

First Vice Chairperson Younger asked if applications are available?

Mr. Holden stated that none are available here tonight. Interested persons may call 3-1-1 to

obtain applications.

Someone asked if he had any information about the Parks Department's recent decision to impose fees for the use of the Brownsville Recreation Center (BRC)?

Mr. Holden stated that he does not have much information regarding the decision. He knows that a fee of \$75.00 per year for adults, \$10.00 for seniors will be imposed beginning July 2006. Children under 17 years old will still be admitted free. Those who have free memberships that have not expired can continue to use them until they expire. While the free memberships are only good at the BRC, paid membership are accepted at any of the City's recreation centers.

First Vice Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Bill Smith of the Bank New York.

Mr. Smith stated that he is here tonight to inform the audience about the federal government's reverse mortgage program, that the Bank of New York, along with other banks, sponsor.

The program has been in effect for about twenty years but has recently become more popular as our senior population increases and their financial needs increase. The program is designed to enable seniors 62 and older to utilize some of the equity that they have in their property. They may borrow from the equity of their one- to four-family home or condominium. The money is non-taxable and may be used however they see fit.

The program is not suitable for everyone but everyone should know about it in order to decide on their options. In light of the amount of foreclosures there are today, especially amongst the senior population in Brooklyn, it is good to know about these tools. One of the important aspects of reverse mortgages is that the borrower is not obligated to make payments as long as they continue to live in their primary residence. This would relieve them of the worries of having to find monies to pay the mortgage as well as pay high utility bills.

The amount of money that can be borrowed is based upon a few different factors such as the age of the borrower (the older the borrower the more that they can borrow), an adjusted home value that is set by the government, interest rates, and the equity in the home. The borrower may choose to have a line of credit to which they have access to over time, monthly payments, or a lump sum payment.

As previously stated, reverse mortgages are not for everyone. The loan can cause one to lose the equity in their home and the cost of the loan is relatively high. The reason for the high cost is that a third of the cost is given to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) which insures the payments in the event of the failure of the lending institution. Pamphlets are available on the distribution table.

Someone asked if a reverse mortgage can be taken if there is an existing mortgage on the property?

Mr. Smith stated that a reverse mortgage can be obtained if there is an existing mortgage, however, the existing mortgage as well as any other encumbrances must be paid off.

Someone asked what is the maximum loan amount?

Mr. Smith stated that each situation is different but the maximum possible as set by governmental guidelines is \$362,790.

First Vice Chairperson Younger thanked Mr. Smith for his presentation and recognized Ms. Lynn Tollett of HSBC Bank.

Ms. Tollett announced that HSBC and Brooklyn Neighborhood Improvement Association (BNIA) are co-sponsoring a free First Time Homebuyers' Seminar on Tuesday, April 4, 2006 at the Bright Light Baptist Church, located at 1676 Park Place between Ralph and Howard Avenues. There will be a guest speaker from the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) at the event who will talk about HPD's first time homebuyer programs and grants of up to 6 percent of the purchase price of a home. A HSBC grant of \$5,000 will also be discussed as well as a review of the home buying process.

First Vice Chairperson Younger thanked Ms. Tollett for her presentation and acknowledged the presence of the following individuals: Ms. Cynthia Woronowicz, Ms. Mary Graham and Ms. Linda Cohen of the Brooklyn Public Libraries, and Ms. Evelyn Turner of HELP New Horizons.

District Manager Viola Greene-Walker, in behalf of Ms. Sadie McNamara, Chairperson of the Health and Human Resources Committee, reported that the Committee met on Wednesday, March 16, 2006 with representatives from the Brownsville Multi-Service (BMS) Family Health Center.

As a non-profit Article 28 facility, BMS provides basic medical services such as OB/GYN, pediatrics, and adult medicine. They also provide acupuncture, dermatology, optometry, podiatry, physical therapy, and surgical consultation.

In addition, BMS has developed some specialized programs in response to the needs of the community.

- 1) 340B Drug Program, a federal program that provides Medicare and self-pay BMS patients with pharmaceuticals at 20-90% below the normal and customary cost of prescription drugs.
- 2) Asthma Action Program, a patient-focused approach to pediatric asthma treatment
- 3) Asthma Peer Leader Initiative, State-funded program which trains adolescents to provide asthma awareness education to other youth
- 4) Baby Think it Over, a pregnancy prevention program designed for at-risk adolescents
- 5) Brownsville Community Awareness Program (BCAP), six (6) highly integrated HIV/AIDS services programs, including the award-winning Community Follow-up Program and Sisters Empowering Sisters Towards Achievement (SESTA).
- 6) Brownsville Community Farmers' Market, the only health center-operated farmers' market in Brooklyn. It operates during the months of June through November.
- 7) Computer Training Program, computer literacy training
- 8) Creating Linkages & Modifying Behavior (CLiMB) an innovative behavioral health program
- 9) Infant Mortality Initiative, State-funded program to address the high rate of preventable infant deaths
- 10) Perfect Fit, a nutritional assessment and physical fitness promotion program for local school children
- 11) Pre-Natal Care Assistance Program (PCAP), to address low birth weight babies and uninsured mothers
- 12) Project Lean, (Learning, Exercise and Nutrition), a physician-led, peer support for the obese
- 13) Reach Out & Read, a unique literacy program for our pediatric patient population
- 14) School-based Health Center (BMS @ Jefferson), a State-funded adolescent health center at the 1,500 student Thomas Jefferson High School
- 15) Tobacco Prevention & Cessation Program, that teaches youth not to smoke and how to quit
- 16) Wellness Education for Achieving Lifelong Total Health (WEALTH), outreach and health education

- 17) Women, Infants and Children Program(WIC), that serves almost 5,000 clients
- 18) World Academy for Total Community Health (WATCH), a new, small, health-themed high school established to prepare inner-city adolescents to make healthy choices, lead health lives, and advocate for the health of their families, their community, their nation, and their world.
- 19) TB respiratory care services including PPD screening, chest X-ray, INH prophylaxis, referrals for active TB cases, coupled with routine adult primary care and sub-specialty care (acupuncture, cardiology, dermatology, infectious disease care, mind/body care, nephrology, nutrition, optometry, podiatry and surgical consultation) to operate from the Third Floor of the Bristol Street Health Center.

The Committee will invite BMS to an upcoming Community Board meeting to further elaborate on their programs.

A motion was made by Ms. Hattie Hunt, seconded by Ms. Eula Key and carried to accept the report of the Health and Human Resources Committee.

Ms. Bettie Kollock-Wallace, Acting Chairperson of the Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committee, reported that the Committee met on March 14, 2006.

They are in receipt of the following correspondences which are being brought forth for informational purposes:

- 1) The following buildings will be renovated under the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development's (HPD) Neighborhood Entrepreneurs Program: 195 Thomas S. Boyland Street (also known as 1205-7 Herkimer Street), 790 MacDonough Street (also known as 32 Thomas S. Boyland Street) and 2160 Dean Street. Once completed, the rehabilitated buildings will provide approximately 17 rental units and one storefront commercial space.
- 2) The following buildings will also be renovated under HPD's Neighborhood Entrepreneurs Program: 18 Havens Place, 215 Mother Gaston Blvd, 213 Hull Street, 216 Hull Street, 1480 Herkimer Street, and 1484 Herkimer Street. Once completed, the rehabilitated buildings will provide approximately 33 rental units and one unit for a superintendent.
- 3) The following buildings will be renovated under HPD's Neighborhood Homes Program: 355 Amboy Street, 554 Chester Street, 1292 Herkimer Street, 1340 Herkimer Street, 1847 Eastern Parkway, 1849 Eastern Parkway, 1723 East New York Avenue (also known as 2428 Pacific Street) and 2318 Atlantic Avenue. Once completed, the buildings will be sold to families with annual household incomes up to 165% of the area median.

As more information becomes available on how one can rent the units and or purchase the homes, the Committee will inform the community.

A motion was made by Ms. Eula Key, seconded by Ms. Deborah Mack and carried to accept the report of the Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committee.

Mr. Henry Hill, Chairperson of the Legislative Committee, reported that the Committee met on March 22, 2006 and discussed two recent correspondences received from Gale Brewer, New York City Councilmember, District 6, Manhattan. She recently introduced two companion pieces of legislation to the Council relating to community board membership and apparently was desirous of receiving feedback.

Intro 765 would require all Community Board members to file financial disclosure forms with the Conflict of Interest Board. Resolution 1279 asked the State legislature to allow the NYC Conflicts of Interest Board to draft its own financial disclosure forms.

Ms. Brewer noted that although Community Board members are subject to conflict of interest laws, they are not required to submit disclosure forms as are elected officials.

The Committee discussed the proposed legislation at length and reached the following conclusion which is being recommended to the Board:

To adamantly oppose the proposed legislation because it imposes an inordinate burden on volunteer members who do not have the commensurate responsibilities of elected officials. It was felt that such legislation would do more harm than good by dissuading volunteers for membership on community boards.

Councilwoman Brewer submitted a second correspondence on January 4, 2006, in which she indicated that she had sponsored legislation that required the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunication (DOITT) to make available to the City Council and the community boards, periodic reports regarding data collected from the 311 Citizen Complaint Service Center. This bill was signed into law on May 19, 2005 as Local Law No. 47 which was to begin 90 days after enactment. However, it was noted that DOITT has failed to implement the law.

The Committee took into account that District Manager Greene-Walker feels that this data would be useful, but there appears to be no action that the Board can take at this time.

There was a discussion about the New York Campaign for Telephone Justice. This is a project under the Center for Constitutional Rights which has been ongoing for a considerable period. It is claimed that the New York State Department of Correctional Services (NYSDOCS) entered a contract with MCI to provide exclusive telephonic service between prison inmates and their families at inordinate rates. The objective of the movement is to obtain State legislation to abridge the existing agreement.

The Committee notes that the New York Campaign for Telephone Justice has failed to appear on two prior scheduled meetings. Therefore, it is recommended that action on this matter be deferred until the Committee can schedule a meeting with the New York Campaign for Telephone Justice.

The American Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) has introduced legislation before the NYC Council to revise, restructure, and make more efficient the current animal control program in New York City.

Accordingly, the agency is seeking all pertinent animal control issues for each area of the City and, thus, would like the Board's input.

Included with their request was a copy of a survey (ASPCA, Animal Control Issues).

The Committee decided that a copy of the survey would be distributed at tonight's meeting with a request that each person present complete and return the survey in order to provide ASPCA input from our community.

Mr. Hill stated that the surveys are available on tonight's distribution table and urged everyone in attendance to complete the short survey and submit them to the dais at the end of the meeting.

A motion was made by Ms. Hattie Hunt, seconded by Ms. Bettie Kollock-Wallace and carried to accept the report of the Legislative Committee and its recommendations.

Ms. Hazel Clark, member of the Senior Citizens Affairs Committee, reported that the Committee held a Town Hall meeting on the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan with Congressman Edolphus Towns on March 20, 2006 at the Patrick E. Gorman Community Center, located at 1381 Linden Boulevard. Also in attendance were representatives from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Social Security Administration.

As of January 1, 2006, persons receiving Medicare must enroll in a prescription drug plan. If you already have coverage for prescription drugs, you don't need to enroll in a plan. However, if you only have Medicare Parts A and B and a supplemental policy, you will need to sign-up for Part D. The open enrollment ends on May 15, 2006.

A lot of information was shared with the audience, however, the Committee also shared with Congressman Towns and the representatives from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Social Security Administration that Medicare Part D is a very complicated plan for senior citizens to comprehend. It is imperative that outreach and assistance be provided to our senior citizens.

It is suggested that questions about the Medicare Prescription Drug coverage be referred to the NYC Department for the Aging's Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program at (212) 333-5511 or 3-1-1. You may also call Medicare at (800) 633-4227 or visit their website at www.medicare.gov, or the Social Security Administration at (800) 772-1213 or visit their website at www.socialsecurity.gov.

A motion was made by Ms. Annie Walkes, seconded by Mr. David Alexander and carried to accept the report of the Senior Citizens Affairs Committee.

Mr. David Alexander, member of the Youth Services Planning Committee, reported that the Committee met on March 21, 2006 and discussed plans for a youth conference on June 24th.

A Conference Committee was formed and will be meeting on April 11th, 6:00 p.m. in the Community Board Office.

The next meeting of the Youth Service Planning Committee will be on April 18th at 6:00 p.m..

The Committee invites anyone who is interested in working on the Conference Committee to attend the meeting on April 11th.

A motion was made by Dr. Cade Jones, III, seconded by Ms. Josephine Blakeley and carried to accept the report of the Youth Services Planning Committee.

First Vice Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. James Tillmon of Assemblywoman Dianne Gordon's office.

Mr. Tillmon stated that the Assemblywoman extends her apologies for not being present. She and her colleagues are currently in Albany attempting to obtain an on time budget for the second year in a row.

He and the Assemblywoman spent a good portion of this past Saturday at the BRC and were saddened to see its state of disrepair. The Assemblywoman plans to make the Center a pet project and find funds to allocate towards the repair of the ball fields and basketball courts.

Ms. Zo Mpofu of Congressman Major Owens' office announced that the Congressman will host a Town Hall meeting at the Van Dyke Community Center (392 Blake Avenue between Powell Street and Mother Gaston Boulevard) on April 8th from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.. A topic of discussion will be Medicare Part D – there will be representatives from Medicare as well as advocacy groups present who will have computers with them. You will be able to receive assistance in determining which available choice best suit your needs based on the formularies.

Other topics will include the Earned Income Credit, the recent imposition of fees for public housing by New York City and alternatives means of meeting your rent and other housing cost.

For those that are unable to attend the April 8th meeting another meeting will be held on April 22nd addressing housing issues.

Ms. Starr Butler of Councilmember Darlene Mealy's office stated that the Councilmember is unable to be here tonight due to there being multiple Board meetings being held within her District. She attended the last meeting held here and has rotated to another this evening.

She announced their plans to open a District Office at 1757 Union Street between Utica and Rochester Avenues. Their telephone number is (718) 953-3097. They can also be contact through their Legislative Office, located at 250 Broadway in Manhattan, the telephone number there is (212) 788-7387.

The Councilmember was apprised of the decision to start imposing fees at the BRC by District Manager Greene-Walker and others. She will be meeting with the Parks Department to determine if anything can be done to alleviate the fees.

The Councilmember will hold a town hall meeting during the first week of May and also a grand opening ceremony for their district office. The community will be advised when the dates are set.

Police Officer Dawn Townsend, Community Affairs Officer for the 73rd Precinct, stated that the Commanding Officer, Captain Jeffrey Maddrey is not in attendance tonight due to his attending a special ceremony honoring Detective Patrick Caprice who was shot in the line of duty last year and is receiving one of the highest honors awarded by the Police Department.

The Captain has asked her to communicate that crime in the Precinct is down overall, however, robberies remain a problem. The robberies are not being perpetrated by adults but rather by our youth.

There has also been a rise in domestic violence amongst teens. On tonight's distribution table are pamphlets that should be distributed to teens to aid them in recognizing signs that they may be in an abusive relationship.

The Precinct has removed over sixty illegal guns from our streets. Their "Gun Stop" program is working. The program will pay up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest of a person with illegal firearms.

The Mayor's free graffiti removal program is still in effect. She urges property owners and business managers to take advantage of the program now, while it is free. Soon it will be up to owners and managers to remove the graffiti at a cost or receive summonses for the graffiti. The free removal of the graffiti will be done as long as the applications are received before the program ends.

At last month's meeting they reported that there was a level two sex offender who escaped and may have been in the area. Tonight she can report that thanks to the fliers that were distributed and the phone call of someone who saw them, the offender was apprehended in Brownsville. They will continue to post fliers whenever possible and ask that you look at them. If a suspect is spotted you are asked to call the number on the flier so that the police can remove the person. Do not try to apprehend them yourself.

Terrorism is still a problem and you are asked to be aware of your surroundings and report any suspicious activities to the Terrorist Hotline at 1-800-NYC-SAFE.

Police Officer Gwen Johnson, Youth Officer for the 73rd Precinct, announced that the Precinct is participating in the Fresh Air Fund this year. The Fresh Air Fund allows City children a chance to see what life is like outside the City, at no cost, for one to two weeks with a rural family or at one of five sleep-away camps run by the Fresh Air Fund. Applications are available at the Precinct.

The Precinct is seeking the help of the community to spot truants. Please call the Precinct's Youth Office at (718) 495-5426 or the Precinct's general number at (718) 495-5411 if you see a child frequenting your business or hanging out on the streets so that the truants can be picked up.

Mr. Roy Antoine asked what happens to the youths if they have no where to go?

Police Officer Johnson stated that the truants are either brought back to their schools or to the TRACKS (Truancy Reduction Alliance to Contact Kids) Center where their parents are called in to pick them up.

First Vice Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Tamara Edelstein of the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office.

Ms. Edelstein stated that as was previously mentioned, there is a rise in robberies by youth in the 73rd Precinct. The District Attorney's Office has been in close contact with the Commanding

Officer of the Precinct and has been working diligently to prosecute the perpetrators. They will continue to work with the Commanding Officer to reduce the robberies.

Mr. Antoine asked what measures are being taken to reduce the robberies?

Police Officer Townsend stated that the Commanding Officer has reached out to several units of the Police Department such as Borough Crime, Gang Units, Mounted, and Auto Crime. They are using a collaborative effort to attack crime in the Precinct.

First Vice Chairperson Younger recognized State Senator Carl Andrews.

Senator Andrews stated that he represents the 20th Senatorial District. He is here to highlight some of the things that he is doing to benefit our community. Two years ago he caused the Department of Civil Service (the State's largest employer) to open an Employment Outreach Office in Brooklyn. It is one of only three such offices in the State. Individuals going to these offices have access to information about State, City, Federal, and private sector jobs. The Brooklyn office is open five days a week, Monday to Friday, with late hours on Thursdays.

The City has a summer youth employment program that functions through a lottery system. Each year he collaborates with the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) and host a youth forum. Representatives of DYCD will be there to register the youth for the program, fliers are on tonight's distribution table with information about the event and what the youth should bring with them to be eligible.

March is Women's History Month and each March he hosts a free breast cancer screening program. The only prerequisite is that one registers before hand. Information on this program is also available on the distribution table.

First Vice Chairperson Younger thanked the Senator for the information and recognized Ms. Carolyn Sanders-James of the Mayor's Community Assistance Unit.

Ms. Sanders-James stated that she spent most of the day assisting approximately 61 families forced out of their homes by a fire at Eastern Parkway and Buffalo Avenue. She was there to ensure that they were provided with every means of assistance available to help them through this rough time in their lives.

The Mayor continues to lobby the legislature in Albany and Washington to get laws that will assist in stopping the influx of illegal guns entering our city from other states. They have also lobbied Albany for the City's fair share of funds to build new City schools and ask that we reach out to our elected officials and let them know that we need the funds.

First Vice Chairperson Younger thanked Ms. Sanders-James for her efforts and asked her to continue advocating for our community. She recognized Mr. Derrick Webster of the PAL Beacon Program.

Mr. Webster stated that the PAL Beacon Program is located at the former Thelma Hamilton J.H.S. now known as Kappa V.

Last summer they were able to obtain a grant through the Office of Congressman Major Owens to establish the Hewlett-Packard Community for Technology Lab. The lab is free and classes are held on Saturdays from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. which are mainly frequented by seniors who want to send e-mails to their children and grandchildren. They also have GED and adult basic education classes on Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

In light of the discussions earlier about the fees scheduled to be imposed at the BRC, he would like to inform the community that they are one of four pilot sites with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in Brooklyn that are operating a "Shape Up Fitness Center" in the school. They received permission from the local Instructional Superintendent to retrofit the old locker room into a fitness gym with state of the art equipment.

He is also interested in bringing a dance studio to the basement with dance bars and mirrors.

Information about their program can be found at their website: www.pal-brownsvillebeacon.org. He encourages the audience to visit the site. They may also be reached at (718) 485-2719. They are located at 985 Rockaway Avenue near the Jimerson and Gorman Houses.

First Vice Chairperson Younger announced the passing of the brother of Mr. Randy Hudson.

Ms. Sarah Hall, President of the 73rd Precinct Community Council, announced that the Council in conjunction with the Officers of the 73rd Precinct and Community Board #16 will sponsor their 2nd Community Service Award Dinner Dance on Thursday, June 1st from 7:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. at the Fleur de Lis, located at 870 Cypress Avenue, Brooklyn. Anyone who desires tickets can contact her, fliers are also available on the distribution table.

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.