

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 – October 24, 2006

Attendance

Rev. Reuben Akinfime (A)
David Alexander
Joyce Anderson
Josephine Blakeley
Patricia Boone
James A. Bowens
Esther Cobb (A)
Adrainer Kim Coleman
Gregory Coad (A)
Bonnie Crump (A)
Essie Duggan
Sam Gardner (A)
Shirley Gonsalves
Daniel Goodine (A)
Sarah Hall
Henry Hill
Kofi Hormeku
Michael Howard (E)
Hattie Hunt
Allene Ingram (E)
Daisy Jackson
Wordell Johnson
Dr. Cade Jones, III
Eula Key
Danny King (A)
Bettie Kollock-Wallace

Shawn Lewis
Deborah Mack *
James Mack (A)
Rev. Thelma Martin (E)
Yolanda Matthews
Sadie McNamara
Joseph Norton
Marie Pierre (E)
Elder Devon Ponds (E)
Mattie Pusey
Isaiah Simmons (E)
Ernestine Turner
Rev. Miran Ukaegbu
Marcus Victory
Alice Vines
Annie Walkes
Dr. Merrill White
Herman Winston
Hazel Younger (E)
Viola D. Greene-Walker, DM
E. Jane Coleman, ADM
Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
Assemblyman William F. Boyland, Jr.
State Committeewoman Lisa Kenner
Councilmember Darlene Mealy
Carolyn Sanders-James, Mayor's CAU

* Inadvertently marked absent instead of excused for the September 26th meeting.

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

PUBLIC HEARING

First Vice Chairperson Henry Hill called the Public Hearing to order at 7:10 p.m. and an invocation was said by Dr. Cade Jones, III.

The Public Hearing is held pursuant to the New York City Charter to gather community views and proposals with respect to the New York City's Fiscal Year 2008 Capital and Expense Budgets.

The capital budget allocates funds for physical improvements, land acquisition, and major equipment. The expense budget allocates funds for the ongoing operations of the City, which include personnel, minor equipment and materials, and anything budgeted on a year-to-year basis.

District Manager Viola D. Greene-Walker directed the audience's attention to the list of recommended Capital and Expense Budget requests and their suggested priority for Fiscal Year 2008 (listed on the first three pages of tonight's District Manager's report).

She stated that a number of requests made by the Board for Fiscal Year 2007 were not funded and suggested that the Board resubmit them along with several new items. She then read the list of her recommendations.

The floor was opened to anyone desiring to comment upon the recommendations.

First Vice Chairperson Hill recognized Ms. Cynthia Woronowicz of the Brooklyn Public Library.

Ms. Woronowicz stated that past repairs to the roof of the Brownsville Branch Library have not been effective. The roof continues to leak in certain areas causing them to have to close large portions of the branch. They are suggesting that a request be made to fund the proper repairs to

the roof, thus allowing them to serve the library's patrons better.

Mr. Kofi Hormeku suggested that a budget request be made for funding for elevator or escalator access to the IRT number "3" line at either the Junius Street or Rockaway Avenue stations.

State Committeewoman Lisa Kenner stated that the roadway of Powell Street between Dumont and Livonia Avenues is in dire need of repair.

District Manager Greene-Walker stated that Capital Budget request priority # 12 addresses the roadway repair. The problem stems from a sewer defect that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is aware of. The street segment just south of that location was recently repaired, for whatever reason the segment between Dumont and Livonia Avenues was overlooked. Hopefully, DEP will contract out the repair of this location soon.

Someone stated that there is a need for restrooms at Betsy Head Park.

District Manager Greene-Walker stated that Capital Budget priority #1 addresses the concern.

Someone asked if the budget item referred to the large section of the park (bounded by Dumont Avenue, Strauss Street, Livonia Ave, and Thomas S. Boyland Street) or the smaller section (bounded by Bristol Street, Blake Avenue, Thomas S. Boyland Street, and Dumont Avenue).

District Manager Greene-Walker stated that it refers to the larger section.

There being no further comments the Public Hearing was closed.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

A motion was made by Ms. Sarah Hall, seconded by Ms. Patricia Boone and carried to dispense with the reading of the minutes.

District Manager Viola Greene-Walker highlighted the following announcements from page 3 of her report:

The New York City Habitat for Humanity will be sponsoring two information sessions to inform interested persons about becoming a Habitat homeowner for their Atlantic Avenue / Eastern Parkway condominium project.

Session 1: Wednesday, October 25th at 7:00 p.m. at St. Peter's Lutheran Church - 105 Highland Place, between Arlington Avenue and Ridgewood Avenue; take the J train to the Norwood Avenue stop.

Session 2: Thursday, October 26th at 7:00 p.m. at Our Lady of Loretto R.C. - 124 Sackman Street, at the corner of Pacific and Sackman Streets.; take the L train to Atlantic Avenue. (A table of income requirements follows on page 4 of the report.)

First Vice-Chairperson Hill requested that the membership read both the minutes and the District Manager's Report at their leisure as they contain a vast amount of important information.

A motion was made by Ms. Mattie Pusey, seconded by Ms. Sarah Hall and carried to accept the District Manager's Report.

Ms. Sadie McNamara, Chairperson of the Health and Human Resources Committee, reported that on October 12, 2006, several Community Board #16 members and staff were taken on a tour of the following BMS Family Health Center offices by Mrs. Wilma Carthan and her colleagues:

- BMS Family Health Center, located at 592 Rockaway Avenue with services such as adult internal medicine, pediatrics, ob/gyn, dental, social service assessment and referral services.
- BMS at Genesis, located at 360 Snediker Avenue
- BMS Life and Wellness Center, located at 408 Rockaway Avenue

- Brownsville Community Residential Program, located at 657 East 98th Street
- WATCH High School, located at 400 Pennsylvania Avenue. WATCH (World Advocates for Total Community Health) High School is a new small high school established under the New Century High Schools Initiative. WATCH High School is a partnership between the Brownsville Multi Service Family Health Center and the New York City Department of Education.

BMS Family Health Center is providing an array of much needed health, educational, and social services to the community. They are also one of the largest employers of local community residents.

Another tour of BMS's facilities will be arranged. If you are interested in taking the tour, please call District Manager Viola Greene-Walker at (718) 385-0323.

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will be offering free flu shots for adults at the Bedford Health Center, located at 485 Throop Avenue at Putnam Avenue, Wednesdays, October 25th, November 8th, November 22nd, and December 6th from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.. For additional information, call (646) 253-5700.

A motion was made by Dr. Cade Jones, III, seconded by Mr. Kofi Hormeku and carried to accept the report of the Health and Human Resources Committee.

Ms. Annie Walkes, member of the Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committee, reported that the Committee met on October 10, 2006 with representatives who appeared on behalf of Lots 35-78 on Block 1475 (located on the block bounded by Howard Avenue, Pitkin Avenue and Eastern Parkway) who are proposing to rezone the block from C8-2 to R-6 with a C2-4 overlay. No formal application has been submitted to City Planning; therefore, no action is required by the Community Board at this time.

Green Guerillas has informed the Committee that the Department of Housing Preservation and Development is conveying the triangular lot bounded by Fulton Street, Somers Street and Rockaway Avenue to them to develop a community garden. They are looking for volunteers to work on the project. If you're interested, please call Mrs. Greene-Walker at (718) 385-0323.

The Committee also met with representatives from New York Acorn Housing Company, Inc. and Dunn Development Corporation regarding their proposal to construct 64 units of affordable apartments on vacant land at 730 Rockaway Avenue.

The Committee has asked them to make a short presentation of their proposal at this time.

Ms. Ismelene Speliotis, Executive Director of New York Acorn Housing Company, Inc., stated that she will be doing a joint presentation with Mr. Martin Dunn, President of Dunn Development Corp. and is the developer for the project.

Ms. Speliotis stated that the project is a new construction building to be located on Rockaway Avenue between Livonia and Riverdale Avenues. They were awarded the site via a Request for Proposals through the Department of Housing Preservation and Development. They will construct a total of 64 apartments (she displayed a rendering of the building). There will be twelve 1-bedroom, twenty-three 2-bedrooms, twenty-nine 3-bedrooms, and nineteen onsite parking spaces.

Apartments will be available for all income levels which will make them affordable to households earning less than 80% of the area median income. There will be a small number of apartments set aside for the formerly homeless. There will be a meeting room and office spaces in the building to provide support services for the residents.

Mr. Dunn stated that when they design their buildings, they try to ensure that the structures are in keeping with the neighborhoods that they are built. This neighborhood has many beautiful buildings and as part of their design process they photographed many of them. They garnered architectural details from the photographs and incorporated many of them into the design of the

building. They designed the building with various setbacks so that it does not appear to be a single large slab as you walk down Rockaway Avenue. Entry to the parking area will be in the rear on Chester Street, which is less congested. There will also be a seating area and a planting area in the rear of the building.

The building will be handicapped accessible with two elevators and all doorways able to accommodate wheelchairs. All the public areas will be fully accessible and the private areas will be adaptable with capability of having cabinets lowered. They have also incorporated a lot of "green" building – high performance energy efficient features such as motion sensing lights in places like utility rooms, energy saving windows and heating and cooling systems.

At the Committee meeting, a concern was raised about security. They do not have the resources to provide a security staff for a building of this size. They will have a motorized security gate at the entrance to the parking area, security cameras on the perimeter of the building and in the public areas of the interior, and double entry vestibules.

Ms. Mattie Pusey asked who will monitor the cameras?

Mr. Dunn stated that the cameras will not be continuously monitored. They will review the images from the camera on a daily basis. The system is designed to act as a deterrent to vandalism.

Someone asked if there would be security lighting?

Mr. Dunn stated that there will be lighting on the façade of the building and on poles in the parking and outdoor seating areas.

Ms. Pusey stated that the building is a rather large one. Will it be setback from the sidewalk?

Mr. Dunn stated that the building will be setback at least eight feet from the curb with portions setback even further. Fencing and plantings will serve as a further screen for the ground floor.

Ms. Pusey asked whether the intercoms will be inside or outside the vestibules?

Ms. Speliotis stated that they will be on the outside. They have buildings setup both ways and think that having the intercom on the outside is most suitable for this location.

Ms. Joyce Anderson stated that in the Ocean Hill area she has seen water enter new buildings after a hard rain. Has any consideration been given to raising the entry to the building to prevent water entering the proposed building on Rockaway Avenue.

Mr. Dunn stated that the Americans with Disabilities Act prevent them from raising the entries and their boring samples indicate that the water table is well below the level of the basement floor.

Mr. Anthony Rouff, a neighborhood resident, stated that much progress has been made in Brownsville in the past few years with the development of one to three family homes and businesses. He expressed a concern that this type of structure will be a setback on the betterment of the community.

Ms. Speliotis announced that ACORN is currently accepting applications for two- and three- family homes being developed in the Brownsville-Ocean Hill area. Fliers are available on tonight's distribution table.

A motion was made by Ms. Mattie Pusey, seconded by Ms. Hattie Hunt and carried to accept the report of the Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committee.

First Vice Chairperson Hill recognized Assemblyman William F. Boyland, Jr.

Assemblyman Boyland stated that they have been working with the Transit Authority to effect repairs to the IRT number "3" and the Canarsie "L" lines. Much of that work is currently underway.

Ms. Blanche Peltonbusch recounted incidents wherein she was essentially trapped on the B25,

B60, and B12 buses due to mechanical failure of the wheelchair lifts.

Assemblyman Boyland stated that he has been speaking to the Transit Authority about updating the equipment and facilities serving the area.

Ms. Deborah Mack asked if the talks included the B14 line?

Assemblyman Boyland stated that the B14 was included in their conversations along with discussion about express bus service to the community.

A number of private companies have expressed a desire to giveback to the community by funding projects such as science labs and computers for local schools. He would like to get some feedback on this suggestion.

The new owners of the old Pitkin Avenue Theatre have indicated that they intend to bring a film theatre to the building. He has requested that they present their plans to the community before they move forward, even if they do not need to.

First Vice Chairperson Hill recognized Ms. Lisa Kenner, State Committeewoman for Assembly District #55.

Ms. Kenner stated that the Van Dyke Community Center is offering free General Equivalency Diploma (GED) preparation classes for persons twenty-one years old or older. Generally, they do not accept persons younger than twenty-one, however, if a group has fifteen persons twenty-one or older, they will allow up to ten people who are eighteen years old.

First Vice Chairperson Hill recognized Councilmember Darlene Mealy.

Councilmember Mealy stated that whenever she is here, there is a young lady named Monique Johnson who always helps with distribution of fliers and pamphlets. She wanted to encourage Ms. Johnson to continue her volunteerism and let her peers know that volunteering is worthwhile, so she went to her school and presented her with a City Council Citation. At the request of Ms. Johnson, she repeated the presentation of the Citation.

She announced that there will be a community forum held with the Department of Housing Preservation and Development to discuss ways in which the community may participate in their programs.

October is Fire Safety Month and she has placed a series of fire safety tips on tonight's distribution table. She encouraged the audience to be mindful of children's safety during this Halloween holiday by watching what they eat and wear.

Anyone seeking to meet with her should call her office at (718) 953-3097.

First Vice Chairperson Hill recognized Ms. Dena Douglass who stated that thanks in part to the support of this community, she won the September Primary Election for a Judgeship for Kings County Civil Court.

She is very concerned about the youth in our community and wants them to have access to our courts. It is important that we have a voice in our justice system. She welcomes the community, whether on a formal or informal basis, to meet with her to discuss becoming a lawyer or judge. She can be reached at (718) 554-0319.

First Vice Chairperson Hill recognized Ms. Carolyn Sanders-James, Brooklyn Borough Director of the Mayor's Community Assistance Unit, who stated that the Mayor continues to fight against the influx of illegal guns entering our city. The guns end up in the wrong hands causing the death of innocent people.

The graffiti removal units will continue to operate as long as the weather permits.

First Vice Chairperson Hill recognized Ms. Christine Larkin of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH).

Ms. Larkin stated that, as mentioned by Ms. McNamara earlier, this is flu season and DOHMH recommends persons over the age of fifty receive a flu shot. Persons under fifty years of age should ask their doctors if they should get a flu shot. For those persons without a doctor, there are fliers on the distribution table announcing locations where free shots may be obtained during the months of November and December.

First Vice Chairperson Hill recognized Mr. William Boone of the Educator for Children Youth and Families Beacon Program.

Mr. Boone stated that they are located at 210 Chester Street between Sutter and Blake Avenues. They operate weekdays from 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m..

He presented Police Officers Gwendolyn Johnson and Dawn Townsend with awards for their outstanding service to the youth of the community.

First Vice Chairperson Hill recognized Mr. Jerry Horton who stated that he is currently producing a documentary film about Brownsville and is seeking assistance from the community. Anyone who can furnish photographs from the fifties to the eighties is asked to provide him with their contact information so that he can reach out to them.

First Vice Chairperson Hill recognized Mr. Derrick Webster of the Brownsville-Pal Beacon Program.

Mr. Webster stated that his program is located at 985 Rockaway Avenue (at Hegeman Avenue). The program is committed to young people, providing them with an environment where they can learn and strive. They also work with parents and other adults in the community. On Saturdays, they offer GED preparation classes free of charge. They have some funding from Microsoft ® that enables them to offer legal secretary training classes. They also offer computer training classes and with support of DOHMH, they have a "Shape Up Fitness Center" to help fight obesity among our youth.

They will host an open house on Thursday, October 26th, 6:00 p.m. highlighting the Computerized Neighborhood Electronic Survey program funded by the Fund for New York City and its Center on Municipal Government Performance.

First Vice Chairperson Hill offered a note of appreciation to those Board members who attended the Borough Budget Consultation earlier this month. He also acknowledged the presence of the following individuals: Ms. Yvonne Maxwell, Manager of the J.P. Morgan-Chase Bank at Pitkin and Rockaway Avenues, Captain Lehr and Police Officer Owens-Johnson of the Transit Police Bureau – District 33, and Denese Forde of Kings County Hospital.

First Vice Chairperson Hill recognized Captain Jeffrey Maddrey, Commanding Officer for the 73rd Precinct.

Captain Maddrey reported that for the past twenty-eight days, crime is up by three offenses as compared to the same period last year. The largest increase has been in grand theft auto. They've made some changes to address the crimes and ask that the community be mindful of their surroundings.

Two homicides took place recently, one occurred near 42 Amboy Street wherein a male believed to be an innocent bystander was shot dead. They have not been able to obtain any leads in their investigation and request the assistance of the community in obtaining information to help them close this case. The other homicide took place in front of 433 Marion Street and a suspect was quickly apprehended by a plain clothes officer who was nearby.

There have been complaints of automobile break-ins along Thomas S. Boyland Street between Pitkin and Sutter Avenues. This past Saturday, someone approached officers on patrol and indicated that someone was trespassing behind the church at 521 Thomas S. Boyland Street. Upon investigation, the officers found a male with a book bag full of car radios. They were able to locate the owner of one of the radios and thus able to prosecute for the theft.

He met with Mr. Larry Fowler, Director of the Pitkin Avenue BID, and informed him that the police will have a large presence on Pitkin Avenue for Halloween. He encourages shopkeepers to remain open for business.

First Vice Chair Hill recognized Captain Kenneth Lehr, Commanding Officer of District 33 of the Transit Bureau.

Captain Lehr stated that District 33 has eight train stations within the confines of Community District #16 and their office is located within the Broadway Junction train station. Overall in District 33, crime is down 11% year-to-date. They have experienced some increases for the stations within the Community District that they are working to improve upon. Roughly fifty percent of the crimes are electronics motivated. In many of the crimes, the thieves are after iPods, cell phones, and PSPs. They have a program where they will etch an identifier on the device thereby making it easier to identify it if it is stolen. The program is free and will only take a few minutes.

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.