

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 April 24, 2007

Attendance

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

James Mack
Rev. Thelma Martin (E)
Yolanda Matthews
Sadie McNamara
Rev. Joseph Norton (A)
Marie Pierre
Elder Devon Ponds
Mattie Pusey
Isaiah Simmons (E)
Ernestine Turner
Rev. Miran Ukaegbu
Marcus Victory
Alice Vines
Annie Walkes
Dr. Merrill White
Herman Winston
Hazel Younger
Viola D. Greene-Walker, DM
E. Jane Coleman-Assistant ADM
Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
Hon. Darlene Mealy
Hon. Lisa Kenner
Kevin McCall for Hon. Charles Barron
Rev. Joseph Jones for Hon. Charles Hynes
Essie Duggan for Hon. Velmanette Montgomery
Simone Lucas for Hon William F. Boyland, Jr.
William Whitaker for Hon. Marty Markowitz

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

A motion was made by Ms. Hattie Hunt, seconded by Ms. Josephine Blakeley and carried to dispense with the reading of the District Manager s report.

A motion was made by Ms. Sarah Hall, seconded by Ms. Marie Pierre and carried to dispense with the reading of last month s minutes.

Chairperson Hazel Younger recognized Ms. Sandra Lloyd.

Ms. Lloyd stated that she is from the Successful Start Home Visitation Program which is a free and voluntary program overseen by the Office of Children and Family Services. They provide for a family s health and development. They also provide information on self-sufficiency, returning to school, and seeking gainful employment.

One of the things that they do to provide parents with information on their child s health and development is to provide home visits by a family support worker. When a family first enters the program they are met by an outreach worker who assesses their needs and hears their concerns. Their primary goal is to teach good parenting skills and provide realistic expectations to the parents concerning their child s health and development.

In order to be eligible for the program, the family must reside in zip codes 11212, 11216, or 11233 and have a child under three months old. Once enrolled in the program, they may continue to participate until the child is five years old if they live in zip code 11216, or two years old if they live in 11212 or 11233. They also offer bi-weekly nutrition skills classes and male involvement classes at their main office, located in Restoration Plaza.

District Manager Viola Greene-Walker asked why is there a difference in age eligibility between families living in zip code 11216 and families living in 11212 and 11233?

Ms. Lloyd stated that they are funded by two different sources. They are part of Healthy Start New York which is funded by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and because of the way it is setup, they are limited to working with the families only until the child reaches two years of age.

Someone asked if there is an age limit for the parents?

Ms. Lloyd stated that there is no age limit for the parents and it does not matter if they are first-time parents or not.

Chairperson Younger thanked Ms. Lloyd for her presentation.

Ms. Sadie McNamara, reported that the Health and Human Resources Committee met on Wednesday, April 18, 2007 with the Administrators and some of the senior residents of Mary's 3/4 House, located at 81, 83, and 85 Blake Avenue between Saratoga Avenue and Legion Street. They have been in operation for approximately 4 months and their primary goal is to provide the resources and assistance that will enable these formerly homeless individuals to reenter the workforce and reunite with their families.

They provide housing, food, clothing and structure to their clients. They are referred to other community-based organizations for services such as counseling, medical needs, etc.. Criminal background checks are made on all of their residents and child molesters and sex offenders are not accepted.

They plan to conduct a clothing drive and will need the community's support.

At last month's meeting, the Committee reported that the Bushwick HomeBase Program will be expanding to service residents in Community District #16. She introduced Mr. Joseph Funt, Program Director of the Bushwick HomeBase Program.

Mr. Funt introduced two of HomeBase's employees, Nathalie Saint Jean who is a Program Supervisor and Latia Hilliard who is a Case Manager.

Bushwick HomeBase is part of a larger initiative - the HomeBase Program which is funded by the Department of Homeless Services (DHS). The concept of the program is to prevent community residents of certain communities from having to enter the DHS shelter system. The program started in October 2004 as a pilot program in six different community districts, including Bushwick. Beginning July 2007, the program will be expanded to include the entire city and DHS has requested that Bushwick HomeBase expand their program to cover the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community.

They try to target families who are at a very high risk of entering the DHS shelter system through an intensive outreach program. Their two primary types of clients are persons/families who are in eminent peril of being evicted and persons/families who are "doubled up" (multiple households sharing a housing unit), where there tends to be a high rate of discord and one or more of the households are in danger of being evicted.

When their clients first come to them, they go through a comprehensive intake and assessment system. The case managers then design a service plan for them, focusing on the immediate reason for the client's pending eviction and the underlying reasons that brought them to that point.

They may address the immediate concerns by providing access to appropriate legal services or accessing different types of benefits such as "one shot deals" for which the client may be eligible. In the case of "double ups" they may mediate between the family members or perhaps assist the family in relocating to a different apartment. In addressing the underlying reasons that the families have reached the point where eviction becomes eminent, they find that educational resources such as GED, ESL, and job training programs are very effective in reducing the rate of recidivism.

They also offer budgeting, tenants rights classes, as well as make referrals for parental skill courses, mental health care, and domestic violence programs, as they all contribute to homelessness.

The Bushwick Program has serviced approximately six hundred families within the past few years. They have a fairly large staff of about 25 persons with a success rate of about 95%. He is very

proud of the work that they have done in Bushwick and is excited to be expanding into the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community. They are in the process of securing office space in the community and will advise the Board of their contact information as it becomes known to them. Someone asked if the services that they will provide in Brownsville be the same as what is offered in Bushwick?

Mr. Funt stated that they will be exactly the same. He believes that their success is incumbent upon having locally available job training and educational programs.

Ms. Yvette Beatty asked what if the training programs are not available in Brownsville?

Mr. Funt stated that it is essential that the training programs be in place in order that the HomeBase program be successful. If the training is not already in place, they will strive to bring it in. Past experience with the Bushwick program showed a poor success rate when they had to refer clients to the large Human Resources Administration funded job training programs that are located downtown. Their success rate greatly improved once they were able to establish their local job training program.

Ms. Beatty asked if the job training will be available to persons not participating in their housing assistance component?

Mr. Funt stated that although they will refer clients from one component to the other, they do not require job training participants to take part in the housing component.

Someone asked if they assisted persons already in the shelter system?

Mr. Funt stated that they only work with the preventive aspect. Once a person has been found eligible for DHS shelter, HomeBase can no longer assist them. An exception would be a family within the first ten days of entering a shelter may be assisted until they are found eligible for shelter.

Someone asked if job placement is a part of the job training program?

Mr. Funt stated that it is. They base their job training program along the S.T.R.I.V.E. (Support and Training Results In Valuable Employees) model wherein they teach both the soft skills - job theory, interviewing, etc., and hard skills such as Certified Nurses Aide training, Building Maintenance training, etc., along with place services and follow-up. They have a good success rate in placing individuals in jobs paying an average of \$28,000 a year to start.

Chairperson Younger thanked Mr. Funt for his presentation.

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, Chairperson of the Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committee, reported that the Committee met on April 10, 2007 with representatives from Common Ground which has acquired a privately-owned parking lot at Hegeman Avenue and Amboy Street. They are proposing to construct an 11-story building to create 124 affordable residential units for families.

The plan is in a preliminary stage. As more information becomes available, the Committee will inform the Board.

Common Ground's HomeLink Program, which is located at 444 Thomas S. Boyland Street, offers free legal services and financial counseling to persons who are at-risk of becoming homeless. If you know of anyone who is in need of this service, please have them call Common Ground at (718) 282-2308.

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

Ms. Annie Walkes, Chairperson of the Senior Citizens Affairs Committee, reported that the Committee met on Wednesday, April 18, 2007.

Because their scheduled guest speaker was unable to attend the meeting due to a last minute

emergency, the Committee proceeded to discuss several topics:

- (1) The Seniors Lobby Day, to be held on May 8, 2007 in Albany, New York. A recommendation was made to contact directors of different senior centers to see if there were buses available to anyone who wanted to go. Mr. Harvey Stone of Wayside could possibly be a good source to check with.
- (2) Hazel Clark announced that there is a pending hearing with regard to spousal coverage for City employees. Retired members of DC 37 will be going to the Council members regarding this matter.
- (3) A package was distributed to each member of the committee, covering the elected officials who represent Community Board 16. It included all of the offices as well as telephone numbers. This enabled the committee to know what committees our elected officials serve on and which one to call upon regarding any specific problem or general information.
- (4) A flyer from Assemblyman Boyland's Office was also distributed. It addressed the Assemblyman's appointment as Chairperson of the Subcommittee on Outreach and Oversight of Senior Citizen Programs. In continuation with his longstanding mission to increase the quality of life for all senior citizens, as well as working very closely with the Committee on Aging, of which Assemblyman Boyland is a member. It is the recommendation of the committee to all Community Board members and everyone in attendance to reach out to Assemblyman Boyland if you have any questions or concerns. It is also the intent of the Senior Citizens Affairs Committee to reach out to him in order to bring more information back to the board. This information was submitted by Mr. Hill.
- (5) It was also recommended that we reach out to representatives regarding Medicare Part D to get an update regarding any changes.
- (6) The meeting concluded with a general discussion regarding sickle cell and other ailments that affect our lives.

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

Ms. Deborah Mack, Chairperson of the Transportation and Franchises Committee, reported that the Committee met on Thursday, April 12th and completed a letter to be sent to the New York City Department of Transportation and the New York City Transit Authority regarding items on the Community Board's Capital Budget Requests for Fiscal Year 2008. The letter addressed items that were not recommended for funding and had no explanation.

Another item listed was the upgrading of streetlights along Pitkin Avenue. Part of the explanation given was that DOT believes they cannot handle this project without the assistance of another agency/group, namely the Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District (BID). The Committee will follow-up with the BID to find out why they cannot help to fund this project since they will benefit from this as much as residents and customers in the area.

The Committee also discussed problems such as lateness and bunching of buses and trains. They urge all residents to report problems with buses and trains by calling the Transit Authority at (718) 330-1234.

In addition, they discussed the problems of large trucks traveling through residential blocks. Mrs. Greene-Walker will follow-up to get new signs posted to ensure that truckers see the restricted streets before entering them.

Please be reminded that issues regarding transportation can be brought to the attention of the Community Board office by calling (718) 385-0323.

A motion was made by Ms. Annie Walkes, seconded by Ms. Eula Key and carried to accept the report of the Transportation and Franchises Committee.

Dr. Merrill White, Chairperson of the Women's Committee, reported that a meeting of the Women's

Committee of Community Board 16 was held on April 23, 2007. The Committee discussed plans for the Health Forum scheduled for May 24, 2007 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m..

Members discussed experts in the field who have been contacted. There are a few confirmations so far. They are seeking presenters who can address cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, infant health and care, mental health, health insurance, high blood pressure, healthy eating, and podiatry.

The forum will be held in the lobby of 444 Thomas S. Boyland Street. Refreshments will be served. The Committee anticipates that handouts will be made available for attendees.

This Health Forum allows the community to obtain information about critical health issues and network with health professionals.

The Committee and Community Board 16 is in the process of preparing fliers to announce this event, participants forms for confirmation of participation, and letters of request to agencies for those who will be present.

Remember that this forum is for both men and women. They expect full support from the men.

Before adjourning, each member volunteered for a specific duty and discussed a banner and programs with the forum agenda.

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for May 14 at 6:00 p.m. in the office of Community Board 16. Please join them.

If you have questions or suggestions, please call Ms. Viola Greene-Walker at the Community Board office at (718) 385-0323.

A motion was made by Ms. Adrainer Coleman, seconded by Ms. Hattie Hunt and carried to accept the report of the Women s Committee.

Ms. Hattie Hunt, Chairperson of the Youth Services Planning Committee, reported that the Committee met on April 17, 2007 and continued discussions for a youth conference which is scheduled for June 16th from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at P.S./I.S 323, located at 210 Chester Street. Topics to be discussed will include: 1) HIV/AIDS, 2) Gangs, 3) Racial Profiling, 4) Education, 5) How to Gain Employment, 6) Peer Pressure, 7) Financial Security, and 8) Surviving College Life.

The next planning session will be held on Wednesday, April 25th, at 5:30 p.m..

A motion was made by Ms. Ernestine Turner, seconded by Ms. Bettie Kollock-Wallace and carried to accept the report of the Youth Services Planning Committee.

Chairperson Younger stated that Mr. Kofi Hormeku, Chairperson of the Park and Recreation Committee, is not present tonight but his report on the condition of our parks can be found in each member s folder. Additional copies are available on tonight s distribution table.

She commended the committees for their hard work in bringing needed information to the community and encouraged the audience to act upon the information.

Chairperson Younger stated that in accordance with the By-laws of Community Board #16, at this month s meeting, she is to appoint members to a Nominating Committee which will meet and come back to the May 22, 2007 Board meeting with suggested names of members to serve as Executive Officers of the Board for 2007-2008.

She has asked the following persons to serve on the Nominating Committee: Josephine Blakeley, Adrainer Coleman, Eula Key, Michael Howard, and Annie Walkes.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Kevin McCall of Councilmember Charles Barron s office.

Mr. McCall stated that he is the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Councilmember Barron. He apologized for there not being a presence from the Councilmember s office at Community Board #16 s meeting of late due to changing of personnel at the Councilmember s office.

Councilmember Barron has been able to allocate \$2,000,000 in funding for the reconstruction of the ball field at the Brownsville Recreation Center. Groundbreaking will be sometime in June and he will inform the Board of the exact date as it becomes known.

Councilmember Barron has been named Honorary Ringmaster for the Universoul Circus for the May 2nd and 3rd performances. Tickets may be purchased online or at the box office, located at Parkside and Ocean Avenues.

The City Council is currently working on the budget and Councilmember Barron would like to hear from organizations with a 501-c that are seeking funding. The request must be made prior to May 31, 2007. A request for funding does not guarantee that funding will be provided, however, organizations needing funding should contact their office to apply. There are many funding sources available that other communities are taking advantage of and our community should as well. He can be contacted at (718) 649-9495.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. William Whitaker of Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz's office.

Mr. Whitaker stated that the appointment process for Community Board membership is nearly complete and appointees will be notified by mail. He can be reached at (718) 802-3876.

Someone asked if the Borough President will sponsor the prostate cancer testing program this year?

Mr. Whitaker stated that he will sponsor the program again.

Ms. Blanche Peltonbusch asked if the Borough President's office would be able to assist a neighbor in placing their child in a specific school.

Mr. Whitaker stated that if they do not provide a specific service they will make a referral to the proper agency if it is available.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Simone Lucas of Assemblyman William F. Boyland, Jr.'s Office.

Ms. Lucas stated that the Assemblyman's office has heard many concerns regarding the status of the HOPE VI Prospect Plaza redevelopment. They understand that Mr. Tino Hernandez, who was appointed Chairman of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) in 2005, has stated that he has a seven-point plan to get things underway but no progress can be seen. They are working hard with NYCHA to find out what is going on with the project as its completion will mean that sorely needed affordable housing is returned to the community as well as jobs created for the tenants through Section 3.

Assemblyman Boyland is working with Councilmember Darlene Mealy in order to help keep the Howard Houses PAL program running. He has received a copy of a correspondence from Councilmember Mealy to the Chairperson of PAL, Mr. Todd Stewart, requesting an explanation of why they intend to close the facility. The Assemblyman intends to follow-up with further correspondence to help keep the site open for the community.

Assemblyman Boyland will sponsor an education forum at Medgar Evers College to address issues such as the phasing out of the Regents curriculum and what it will mean for the education of our youth.

Assemblyman Boyland will also host the annual Intergenerational Festival on June 22nd at Saratoga Square Park, and the Brownsville Music and Cultural Festival in August at Betsy Head Park.

The field trip for seniors to see the Color Purple has been moved to July 25th in order to accommodate a number of seniors who are wheelchair bound. They will be in contact with the managers of the senior centers in order to coordinate the trip.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Essie Duggan, representing State Senator Velmanette

Montgomery.

Ms. Duggan stated that Senator Montgomery is sponsoring a fact finding forum for homeowners and homebuyers on Thursday, April 26, 2007, 6:00 p.m. at the Wayside Manor, located on Broadway between Rockaway Avenue and Chauncey Street. Flyers are available on tonight's distribution table.

Chairperson Younger recognized Councilmember Darlene Mealy.

Councilmember Mealy stated that she has introduced a resolution to the Council that asks New Yorkers to shun the use of "h* and b**ch," as was previously done with the "n" word. She is working with Rev. Al Sharpton to let the recording companies know that we will no longer tolerate this type of degradation. A march is being planned for the month of May to express this sentiment.

At last month's meeting, she became aware of the proposed closing of the Howard Houses PAL Program. She is working with Council Speaker Christine Quinn to try to resolve the issue.

She reminded the audience to be cognizant of legislation that is being passed. A recent bill that passed is the Pedicab Bill - it allows for the operation of pedicabs strictly in the Borough of Manhattan. She is of the opinion that it should not be restricted to Manhattan and that if an entrepreneur wants to operate such a venture in Brownsville they should be able to. For that reason, she voted against it. Disparities also exist with yellow cab bases - one should be able to hail a yellow cab anywhere in the City but that does not happen. She is fighting to make amenities available in Manhattan available to all New Yorkers.

On the issue of renaming Gates Avenue in honor of Sonny Carson, she is aligned with Councilmember Al Vann. She sees no reason why the community's desire to rename the street after him should be circumvented from the normal process. Malcolm X is known to have called whites the "blue-eyed devil," yet today there are venues throughout the City named in his honor.

Block associations requesting assistance for their summer block parties should submit their requests as soon as possible because funds are limited.

Someone stated that the Oasis Summer Camp program which services approximately six hundred community youths is in jeopardy of not being funded this summer. Can the Councilmember look into this?

Councilmember Mealy stated that she has been made aware of this situation and toured their facility last week. She is working to make the funding available.

She introduced her Special Assistant, Mr. Maurice Philips, who will attend the Community Board meetings when she is unable to attend. Persons with questions or concerns may contact her or Mr. Philips at (718) 953-3097.

Chairperson Younger recognized District Leader Lisa Kenner.

Ms. Kenner stated that she attended a forum sponsored by Congresswoman Yvette Clarke on March 18th. At that forum she stated that the young people of the community need to attend Community Board meetings and let their voices be heard. Homes are being developed and sold for \$500,000 and \$700,000 but we still do not have a decent restaurant or any cultural centers in the community.

We are losing many of our youth, especially the young men. She is seeking to have the older men of the community engage with the younger ones. She is sponsoring a men's celebration on May 5th at the Van Dyke Community Center at 6:00 p.m. and is inviting all the men of the community to attend and remind the young men that they have intelligence and a future. The event is being called "Stand Up and Be Counted."

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Marcel Braithwaite of the Brownsville PAL Beacon Program.

Mr. Braithwaite stated that he is the new Director of the Brownsville PAL Beacon Program and that they are currently accepting applications for their summer program. The program is open to youth age 6 to 13. They are located at 985 Rockaway Avenue between Hegeman Avenue and Linden Boulevard

The Brownsville PAL Beacon Program currently runs an after school program that operates from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and an evening program that operates from 6:00 p.m. until 9:45 p.m.. During the summer their program operates from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.. In some instances they will allow the young people to remain until 7:00 p.m.

The Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) is currently accepting applications for their Summer Youth Employment Program for youth ages 15 to 21 years old. Applications may be downloaded from DYCD s `website at nyc.gov/dycd or obtained at the Brownsville PAL Beacon Program.

In regards to the comments made earlier concerning the Howard Houses PAL program closing, the PAL operates 18 centers throughout the city, including 5 in Brooklyn, and 50 summer play streets citywide. Their budget is limited and they try to make the best use they can of their limited resources.

Ms. Joyce Anderson stated that she hears of program after program coming to the community, but until we address education they are futile. What good is providing a summer employment program when the child cannot complete the application?

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. William Boone of the Educators for Children, Youth, and Families Beacon Program.

Mr. Boone stated that to address Ms. Anderson s `concern, he conducts a job readiness class on Saturdays and some Tuesdays. In these classes he teaches students how to complete job applications on a line by line basis. The students will also learn how to write a resume and an essay. He encouraged anyone who knows of a child who is having difficulties in theses areas to contact him. They are located at 210 Chester Street between Sutter and Blake Avenues and his telephone there is (718) 498-7033.

Someone asked if they had any staff or volunteers?

Mr. Boone stated that they have both paid staff members and volunteers. They always welcome volunteers.

Chairperson Younger recognized Dr. Merrill White of the Brownsville/East New York Child Welfare Neighborhood Network.

Dr. White stated that the Network is a conglomerate of 50 to 80 agencies in the Brownsville and East New York area that work together to provide family preservation services to our community. The Network is sponsoring their Sixth Annual Breakfast Forum on May 1st and the donation for this event is \$15.00.

They are also sponsoring a Family Fashion Show from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on June 16th at St. Luke s `Community Church, located at 142 Watkins Street between Pitkin and Belmont Avenues. She encourages everyone to participate in this event which will help fund their Annual Family Day event. Each year they sponsor the Family Day event and distribute school supplies to children in the community. Last year they distributed over seven hundred school packages to children. This year they are not funded and will only be able to distribute the packages if they purchase them themselves. The Family Fashion Show will help towards that cause.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Randy Hudson, Chairperson of the IRT Transportation Committee.

Mr. Hudson stated that thanks to the support from Community Boards #5 and 16, the New York City Transit Authority has refurbished the stations on the L` line from Sutter Avenue to New Lots Avenue as well as painting the beams and trusses of the Livonia Avenue elevated tracks. However, they still have not created a connection between the two lines.

They are hosting their Showstopper Basketball Tournament again this year and Councilmember Charles Barron has agreed to be a sponsor once again. This year the event will be held at P.S./I.S. 323 beginning May 12th through June 30.

Someone asked if there was an age limit for the basketball tournament?

Mr. Hudson stated that the tournament is for youth between the ages of 11 and 18.

Mr. David Alexander asked what barriers are preventing the Transit Authority from creating a connection point between the IRT and Canarsie Lines?

Mr. Hudson stated that they have been saying that there is not enough turnstile revenue to support the connection. The Committee has suggested to the Authority that the connection would create additional fares from surrounding neighborhoods. In light of the additional housing that has been built and the additional population that they have created, perhaps the Authority will revisit the idea.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Michael Howard of the Central Brooklyn Jazz Consortium.

Mr. Howard announced that there will be a free jazz and spoken word concert on Thursday, April 26, 2007 at Brooklyn Borough Hall from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. as part of the Central Brooklyn Jazz Festival.

Chairperson Younger announced that the 73rd Precinct Community Council and Community Board #16 will host their Third Community Service Award Dinner-Dance on Thursday, June 28, 2007 from 7:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. at Fleur de Lis, located at 870 Cypress Avenue. This year honorees are: Ace Beer and Soda Distributors, Inc., Ms. Wilma Carthan, Ms. Hazel Clark, Ms. Joanne Glass, Auxiliary Captain David Johnson, Commissioner Raymond Kelly, Ms. Bettie Kollock-Wallace, Liberty Electrical Supply Co., Inc., Mr. Eligha Lockamy, Deputy Inspector Jeffrey Maddrey, Ms. Yvonne Maxwell, Mr. Bryant Shannon, Auxiliary Police Officer Ivy Toppin, Ms. Annie Walkes, Ms. Shirley Washington, and Dr. Merrill White.

Please contact Ms. Sarah Hall for additional information.

Chairperson Younger acknowledged the presence of Ms. Denese Forde of Kings County Hospital and Medical Center and, on behalf of the Board, extended condolences to her on the recent passing of her beloved mother.

Chairperson Younger recognized Community Affairs Officer Dean Elmore of the 73rd Precinct.

Police Officer Elmore reported that the City will begin to issue fines to property owners who do not remove graffiti from their buildings. Owners can avoid the fines by signing up for the Mayor's free graffiti removal program.

He stated that identity theft has become an epidemic in the United States and disseminated literature on steps to take to prevent it from happening to you.

Mr. Randy Hudson cautioned the audience to make use of firewall when using the internet as an additional precaution to guarding one's identity.

There have been changes made to the City's gun laws which now impose a mandatory imprisonment of three and a half years (minimum) for persons found guilty of illegal possession of a loaded firearm. Shootings continue to plague the community; he urges any who knows the location of an illegal gun to contact the Police Department.

Chairperson Younger recognized Rev. Joseph Jones of District Attorney Charles Hynes' office.

Rev. Jones expounded on the change to the gun law by relating an incident that he is familiar with. In that incident, a pastor of a church requested his assistance in behalf of two of his congregants who were passengers in a car that was stopped and a gun was found in the trunk. As passengers, they had no access to the trunk and no knowledge of the gun being there. The passengers and the driver, who also stated that he had no knowledge of the gun, were arrested. The passengers had

to go through a nine month ordeal before someone decided that it was likely that they were unaware of the gun and dismissed the case against them. The blemish of the arrest will remain on their records. Should they apply for employment they can no longer state that they have no arrests record.

There are legal ways of turning in illegal guns without incurring a penalty. You can place the weapon (unloaded) in a brown paper bag and have the police collect it, no questions asked. If you see a gun on the street do not touch it, simply call the police and inform them of the location.

On May 5, 2007 there will be a conference at the National Church of God (Saratoga Avenue between St. Mark s Place and Bergen Street) from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. dealing with domestic violence and all of its aspects, from child and elder abuse to truancy.

The District Attorney s ComALERT program offers employment and employment services to parolees and probationers. The program helps them get a job paying \$7.50 per hour and furnish them with a suit, shirt, and tie to wear on an interview. Once they have obtained the job, the program provides another set of clothing to them. ComALERT also provides substance abuse counseling and health care referrals. The program is free of cost to the client. They are located on the Fifth Floor of 210 Joralemon Street and the telephone number is (718) 250-5557.

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