

## **MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 – SEPTEMBER 23, 2008**

### **Attendance**

David Alexander	Shawn Lewis (A)
Renee Archer (A)	Deborah Mack (A)
Orlando Aupont (A)	James Mack (A)
Octavius Bamberg (A)	Yolanda Matthews
Sissi Benitez (A)	Sadie McNamara
Josephine Blakeley (E)	Ted McQueen
Patricia Boone (A)	Rev. Joseph Norton (A)
Essie Duggan	Marie Pierre
Samantha Dunn (A)	Elder Devon Ponds (A)
Ivory Ellison (A)	Mattie Pusey
Helen Giles	Melaine Rochford (E)
Shirley Gonsalves	Linda Sanders
Sarah Hall	Lashon Segar (A)
Henry Hill	Tyrone Thomas (A)
Jessie Hilliard	Ernestine Turner
Kofi Hormeku (E)	Rev. Miran Ukaegbu
Michael Howard (A)	Alice Vines (E)
Allene Ingram (A)	Annie Walkes
Daisy Jackson (E)	Herman Winston
Javonn Johnson (A)	Hazel Younger
Troy Johnson (A)	Viola D. Greene-Walker, DM
Dr. Cade Jones, III	E. Jane Coleman-Assistant ADM
Pamela Junior	Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
Eula Key (E)	Hon. Eric Adams
Danny King (A)	Hon. John Sampson
Bettie Kollock-Wallace	Xamayla Rose for Hon. Marty Markowitz

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

Chairperson Hazel Younger called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.. An invocation was said by Rev. Miran Ukaegbu.

A motion was made by Ms. Pamela Junior, seconded by Rev. Miran Ukaegbu and carried to waive the reading of last month's minutes.

A motion was made by Ms. Pamela Junior, seconded by Ms. Mattie Pusey and carried to waive the reading of the District Manager's report.

Everyone was encouraged to read the minutes and the District Manager's report at home.

District Manager Viola Greene-Walker announced that the United States Postal Service is seeking to hire temporary staff for the holiday season. The application and additional information are available on the Postal Service's website: [www.usps.com/employment](http://www.usps.com/employment).

Ms. Pamela Junior, member of the Economic Development Committee, reported that the Committee continues to meet with merchants on Belmont Avenue to develop a plan to revitalize Belmont Avenue between Rockaway Avenue and Mother Gaston Boulevard.

A recent survey of Belmont Avenue revealed that approximately 23 store fronts are closed. Reasons given for vacancies include the high cost of operating a business – rent, energy cost, real estate taxes and insurance. Crime is also a factor and that is being addressed by the 73<sup>rd</sup> Precinct.

The Committee is identifying resources that the existing merchants can access to assist them with operating costs. In addition, the Committee is reaching out to both public and private sector agencies to bring an anchor tenant to Belmont Avenue.

A motion was made by Ms. Mattie Pusey, seconded by Dr. Cade Jones, III and carried to accept the report of the Economic Development Committee.

Chairperson Younger commended Ms. Essie Duggan, Chairperson of the Economic

Development Committee, and the Committee members for their diligent efforts.

She recognized Mr. Wayne Devonish of the Bedford Central Community Development Corporation.

Mr. Devonish stated that the Corporation will host a 16-week Homebuyer Seminar series at the Bedford-Stuyvesant Multi-Service Center, located at 1958 Fulton Street, beginning on October 21, 2008.

Obtaining a mortgage is no longer as simple as it has been in the past. Borrowers now, more than ever, need to prepare before getting a loan. The seminar will include topics such as How to Qualify for a Mortgage, Repairing and Building Your Credit, Predatory Lending, and Home Maintenance.

A course and application fee of \$20.00 is a small investment for the information that will be given.

Chairperson Younger stated that the fliers that were disseminated indicate a sponsorship by the Freddie Mac Corporation, in light of the recently proposed takeover of Freddie Mac, how will the program be affected?

Mr. Devonish stated that for now, no changes are anticipated.

Rev. Miran Ukaegbu stated that the proposed takeover of Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae by the federal government is not yet complete and all documentation and programs will continue as in the past.

Mr. Devonish stated that he can be reached at (917) 297-2365.

Chairperson Younger thanked Mr. Devonish for his presentation and recognized Ms. Shanida Carter of News 12.

Ms. Carter stated that News 12 is a 24-hours, 7-days a week cable news station focusing on local news and the local effects of other news stories. They have undertaken an initiative to attend the meetings of every community board in Brooklyn to find out what their issues and concerns are. They also seek to inform the boards that they can notify News 12 of their news stories (good or bad). News 12 is interested in learning about all the issues affecting Brooklyn and its residents. As an example of local concerns being underserved by mainstream broadcast, she was watching another network's news broadcast today and there was not a single Brooklyn-based news story aired.

Brownsville is often connoted negatively in the media, they are aware that good things happen here as well and would like to reflect that in some of their news stories.

Chairperson Younger thanked Ms. Carter for her presentation and recognized Ms. Xamayla Rose of the Brooklyn Borough President's Office.

Ms. Rose stated that she is the Board's new liaison to the Borough President and is here tonight to present Perfect Attendance Awards for the 2007 calendar year. She proceeded to present the awards to Ms. Essie Duggan, Mr. Henry Hill, Ms. Ernestine Turner, and Mr. Herman Winston.

She announced that October 16<sup>th</sup> has been proclaimed "Take Your Man to the Doctor Day" at Borough Hall. Borough President Marty Markowitz is encouraging women from throughout the borough to get the men in their lives to visit a doctor. From 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., a variety of health care professionals will be available for free screenings at Borough Hall.

Chairperson Younger thanked Ms. Rose for her presentation and recognized Ms. Denese Forde of Kings County Hospital.

Ms. Forde stated that Kings County Hospital will also offer free screenings for men on October 17<sup>th</sup> on the first floor of their "E" Building, located at 541 Clarkson Avenue, Brooklyn, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.. They will also host a Palliative Care Conference in the "T" Building Auditorium, located on the second floor at 451 Clarkson Avenue. For additional information about the conference, please call (718) 245-3910.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Allison Jones of the Brownsville Multi Service (BMS) Family Health Center.

Ms. Jones stated that BMS's main office is located at 592 Rockaway Avenue and they operate out of six additional sites in the Brownsville and East New York communities.

BMS is currently conducting a voter registration drive to raise awareness in the community of the obligations of elected officials to their constituents.

BMS sponsors health seminars at Unity Houses in East New York and they are seeking to bring them to all of the New York City Housing Authority housing complexes in the community. The seminars cover a variety of health issues including health insurance.

Present with her tonight is Ms. Alice Surgeon who is their Volunteer Coordinator. They encourage anyone with some free time to come and see them about volunteering. It is a good program for teens with idle time.

Chairperson Younger recognized Rev. Miran Ukaegbu, Chairperson of the Environmental and Sanitation Committee.

Rev. Ukaegbu announced that the Department of Sanitation is sponsoring a series of composting events at the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens beginning on Tuesday, October 7<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.. The program will teach methodologies of improving the soil. Some of you may say that you have no space for planting and might be surprised to learn how little space is required to grow some fruits and vegetables. She encourages the community to take advantage of the program.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. William Boone of the Medgar Evers Beacon Program at P.S. / I.S. 323.

Mr. Boone stated that the program was able to serve 275 young people over the summer. He thanked the Community Board staff for hosting the 75 students that he brought to the Board's office on a moment's notice and for the overview of the functions of the Board that they were given.

The program services children from kindergarten through high school, 6-days a week. He can be reached by calling (718) 498-7033.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Christina Larkin of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH).

Ms. Larkin stated that DOHMH, in partnership with the Brownsville Multi Service Family Health Center, will begin providing free Lamaze classes at the end of the month. She encourages the audience to inform pregnant women they know about the program.

Through an expansion of the Food Stamp program, consumers using EBTs to buy fruits and vegetables from certain farmers' markets will receive an additional \$4.00 purchasing power at the market for every, \$5.00 spent. Food Stamp recipients need only use their EBT cards at the participating farmers markets to receive the benefits. No additional coupons or fliers are necessary. The intent is to encourage the purchase of locally grown produce and the eating of more healthy foods.

It is once again time to get your flu shots. This year, for the first time, you will be able to get your shots from specially trained pharmacists throughout the city. She encourages the audience to ask their pharmacist if they will be administering flu shots. The more inquiries the pharmacist receives, the more likely she or he will obtain the training needed to be allowed to administer the flu shots.

Free flu shots will also be administered at the DOHMH clinics at 485 Throop Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant and at 295 Flatbush Avenue Extension in Fort Greene. She can be reached at (646) 253-5713 for more information about these programs.

Ms. Bettie Kollock-Wallace asked if the administering pharmacist will be part of a larger organization or will they be individuals? She also asked if they will be charging for the service?

Ms. Larkin stated that the training and permit to administer the flu shots are tied to the individual pharmacist's license. If he or she is part of a larger organization that allows them to administer the shots, that is acceptable to DOHMH as well. As many of the pharmacists are self-employed individuals, they are allowed to charge a nominal fee for administering the shots. The only places that she is aware of that are administering the shots free of charge is at the DOHMH clinics and at select senior centers.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Linda Sanders who announced that she will be conducting her third annual march against violence this coming Saturday, September 27<sup>th</sup>. Past marches have not been well supported by community organizations and she would like to see that change this year. Violence is an issue that affects all of us. She wants to call attention to and bring about an end to the violence against our youth, elder abuse, and police brutality.

None of the many programs in our community will be of any use if their clientele are not alive to use the services. The entire community is invited to join her as they start the march from the intersection of Pitkin and Saratoga Avenues at 1:00 p.m..

Ms. Essie Duggan stated that Senator Velmanette Montgomery worked hard this past summer representing her constituency in Albany. She has long been a proponent of providing second chances for people. She is proud to have a bill to remove the restriction of licensing for cosmetology and barbering to formerly incarcerated persons. The removal of this ban is important because it now allows that population another avenue to become self-sufficient and law-abiding members of the community.

She offered kudos to Dr. Cade Jones, III and the College of New Rochelle for their program that allows students to earn, simultaneously, a general equivalency diploma (GED) and college credits which is a savings of both time and funds. She recommends anyone who is planning to or knows someone who is planning to take a GED course to reach out to Dr. Jones for information on the program.

The City's administrators have announced that there will be a three percent budget cut across the board to all senior centers. One of the centers in this community that will be drastically affected by the proposed cuts is the Mt. Ararat Senior Citizens Center. Plans are being drafted for a march in protest of the proposal and she asks that the community prepare for a call to action towards that end. She also requests the support of the Board in their endeavor to stop the cuts from happening.

Ms. Mattie Pusey offered thanks to Senator Montgomery and to supporters of the bill to repeal the ban on licensing formerly incarcerated persons in the fields of barbering and cosmetology.

Chairperson Younger stated that it should be noted that District Attorney Hynes' office also has a program (COMALERT) that offers assistance to the formerly incarcerated. She also stated that it is important that we as a community share information and resources in order to better the entire community.

Senator Eric Adams was recognized and stated that he is the Ranking Minority member on the Senate's Crime Victims, Crime and Correction Committee. As a Senator, he has, at-will access, to any State correctional facility and whenever he receives a concern about a particular facility he makes a point of visiting that facility. He has visited Five Towns, Sing-Sing, and others. His goal is to visit as many of the facilities upstate as possible, with an eye towards closing as many as possible. When sentenced to jail, people from our community are sent to prisons in the northern counties and make their way south, depending on the length of their sentence.

There are facilities upstate that have few occupied beds that are being kept open solely for the purpose of a source of economic revenue for the communities in which they are located.

With anticipated changes in 2009, Senators such as John Sampson, Velmanette Montgomery, Kevin Parker, and he will be able to bring into Brooklyn communities some of the funds that historically have been leaving our communities. It would be a Shakespearian tragedy if these funds were not put to good use in our communities. Now is the time to form task forces and committees to determine where the funds should be allocated. He asks the audience to contact him via e-mail at [voiceofconcern@aol.com](mailto:voiceofconcern@aol.com) with their suggestions. He receives about 120 e-mails a days and diligently answers each one personally. He can also be reached by calling (718) 284-4700. He asks that he be kept informed about our concerns. Do not keep them to yourselves and then accuse him of being a typical politician when the problems are not

addressed.

He will sponsor a financial literacy seminar and another "From Cradle to College" seminar in the near future. The community will be advised as more detailed plans are made.

Senator John Sampson recognized and stated that Senator Adams is one of Albany's rising stars and commended him for his work thus far. As was stated by Senator Adams, financial literacy is a shortcoming in our community. We need to be vigilant with regard to fiscal policies that are proposed by our government. Earlier today, he took part in a press conference at the Federal Reserve Bank. The federal government is proposing to spend 750 billion taxpayer dollars to bailout failing Wall Street banks. At the press conference, he and his colleagues told the federal government that along with bailouts for Wall Street they need to assist Main Street. The everyday working families who are struggling to pay mortgages, high utility bills, taxes, and fuel costs need help.

With the assistance of Senator Adams, Educate Online is now available to our youth. Educate Online is funded through the No Child Left Behind Act. This free tutorial service is designed to aid students in grades 3 through 12 in mathematics and reading. Eligible students may receive a desktop computer and internet service at no charge to allow them to study at home.

In today's competitive global economy, a solid educational foundation has never been more important. The United States now lags behind many, if not most, of the world's industrial nations with regard to education, making programs such as Educate Online an extremely valuable resource.

Please contact his office at (718) 649-7653 for additional information.

Ms. Blanche Peltonbusch stated that it is well and good that this program is in place for the third through twelfth graders. Are there any similar programs for the younger minds in the community?

Mr. Brandon Blumfield, Assistant to Senator Sampson, stated that the program particularly targets the third through twelfth graders because students are mandated to take standardized test in those years.

Senator Sampson stated that the legislature allocates a large sum of money to Headstart programs that target the younger children and strives to avoid budget cuts to education services.

Someone asked if there are any programs for high school students seeking to further their education?

Senator Sampson stated that what he likes to tell students is to begin their search for college funding in their junior year or earlier. Many scholarship offerings that are available go unused because the application periods expire. He encourages educators to work with the young people to make certain that they are getting the information about these resources on a timely basis.

Someone stated that he is involved with some schools in the East New York area wherein they offer tutorial service to students. He also has available a list of certain grants and scholarships that he will gladly make available to the Senator.

Chairperson Younger requested that he contact District Manager Greene-Walker as well.

Chairperson Younger announced that a member of the Board has passed and asked the audience to join her in a moment of silence in memory of the late James A. Bowens, former Chairperson of Community Board #16.

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