

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 – February 24, 2009

Attendance

David Alexander	
Renee Archer (A)	Sadie McNamara (E)
Orlando Aupont (A)	Ted McQueen (A)
Octavius Bamberg (E)	Rev. Joseph Norton
Sissi Benitez (A)	Marie Pierre
Josephine Blakeley (E)	Rev. Devon Ponds
Patricia Boone (A)	Mattie Pusey
Essie Duggan	Melaine Rochford
Samantha Dunn (A)	Linda Sanders (A)
Ivory Ellison (A)	Lashon Segar (A)
Helen Giles	Tyrone Thomas (A)
Shirley Gonsalves	Ernestine Turner
Sarah Hall	Rev. Miran Ukaegbu
Jessie Hilliard	Alice Vines
Kofi Hormeku	Annie Walkes
Michael Howard	Herman Winston
Allene Ingram (A)	Hazel Younger
Daisy Jackson	Viola D. Greene-Walker, DM
Javonn Johnson (A)	E. Jane Coleman-Assistant ADM
Troy Johnson (A)	Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
Pamela Junior (A)	Hon. Darlene Mealy
Eula Key	Latrice M. Walker for Hon. Yvette Clarke
Danny King (A)	Karen Cherry for Hon. Edolphus Towns
Bettie Kollock-Wallace	Essie Duggan for Hon. Velmanette Montgomery
Shawn Lewis (A)	Nathan Bradley for Hon. John Sampson
Deborah Mack	Carol Sanders-James for Hon. Mike Bloomberg
James Mack	Mel Faulkner for Hon. Charles Barron
Yolanda Matthews	Michael Caver for Hon. William F. Boyland, Jr.

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

PUBLIC HEARING

Chairperson Hazel Younger called the public hearing to order at 7:08 p.m..

A moment of silence was observed in memory of the late Dr. Cade Jones, III, and an invocation was said by Rev. Dr. Denise L. C. Boyce.

IN THE MATTER OF the Citywide Statement of Needs for Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011 on facilities that the City expects to site, replace, expand or reduce during the next two fiscal years (A copy of the Citywide Statement of Needs is available for review at the Office of Community Board #16).

District Manager Viola Greene-Walker stated that there are several items that are being cited for Brooklyn – two specifically for Community District #16. The first is the relocation of the Human Resources Administration’s (HRA) Home Care Services Office which services Community Districts 5, 16, 17, and 18. The HRA proposes to relocate from 710 Hendrix Street also known as 645 Van Siclen Avenue in Brooklyn’s Community District #5 as part of its space consolidation program. The office houses the Medical Insurance and Community Services Administration (MICSA) / Brooklyn Community Alternative Services Administration (CASA) #8 Office which manages and administers the provision of home care services to Medicaid eligible individuals who are elderly and/or disabled and require medical care, home attendant, housekeeping and homemaking services. Approximately 15,000 square feet is required and should be accessible to public transportation.

The second item is proposed by the Fire Department. They are proposing the construction of a new Brooklyn Rescue 2 Facility. Rescue 2 is part of the Department’s Special Operations Command. Their mission is to provide a more specialized response at major emergencies (eg., building collapses, confined space / high-angle rescues, and various extrication operations) than a normal engine or ladder company.

Rescue 2's quarters, located at 1472 Bergen Street in Brooklyn Community District #8, was built in 1893 and is too small to accommodate the needs of this specialized unit. In the post 9/11 climate, the mission of the Department's rescue companies has changed and the amount of material (equipment and vehicles) continues to increase.

The Department proposes constructing a new facility for Rescue 2 on Block 1467, part of Lot 22 in Brooklyn CD 16, approximately seven blocks from its present location. This new facility will enable the Department to keep Rescue 2 in the borough while the new facility is built and provide them with enough space to meet current and planned emergency response needs in the post 9/11 environment. Approximately 22,908 square feet is required with access to major arterial roads.

There are other proposals which are not specifically cited for the district, but may well be placed here. Of note are proposals by the Department of Homeless Services for the relocation of their Adult Intake Facility from the Bellevue Shelter in Manhattan, and by the Human Resources Administration (HRA) for Permanent Supportive Congregate Housing. HRA provides permanent congregate housing and supportive services for HRA clients in need of such accommodations. Existing providers have exhausted their current procurement options. These services are to be re-solicited under the Request for Proposal (RFP) process according to the Procurement Policy Board Rules. The new RFP was projected to be released by the end of calendar year 2008 with services expected to commence on July 1, 2009. There is also a proposal by the Human Resources Administration to relocate their Burial Unit and Quality Assurance Office. HRA proposes to relocate the Burial Unit and Quality Assurance Offices currently at 151 Lawrence Street in Brooklyn Community District #2 as part of its space consolidation plan. These programs are to be relocated to existing HRA facilities. The Burial Unit provides financial assistance to individuals in need of assistance to meet funeral expenses. These funds are available when an indigent resident dies without leaving funds to cover burial expenses and there are no others willing or able to pay the funeral expenses. The Office of Quality Assurance is responsible for the evaluation and analyses of Federal and State Quality Control audits; and review of Family independence Administrative cases for accuracy in providing cash assistance, food stamps and Medicaid.

Chairperson Younger asked if there were any comments or concerns about the Citywide Statement of Needs?

There being no comments, the next public hearing item was read by District Manager Greene-Walker.

IN THE MATTER OF the City's Preliminary Budget Statement and Community District Register for Fiscal Year 2010. The Hearing is to obtain public comments on City agencies' responses to Community Board 16's Capital and Expense Budget Priorities for Fiscal Year 2010 (A copy is available for review at the Office of Community Board #16).

District Manager Greene-Walker stated that Community Board members were sent a copy of the Register of Budget Requests and they are itemized on the first nine pages of her report.

Chairperson Younger asked if there were any comments or concerns about the Preliminary Budget Statement and Community District Register?

There being no comments, a motion was made by Ms. Deborah Mack, seconded by Ms. Eula Key and carried to adjourn the Public Hearing.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

A motion was made by Ms. Mattie Pusey, seconded by Mr. David Alexander, and carried to waive the reading of last month's minutes.

A motion was made by Ms. Annie Walkes, seconded by Ms. Deborah Mack, and carried to waive the reading of the District Manager's report.

Chairperson Younger recognized Erin Maehr from the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

Ms. Maehr stated that as part of PlaNYC, Mayor Bloomberg has an initiative to plant and care for one million new trees in the next decade. Information about the initiative is available through

3-1-1 or the Million TreesNYC Website at www.milliontreesnyc.org.

A number of trees have either been planted, or cited to be planted in the East New York and Brownsville communities. (A map displaying these locations was circulated.) She stated that anyone may request a tree planting by calling 3-1-1 or visiting the Million TreesNYC Website.

Someone asked if a property owner may refuse the planting of trees in front of their property?

Ms. Maehr stated that in the past, owner refusals were allowed. However, that is no longer the case. It is the City's contention that trees are beneficial to all City residents.

She was asked if an exception may be made in an instance where the property owner is elderly and no longer able to clear the sidewalk of leaves that fall from the trees in the fall?

Ms. Maehr stated that exceptions are not generally made under such circumstances. She suggested that perhaps the senior citizen may enlist the help of a neighborhood youth to remove the leaves.

Someone stated that there is also an issue of trees causing damage to sidewalks. What surety does the City offer in those instances?

Ms. Maehr stated that the City does have a trees and sidewalks program, wherein a property owner may call 3-1-1 and report a location (for 3-family or smaller homes) where roots are damaging sidewalks and the City will affect repairs.

Chairperson Younger stated that the presentation is lacking in substance. She asked the presenters if they had more details to offer the audience?

Ms. Maehr apologized for not being prepared for a full presentation and stated that at previous meetings with other community boards they were requested to keep their presentation brief. On the assumption that the same would be true for this Board, they only prepared a two minute presentation.

Rev. Joseph Norton asked if anything can be done in instances where the property owner vehemently opposes having a tree planted in front of their property?

Ms. Maehr suggested that they write to the Mayor.

Rev. Norton stated that there have been many instances where tree roots have caused blockage in waste water pipes. What recourse does a property owner have in those instances?

Ms. Maehr stated that tree roots only enter pipes if there is an entry point.

Ms. Blanche Peltonbusch asked how is it that property owners have no input as to whether or not trees may be placed on property for which they are paying taxes and mortgages?

Ms. Maehr stated that the sidewalk is considered City property.

Chairperson Younger requested that the presenters return to their offices with a message that this community has some unanswered questions that need to be addressed before trees are planted here.

Ms. Maehr stated that the process has already begun, however, they will return to the Board with a more detailed presentation in the near future.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Margie Rodriguez and Gail Bartcliff of Communities on the Move.

Ms. Rodriguez stated that she is an employee at Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center (Brookdale), and a resident of the East New York community for over twenty-five years. Communities on the Move is outreaching to the eight communities that neighbor Brookdale to raise awareness and activeness concerning resources that are being proposed to be removed from our communities. They are concerned that firehouses will be shutdown two days a week, homecare workers will not be available to care for our elderly and to bring them to their appointments. There is talk of shutting down floors in hospitals, closing down clinics, and

raising the cost of Access-A-Ride from a \$2.00 fare to \$6.00. How can our elderly and infirm endure these losses of services when they are already suffering a challenged quality of life?

Our communities are distressed as it stands and can ill afford to lose the limited resources that they have. With the backing of 1199, Communities on the Move is reaching out to elected officials and policy makers to let them know that the proposed cuts are an unfair burden to our communities. St. Mary's and St. John's Hospitals have already been shuttered. What will happen if this trend continues?

She encourages the audience to be active in this cause as well. If the community remains silent, the legislators will read this to mean that the cuts are acceptable. Their organization previously met once a month at the Brownsville Recreation Center at 1555 Linden Boulevard, now it meets bi-monthly in view of the current crisis. They distributed flyers with information about a rally that will be held next week in Manhattan to protest the cuts. They ask that everyone attend this rally. They are expecting the membership of all of the city's labor groups to attend.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Harvey Lawrence, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Brownsville Multi Service Family Health Center (BMS).

Mr. Lawrence stated that while his titles are new, he is neither new to the community nor to BMS. He recalled that BMS was started in 1982 as an organization with one doctor and Mr. Joseph François, the founding Executive Director. BMS is the result of community people getting together and saying that, in terms of healthcare, we need something different and better for our neighborhood.

Over his fourteen year tenure, he has seen many positive changes to BMS. He proudly inherits this legacy. In its infancy, BMS could not afford to hire a doctor on its own, so they used a doctor provided to them by the federal government. Fast forward to today, where the organization has over 250 employees and offers a variety of services. This is phenomenal, especially when considering that most ambulatory care facilities are operated by large hospitals. BMS is the only independently operated, federally qualified health center in Brooklyn accredited by the Joint Commission. The accreditation speaks to their quality of service.

Additionally, they are at the forefront of the medical industry with their electronic health records initiatives. They are proud to have been the first in Brooklyn to make use of the new technology. Many of their departments already make use of it and they look forward to having the entire facility adopt the technology by year end.

BMS operates numerous facilities in the Brownville and East New York communities, including a small high school within the former Thomas Jefferson High School Building on Pennsylvania Avenue. The school, World Academy for Total Community Health (WATCH), had its first graduation last June. The Valedictorian has gone on to Spellman College on a full scholarship, five of the students received full scholarships to attend Long Island University Nursing Programs, and the class president is attending Rochester University. Their graduates are attending schools throughout the city and state. He looks forward to some of them returning to the community and continuing the work of BMS. He and his colleagues look forward to returning to this forum to speak about some of the health challenges facing our community and how they are addressing the issues.

Ms. Genese Morgan, member of the Economic Development Committee, reported that on Thursday, February 19th, 2009, members of the Economic Development Committee met with Small Business Banker, Kris Henry of J.P. Morgan Chase to discuss the types of services and incentives that might be available to merchants on Belmont Avenue. This meeting was held as an attempt to line-up resources for the current and future merchants of Belmont Avenue. The committee is continuously working on revitalization plans for the shopping area along Belmont Avenue.

The Committee is asking that residents and business owners of the community continue to support the existing merchants on Belmont.

Additionally, the Committee is proposing to publish a newsletter and is seeking comments from the community on why they like living in the community. She lives here, not because she has to, but because she chooses to live here. She asks that like-minded persons e-mail her at genesemor@aol.com with their comments which will be included in the newsletter.

A motion was made by Ms. Deborah Mack, seconded by Rev. Devon Ponds and carried to accept the report of the Economic Development Committee.

Ms. Bettie Kollock-Wallace, Chairperson of the Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committee, reported that the Committee met on February 10, 2009 with representatives from the Nehemiah Economic Development, Inc. and Universal Contracting who are proposing to develop affordable housing and a community center on Livonia Avenue between Christopher Avenue and Junius Street.

On Livonia Avenue between Christopher Avenue and Sackman Street (Block 3812), they are proposing a 2-story building with a cellar and a rear garden area for events and programs for senior citizens.

On Livonia Avenue between Sackman Street and Powell Street (Block 3813), they are proposing two 6-story buildings to create 76 housing units with 44 parking spaces, 8,370 square feet of retail space and five one-family homes.

On Livonia Avenue between Powell Street and Junius Street (Block 3814), they are proposing two 5-story buildings with 36 parking spaces and 6,120 square feet of retail space.

The Committee recommends that the Community Board support this proposal.

A motion was made by Ms. Mattie Pusey, seconded by Mr. Herman Winston and carried to accept the report of the Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committee and its recommendation.

Chairperson Younger stated that the Parks and Recreation Committee's report on the condition of the District's parks and playgrounds can be found on tonight's distribution table for review at your leisure.

The Committee continues to need volunteers to adopt the parks and playgrounds in our community. Please contact the Board office at (718) 385-0323 to volunteer.

Ms. Daisy Jackson, Chairperson of the Youth Services Planning Committee, reported that on February 10, 2009, members of the Committee held a meeting to continue to plan for their annual Youth Conference. They have renamed this event from Youth Conference to The Ocean Hill/Brownsville Yes We Can Teen Movement.

The Committee's plan is to meet with each high school in the community and put together a team of students from each school to spearhead this movement. These teams are expected to work together and come up with a time and a theme each year. Each team will be responsible for putting together a presentation that will showcase their school's best attribute.

This event will take place at Teachers Preparatory High School located at 226 Bristol Street. A tentative date of May 16th, 2009 has been set.

The next planning meeting will be held on March 3, 2009 at 6:00 p.m..

A motion was made by Rev. Devon Ponds, seconded by Mr. David Alexander and carried to accept the report of the Youth Services Planning Committee.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Mel Faulkner, representing Councilmember Charles Barron.

Mr. Faulkner stated that they are asking everyone to boycott the New York Post in order to let them know that we will not accept their distasteful depiction of President Obama. Such depictions are not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Michael Caver from Assemblyman William F. Boyland Jr.'s office.

Mr. Caver announced that Assemblyman Boyland, Jr. will host a job fair on March 5, 2009 here at 444 Thomas S. Boyland Street. He will also be sponsoring a free or low-cost event for mammograms on March 25th in front of 467 Thomas S. Boyland Street. He distributed flyers for both events.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Karen Cherry from Congressman Edolphus "Ed" Towns' office.

Ms. Cherry announced that Congressman Towns will host a town hall meeting in Canarsie on the subject of predatory lending and invites everyone to attend. The event will be held at the Holy Family Church at 9719 Flatlands Avenue (between Rockaway Parkway and East 98th Street) on Saturday, February 28th from 12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m.. She can be reached at (718) 272-1175 for additional information.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Carolyn Sanders-James from Mayor Michael Bloomberg's office.

Ms. Sanders stated that at a future meeting she will introduce to the Youth Service Planning Committee a group of students in the City Year Program. These young people perform volunteer work throughout the City and earn scholarships while doing so.

In terms of planned budget cuts, she urges the audience to continue their letter writing campaigns and let their elected officials know that the cuts will hurt our community.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms. Latrice Walker from Congresswoman Yvette Clarke's office.

Ms. Walker announced that Congresswoman Clarke is sponsoring a Black History Month event on Friday, February 27th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Prospect Heights High School - 883 Clarkson Avenue between Eastern Parkway and Union Street.

As part of the economic stimulus package, Congresswoman Clarke is compiling a list of "shovel ready" projects to present to the Mayor and Governor so that, once the stimulus funds are received, Brooklyn and the 11th Congressional District receives its fair share. Earlier today they met with the Department of Labor and requested that the Department meet with the community and inform residents on the usage of the resources being made available through the Workforce Investment Act. As plans are further developed, she will inform the community.

Chairperson Younger recognized Mr. Nathan Bradley from Senator John Sampson's office.

Mr. Bradley stated that Senator Sampson requested that he announce that twenty-nine million dollars have been secured towards anti-crime initiatives. He also announced that on Saturday, February 28, 1:00 p.m., Senator Sampson will host a meeting with local tenant and resident groups, and representatives of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) at the New Lots Family Center, located at 653 Schenck Avenue at the corner of New Lots Avenue. They ask that tenant association presidents and anyone with a concern about NYCHA be present at the luncheon.

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

Ms. Duggan stated that Senator Montgomery echoes the sentiments heard earlier about boycotting the New York Post.

She highlighted information found in a pamphlet published by Senator Montgomery to aid persons seeking employment opportunities. The pamphlet lists resources for job seekers, including specific resources for those who have been formerly incarcerated.

Senator Montgomery continues to seek your input on projects and programs that are important to you. As the newly appointed Chairperson of the Senate's Committee on Children and Families, she continues to advocate for the rights of children in education and asks that you contact her office at (718) 643-6140 with your concerns and suggestions.

Chairperson Younger recognized Councilmember Darlene Mealy.

Councilmember Mealy stated that the 41st Council District encompasses parts of East Flatbush, Crown Heights, Ocean Hill, Brownsville, and Bedford-Stuyvesant. She thanked everyone for their prayers and well wishes while she was convalescing from an injury.

Her District Office is open six days a week and offers activities for youth from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.. From 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. they host a girls' book club where they read books that help girls with their self-esteem, teaches them how to date safely, and how to deal with harassment

from young men. From 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. they host their "Moving Mountains" program where they have collaborated with Jamie Hector from the HBO television series "The Wire". He comes to the District Office each Saturday and assist the youth in producing a play about the choices they make as teenagers and the effect on their lives.

She invites the audience to attend her State of the District Address at Brownsville Academy on Wednesday, March 4th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.. She will speak about what has been accomplished in the District this past year and where the future will take us. She has been battling the City on funding for full-time staffing of Betsy Head Park – the only park in the City without such staffing, and the funding will finally come to fruition. She also seeks to have the park rehabilitated so full use of the facility will be available.

Ms. Mattie Pusey asked if the diving pool at Betsy Head Park will be restored?

Councilmember Mealy stated that the pool was filled with sand some years ago as a safety precaution. In recent conversations with Mr. Gregory Jackson, Borough President Markowitz, and representatives from the Department of Parks and Recreation, they discussed using the site as a venue for a possible volleyball tournament. She agrees with programs that will promote full utilization of the park.

Chairperson Younger recognized Captain Anthony Perez, Executive Officer of the 73rd Precinct.

Captain Perez reported that overall crime is down year-to-date. This is partly attributed to the sixty new officers assigned to the Precinct from the recent graduating class.

He asks that the community establish working relationships with the new officers. They are here to help remove criminal elements in the Precinct and much of the work they perform is due to information given by the community. They want the officers to communicate with the community and perform their jobs in a respectful manner.

They are performing vertical patrols in many of the building complexes in the Precinct and in the area around Fulton Street and Atlantic Avenue where there have been numerous burglaries. Call 9-1-1 if you hear something suspicious in an alleyway or in a backyard. You may see officers stopping and talking to people in their efforts to address the crime conditions.

Summonses may be issued to persons entering parks after dark. This is done with the intent of dissuading persons from going into the parks to drink alcohol and smoke marijuana. Some of these same individuals may attempt to prey on senior citizens and others who might use the park as a shortcut. They urge that you travel along the main thoroughfares as this is where the most officers are deployed.

Chairperson Younger read gratitude notes from Dr. Denise Boyce, Deacon Edna Massey, and Mrs. Eleanor Jones.

She recognized Mr. James Chestnut who announced that there will be a march along Fulton Street, starting at Van Sinderen Avenue and ending at Washington Avenue, on Saturday, February 28th, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. to protest the proposed elimination of the B-25 bus route. At 1:00 p.m. there will be a rally at Zion Baptist Church on Washington Avenue.

Chairperson Younger recognized Ms Christina Larkin from the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Ms. Larkin stated that Councilmember Mealy referred to a serious problem in our nation, intimate partner violence. The Department of Health has embarked on a public health campaign, visiting providers in Central Brooklyn as well as other parts of the City, raising awareness to this issue. Information is available on the City's website.

She announced that in partnership with Brookdale Hospital, they will be hiring a Perinatal Depression Coordinator, women who suffer from symptoms of post-partum depression will now be able to receive care through the system. They will also be purchasing one hundred breast pumps for mothers who may be interested in breast-feeding their infants. The pumps will be distributed through Brookdale Hospital. Funding for this program comes from the Healthy Start Program which was funded by the Central Brooklyn Congressional Representatives.

The Shape-Up New York has had to remove funding from the program at the Van Dyke Community Center due to low participation, however, the program at the Brownsville Recreation Center will be expanded.

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