

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 – MARCH 23, 2010

Attendance

David Alexander	Sadie McNamara (E)
Orlando Aupont (A)	Ted McQueen
Octavius Bamberg (A)	Genese Morgan (E)
Carolyn A. Benjamin-Smith	Davond Motes (A)
Patricia Boone (E)	Rev. Joseph Norton (E)
Margaret Brewer	Blanche L. Peltonbusch
Lynn Brown (A)	Marie Pierre
Essie Duggan	Rev. Devon Ponds
Helen Giles (A)	Mattie Pusey (E)
Shirley Gonsalves	Melaine Rochford (E)
Sarah Hall	Wendy Rutheford
Jessie Hilliard	Linda Sanders (A)
Kofi Hormeku	Tyrone Thomas (A)
Michael Howard	Hellen Thomas-Purdie (E)
Allene Ingram (E)	Ernestine Turner
Prince Issachar (A)	Rev. Dr. Miran Ukaegbu (E)
Daisy Jackson (E)	Alice Vines (E)
Orin Johnson-Griffith (A)	Annie Walkes
Pamela Junior	Herman Winston
Rev. Eddie Karim (A)	Hazel Younger (E)
Eula Key	Viola D. Greene-Walker, DM
Bettie Kollock-Wallace	E. Jane Coleman-Assistant ADM
Charles Ladson	Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
Shawn Lewis (A)	Hon. Darlene Mealy
Deborah Mack (A)	Christopher Lundy for Hon. Edolphus Towns
James Mack	Marie Monk-Boone for Hon. John Sampson
Yolanda Matthews	Melvin Faulkner for Hon. Inez Barron

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

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

First Vice Chairperson Bettie Kollock-Wallace called the meeting to order at 7:16 p.m. and an invocation was said by Rev. Joseph Norton.

First Vice Chairperson Bettie Kollock-Wallace recognized Ms. Shana Wertheimer from the Street to Home Program.

Ms. Wertheimer stated that she is the Community Director for the Street to Home Program in Brooklyn and Queens. New York City changed the manner in which they outreach to homeless individuals in 2007 by having one point of contact for each borough. Common Ground's Street to Home program is responsible for all of Brooklyn and Queens.

They focus on the most vulnerable individuals on the streets, those who are of frail health and persons who are on the street for over nine months out of the year. She is here tonight because they believe that the best way to reach these individuals is on the community level.

They operate outreach services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. They respond to 3-1-1 phone calls, perform joint outreach efforts with the New York City Police Department, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and a number of other City agencies in an effort to reach all homeless New Yorkers – whether they are on the most obvious street corner or hidden away in a park. Upon being deemed eligible for services, the individual is assigned a Case Manager by the program and transitioned into permanent housing. Many are placed in housing settings that provide supportive services.

Clients do not go directly from being on the streets to permanent housing, but the goal is always to get them to that point. To accomplish this, they assist the client in obtaining benefits, identification, and other items necessary to complete a housing application.

Since their inception in September 2007, they have been able to place over 850 persons off the streets of the City and into permanent housing. They look forward to hearing from the

audience with regard to persons who may be in need of their services. They would like to hear about individuals who may have substance abuse or mental health issues – these can be barriers to housing but do not preclude an individual from obtaining housing through the program. In fact, there are no prerequisites to the program. They recognized that stable housing is often the key to healthy living choices.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Ms. Danya Patsyszek from the Hope Program.

Ms. Patsyszek stated that the HOPE Program is located at One Smith Street, Downtown Brooklyn. They operate job training programs to aid individuals in breaking the cycle of poverty. Some of their clients have never worked, others may have fifteen years or more of experience and may have been laid-off and are looking to get back into the workforce.

They are also seeking employers who may be in need of employees. They know the importance of employees having basic work readiness skills. Their specialized training prepares individuals to be responsible employees, acquire and use information in order to problem-solve, work effectively with others, use basic office equipment, and the importance of promptness.

One of the things that they are concerned about is the increasing amount of employers who will not hire those without a high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED). Many of their clients fall into that category. They work with the clients to help them achieve their GEDs, but they also do outreach to employers who, arguably, have jobs that can be performed by persons with a diploma.

They start classes once a month with the next class starting on April 5th and the following class on May 17th. Orientations are scheduled twice a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays. She can be reached at (718) 852-9307, extension 19. Informational flyers are available on tonight's distribution table.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Ms. Berlane Holland from the United States Census Bureau.

Ms. Holland stated that by now, everyone in the audience should have received their Census forms and have hopefully completed and returned them. She stressed the importance of completing and returning the forms. Whatever the results in 2010, we will have to live with until 2020. We must not wait until 2015 to discover that our children are not receiving the quality education that they deserve due to lack of proper funding.

The Census will determine how many fire houses, police precincts, schools, and hospitals are built in our communities. It determines the number of Congressional Seats that we receive and the boundaries of the districts.

She solicited members of the audience who are able to place posters in their place of work or elsewhere to take one from those being distributed this evening and post it. She urged that the message be made known to all we come across. Inform everyone that the information that they provide on the Census is safe and secure. It cannot be used against them in anyway nor is the information shared with any entity, including other governmental agencies. The information remains sealed by law for at least seventy-years. No one is asked whether they are documented residents or not. You are not asked for a social security number. We are asked to answer ten simple questions for each member of your household which should not take more than ten minutes to answer. She invites each person in the audience to take ten minutes to complete ten questions and tell ten people about something that will affect us all for the next ten years of our lives.

Ms. Eudene Stanton stated that the instructions state that she should not include her child who is away at school. She is concerned that this will under represent our community.

Ms. Holland stated that if the child will be away at school on April 1, 2010, they should be counted at the location where they will be. She should not be too concerned about an under count as there are many students who live elsewhere but are students here – it balances out.

A short video entitled: "Portrait of America" was shown (the video may be viewed by visiting: <http://2010.census.gov/mediacenter/portrait-of-america/portrait-4.php>).

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Mr. Maurice Cole from Brooklyn Neighborhood Improvement Association.

Mr. Cole stated that Brooklyn Neighborhood Improvement Association (BNIA) is located at 1482 St. John's Place between Rochester and Utica Avenues. BNIA has been in existence for twenty-seven years as an advocate for housing issues in the community. They assist in the remediation of landlord/tenant disputes, reverse mortgages, and other housing issues. They offer assistance to the community on housing issues including stopping foreclosures and loan modifications. They are a non-profit organization and ask that you not be afraid to seek their assistance.

Oftentimes, borrowers in this community who find themselves in financial difficulty, receive correspondence from their mortgage holder and ignore it. BNIA discourages such action as it does not cause the problem to go away. They suggest that the borrower call 3-1-1 who can provide them with a list of non-profits which can assist them in working out a positive outcome.

A motion was made by Ms. Pamela Junior, seconded by Mr. David Alexander and carried to waive the reading of the minutes.

A motion was made by Ms. Pamela Junior, seconded by Mr. Kofi Hormeku to waive the reading of the District Manager's report.

District Manager Greene-Walker highlighted some of the time-sensitive articles found on pages one and two of her report. The first article concerned the availability of applications for the RiverRock Apartments. Applications are due by April 16, 2010.

The next article dealt with an invitation by the Church Avenue Merchants Business Association for persons interested in starting-up their own small business to attend their "Taking Care of Business" informational session on Monday, April 12th from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at 884 Flatbush Avenue (corner of Church Avenue).

The third article pertained to Strive / East Harlem Employment Services collaboration with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) to offer a construction / building maintenance training program for Brooklyn residents. Residents of a NYCHA facility located in Brooklyn may enroll at NYCHA's offices at 787 Atlantic Avenue (between Vanderbilt and Clermont Avenues) on Wednesday, March 24th, between 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.. Brooklyn residents who do not live in a NYCHA building must enroll at Strive headquarters in East Harlem – located at 240 East 123rd Street, 34th Floor, by Monday, April 5, 2010.

She encouraged everyone to read the entire report and to share the information found in it with their neighbors.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace acknowledged the presence of the MAP team from the Municipal Arts Society and thanked them for their service.

District Manager Greene-Walker, in behalf of Ms. Sadie McNamara, Chairperson of the Health and Human Resources Committee, reported that the Committee met on March 16, 2010 with a representative from the Lupus Cooperative of New York.

The Committee was informed that lupus is a chronic disease of the immune system. It is an inflammatory autoimmune disorder in which the body's immune system attacks its own healthy tissues and organs. Lupus is difficult to diagnose because many lupus symptoms imitate symptoms of other diseases. Lupus is not infectious. Although there is no known cause, a combination of genetic, environmental and hormonal factors are believed to work together to trigger lupus. Ninety percent of people with lupus are women and most of them develop the condition between the ages of 15 and 44. Lupus is more common and tends to be more severe among African-American, Latina/Hispanic, Asian, and Native-American women. There is no cure yet, research is promising.

The Lupus Cooperative of New York has a Brooklyn Division which is located on the campus of Long Island University at 161 Ashland Place (lower level).

The Cooperative offers brochures about lupus and regular programs on living well with lupus, assistance with accessing public programs and services for people with lupus, and referrals to doctors and other health professionals.

For additional information, please contact the Lupus Cooperative at (718) 928-2002.

The Committee also met with Ms. Ngozi Moses, Executive Director of the Brooklyn Perinatal Network. Ms. Moses is working on a project to reduce infant mortality and low birth weight babies in the Brownsville community which has the highest infant mortality rate in New York City.

The Committee will be working with Ms. Moses to bring awareness to this problem as well as resources.

A motion was made by Ms. Yolanda Matthews, seconded by Ms. Pamela Junior and carried to approve the Health and Human Resources Committee report.

District Manager Greene-Walker, in behalf of Ms. Bettie Kollock-Wallace, Chairperson of the Land Use, Planning, and Zoning Committee, reported that the Committee met on March 9, 2010 with a representative from the Brownsville Housing Development Fund Corporation who is proposing to construct commercial space on vacant City-owned property at 362-376 Livonia Avenue between Sackman Street and Christopher Avenue. The building will be a two-story structure with the first floor subdivided into 4 stores for use such as a grocery store, pharmacy, laundry and hair salon. The second floor will house medical offices.

The Committee also met with representatives from the African-American Planning Commission, Inc. which is proposing to construct 125 units of senior housing on a vacant lot on Glenmore Avenue between Mother Gaston Boulevard and Christopher Avenue. There will be 18 studios, 106 one-bedroom and a two-bedroom apartment for a live-in building superintendent. In addition, there will be 30 car parking spaces and 2 spaces for van parking.

Onsite support services will include administration offices, senior health and wellness services, senior technology services, laundry room, recreation services, homebound elderly services, communal dining facility, and rooftop sitting areas for residents.

The Committee recommends that the Board supports the proposal for 362-376 Livonia Avenue because it will increase commercial business in the community. The Committee also recommends that the Board supports the proposal to construct 125 units of senior housing on Glenmore Avenue between Sackman Street and Christopher Avenue because it will increase the number of affordable apartments for senior citizens.

A motion was made by Ms. Daisy Jackson, seconded by Ms. Wendy Rutherford and carried to accept the Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committee report and its recommendation to support the proposal to construct 125 units of senior housing on Glenmore Avenue between Sackman Street and Christopher Avenue and the proposal to construct commercial space on vacant City-owned property at 362-376 Livonia Avenue.

Mr. Kofi Hormeku, Chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Committee, reported that the Brownsville Recreation Center and the Betsy Head Park Recreation Center are in need of repairs. The Brownsville Recreation Center pool area ventilation system is not working due to a faulty fan and there are several leaks in the roof of the building. The Department of Parks and Recreation is working to resolve these problems.

As daylight hours increase so does the use of our parks and playgrounds. He requests the support of the community in keeping them as viable places for the children and adults to enjoy. He reminded everyone that the parks are not the place to walk our dogs and that those caught doing so are subject to fines. Persons entering the parks after 8:00 p.m. are also subject to fines.

A motion was made by Mrs. Hellen Thomas-Purdie, seconded by Mr. Michael Howard and carried to approve the Parks and Recreation Committee report.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Ms. Essie Duggan, representing Senator Velmanette Montgomery.

Ms. Duggan stated that Senator Montgomery and her colleagues are in Albany working on the budget. Due to the shortfalls of the economy and the amount of funding the State will receive from the federal government, we should expect to see drastic cuts in the funding of services provided by the State. The cuts are expected to affect a wide range of service throughout the

State of New York.

As has been mentioned before, Senator Montgomery has a passion for youth and for giving them a fair chance to succeed in life. Youth make mistakes and they should not have to remain without opportunities to grow. She is working on legislation that will offer alternatives to youth being incarcerated in adult facilities. She seeks to provide methodologies that will allow certain youth offenders the opportunity to serve their time while living at home and reporting daily to authorities.

She encourages everyone to make use of the services that are located in our community. If the demand (as shown by usage) is not there, the services will be eliminated.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Ms. Marie Monk-Boone from the Office of Senator John Sampson.

Ms. Monk-Boone announced that on Saturday, March 27th at 9517 Avenue "J", Senator Sampson will sponsor a cardio-vascular screening event from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.. Medical personnel will test for high blood pressure, diabetes, and cholesterol levels. RSVPs are required for this event.

On Saturday, April 3rd, he will host his Community Advisory Board meeting from noon to 2:00 p.m. at the Van Dyke Community Center (392 Blake Avenue). The advisory meetings are a good place to let the Senator know about issues of concern to the community.

"March to the Mailbox" is a motivational push for households that have not yet responded to fill out and mail back their 2010 Census forms. April 10th has been designated the nationwide date for this event and Senator Sampson, in association with Community Partnership Commission Association and Community Board #5, will present a Census Day: March to the Mailbox Celebration at the New Lots Family Center, located at 621 New Lots Avenue from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.. Personnel will be available to assist in completing the forms.

Informational flyers are available on tonight's distribution table and at Community Board #16's office. Please call Senator Sampson's District Office at (718) 649-7653 for additional information or to RSVP to the cardio-vascular screening event.

Mr. Charles Ladson asked if Senator Sampson will be providing employment opportunities for the youth this summer?

Ms. Monk-Boone stated that she did not know at this time. She will inquire and relate her findings to Mr. Ladson.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Mr. Melvin Faulkner from the Office of Assemblywoman Inez Barron.

Mr. Faulkner stated that Assemblywoman Barron is in Albany where she and her colleagues are working on the State's budget. It appears that they are near completion of the budget. It would also appear that the budget will have a harsh effect on everyone. If the budget is passed, as it currently stands, it will eliminate 110 senior centers across the State.

Department of Education Chancellor, Joel Klein, was at a meeting held at I.S. 365 in East New York on Thursday, March 18, 2010. Chancellor Klein presented a series of charts and graphs and indicated that there is a twenty percent gap in scores of White and Asian students versus their Black and Hispanic counterparts. Why is it that our schools are always the last to receive proper funding, books, and equipment? Then we are told how badly our schools are doing. Under these terms, comparison will always be unequal.

They are requesting that 100,000 students, teachers, clergypersons, parents, and union members join them on May 20, 2010 for a march and rally on City Hall. They will march across the Queensborough, Williamsburg, Manhattan, and Brooklyn Bridges and on to City Hall to make their voices heard. The Mayor and Chancellor are proposing to displace twenty-three thousand students in School District #75. They should not expect to close any school in our community without a fight.

Mr. Ladson stated that it is important we continue to advocate for special needs students. While they may face challenges, many of them go on to college and lead productive lives.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Councilmember Darlene Mealy.

Councilmember Mealy stated that the school closings and charter schools are under review by the City Council. This is a citywide issue affecting many communities. She will report their findings to the community.

She attended a Woman to Woman event at City Hall earlier today and has concluded that the women of New York City need to take better care of themselves. They are “sheroes”, caregivers and must now learn to care for themselves. Too many are dying of breast cancer and other illnesses that can be treated if caught early.

The Council submitted their budget proposal to the Mayor who, in turn, has cut the community boards’ budget by four percent. The Council is working to restore the funding. Community boards are a vital part of our communities and they already operate on a limited budget.

She will present her State of the District report at 6:00 p.m. on April 22nd at P.S. 21- The Crispus Attucks School (180 Chauncey Street, Brooklyn). Everyone is welcome to attend.

Flyers are available on the distribution table containing information about the City’s upcoming tax lien sale. In the past, she has hosted events wherein individuals were able to settle their outstanding Department of Environmental Protection bills on the spot. Our elderly homeowners are especially susceptible to losing their home to lien sales because they are unaccustomed to having to pay a water bill.

Free Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) classes are offered at her district office (1757 Union Street, 2nd Floor). She urges the audience to take advantage of the course – it could someday save a life.

In celebration of Women’s History Month, she is hosting an “Empowering Women in Changing Times” event at her office on May 2, 2010, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.. She encourages the women of the community to come out and enjoy the event which will include spa treatments, facials, pedicures, and more.

Ms. Blanche Peltonbusch asked if she appropriated any funds for the upkeep of Marcus Garvey Village Apartments. There are rumors circulating that funds were made available, however, she has not seen any work being done except for some dressing up of their offices.

Councilmember Mealy stated that as a private organization they may have received discretionary funds from one or more elected official. She will contact Marcus Garvey Village’s management to see if this is the case.

She is assembling a task force to assist in the opening of New York City Housing Authority Community Centers that are shuttered. About three community centers are complete and remain unused while our children are left to play in the streets. She asks for the support of the community in attending task force meetings. There needs to be more than five persons in attendance when they meet with NYCHA’s chairperson to let him know that this is unacceptable.

Someone asked what is the status of the request for surveillance cameras for the Brownsville Houses.

Councilmember Mealy stated that the project is funded and they should be in the process of obtaining a contractor to install the cameras. She also announced that she has been appointed Chairperson of the Council’s Contract Committee. The City’s annual budget is sixty-three billion dollars and her Committee is charged with distributing eleven billion dollars from that amount.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Mr. Christopher Lundy from the Office of Congressman Edolphus Towns.

He urged the community to complete and return their census forms. Funds needed to operate various programs that serve our community are dependent on an accurate count of the community.

The House of Representatives recently passed legislation on health care reforms. When the bill

becomes law they will report to the community on how it will affect different individuals. Congressman Towns and his staff continue to work with WorkForce One to help reduce the unemployment rate in our communities. He can be reached at (718) 272-1175.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized Mr. Michael Howard of the Central Brooklyn Jazz Consortium.

Mr. Howard read a letter from Congressman Edolphus Towns which congratulated the Consortium on their eleventh anniversary.

The 11th Annual Central Brooklyn Jazz Festival - Brooklyn's longest running continuous festival dedicated to Jazz, - "*Expressions of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*", will take place during Jazz Appreciation Month, March 27 - April 30, 2010 - forty events with over thirty bands performing at various venues throughout Brooklyn. Weeksville Historical Center, New York Aquarium, BAMCafe, Afroarts Design, Sistas' Place, and Jazz966 are some of the locations attracting the jazz world to Brooklyn. Interested parties may call (718) 773-2252 or visit the Consortium's office at 1958 Fulton Street (between Ralph and Howard Avenues) for additional information.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace acknowledged the presence of Mr. Gregory Jackson and Mr. Gerald Childs of the Brownsville Partnership Program.

She recognized Ms. Kristal Simmons of the Wayside Home Delivered Meal Program.

Ms. Simmons stated that the Wayside Home Delivered Meals Program has been in existence for about a year. They service Community Districts 5, 8, and 16. Meals are delivered to homebound seniors on a daily basis. Currently, this amounts to about seven hundred meals each day, Monday through Saturday. They deliver both kosher and non-kosher meals. Brochures are available on tonight's distribution table.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace recognized P.O. Kevin Carro of the 73rd Precinct.

Officer Carro stated that he is the Auxiliary Coordinator for the 73rd Precinct. Auxiliary officers supplement the regular police force. During this economic period there are shortages in their budget and the number of police officers is being cut. The Department is seeking to increase the enrollment of volunteer auxiliary officers. Becoming an auxiliary officer will give one great insight into the Police Department. College aged students may be able to earn credits by joining the auxiliary police. Brochures are available on tonight's distribution table.

First Vice Chairperson Kollock-Wallace reminded everyone to complete and return their Census forms and to encourage their neighbors to do the same.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.