

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 – March 28, 2017

Attendance

David Alexander
Carolyn Benjamin-Smith
Margaret Brewer
Aaron Brown (A)
Dr. Cleopatra Brown
Anthony Clark (E)
Adrainer Coleman
Carlos Diaz (A)
Brenda Duchene (E)
Christopher Durosinmi (A)
Norman Frazier
Danny Goodine (A)
Chyanne Hairston (A)
Sarah Hall
Jessie Hilliard (E)
Mawuli Hormeku
Michael Howard
Prince Issachar
Carl Joseph (A)
Pamela Junior (E)
Eula Key
Danny King
Bettie Kollock-Wallace (E)
Charles Ladson, Sr. (E)
Wendy Lanier (A)
Carolyn Lee (E)
Quardean Lewis-Allen (A)
Albion Liburd (E)

Deborah Mack (E)
Yolanda Matthews
John McCadney, Jr.
Virginia McClam (E)
Andrea McCullough (E)
Ronella Medica (A)
Shemene Minter
Genese Morgan
Anita Pierce (A)
Marie Pierre
Linda Rivera
Wendy Rutherford (A)
Evelyn Sanchez (E)
Delores Slaughter (A)
Celina Trowell (A)
Ernestine Turner
Rev. Dr. Miran Ukaegbu
Patricia Williamson (E)
Pat Winston
Viola D. Greene-Walker, District Manager
Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
Hon. Inez Barron
Jason Salmon for Hon. Velmanette Montgomery
Melvin Faulkner for Hon. Charles Barron
Rev. Eddie Karim for Hon. Latrice M. Walker
Leroy Hutchinson for Hon. Nick Perry
William William for Hon. Darlene Mealy
Malcolm McDaniel for Hon. Eric L. Adams
Shelton Jones for Hon. Eric Gonzalez

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

Chairperson Genese Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. and an invocation was said by Rev. David Demera.

The roll was called and a quorum was not present.

Chairperson Morgan next recognized Councilmember Inez Barron.

Councilmember Barron stated that the community achieved a victory with the preservation of the Green Valley Community Garden. She was able to get the city to agree to preserve the garden in its entirety and not just a sliver of it. Our community has a high rate of diabetes and other chronic diseases. We need to have places where we can learn about and have access to fresh produce.

The project being proposed for 210-214 Hegeman Avenue has come before the Land Use Committee (of the City Council). Thus far, she approves what has been presented with the caveat they also include some 1-bedroom units, so that there is not such a large concentration of studio units.

She was disappointed to see the closure of P.S. 165. She opposed the closing because the school was listed as a renewal school and as such, they were told that they had three years to raise their scores. The school was voted to be closed after only one and a half years. They are now going through an appeal process which she supports.

Mayor de Blasio is proposing the addition of 90 shelters across the city. She asks that the community fight against this and any other proposals that do not respect our neighborhood and its residents.

Deputy Inspector Rafael Mascol, Commanding Officer of the 73rd Precinct, was introduced.

Deputy Inspector Mascol stated that they continue to experience declines in the seven major crime categories this year. Overall crime is down 4.5% year-to-date. Robberies are down 16% for the year. Shootings are down by 66% with a reduction in shooting victims of 65%. They look forward to keeping the trend going with tools such as the Neighborhood Coordinating Officer (NCO) program, which is now in its second year. The NCO's are making good progress in reaching out to businesses and they want to have those relationships trickle-down to the "Steady Sector" Officers. Steady Sector Officers are assigned to patrol the same sector daily which allows them to get to know the residents and businesses in the sector. He encourages the audience to get to know their individual NCOs and Steady Sector Officers. Should they have any complaints or quality of life issues, they have someone they can reach out to specifically address the condition.

Someone asked how they could find out who their NCOs and Steady Sector Officers are?

Deputy Inspector Mascol stated that they are posted on the Precinct's Twitter page (#nypd73pct).

District Manager Viola Greene-Walker highlighted the following from her report:

- Affordable Housing for Rent - Applications are now being accepted for 25 newly constructed units at 603 Mother Gaston Boulevard.

You may apply online or through the mail. To apply online, go to www.nyc.gov/housingconnect. To request an application by mail, send a postcard or self-addressed envelope to: Affordable and Supportive Services at Van Dyke, c/o Shinda Management Corp, 221-10 Jamaica Avenue, 3rd Floor, Queens Village, N.Y. 11428. Applications must be postmarked or submitted online no later than May 24th, 2017. Late applications will not be considered.

- National Grid - Beginning in April and continuing through November 2017, National Grid will install approximately 1.4 miles of new gas main from Linden Boulevard to Glenmore Avenue.

The project will begin on the north side of Linden Boulevard in front of the Brownsville Recreation Center playground, west to Mother Gaston Boulevard, north along Mother Gaston Boulevard to Hegeman Avenue, east along Hegeman Avenue to Junius Street, north along Junius Street to Blake Avenue, west along Blake Avenue to Powell Street, and north along Powell Street to Glenmore Avenue.

Concerns about the project can be reported to the Community Board Office or directly to Renee McClure, Community and Customer Management, National Grid at (929) 324-4390.

- Department of Sanitation - On Sunday, April 2nd from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Rain or shine), at Prospect Park, Park Circle, corner of Parkside Avenue and Prospect Park SW (cars enter from Parkside Avenue), the New York City Department of Sanitation will hold a SAFE Disposal event. The event provides City residents with a one-stop drop-off to safely dispose of potentially harmful household products.
- Summer Camp - The PAL Brownsville Beacon Center will be hosting an application party for those interested in a FREE summer camp program on Wednesday, April 5th from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., Saturday, April 22nd from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m., and Saturday, April 29th from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the cafeteria at 985 Rockaway Avenue between Hegeman Avenue and Linden Boulevard.
- Breast Cancer Screening - The Mobile Care Clinic, sponsored by the American Italian Cancer Foundation, hosted by the Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health Center, located at 592 Rockaway Avenue, is offering Digital Mammogram and Clinical Breast Exams on Saturday, April 8, 2017 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to women aged 40 and older, currently living in New York City who have not had a mammogram in the past 12 months.
- Community Action Network - The Healthy Start Brooklyn Community Action Network, whose goal is to work closely with community members, community-based organizations, city agencies, and other stakeholders to reduce stress, alleviate toxic stress, and improve mental health, primarily in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville, Bushwick, and East New York invites the

public to their next meeting on Tuesday, April 18, 2017 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Gregory Jackson Center for Brownsville, located at 519 Rockaway.

- Summer High School Internship - Acting Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez has announced the open application period for a summer internship program for high school students who live or attend school in Brooklyn. Students with an interest in criminal justice or public service and desire to participate in the comprehensive 5-week program should contact the Brooklyn District Attorney's office at 350 Jay Street.

Also contained within her report is grant information as well as several complaints received by the Board's office which were forwarded to various agencies for resolution.

Chairperson Morgan stated that in the absence of a quorum, we are unable to accept the District Manager's Report.

She then reported that there are several meetings that take place during each month to discuss quality of life issues, and other matters and projects affecting the community. It is extremely important that we each stay informed and connected to these discussions that take place with individuals, agencies, and organizations bringing forth matters and projects in the District.

The Community Board's office is open Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and can assist with information and complaints; including but not limited to illegal dumping, trash pickup, park maintenance, potholes, poorly managed housing or construction sites, broken streetlights, broken sidewalks, tree conditions and street closing permits, etcetera.

Additionally, there are twelve (12) committees that work on advocacy, planning, and information sharing related to broader quality of life issues that impact our community.

Our District Manager, Viola Greene-Walker, can be reached at (718) 385-0323 or bk16@cb.nyc.gov or residents may call 3-1-1 to obtain information and file complaints about the same conditions.

Recent news articles about the Vital Brooklyn plan which is a comprehensive community development plan initiated by Governor Andrew Cuomo which will re-invest public resources totaling \$1.4 billion into Central Brooklyn. In the last three decades or more, we have not received this type of direct and intentional investment in our community. Although residents have been advocating for such. We, therefore, cannot afford to get this wrong. As a community, we have been engaging in community development planning initiatives for many years and much of what we want to see in our community is known and only requires fine tuning. She urged the audience to please all answer when the call to action takes place.

The only way to get it right is for more members of the community to get involved and help move our community agenda.

The media is continuing to perpetuate negative messages about our community, and many of us were collectively outraged by what we read; because recently we have been getting so much good news about things happening in our community. Let us not allow this negative news to distract us from owning our narrative and building a more positive message about our community.

Lastly, she asks that the community take advantage of the programs and resources offered within the community because if we do not use it, we will lose it.

She extended welcomes and a thought of gratitude to members of the audience in attendance for the first-time or first-time in some time for being here tonight and urge their continued attendance and activism for the community.

Chairperson Morgan recognized Mr. Andrew Hoyles of the Department of Sanitation.

Mr. Hoyles stated that he is the Senior Manager for Organics Outreach for the Department of Sanitation. The Department will expand its organics collection to Community District #16 this spring. An official notice has been mailed to homes within the District advising residents of the upcoming change. They will be collecting organics for recycling from the entire city by the end of 2018. Basically, organics are food scraps, yard clippings, and soiled paper.

This is an important step for the city. Instead of creating greenhouse gases in landfills, the material will now be turned into compost and fuel for clean energy, as well as reduce waste.

Beginning in April, the Department will begin distributing rodent-proof brown containers with latching covers and smaller bins for collecting kitchen scraps to 1 to 9 unit residences. Larger residences and commercial units are also eligible to participate in organics collection but must sign up at www.nyc.gov/organics.

This is a permanent program and they want everyone to participate in it. Currently, the program is voluntary and summons will not be issued for not separating organics. However, they are hoping that most residents will participate and help create a better environment.

Someone asked if there will be a specific day for organics collection?

Mr. Hoyles stated that collection will begin during the first week of May and will coincide with the day that other recyclables are collected.

Ms. Balinda Harris stated she already has problems getting her tenants to comply with recycling ordinances. Requesting that they separate organics will be an additional burden. Can the Department of Sanitation issue summons to noncomplying tenants as opposed to property owners?

Mr. Hoyles stated that they will not issue summons to tenants. For buildings with more than ten residential units, the Department's staff can work with the building's management to educate tenants on how to properly recycle.

Someone asked if churches are eligible?

Mr. Hoyles stated that churches, other non-profits, food kitchen, and city agencies are all eligible but they must sign up at www.nyc.gov/organics.

Someone asked what happens if they do not receive a bin?

Mr. Hoyles stated that they will be delivering the bins to every 1 to 9 unit building in the District. However, should it go missing you can request a replacement by completing a form on the website. He encourages property owners to place their addresses on the bins once they are received, to avoid confusion amongst neighbors.

Chairperson Morgan thanked Mr. Hoyles for his presentation.

Next, District Manager Viola Greene-Walker, in behalf of Mr. Daniel Goodine, Chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Committee, reported that the Parks and Recreation Committee met on March 21, 2017 with Brooklyn Borough Commissioner Marty Maher and the architect teams to review the schematic plans for Prospect Plaza Park and Betsy Head Park.

She called forth the representatives from the Department of Parks and the architects to present on the two projects.

Mr. Len Hopper of Weintraub Diaz Landscape Architecture, PLLC stated that he is working on the plans for Prospect Plaza Park. The site's borders are Saratoga Avenue, Sterling Place, and Park Place and is on the footprint of the former Prospect Plaza NYCHA (New York City Housing Authority) Development. Along Saratoga Avenue, affordable housing is being built with Phase I and Phase II completed or near completion, and Phase III is in the early stages of construction. The park will be behind the Phase III development.

Overhead photographs of the site and surrounding area were displayed and showed the location of nearby parks within a 10-minute walk. Mr. Hopper also noted that scoping sessions were held with members of the community who informed them that the community wanted to increase and upgrade the active play capacity for the neighborhood with children's play areas with water features, basketball courts. They also wanted enhancements to the environmental amenities of the site such as an open lawn, trees and planting beds, and passive use of the site with seating areas and game tables.

Historic views of the site from 1924 through 2012 were displayed. Contextual diagrams were displayed to inform the audience on the spatial relationship of the park to nearby facilities, transportation routes, and the demographics of the community in comparison to Brooklyn and the City. A topographical drawing showed a steep elevation from Sterling Place to Park Place. The plans call for the incline to be mitigated via a meandering pathway. Additional diagrams, showed the layout of play equipment and other park amenities including plantings, tables and benches, a basketball court, fencing heights and types, lighting, and color schemes.

Someone asked if there will be a comfort station within the park?

Mr. Hopper stated that there will not be a comfort station within the park. The constraints of budget and space do not allow for one. He anticipates that the adjacent community center will be able to accommodate the restroom needs of park goers.

Spirited discussion then took place regarding the lack of a comfort station in the design with several stating that something in the park should have been sacrificed to include the comfort station. Several felt that it is necessary with young people using the park.

Mr. Hopper stated that their research showed that two-thirds of the parks in Brooklyn do not have comfort stations. They will not be able to accommodate the addition of a comfort station to a park this size.

Someone stated that the design indicates spaces for 2- to 5-year olds and 5- to 12-year olds. Are their spaces planned for adolescents?

Mr. Hopper stated that this park is intended for the younger children. There are other parks within a 10-minute walk to accommodate the older youth.

Ms. Balinda Harris stated that she took part in the workshop that was done prior to the schematics being drawn and is pleased with the outcome. She does not think anything needs to be sacrificed. Do we want to have a park with a restroom and no play equipment? She suggested that parents have their children go to the bathroom before or after using the park.

Chairperson Morgan asked if there is a standard for the amount of acreage that a park has that would require a comfort station be built?

Mr. Davey Ives of the Department of Parks and Recreation stated that there is no specific standard.

Someone stated that she does not understand why they would consider building a new park without planning for comfort stations.

Chairperson Morgan stated that the park is designed to be a community park for persons living nearby. Individuals using the park are likely to be within 5-minutes walking distance to their home. If the park was far away from residential areas, it would be a little more difficult to get to the bathroom. If a park is close to home, it is easier to get to a restroom. We go to the park to play not to use the restroom. In this instance, we need to think a little broader. Do we want public bathrooms in the community or do we want assets that we can use and enjoy?

Ms. Carolyn Benjamin-Smith asked what is the cost of a comfort station?

Mr. Ives stated that the cost of a typical 20-foot by 20-foot comfort station building is between two and a half to three million dollars. The total budget for the Prospect Plaza Park project is one and a half million dollars.

Rev. David Demera stated that understands the cost issue of the comfort station. Could port-a-potties be used as a way of balancing the physical needs of the children and the budget constraints?

Mr. Ives stated that they could look at port-a-potties as temporary solution, but they would not want it to be a long-term solution.

Mr. John Butz of Abel Bainnson Butz, LLP stated that they are a landscape architecture firm and next presented on Betsy Head Park.

Betsy Head Park is one of five “anchor parks” in the city. Thirty million dollars have been allocated towards the rehabilitation of Betsy Head Park. Through the community visioning process, they developed the following goals for the project:

- Create warm and inviting entrances with opportunities for seating and gathering.
- Create flexible open spaces for community events such as Summer Stage.
- Create an exciting destination.
- Open recreation to all sorts of abilities and ages from young to old.

The project will take place in two phases. The first phase will be the parcel that is bordered by Thomas S. Boyland Street, Blake Avenue, Bristol Street, and the Imagination Playground. The second phase will be on the larger 6-acre portion of the park which lies between Dumont and Livonia Avenues.

Photographs and schematic drawings showing the existing layout along with the proposed plan were displayed. Phase I will have a multi-purpose play area, accessible basketball courts (half-court and full-court), a parkour area, and a skate park.

In Phase II, they will close the entry at Herzl Street and open four new entries, install new adult fitness equipment, a new resilient running surface, a synthetic turf suitable for football, soccer, lacrosse, and softball. The existing comfort station will be renovated, along with the handball courts, basketball courts, and seating area.

Standards for materials and equipment to be used were displayed.

Councilmember Inez Barron asked if the pool area will be part of the project?

Mr. Butz stated that it will not be.

Councilmember Barron asked if there are any plans to refurbish the pool?

Mr. Ives stated that it is not currently funded.

Councilmember Barron asked if the existing concrete bleachers at the northwest corner of the Phase II site will be demolished?

Mr. Butz stated that they will be and the location will be a new entrance to the park.

Someone questioned the expenditure of thirty-million dollars on a park when there are other needs in the community.

Chairperson Morgan stated that the community has been asking for monies to improve Betsy Head Park for many years. The park is badly deteriorated. Funding for some of the other issues you mentioned are already in place for programs.

The questioner stated that earlier this evening, Chairperson Morgan stated that reports in the news media were untrue. If so, why do we need this expenditure?

Chairperson Morgan stated that our conditions here are not as bad. She is not going to let the person who wrote the article tell how happy we are in our community. We dictate our own happiness. Yes, the community has challenges; however, a condition that appear to be true for one resident, may not be true for another.

The questioner stated that at the end of the day, she still lives in Brownsville whereas most of the Board does not.

Chairperson Morgan assured the questioner that this is not the case. The members of the Board live in the community. She thanked her for attending this meeting and looks forward to working with her.

Someone stated that there are different perspectives on the issues. There needs to be a way to look at not just short-term objectives, but also the long-term effect on the community.

Chairperson Morgan stated that she agrees which is why she encourages participation in the committee meetings. There are twelve committees that meet to address issues affecting the community. During these meetings, they can look at the issues in-depth, question presenters and make suggestions that can then be incorporated into what is presented to the full Board. We need to be proactive instead being reactive. Waiting until an issue is being brought to the full Board when it is ready to be approved, makes it difficult to change. We need to be proactive and less reactive. If we are proactive, we can have anything we want in this community

Rev. David Demera asked how can people in the community can obtain work and be part of the construction phase of the projects?

Mr. Ives stated that this question is asked often. All City contracts are publicly bid. Anyone in the community may bid for the contracts or work as a sub-contractor for one of the prime contractors. It is just a matter of looking for the advertisements and having a company that is setup. Anyone can bid on the project as long as they are bonded and meet the requirements of the city.

Rev. Demera stated that he is thinking along the lines of construction workers who live in the community and are looking for work. Is there a way that they can be contacted?

Chairperson Morgan stated that contractors (who have procured contracts from the city) are now required to use the HireNYC portal to post all open positions. Residents from the community can then apply for these positions. The Community Board advertises the opportunities, as they are made known to the Board. They are also posted at the WorkForce1 Center which is a program that the Board requested and is now in the community.

District Manager Greene-Walker continued reading the Committee's report by stating that it is their recommendation that: 1) electricity be provided in each of the parks, 2) neutral colors for basketball courts be used, and 3) the Community Board approve the schematics for Prospect Plaza Park and Betsy Head Park with the recommendations. Additionally, the Committee requests that these two parks be place on the list for Request for Proposals to provide Wi-Fi service.

Chairperson Morgan thanked everyone for their participation in the discussion of the proposal. However, because a quorum is not present, the item is tabled until next month.

District Manager Viola Greene-Walker, in behalf of Deborah Mack, Chairperson of the Transportation and Franchises Committee, reported that the Committee met on March 13, 2017 with representatives from the Department of Transportation (DOT) and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and discussed expansion of the bike lanes and bike programs in the community.

The DOT representative will present suggested new bike lane routes at the April Transportation Committee meeting.

The Committee also heard a presentation by the Department of Transportation on behalf of the proprietors of 3 Black Cats Café and Cakery, located at 3 Belmont Avenue. Owners of the establishment have filed an application for Street Seats along the curb in front of 3 Belmont Avenue. At our April Community Board meeting, there will be a presentation from DOT on the Street Seats applications.

The next meeting of the Transportation and Franchises Committee will be on Thursday, April 6th, at 6:30 p.m. in the First Floor Conference Room at 444 Thomas S. Boyland Street.

Chairperson Morgan state that in the absence of a quorum, we cannot vote on the report.

As Chairperson of the Economic Development Committee, she next reported that the Committee held a meeting on Thursday, March 16, 2017.

The Committee heard a presentation by Lucas Denton of the Melting Pot Foundation which is a 501 (c) (3) organization formed to operate a 45-seat neighborhood facility inclusive of a learning kitchen, bakery, eatery and community center at 69 Belmont Avenue in consultation with several community-based organizations that address food insecurities.

The organization will offer a 40 week – stipend paid, culinary arts training program utilizing an apprenticeship model with a focus toward court involved youth ages 18-24. The program is expected to equip its graduates with the necessary certification and skills required to obtain employment in the restaurant industry.

The menu will include breakfast, lunch, and dinner with table service and honor traditional, yet healthy neighborhood recipes; with a 50% discount to SNAP recipients. The program will be led by Rodney Frazer, well known co-owner of several Brooklyn-based restaurants and offer social services.

Anyone interested in joining the advisory board or seeking more information, should contact Mr. Lucas Denton at (845) 616-0982 or brownsville@meltingpotfoundation.org. Applications for the training program can be submitted online at www.meltingpotfoundation.org.

The Committee also met with Carlos Ortiz of the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs to discuss resources available to the community to help improve the consumer experience along our commercial corridors with regards to such practices as baggage check, return and refunds and business owner relationships.

In addition to a wealth of information, Mr. Ortiz provided the Committee with copies of the inspection checklist for General Retail and a handout titled “10 Things Every Consumer Should Know”. In efforts to improve our neighborhood shopping experience, the Committee will work with the Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District to implement a “Culture of Compliance” regarding store policies and community engagement.

Lastly, the deadline to apply for Summer Youth Employment has been extended until Friday, March 31, 2017. Please continue to encourage our youth to apply for these opportunities.

The purpose of the Economic Development Committee is to identify and respond to issues related to existing or proposed economic opportunities for the District.

If anyone has any questions or comments regarding the contents of this report, please feel free to contact Genese Morgan at bk16@cb.nyc.gov.

Someone asked when the culinary school will open?

Chairperson Morgan stated that the school will open in May 2017.

Because a quorum was not present, the report was tabled.

Rev. Dr. Miran Ukaegbu, Chairperson of the Health & Human Services Committee, reported that the Committee met on March 8, 2017 with Dr. Lula Philips, the representative and Trainer of the CPR Hands Only from Hunter College, New York City. In her presentation, she emphasized the difference between regular CPR and the CPR hands only and that research has indicated that both techniques if applied effectively are excellent preventive measures needed to save lives in Brooklyn, especially in our communities. She stated that her responsibility is to seek, inform and train volunteers from community outreach and public education initiatives even at health fairs, schools, senior citizen homes, block parties, youth events, public meetings, and other events in our community.

The Committee acknowledged the importance of her work, requested that she send the additional information and promised to assist her further.

Please be informed that the new One Brooklyn Health System which combines Brookdale Hospital, Interfaith Hospital, Wyckoff Hospital, and Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center is being structured. The \$700 million is being approved and discussions on acquiring the additional \$1.5 billion required to sustain their operations through fiscal 2021 are being held.

Several members of Board Community #16 and residents of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community (a total of 20 community volunteers) were trained and certified as Mental Health First Aider in Brownsville on Saturday, March 25, 2017. She congratulates them on their achievement.

Mental health issues affect all of society in some way, shape, or form. It is estimated that about one in five Americans will experience a diagnosable mental disorder in any given year. It is

extremely likely that you will encounter someone in your family, workplace, school, church, or community who lives with a diagnosed mental disorder. In addition, you will encounter others who are experiencing distress or facing a mental health challenge that may require support and assistance but not medical intervention.

The Ocean Hill-Brownsville community has a high percentage of the mental health issues. We can learn and be our own advocates and help each other towards good quality health and wellness.

The Committee encourages everyone to sign up for this training. Please call the Community Board Office at (718) 385-0323 to register for the next training session.

For more information on other workshops, trainings, and activities, please email brooklynActionCenter@health.nyc.gov.

She encouraged the audience to inform themselves regarding the following March 2017 health awareness information:

- Women History Month and Women Issues
- National Nutrition Month
- Brain Injury Awareness Month
- Child Life Month
- Save Your Vision Month
- National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
- World Kidney Month
- American Diabetes Alert (March 28)
- National Doctors Day (March 30).

The Committee's goal is protecting the health of our community and providing essential human services to improve the health, safety and well-being of all its residents.

The next Committee meeting will be on April 12th, 6:00 p.m. in the Community Board Office.

Rev. Ukaegbu introduced Mr. Marcus Harris, Special Assistant to the Brooklyn Borough President.

Mr. Harris stated that he is present this evening to speak about an issue affecting our communities. Not just the community of Brownsville, but rather communities throughout the nation.

April is Child Abuse Awareness Month and the Borough President's office will be focusing on awareness and working on ways to reduce child abuse. Children are important to our future. For this reason, Borough President Eric Adams has been collaborating with Ms. Ama Dwimoh, Special Counsel the Borough President, on Operation C.A.R.E. (Child Abuse Response and Engagement).

This coming Tuesday, April 4th from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., they will be at the Brownsville Collaborative Middle School (85 Watkins Street), as part of an outreach campaign to educate and empower residents on identifying the signs of child abuse and neglect in their communities. He encouraged everyone to participate.

He stated that the Borough President's office also offers free legal clinics wherein attorneys are available to assist with issues such as housing discrimination, family law, and veterans' issues.

Someone asked if they can assist in immigration issues?

Mr. Harris stated they do not currently have an immigration lawyer, but they have resources to assist in becoming a citizen. You may call (718) 802-3700 to get a referral.

Because a quorum was not present, a vote was not taken on the report.

Ms. Marie Pierre, Chairperson of the Legislative Committee, thanked Rev. Dr. Ukaegbu for making the opportunity to participate in the Mental Health First Aide training available to her. She attended the session and learned a great deal from it.

She next reported that the Legislative Committee met on March 20, 2017 and discussed several pieces of legislation. The Committee was updated on bills previously discussed, for example, the “Plastic bag bill” which did not pass the Assembly because many of the legislators questioned the fact that the fees collected would not have been used on projects to improve the neighborhood but instead be put in the pockets of the businesses. The Governor, however, has since called for a committee to study the impact of plastic on the environment.

The Committee also revisited legislation that was passed in California prohibiting schools from requiring parents to provide or pay for supplies and educational activity. It states that the state has an obligation to provide students the opportunity for a free sound education. Fortunately, a Committee member, Dr. Cleopatra Brown serves on the Community Education Council of School District #23 and brought this issue to legislators on the Education Committee in Albany and it was well received. It is just waiting on a bill number and hopefully it will be brought up in committee, discussed and eventually similar legislation will be proposed for New York State.

The Committee also discussed “Raise the Age” which has been ongoing legislation to reform the juvenile and criminal justice system. This legislation, which was first introduced by Senator Velmanette Montgomery in 2012, was recently reintroduced by Assemblymember Joseph R. Lentol and it seeks to protect 16- and 17-year-olds who are nonviolent offenders from getting caught up in the criminal justice system. This is just a broad overview of the bill, however, given its intensity and concerns regarding the criminalization of certain offenses, the Committee intends to further discuss this legislation.

Finally, they discussed legislation proposed by Assemblymember Latrice Walker dealing with protecting the rights of Mitchell-Lama residents.

The next Legislative Committee meeting will be held on April 17, 2017, 6:30 p.m. in the Community Board office.

Because a quorum was not present, a vote was not taken on the report.

Ms. Margaret Brewer, Chairperson of the Public Safety Committee, reported that the Committee met on March 1, 2017 to discuss the meaning of and how to recognize domestic violence and what can we do to reduce the acts of domestic violence in our District and outreach efforts to our community.

On March 27th, the Public Safety Committee joined the Women’s Committee in hosting a Victims and Survivors of Domestic Violence event. Mr. Kevin Morris of the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) made an informative presentation on interpersonal relationships, that was followed by a healthy group discussion.

She thanks Mr. Morris, and his office for the support they have committed to the Committee’s Domestic Violence Awareness Campaign.

The next topic to be covered by the Committee will be the effects domestic violence has on children and offering non-judgmental advice.

She urges the audience to take advantage of the workshops being offered. The information is relatable and many listening, found themselves reflecting on their own situations and some will view things differently with this better understanding.

Being well informed will help in making better assessments of some of the challenging situations and help you navigate them more positively.

She suggests that everyone check their homes, front to back, for fire hazards daily. Be aware of windows with blowing curtains that can potentially knock over something flammable (candles), clothing or debris too close to space heaters and extension cords, unattended cooking or smoking, careless extinguishing of cigarettes, and curious/destructive children with access to lighters or matches.

Please talk about the dangers of fire and safety measures for your home as well as an emergency plan where everyone understands their role in staying alive. Ensure that smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are good working order.

Be vigilant when operating a vehicle. Patience is essential; If you are in slow moving traffic, the chances of someone crossing the street or a disabled vehicle is more likely than there being a plot to make you late. Please do not pass on the right to avoid stopping. Being late is better than being hit by a vehicle. Driving is a privilege, please do it in a considerate manner.

She urges parents of school aged children, to check their backpacks for items that may be harmful to the child or others. Maintain communication with your children to keep their trust and informed on safety.

The Committee's next meeting will be held on April 5, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Board's office.

Because a quorum was not present, a vote was not taken on the report.

Ms. Linda Rivera, Chairperson of the Women's Committee, reported that the Committee met on Friday, March 17, 2017 in concert with the Public Safety Committee to discuss the topic of domestic violence. The Committees participated in an engaging and informative discussion with Mr. Kevin Morris, the Community Liaison from the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence. As the representative of OCDV (Office to Combat Domestic Violence), he travels throughout the boroughs meeting with groups to teach and inform what we should know and the resources available to individuals in the community. They learned about the various types of ways a person could be involved in some type of mental, physical, or emotional abuse. During the presentation, a wealth of information was provided. The Women's Committee is in the process of engaging the victims in our community who may be facing domestic violence issues and bringing resources to those individuals.

During the meeting, Mr. Morris posed questions to show us the premise of how someone can harbor an abusive mentality.

If you are in immediate danger, you should always call 911 or you can call the New York City Domestic Violence hotline at 1-800-621- HOPE (4673) which is a 24-hour a day hotline for immediate safety planning and shelter assistance.

The Family Justice Center, located at 350 Jay Street in Brooklyn, is open Monday through Friday between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. You can visit them to create a full plan for your safety and discuss options with a case manager on what you can do. Ultimately, they want to be a resource where families and individuals can go for assistance. It does not matter if the abuse happened 20 years ago or yesterday they are there to assist.

If you would like Mr. Morris to hold a workshop on building healthy relationships, he can work with his agency to teach young people what a healthy relationship should look like. They are available to visit schools to provide presentations to teach both young women and young men on how to identify abusive behaviors.

The next Women's Committee meeting is scheduled for April 21 at 6:00 p.m. via conference call. If there are any topics that you would like the Committee to address, please contact Ms. Rivera at bk16@cb.nyc.gov or the District Manager at (718) 385- 0323.

Because a quorum was not present, a vote was not taken on the report.

Mr. David Alexander, Chairperson of the Youth Services Planning Committee, reported that the Committee met on March 9, 2017 with the cosponsors of the Middle School Workshop event which will be held on April 22, 2017 at PS/IS 323, and Mott Hall Bridges Academy, located at 210 Chester Street.

The program will begin at 9:00 a.m. and will end at approximately 3:30 p.m. There are eight workshop topics for the youth to choose from. Community program vendors will set up booths and provide the participants with information pertaining to their programs. A parent workshop has been considered as part of the youth workshop.

The next Committee meeting will be on Friday, April 7, 2017 at 444 Thomas Boyland. He thanks Committee members who have devoted their time to acquire and provide services to the youth in our community and their families. Individuals who are interested in discussing concerns regarding schools, children and or, youth issues, or simply would like to join the

Committee, please contact District Manager Greene-Walker at (718) 385-0323 to inform her of your interest(s).

Because a quorum was not present, a vote was not taken on the report.

Ms. Adrainer K. Coleman, Chairperson of the Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committee, reported that at last month's Community Board meeting, an appeal was heard from members of the Brownsville Cultural Coalition to support their efforts to landmark the former Our Lady of Loreto Church building at 126 Sackman Street to preserve the structure and create a cultural center. The Community Board voted to support this proposal.

Realizing that the views of the Diocese of Brooklyn, owners of the former Our Lady of Loreto Church building, have not been heard the Committee reached out to them for a meeting to hear their position.

On March 23, 2017, the Committee met with Monsignor Alfred LoPinto, representing the Diocese of Brooklyn and Councilmember Rafael Espinal, Jr.

Monsignor LoPinto informed the Committee that they own the property at 126 Sackman Street and per engineering reports that they commissioned, the building is severely deteriorated and they are seeking to demolish the building and construct housing for homeless veterans.

After a lengthy discussion and to maintain the structure of the former Our Lady of Loreto Church building and its rich history, and the Diocese's effort to develop housing for homeless veterans, the Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committee submits the following resolution for adoption by Community Board #16:

WHEREAS, 126 Sackman Street, Brooklyn is owned by the Diocese of Brooklyn and has been decommissioned as a church; and

WHEREAS, the structure which is formerly known as Our Lady Loreto was examined by engineers hired by the Diocese of Brooklyn and the engineer's report has determined that the structure is severely damaged; and

WHEREAS, Monsignor LoPinto, representing the Diocese of Brooklyn, has agreed to work with Community Board #16 to design a building to incorporate a community facility and housing for homeless veterans at 126 Sackman Street; and

WHEREAS, Councilman Rafael Espinal has committed to working with the Diocese of Brooklyn and Community Board #16 to secure City capital budget funds to construct a community facility and affordable housing for veterans at 126 Sackman Street; and

WHEREAS, the Dioceses of Brooklyn has agreed to safeguard and maintain the statue of the Virgin Mary and the memorial to war veterans at their present location situated on the grounds of 126 Sackman Street; and

WHEREAS, the Diocese of Brooklyn has agreed to safeguard and maintain the façade of the former Our Lady of Loreto Church and the statues of St. Paul and St. Peter affixed thereto;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board #16 rescinds its February 28, 2017 vote to support the application by the Brownsville Cultural Coalition to landmark the former Our Lady of Loreto Church building; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Community Board #16 supports the proposal by the Diocese of Brooklyn to preserve the statues of the Virgin Mary and the memorial to war veterans on the grounds of 126 Sackman Street; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Community Board #16 supports the proposal by the Diocese of Brooklyn to preserve the statues of St. Paul and St. Peter affixed thereto to the façade of the former Our Lady of Loreto Church; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Community Board #16 supports the proposal by the Diocese of Brooklyn to construct housing for homeless veterans at 126 Sackman Street and community facility space for a cultural center and educational programs.

The next Committee meeting will be held on April 11, 2017.

Mr. John McCadney, Jr. asked how can the Board rescind its support of the landmarking of the building without a vote?

District Manager Greene-Walker stated that the Committee is requesting that the Board rescind its vote to give a letter of support. In that a quorum is not present, no action can be taken at this evening's meeting.

Chairperson Morgan recognized Mr. Melvin Faulkner, representing the Office of Assemblyman Charles Barron.

Mr. Faulkner stated that immigration is an issue that is affecting the entire nation. Last month, Assemblyman Barron sponsored an Immigration Forum wherein persons who have issues regarding their immigration status could speak directly to attorneys about those matters. Should the individuals who attended the forum be stopped by ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) agents, they can present the attorney's business card and employ their right to not be questioned without the presence of their attorney.

Mr. Faulkner stated that this is good legal advice and suggests that anyone who finds themselves in such a situation heed the advice.

They will sponsor another Immigration Forum on Friday, April 21, 2017, 6:30 p.m. at the New Hope Family Worship Center, located at 817 Livonia Avenue. Fliers are available on tonight's distribution table.

He can be reached by calling (718) 257-5824.

Rev. Eddie Karim, representing the Office of Assemblywoman Latrice Walker, stated that Assemblywoman Walker was briefed on the discussion regarding the comfort station at the proposed Prospect Plaza Park and has stated that she will try to find funding for the placement of a comfort station within the capital budget.

Assemblywoman Walker will host her State of the District Address on April 6th and invites the audience to R.S.V.P. for the event.

She invites everyone to join her at the Universoul circus at meet the Leaders Night on April 2nd. Discounted tickets may be purchased by visiting universoulcircus.com and entering the code NYCHA.

Mr. Jason Salmon, representing the Office of Senator Velmanette Montgomery, reported that Senator Montgomery is championing "Raise the Age" legislation (S4157) which was passed in the Assembly (A4876). Governor Andrew Cuomo is also supporting a "Raise the Age" agenda. It is important to note that there are significant differences between the Governor's proposal and S4157. The Governor's proposal would not take effect until 2020 and will add offenses that youth may be charged with as an adult. Senator Montgomery's bill will take effect immediately without adding charges. Informational pamphlets comparing the two proposals can be found on tonight's distribution table.

Mayor de Blasio has announced his plan to add ninety additional homeless shelters and expand on thirty existing shelters. Adding shelters is not the answer to a homeless situation that is three decades in the making. We need more permanent, affordable housing. Not only for the homeless, but also for moderate- and low-income earners. Affordable housing should be truly affordable for low- to moderate-income New Yorkers. There are approximately 1,100 vacant lots across the city. Senator Montgomery has written a letter to Mayor de Blasio proposing that they be transferred to non-profit organizations that can create truly affordable housing and not be sold to private developers.

Mr. Shelton Jones, representing the Office of Acting Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez, stated that they are two Begin Again events on April 14th and 15th at Mount Pisgah Baptist

Church, located at 212 Tompkins Avenue from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on both days. During the events, court and defense attorneys will be available to assist individuals in resolving outstanding summonses. The summonses must be dated prior to March 24, 2017.

Their summer internship program has been expanded. Last year, they had a pilot program wherein ten interns were hired. This year, there will be twenty interns.

The internship will be for five weeks with a stipend of \$150 per week plus a Metrocard for the interns commuting cost during the internship. The internship is not a “busy work” type program; the successful candidate will be attending court sessions with assistant district attorneys, work with paralegal in preparing for court cases, speak with judges, and dialogue with Acting District Attorney Gonzalez. A three-hundred-word essay and letters of recommendation are required. He encourages youth with interest in law to apply for the internships. Even if they are unsuccessful, it is a good exercise to assist them in the future. The program is open only to students who will be a high school sophomore, junior, or seniors in the upcoming fall semester. Fliers on the program are available on tonight’s distribution table.

Their Immigrant Fraud Unit recently prosecuted an individual who was posing as a federal employee for immigration service and defrauded three immigrants for a total of \$5,000. The Office of the District Attorney will not tolerate this type of behavior. If you or someone you know is being defrauded or harassed due to immigration status, please reach out to their office. The Immigrant Fraud Unit will not call ICE. They are not there to arrest those who may be here illegally, they are there to prosecute those who try to take advantage of the immigrants. The office can be reached by calling (718) 250-2340.

Mr. Malcolm McDaniel, representing the Office of Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, reported that they hosted a number of events last month, including a Black History Month event and a Chinese New Year event. There will be a Women’s History Month event at Borough Hall on March 30th.

He also commended Board member Patricia Winston on the Women’s History Month event that she hosted.

Earlier, we heard about affordable housing not being truly affordable. While this is true, it is important that we, as individuals, prepare ourselves financially for opportunities as they arise. April is National Financial Literacy Month and Borough President Adams will host a series of Financial Education Seminars and urges everyone to visit their website to find the dates and for additional information. You may also call Constituent Services at (718) 802-3700.

Mr. William William, representing the Office of Councilmember Darlene Mealy, announced that Councilmember Mealy will host her Advisory Board meeting on Saturday, April 1st from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at her office, located on the second floor of 1757 Union Street (between Utica and Rochester Avenues). Lawyers will be present to help on legal issues.

Chairperson Morgan recognized Ms. Miriam Robinson of the Brownsville Heritage House.

Ms. Robinson stated that she is here to respond to the Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committee’s request to rescind their support for the landmarking of the former Our Lady of Loreto Church building. She understands that the building is in the ownership of the Dioceses of Brooklyn and that there is a homeless situation in the community. However, there is also a strong need for cultural institutions that can spur economic development in the community as well.

The building is 109 years old and in her opinion, despite the engineer’s report, is structurally sound. Even if the Dioceses does not want to allow a cultural center, the building is deserving of becoming only the third structure in our community, following the Betsy Head Pool and the Stone Avenue Library to be given landmark status. She longs for the day when someone coming to New York City is told to visit the old Our Lady of Loreto Church building.

She believes that the nearly seven million dollars that the city spends each year on housing the homeless can be better applied by permanently housing them using NYCHA (New York City Housing Authority) resources.

She implores the Board to not rescind their original vote to support the landmarking of the former Our Lady of Loreto Church building.

Mr. Mario Toglio of the Italian American Studies Association stated that he, along with Mr. Jeffrey Dunston and Mr. Charles Piazza were part of a negotiation committee that wanted to work with the Dioceses in an effort to have a cultural center there and preserve the structure. Mr. Dunston, who is from this community, came up with a plan that would enable it.

He felt that the Dioceses was not cooperative. The plans presented by his group was not given any consideration. The Dioceses stated that it would take four million dollars to repair the building. His group brought in a non-profit church restoration group which stated that the repairs could be done for two million dollars. They then reached out to the New York Landmark Conservancy which showed interest in having the property landmarked and offered to have an independent engineering report done. Calls made by Mr. Piazza to arrange this went unanswered.

After several rallies by the community, the Dioceses agreed to a letter of resolution stating that the Dioceses would save the building. They signed an agreement with the state wherein they agreed to maintain the building for the community.

A letter from the state government stated the building has architectural and historical significance and is deserving of every effort to conserve it.

Mr. Les Ford requested that the Board not rescind their support to have the building landmarked. He disputes the report stating that the church building is beyond repair. The structure is made in cast stone which does not deteriorate. He urges the Board not to act until a proper un-biased assessment of the building is made.

Mr. Robert Henderson of the RBSCC HomeBase program, located at 145 East 98th Street, invited the audience to attend an open house on Wednesday, April 26th from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. They especially invite those who may be having issues with losing their apartment, owe back rent, or are seeking legal advice regarding housing. Fliers are available on tonight's distribution table.

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