

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 – NOVEMBER 26, 2019

Attendance

David Alexander (E)	Yolanda Matthews
Cynthia Bannister	John McCadney, Jr. (E)
Margaret Brewer (E)	Andrew McCoy
Dr. Cleopatra Brown (A)	Melanie Mendonca
Kaseem Clark-Edwards (A)	Shemene Minter
Adrainer Coleman	Genese Morgan
Norman Frazier	Deidre Olivera-Douglas (A)
Danny Goodine (A)	Busayo Olupano (A)
Chanel Haliburton	Ariel Perry-DeCamp (A)
Sarah Hall (E)	Anita Pierce
Balinda Harris	Marie Pierre (E)
Zalika Headey	Linda Rivera
Michael Howard (E)	JoAnn Sexton
Gabriel Jamison (E)	Keturah Suggs
Lannetta Jeffers (A)	Richard Swinson (A)
Carl Joseph (E)	Rev. Eric Thompson (A)
Maurice Joyner (A)	Brenda Thompson-Duchene
Eula Key (E)	Christopher Toomer (E)
Gwendolyn King	Ernestine Turner (A)
Leticia Knowles (A)	Rev. Miran Ukaegbu
Dr. Betty Kollock-Wallace (A)	Deborah Williams
Charles Ladson, Sr. (A)	Pat Winston
Digna Layne (A)	Viola D. Greene-Walker, District Manager
Kelly Lee-McVay	Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
Albion Liburd (E)	Bernice Navarrete-Perez for Hon. Rafael Espinal, Jr.
Deborah Mack	Ronald Baez for Hon. Zellnor Myrie

PUBLIC MEETING HELD AT BROWNSVILLE

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

Chairperson Genese Morgan called the public hearing to order at 7:05 p.m., and an invocation was said by Rev. Joseph Norton.

A roll call of the membership was done and failed to yield a quorum.

Chairperson Morgan recognized Marjorie Parker of JobsFirstNYC.

Ms. Parker stated that a “Mobility Challenges” survey is being distributed that they would like the audience to complete and return.

She stated that she is the President and CEO at JobsFirstNYC. They are a workforce development intermediary that focuses on solutions for New York City communities that have more than 20% of their residents who are unemployed and out of school. Their work is based on collaborations and partnerships. They were founded about fifteen years ago and are philanthropically funded – meaning that they do not take public funding.

They are here tonight to talk about Mobility Learning and Action Bets. Brownsville has had about 12 different plans over the last few years. About 18 months ago, Community Board #16 invited them to come out to Brownsville to work with them to see if there is a way to get some of the actions in the plans implemented. They met with the Economic Development Committee and looked at the plans and saw what has already been implemented. However, they found that many of the plans have not been implemented because of a lack of resources.

The difference between JobsFirstNYC and perhaps another group that developed a plan is that JobsFirstNYC raises money to help implement the plans and they stay through its development. They build methods of measuring success. They get input from the community that they are working with through devices such as the survey that was distributed. Oftentimes, people come into a community with goodwill but without getting the input of the people who live in the community.

In speaking with the Community Board, they were told that they do not need to come up with another plan. They needed ways to get funding to implement some of the existing plans. They reached out to some their investors, many of which did not want to invest in plans which they did not help develop. They reported this back to the Community Board and stated that unless they could get at least a three-year commitment, JobsFirstNYC would not be able to do anything.

However, the word was out that they wanted to do something in Brownsville. They received a call from the J.P. Morgan/Chase Foundation stating that they wanted to help, but the amount that they were ready to invest was not enough. They then heard from the Robin Hood Foundation who informed them that Brownsville is one of the communities that they are considering for their Mobility Learning and Action Bets (Mobility LABs).

In September 2019, the Robin Hood Foundation gave them \$125,000. That money will come into the community through the Community Board, Brownsville Community Justice Center, and Central Brooklyn Economic Development Corp., in collaboration with JobsFirstNYC.

JobsFirstNYC works from the ground up. They organize communities, collaboratively determine solutions that can be agreed upon and then raise money to implement the solutions. However, in this case they did not need to raise the money, as the Robin Hood Foundation has informed them that if they can build a plan in 9-months, they will provide \$1.2 million to get the plan going. Normally, it takes about 18-months to put a plan together but with the Brownsville Plan already there, they can begin at that point.

They have monthly meetings that are open and want to get feedback from the community. They have a 4-phase process and are now in what they term the Investigative Phase. This phase includes getting feedback from the community to determine what should be the top four or five things that they should be working on. Once they have that, they move their Imagine Phase where they take what they have and narrow it down to the three. How they should go about doing it? Who should be at the table? Who is involved, who is not? The next phase is the Incubate Phase wherein they design the solution and then move on to the Implement Phase. In this case, the design will be submitted to the Robin Hood Foundation who may have some questions.

Ms. Dayanna Torres of JobsFirstNYC stated that she is excited to be here as this plan is about the community. They want to share about the different stages of this process. In October, they reviewed the initiative and goals. They are looking at community assets. What resources exist? What community organizations exist? What programs are in existence? What businesses are in operation? How do these resources create opportunities for Brownsville residents? What can complement the existing resources?

As part of developing the next steps, they look at the data and are informed by the numbers as well as the stories of our communities.

Economic mobility means that the people of Brownsville have equitable access to choices, opportunities, and resources (financial and non-financial) that are driven by investment, collective community voice, and with achievable steps toward self-sufficiency.

As the exploration and conversations continue on what mobility means to the Brownsville community, it is very important to continue to account what mobility challenges face the community. As was mentioned by Ms. Parker, they want to be sure that they hear from the community as they embark on this venture. They are asking that the audience complete and return the survey that was distributed earlier and to share the link: <http://bit.ly/mobilitylabs1> with their neighbors for them to also complete the survey online.

Ms. Zalika Headley asked if the \$125,000 is for the first phase of JobsFirstNYC's initiative and that total investment will be \$1,400,000.

Ms. Parker confirmed that this is the case and further stated that only represents their initial investment. To better understand how they work, one can look at the first network that they ever worked on, the Lower East Side Employment Network (LESEN). LESEN is now completely independent of JobsFirstNYC but was supported by them up until last year. They came to JobsFirstNYC about six months after the launch of JobsFirstNYC when Manhattan Community Board #3 and a few non-profits were concerned about the effect of the influx of economic development on their community. There was concern that local residents would not have access to jobs that were coming into the neighborhood. Even more, there were concerns that they

would not have enough say on the ULURP (Uniform Land Use Review Procedure) processes that were taking place. They wanted to make sure that more residents got involved in that process.

JobsFirstNYC worked with them on forming a network. One of her favorite stories to tell, is when Foot Locker was moving into the neighborhood, they called the network to inform them that there would be ten job openings. The network told them that they need not look any further, the network can fill those jobs right from the neighborhood. Beyond that encounter, whenever new businesses came in the network was always able to help fill job openings.

When a network is in place with a network agreement, there is an infrastructure in place that makes it fairly much unnecessary for businesses to look outside the network. The network is there to monitor that agreements are adhered to.

It is their plan to be in Brownsville for the next five years. During which time the Brownsville network will be the only one they will work on. The Brownsville community is one that is rich in assets, but it also has many challenges. They need to bring some friends along who do similar work. They may not do economic and workforce development, but might work on making public spaces safe and viable. During the next five years, they will work on the things that they have expertise in and as they learn what the community wants they will ask other groups that match those needs to join them.

The \$1.4 million is just the beginning commitment that they have received from the Robin Hood Foundation. They have informed them that they will have their other divisions support each of the plans that rise up out the plans that JobsFirstNYC may come up with that may not be directly covered by their initial investment.

One of the things that they have heard from other potential investors is that they want to see what JobsFirstNYC can do over the next year. In meeting with investors, they have heard them say that they do not know what will work in the community. They do not know who is there. These are things that they often hear about communities like Brownsville. They have just completed 28-weeks of work in Bedford-Stuyvesant where there are some large organizations doing work as well as some small, lesser known organizations that do great work. JobsFirstNYC seeks to elevate these small organizations that are doing fantastic work and double-down on investments in them.

They work with organizations from across the nation who share how they are making positive changes in their communities. They have worked with groups from Oakland, California that have made great strides with their high school graduation rates. While Brownsville has a decent graduation rate it does not fare well in college enrollment.

JobsFirstNYC does not currently know what the solutions will be but as we go through the process they will. The good thing about working with JobsFirst is that when solutions are found they find ways to support them. When the community wins, they win. If the community does not win, neither do they.

She invited everyone to complete and return the survey they distributed earlier this evening and stated that they will be around for a while to answer questions and collect the surveys.

Chairperson Morgan recognized Mr. Robert Sinclair, representing the Friends of the Saratoga Branch Library.

Mr. Sinclair stated that he works at the Saratoga Avenue Branch Library with the youth who use the library. He is present this evening to announce that the Saratoga Library is seeking to relaunch their “Friends of “group. A Friends of group is basically a fund-raising arm of an organization. The Friends of Saratoga Library will raise funds as well as advocate for library services and programs. This is most worthwhile when there is a diverse body of people with diverse skill sets. Anyone who is interested in joining the Friends of Saratoga Library group may pick up a flier from tonight’s distribution table or visit the library which is nearby. He encourages anyone who does not have a library card to obtain one.

Someone asked where is the library is located?

Mr. Sinclair stated that it is at 8 Thomas S. Boyland Street between Macon and MacDonough Streets near Broadway.

Chairperson Morgan recognized neighborhood resident Ms. Ann-Marie Fisher.

Ms. Fisher related an incident that took place over the past weekend. Her 16-year old son and a friend went to exercise at Betsy Head Park only to find out that it is closed for renovation. They decided to run laps around the park and upon their fifth lap, two young men approached them from behind and asked “Where you from?”. Her son innocently stated that he is from Brownsville, meaning the community. However, it appears that the youth took the response to mean Brownsville Houses. She is guessing that the youth who approached her son had some grievance with someone who lives in Brownsville Houses because the smaller of the two began exchanging words with her son. This led to her son punching the young man who then pulled out a gun, told her son and his friend to “run their pockets”, robbed her son of his iPhone and his friend of his wallet and ran off. She is grateful that they did not take her son’s or his friend’s life.

She is here tonight because she is not the type of person who will wait for an organization or whoever to act. Before coming to this meeting, she asked her son what does he want her to relate to this body? She knows that there are several community-based organizations operating in Brownsville. Some do what they say they will, while others seem to only collect money. She would like to see an agency have some type of training made available to our youth to teach them how to handle situations such as this.

Chairperson Morgan recognized Captain Hugo Dominguez, Executive Officer of the 73rd Precinct, who stated that he spoke with Ms. Fisher regarding the incident involving her son. They are investigating and are aware of a crew of about 7 individuals operating in the area near Livonia Avenue and Saratoga Avenue. They are known to brandish a black firearm and are targeting teens to rob them of cellphones and iPods forcing them to give up their PINs.

Overall, crime in the Precinct is down year-to-date. They are down 198 in the 7 major crime categories which is about 13%. He attributes this to the hard work of the men and women of the 73rd Precinct and the community working together. He is hopeful that this great partnership will continue to drive crime down in the community. Shootings are down 30 versus 40 in the previous year-to-date period. They are down five victims from shootings (48 versus 53).

Someone reported that there was a drive-by shooting that took place last Thursday around 4:30 p.m. in the area of Legion Street and East 98th Street. The description of the youths involved in the robberies mentioned earlier is similar. He is concerned that there is not a police presence in the area.

Captain Dominguez stated that he would love to have police everywhere, but they are limited in the number of officers they have and to place them strategically. He encourages the speaker to reach out to their Neighborhood Coordinating Officers (NCOs).

He highly recommends that everyone take advantage of the NCO program. The Precinct is divided into four sectors with each having two NCOs assigned to them. You may contact the Community Affairs Office to get the name and contact information for your NCOs. Rest assured that they are working diligently to help make the Precinct a safe place to live and work.

Ms. Adrainer Coleman, Chairperson of the Land Use, Planning, and Zoning Committee, reported that the Equity Planning Work Group met on October 8, 2019 with Tonya Bonner of the New York City Small Business Services who informed us of the efforts to organize a merchants association and to work with the merchants and community to revitalize Belmont Avenue between Rockaway Avenue and Christopher Avenue.

The Work Group also met with representatives of Family Services Network regarding their proposal to develop 95 units of housing with 5,000 square feet of community facility space on property they own at 1546 East New York Avenue.

Family Services Network responded to a Request for Expression of Interest issued by the New York City Housing Authority to acquire 6,000 square feet of land and 45,000 square feet of air rights from the Authority’s property adjacent to 1546 East New York Avenue to enable them to construct an 11-story building on the site.

Family Services Network is seeking a letter of support from Community Board #16 to accompany their application for funding.

They also met with the owners of All Night Skates, their attorney, and residents of Marion and Chauncey Streets. The owners of All Night Skates are requesting that the Community Board reconsider their application to the New York State Liquor Authority for a license to sell liquor, beer, and wine at 54 Rockaway Avenue. The conversation is ongoing as to the hours of operation and sale of alcohol. The Work Group anticipate reporting on the outcome to the Board at next month's meeting.

The next meeting of the Equity Planning Work Group will on Thursday, November 12, 2019, 6:00 p.m. at 444 Thomas S. Boyland Street.

Ms. Deborah Williams, Chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Committee, reported that the City Services Planning Work Group met on Thursday, November 14, 2019, with a representative of Spin Electric Scooters who are looking to do business in Brownsville. At present, electric scooters are not legal in the State of New York. Legislation to legalize electric scooters is currently pending in Albany. Once the legislation passes, the company will return to us for a letter of support.

They also met with Dorothy Lee and Kelly Lau and discussed the DSNY Zero Waste Communication Corp outreach program which encourages the use of disposable bags because as of March 1, 2020, one-time use plastic bags will no longer be allowed in New York State.

A ground-breaking ceremony was held on Tuesday, November 19th for the track and field at Betsy Head Park, and on Thursday, November 21st a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at Prospect Plaza Park (located on Sterling Place between Saratoga and Howard Avenues).

The Fire Department's Rescue 2 is now housed in their new facility on Sterling Place between Saratoga and Howard Avenues. To enable Rescue 2 to make a left turn on Howard Avenue during emergencies, "No Standing Anytime" regulations were posted on the west side of Howard Avenue between Sterling Place and Eastern Parkway. In the spring, pavement markings will designate this area as a "Fire Lane".

The Work Group thanks to everyone who attended. The next City Service Planning Work Group meeting will be on December 12, 2019, at 444 Thomas Boyland Street at 6:00 p.m.

Ms. Melanie Mendonca, member of the Youth Services Planning Committee, reported that the Community Resident Planning Work Group met on November 13, 2019, the Community Resident Planning Work Group met with the staff of New Visions A.I.M. (Aspire, Invest, Maximize Your Potential) I Charter High School, located at 1150 East New York Avenue, and shares space with Brownsville Academy High School. This charter school is a multi-functioning high school that caters to less fortunate high school students in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, who are having trouble achieving DOE standards. The staff is proactive and are dedicated to ensuring that the students who attend the charter school have a chance at success. The Work Group was very impressed with the comprehensive school structure. The school has been open since October 2017. The Work Group will periodically follow up to ensure that the school is achieving the standards they have proposed in their presentation. If you are interested in enrolling your child in this charter school, you may contact Shameeka Wilson, Recruitment Coordinator at (718) 269-7090 or (347) 988-4573. To apply online, visit: aimcharterhighschools.schoolmint.net, to inquire about enrollment dates.

On the same day, Mr. Alexander was invited by Senator Roxanne Persaud to participate in a very important roundtable discussion: Examining the Prevalence of Youth Violence, held at Spring Creek Educational Campus. The roundtable consisted of 18 high school youths and a myriad of community activists who were supporting their concerns. Each of the youth participants gave testimonies of his or her distresses within and out of school. The students discussed their anxieties over violence; in the home, in the school/street, relationship, gangs, housing concerns, incarceration, and education. These topics are too vast for me to give a full report at this time. However, when I receive the minutes from this eventful exchange of ideas, I will share it with you at our next meeting. However, my assessment is that our children need our support and encouragement. I also suggested at the roundtable that a youth support group be initiated in schools, after school programs where the youth can dialogue among themselves and present their findings to a facilitator to enact upon. This is my recommendation to the panel.

The Veterans Day Parade on November 2, 2019 was a successful event and was well attended.

Also, at the meeting was a representative from the Arthur Ashe Institute who is advocating for the community to act on housing issue when presented by developers. Most affordable housing is limited in number within a specific housing development, and the lottery needs to be more inclusive of the residents within a particular community for first priority to the housing. These are some of the challenges that the Arthur Ashe Institute is advocating in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community.

Programs open for enrollment:

- SONYC BIZ Entrepreneurial Programs for students attending middle schools
- Youth Community Ambassador Program recruiting middle/high school students
- Open Enrollment for GED Program ages 17 and up. Both programs are located at 444 Thomas Boyland on the 3rd Floor – telephone number (718) 498-4513.

- The CAMPUS Afterschool Tech & Arts Program for Middle School Students – at the Brownsville Collaborative Middle School (BCMS), located at 85 Watkins Street. To enroll call (718) 284-4700 for applications.

- Fathers and mentors are now meeting. If you are interested in the Fathers and Mentors Program call Mr. William Rochford at (718) 240-3657/917-428-0647, to obtain the date and time of the meetings because the meeting moves from location to location.

The next Community Resident Planning Group meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 11, 2019.

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

- The Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City, on behalf of Building Healthy Communities initiative, is accepting proposals for NYC Parks GreenThumb-registered community garden groups that are interested in growing more food in their gardens, and distributing this garden-grown food in their surrounding neighborhoods. Garden groups that are registered with NYC Parks GreenThumb, and are based in Brownsville or East Harlem, may apply for this opportunity.

The Mayor’s Fund will award up to five (5) grants of up to \$5,000 each to community garden groups across Brownsville and East Harlem in total, and up to two (2) grants of up to \$10,000 each across Brownsville and East Harlem in total.

For additional information, visit fundrfrp@cityhall.nyc.gov. The deadline for applications is December 16, 2019.

- The Citizens Committee for New York City has announced that they are accepting applications for grants of up to \$3,000 for community and school improvement projects carried out by unstaffed resident-led groups to address issues they identify as important to them.

For additional information, visit citizensnyc.org/grants/neighborhood-grants. The deadline for applications January 20, 2020.

- Osborn Plaza (Osborn Street between Belmont Avenue and dead end) will undergo reconstruction in 2021. The community is invited to a design workshop on Tuesday, December 3, 2019, 6:00 p.m. at 50 Belmont Avenue. The design workshop will be an opportunity for you to have input on the redesign of Osborn Plaza and the surrounding area.

- As of Sunday, November 24, 2019 thru December 22, 2019 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., the following post offices will be open on Sundays for customers wishing to pick up packages:

Brownsville - 167 Bristol Street.
Shirley Chisholm – 1915 Fulton Street

- Starting March 1, 2020, single-use plastic bags are banned, with limited exceptions, in New York State. In addition, businesses will begin collecting a five-cent fee on paper carryout bags in New York City.

Additionally, the report contains information about various available grants.

Chairperson Morgan recognized Ms. Bernice Navarrete-Perez, representing the Office of Councilmember Rafael Espinal, Jr.

Ms. Navarrete-Perez announced that Councilmember Espinal invites everyone to come to the Bushwick winter celebration and Christmas tree lighting on Saturday, December 7th at Irving Square Park (Halsey and Knickerbocker Avenues).

Also, on December 7, 2019 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Councilmember Espinal will sponsor a CUNY Citizenship Now event at North Brooklyn YMCA, located at 570 Jamaica Avenue. Experienced lawyers and other immigration professionals, members of the NYC/CUNY Citizenship Now Volunteer Corps, will assist permanent residents with their citizenship applications. Event is free and open to all. For additional information, you may call (646) 664-9400.

Mr. Ronald Baez, representing the Office of Senator Zellnor Myrie, reported that they are accepting new and unwrapped toys at their District Office through December 18, 2019. The toys will be distributed at their holiday giveaway on December 21st at the Full Gospel Assembly Church, located at 131 Sullivan Place in Crown Heights. The office is located at 1077 Nostrand Avenue and their telephone number is (718) 284-4700.

Their office still has 60 rain barrels that are available for distribution to anyone who wants one.

Mr. Baez stated that he is a former employee of the New York State of Health and he can help anyone in applying for health insurance, understanding their coverage options, and enrolling in a plan that is right for them. On Mondays and Wednesdays, he is at the Office of Assemblywoman Latrice Walker, located at 400 Rockaway Avenue and at Senator Myrie's District Office the rest of the week.

Senator Myrie in collaboration with Assemblywoman Walker and Councilmember Alicka Ampry-Samuel, will host a Senior Thanksgiving Celebration event on Thursday, November 28, 2019 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at 1630 St. Mark's Avenue.

In collaboration with the Office of Councilmember Carlos Menchaca, Senator Myrie will sponsor a free flu vaccine event at SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University, located at 44417 4th Avenue, Brooklyn on Saturday December 7, 2019 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. No insurance is required.

Mr. William Boone of the Medgar Evers-Oasis Beacon Program, located at 210 Chester Street stated that they have a new Director who will be introducing himself to the community.

The Beacon program has a Girl Scout program serving girls in first grade through high school. If you are or know a parent or guardian of a young girl who is interested in the program, they meet on Saturdays from 12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m.

Office hours for the Beacon Program are Monday through Saturday from 10:00 to 6:00 p.m.

He thanked the Board for the recent housing forum they sponsored. The parents who attended were very appreciative of the information that they received.

Chairperson Morgan thanked the audience for their attendance and participation in tonight's meeting. She recognized Ms. Patricia Winston and congratulated her and her tenants association at Atlantic Plaza Towers in their win against management who sought to install a facial recognition system against the will of the tenants.

She announced that next month's General Board meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 17th, due to our regular meeting date falling on Christmas Eve.

Ms. Winston stated that their success against management would not have been possible without the involvement of their Board and she applauds their tenacity.

Chairperson Morgan concurred and offered congratulations to all who worked on the issue.

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