



**THE CITY OF NEW YORK
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 6**

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Honorable Ruben Diaz Jr., Bronx Borough President

MS. EVONNE CAPERS
Board Chairperson

MR. JOHN SANCHEZ
District Manager

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #6
Meeting minutes of Wednesday, March 10, 2021

Members Present:

Clarita Bailon, Cornell Brown, Evonne Capers, Nicole Carter, Sadija Cekovic, Nelson Chimilio, Margarita Espinosa, Audrey Harden, Maria Latimer, Matthew Martinez, Floretta O'Brien, Jorge Ortiz, Rosa Peraza, Paul Ramirez, Kristine Rivera, Wendy Rodriguez, Lisa Sanchez, Divine Sikanku, Gil Simmons, Lillie Steed, Noorjahan Wells, and Jacquetta Whaley.

Members Absent:

Virginia Bird, Milagros Cancel, Diana Diaz, Frank Franz, Maria Garcia, Lanell Gardenhire, Julisa Hamilton, Laura James, Assana Lloyd, Francine Miller, Michael Nelson, Rev. Marilyn Oliver, Reggie Powell, Carmen Rivera, Rev. Hiriam Ratliff, Helga Robles, and Maria Ruiz Gutierrez.

Elected Officials Present:

Council Member Rafael Salamanca Jr.
New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda
United States Congressman Ritchie Torres

Elected Officials Representatives Present:

Elanor Werner, representing New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson and the 15th Council District
Nick Peters, representing New York State Assemblymember Victor Pichardo
Francisco Aquino Ramirez, representing New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera
Caitlyn Best, representing New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera
Nanette Alvarado, representing United States Congressman Ritchie Torres
Khadim Niang, representing New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The March 10, 2021 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was held via Zoom Audio and Video Conference meeting ID 920 2315 0936 and via Zoom Video at <https://zoom.us/j/92023150936> and was called to order at approximately by 6:35 PM by Chairperson Evonne Capers.

II. INVOCATION

The meeting's invocation was delivered by Board Member Jacquetta Whaley.

III. COMMUNITY PERIOD

Individuals who asked to address the community board as part of the meeting's Community Period included:

Anastasia Savelyeva, representing NYC Health + Hospitals | Tremont

Ms. Savelyeva informed us about the health and medical services offered at NYC Health + Hospitals through their locations in the City. They offer primary care, women's health services, ophthalmology, and dental services. They are also offering COVID-19 self-testing and rapid testing at their locations. She also informed us about NYC Care. NYC Care is a health care access program that guarantees low-cost and no-cost services offered by NYC Health + Hospitals to New Yorkers who do not qualify for or cannot afford health insurance based on federal guidelines. NYC Care is the nation's largest and most comprehensive initiative to guarantee health care for New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status or ability to pay. She also announced that there is a new NYC Health + Hospitals location in our district, NYC Health + Hospitals | Tremont which is located on 1920 Webster Avenue. Ms. Savelyeva can be reached by email at savelyea@nychhc.org for further information.

IV. BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr's report for the Community Boards for the month of March was emailed.

V. ELECTED OFFICIALS' REPORTS

United States Congressman Ritchie Torres

Congressman Ritchie Torres announced that the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan just passed through the legislature and was sent to President Joe Biden's desk. The plan was created to strengthen businesses, families and local and state governments. New York State will receive over one hundred million dollars from the federal government. The federal government will distribute the funds to states and it is up to the state on how they want to distribute the funds, so they can possibly provide for small business startups. The centerpiece of the bill is the child tax credit. The expansion of the child tax credit will help reduce poverty in the South Bronx. The original structure left behind one-third of American families, the poorest in the country. Two-thirds of South Bronx families were excluded from full benefits of the child tax credit. Thus, extending the child tax credit will cut child poverty by about 50% within the year. There are proposed legislations that would make this extension more permanent. Under the child tax credit, families will receive a monthly check of \$300 per child under the age of six and \$250 per child for children in general. There will be a continuation of unemployment insurance of \$300 per week. There will be a one-time \$1,400 stimulus check and an enhanced unearned income tax credit. There will also be some measure of food and housing assistance for landlords and renters. There

is more than \$100 billion in loans for small businesses under the State Small Business Credit Initiative. This program began in 2010 and was considered a success. Eleven employees was the average size of the small businesses and about half of them had only three employees. The program has a track record of targeting small businesses. Congressman Ritchie Torres explained that he is in support of removing the filibuster for a more democratic structure. There have been more exemptions to filibusters like judicial appointments, executive cabinet appointments and now economic items to reconciliations. HR1 for the People Act would establish independent nonpartisan redistricting commissions to prevent partisan gerrymandering. Congressman Torres also voiced that without universal Wi-Fi, public education will be a luxury instead of a necessity. There will be a second infrastructure reconciliation package that will include broad band and a massive investment into broadband. There is also a whole task force in Congress working to bridge the digital divide. Many people had no electronic tablets or broadbands, thus having no means of accessing online education during COVID. The second package is likely to go through reconciliation to avoid filibuster.

New York City Councilmember Rafael Salamanca Jr.

Councilmember Rafael Salamanca informed the community that every Thursday from 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM, his office is COVID testing in the office. Individuals can walk in to get tested. The office is working with HAC and individuals can get their results in 2 days. There is a professional there with HAC when you self-swab. Heidi Hines from the Mary Mitchell Family and Youth passed and she meant a lot to the community. Council members can rename or co-name streets and Councilmember Salamanca was able to get a street co-named after Heidi Hines, which will read Heidi Hines way. The councilman will work with the youth center to plan an event for the street re-naming. The deadline for program money from NYC already passed. There is an upcoming deadline for organizations for capital dollars. They have to submit applications to the city council by the end of the month. The councilman will be sending out the link or individuals may call the office for the link. Councilman Salamanca met an interim director of Mary Mitchell Youth Center and he will reach out to them and maybe the Bronx Community Board #6's executive board can meet with them. Elena Rodriguez, executive director of Mary Mitchell, doesn't know about the job application process but she can encourage the board to speak with Bronx Community Board #6. She applied for the position and gained acceptance. Heidi Hines Way is on East 178th Street between Mapes Avenue and Prospect Avenue. Bronx Community Board #6's Board Member Rosa Peraza wants to include Ms. Armstrong. She is advised to bring it up to the committee and the board can vote on it. Bronx Community Board #6 would then provide a biography of the individual and a letter of support to the councilmember. The councilman will then submit it and the City Council's attorneys will vet it and if there are no issues, then the proposal can go into the next batch of street renaming and street re-naming. This process is done twice a year and the next one will happen in six months.

New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda

Senator Sepulveda informed the community that last Sunday, the COVID positivity rate is 4.71, which is still highest in New York City. His office is trying to help lower the rate more effectively by starting a COVID vaccination waitlist in office. In the last week and a half, the office helped vaccinate over 500 people. Individuals can sign up online and the office working with providers to get vaccinated. Individuals may also call the office to get added to the waitlist. The office has over a 90% success rate. Individuals signing up for the waitlist must be eligible, which recently expanded to people over 60 years old and government workers that face people. Individuals can call the office or fill in the waitlist

to see if they qualify. The office will do everything possible to make sure that people get vaccinated. They are working with providers for rapid testing throughout the county. However, they are not testing in the office anymore. The office is continuing to give out masks. Individuals and organizations can reach out to the office for masks. If individuals are facing food insecurities, then they can also reach out to the office because they are working with nonprofits and church-based organizations to give out food. One bill passed in the senate dealing with civil service exams. The New York State website has over 45,000 jobs available. Many in the community are unaware because most of the job information is provided to those outside of the community. This bill will require a study to make sure the civil service process and exams will come to our community. The senate also passed a law that curbs the governor's power from when COVID started, giving them power to pass executive orders regarding COVID. His powers are scaled back, so now he has to treat legislators as partners and cannot bypass the Senate and the Assembly. The senate also passed the Heroes Act, which requires the creation of health and safety standards for airborne diseases in the workplace. It also encourages employers to use shared work programs to avoid layoffs. There is also an increased amount of shared work benefits up to the maximum allowed by federal law. If individuals are working part time, then they can still get unemployment benefits. There will be legalization of marijuana for recreational use, which will bring anywhere between \$300 million and \$450 million. Our community should get help first and the initial opportunity of selling should go to Black and Brown communities. The legislature wants to provide low interest loans to allow people in our community to invest in our communities in the legalization bill. They don't want big companies to monopolize the industry because our communities were the ones that were impacted when marijuana was not legalized. There will be later provisions to allow for homegrown marijuana, but for now, individuals will be allowed to grow up to six plants because the legislature wants to prevent people from growing and selling. Marijuana provides many benefits for people that are suffering pain due to many other illnesses. Marijuana will become a major industry in New York State. Records and arrests are going to be expunged due to Marijuana use for people in our community, so people can get jobs and children can go to school. Senator Sepulveda also informed the community that the landlord has to provide a hardship affidavit if they were to evict tenants based on nonpayment to indicate to the tenant that they have been subjected to economic hardship due to COVID. Landlords can get judgement but cannot get a Marshall to evict tenants based on rent that is owed during that period. The landlord has an obligation to send an affidavit before commencing a proceeding in housing court. The same thing applies to those who have properties with less than ten units. There is another hardship form for foreclosure proceedings to prevent people from losing homes because of COVID. The deadline to fill out the forms is May 1, 2021. If individuals need assistance, then they can call the office. The senate also passed a package of bills that included broadband. They tried to allocate money so that the children are well prepared and can access online education in order to fix the digital divide. If anyone is scared of getting evicted or need assistance with eviction, then they should call his office, which has a team of housing attorneys. The elections for District 11 and 15 are on March 16 in the Bronx. High schools will reopen for the in-person learning process starting March 22, 2021. Schools will provide more information and a schedule to the children's parents. There is also an ongoing investigation by the local federal authorities and the Attorney General about allegations regarding COVID numbers not being accurately reported in senior homes and centers. There is a committee in legislation that is also looking into it. His office can be reached at (718) 991-3161 or via email at team@senatorsepulveda.com. Individuals may also contact Senator Sepulveda at (347) 582-8173.

Nick Peters, representing New York State Assemblymember Victor Pichardo

Mr. Nick Peters informed the community that Assembly sessions are ongoing and Assembly website livestreams them. Session will begin at 10 AM on Thursday, March 11, 2021. He announced that the legislation voted to revoke the executive powers of the governor last week and the assembly majority passed two pieces of legislation to regulate nursing homes. The current focus in the Assembly is on the upcoming budget votes. Assemblymember Pichardo has been distributing PPE and hand sanitizers to different parts of the community. If individuals know someone in need, then they should reach out to the office. Assemblyman Pichardo also partnered with Assemblywoman Lotoya Joyner and Helen Keller International at Mt. Herman Church to provide free eyeglasses to members of the community. He also partnered with Este Medical to bring COVID testing sites to the Fordham Lutheran Church. Caucus weekend was a few weeks ago and the assemblyman was able to host a couple of panels for it. Assemblyman Pichardo is also partnering with Lotoya Joyner, SBA, Cross River Bank and Citizen Committee for NYC on a webinar discussing PPP loans and how local businesses and nonprofits are able to access them. The event will be happening on March 17, 2021 at 10:00 AM. You can register at crossriver.com/ppp-ny. The link is also on the assemblyman's social media pages as well. Mr. Peters reminded community members that taxes are due on April 15 and the office has been given a list of free tax assistance resources and groups. Individuals may reach out to the office if they are in need of assistance. The office can be contacted via telephone at (718) 933-6909 or by email by contacting Nick Peters at petersng@nyassembly.gov. Their office is operating remotely from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM from Monday to Friday. Starting March 15, 2021, the office will begin to slowly open physically. The office will be open physically on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:30 AM to 5:30 PM. The office will still be closed to in-person constituent services for safety of the staff and due to high COVID rates in the area. Individuals can also follow Assemblymember Pichardo on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram at [vpichardo86](https://www.instagram.com/vpichardo86). They can also sign up for a monthly newsletter. They can also obtain weekly updates on what's happening in Albany on his social media platforms on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Eleanor Warner, representing Speaker of New York City Council Corey Johnson

Ms. Eleanor Warner informed the community that the Council District office 15, Congressman Ritchie Torres' former seat, is still open remotely from Monday to Friday from 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM. They are still offering constituent services until a new council member is elected and the office will hand off duties to the new council member, who will take over operations. Until then, Ms. Warner is still servicing the district. They can be reached at (718) 842 - 8100 or via email at district15@council.nyc.gov.

Francisco Aquino-Ramirez, representing New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera

Mr. Francisco Aquino-Ramirez announced that the Senate session is currently happening and Senator Rivera is working on passing bills and the budget. The senate recently passed nursing home reforms, particularly bill S3601A, which outlines reporting standards for communicable disease cases and resulting deaths related in order to bring transparency to the information gathered during a public health crisis like COVID-19. Bill S4336A directs the Commission of Health to establish a direct patient care ratio requiring nursing homes to establish at least 70% of the facilities' revenue on direct patient care. Senator Rivera voted this month to strip Governor Cuomo of his emergency executive powers. He also announced that the eligibility to get vaccinated has expanded to individuals who are 65 and older. As of February 15, adult New Yorkers with certain preexisting conditions are allowed to get vaccinated. The office has a list of preexisting conditions that are eligible and people can call to find out. In home COVID vaccines are available for full homebound residents. To sign up and check

availability, individuals call the office for guidance. Yankee stadium opened up as a mass vaccination hub for Bronxites. If individuals are eligible for vaccinations, they can call (833)-SOMOS-NY or visit somosvaccinations.com. Individuals will need an ID and proof of Bronx residency, which can include a state ID, statement from the landlord, current rent lease or receipt, mortgage records, a statement from another person, current mail or school records. Individuals can call the office if they need help with that. The office is physically closed but the team provides over the phone and email services. Mr. Aquino-Ramirez encouraged community members to view Senator Rivera's social media pages in celebration of women's history month, where they will be highlighting important and historic Bronx women. Additionally, every Tuesday from 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM, the tenant specialist services are still continuing, so individuals can call to make an appointment. The office can be reached at (718) 933-2034, or via email at grivera@nysenate.gov or aquino@nysenate.gov.

Khadim Niang, representing New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer

Mr. Khadim Niang announced that the Comptroller's office will be hosting a series of workshops through the MWBE University Program. Workshops will address various topics like how to hire a chief diversity officer, how to attain seats on boards, how to navigate minority depository institutions among other issues. Along with opening doors to city contracting, MWBE will also provide businesses with opportunities and the opportunity to contract directly with the Comptroller's office. This series of online workshops will go on from March until April. Individuals can RSVP by emailing him.

VI. DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT

District Manager John Sanchez is on a leave of absence. The district manager's report was presented by Ms. Carla Leon. The report included the following information:

- Ms. Leon announced that the office is still continuing to operate remotely and the best way to contact the office is by email at bronxcb6@bronxcb6.org. Individuals can also call and leave a message at (718) 579 - 6990.
- Ms. Leon also announced that there will be a virtual Opioid Overdose Prevention Training on Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 6:30 PM via Zoom Video Conference.
- Ms. Leon informed the community that there will be a Constituent Service Informational Session in partnership with HAVE, Bronx Community Board #3 and Bronx Community Board #5 along with some city agencies to inform constituents about their constituent services on Monday, March 29, 2021 at 11:00 AM and 6:00 PM via Zoom Video Conference.

VII. UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW PUBLIC HEARING

Public Hearing:

A public hearing on Uniform Land Use Review Procedure applications #210063 ZMXN and #N 201162 ZRX2. The applications, if approved by all relevant authorities, will include a Zoning Map Amendment from R6A to R7D and a Zoning Text Amendment for Mandatory Inclusionary Housing ("MIH") areas to facilitate the development of a new 11-story, 287-unit affordable residential building at 1949 Bathgate Avenue, Bronx, New York.

Ms. Susan Albrecht from Association of New York Catholic Homes informed us about the proposed affordable housing project that will be developed by New York Catholic Homes and New York Institute for Human Development at 1949 Bathgate Avenue. The proposed project will require the rezoning of R6A to R7D to facilitate the development of a mid-density 290-unit affordable and supportive residential building. The development would also require an MIH text amendment to be included to Appendix F. The development will have a total of 130 units of supportive housing that will be managed by Beacon of Hope and New York Founding and a total of 160 units of low income housing. The construction for the proposed project will begin late 2021. The development will also contain preserved existing rock outcropping and original retaining wall from St. Joseph's Church to maintain the history of the church in the community.

No one requested to testify as a speaker for the Uniform Land Use Review Public Hearing.

VIII. ROLL CALL ATTENDANCE

A roll call attendance was taken confirming the presence of a quorum with the presence of twenty-two (22) members.

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS

The committee reports were sent by email and are available on Bronx Community Board #6's website. Chairperson Evonne Capers requested that we read the reports at our leisure.

X. ADOPTION OF MOTIONS

- 1. A motion to adopt the minutes of Bronx Community Board #6's meeting of February 10, 2021 with corrections was made by Mr. Gil Simmons, seconded by Ms. Margarita Espinosa, and adopted by a vote of twenty-two in favor, zero opposition and zero abstention.**
- 2. A motion to approve Uniform Land Use Review Procedure applications #210063 ZMXN and #N 201162 ZRX2 and issue a letter of support to the New York City Department of City Planning for the St. Joseph's Affordable Housing Project at 1949 Bathgate Avenue was made by Mr. Matthew Martinez, seconded by Ms. Clarita Bailon, and adopted by a vote of twenty-two in favor, zero opposition and zero abstention.**
- 3. A motion to convert East 178th Street between Webster Avenue to Park Avenue from a two-way street to a one-way westbound street was made by Mr. Paul Ramirez, and seconded by Mr. Gil Simmons, and adopted by a vote of twenty in favor, zero opposition and two abstentions.**

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to discuss, the March 10, 2021 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was adjourned at approximately 8:00 PM pursuant to a motion made by Mr. Gil Simmons, second by Ms. Noorjahan Wells and unanimously adopted by acclamation (twenty-two in favor, zero opposed and zero abstention).

Respectfully submitted:

**Sanzida Talukder
Community Associate**

**Carla Leon
Community Associate**

*Vacant,
City Council Member, 15th Council District*

*Honorable Rafael Salamanca Jr.,
City Council Member, 17th Council District*

