



**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, May 12, 2021

Members Present:

Clarita Bailon, Virginia Bird, Evonne Capers, Nicole Carter, Margarita Espinosa, Frank Franz, Lanell Gardenhire, Audrey Harden, Laura James, Maria Latimer, Matthew Martinez, Floretta O'Brien, Reggie Powell, Paul Ramirez, Carmen Rivera, Kristine Rivera, Wendy Rodriguez, Maria Ruiz Gutierrez, Lisa Sanchez, Divine Sikanku, Gil Simmons, Lillie Steed, Noorjahan Wells, and Jacquetta Whaley.

Members Absent:

Cornell Brown, Milagros Cancel, Sadija Cekovic, Diana Diaz, Maria Garcia, Julisa Hamilton, Assana Lloyd, Francine Miller, Michael Nelson, Rev. Marilyn Oliver, Jorge Ortiz and Rosa Peraza.

Elected Officials Present:

New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda
New York State Assemblymember Chantel Jackson
New York State Assemblymember Karines Reyes

Elected Officials Representative Present:

Surrey Miranda, representing Mayor Bill de Blasio
Alexis Ruiz, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.
Terrence Miller, representing Public Advocate Jumaane Williams
Francisco Aquino Ramirez, New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera
Justin Westbrook-Lowery, New York State Assemblywoman Karines Reyes
Nick Peters, representing New York State Assemblyman Victor Pichardo
Leslie Ramirez, New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda
Nanette Alvarado, representing United States Congressman Ritchie Torres

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The May 12, 2021 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was held via Zoom Audio and Video Conference meeting ID 914 616 15531 <https://zoom.us/j/91461615531> and was called to order at 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:

Gail Nathan, representing Bronx River Art Center (BRAC)

Ms. Nathan announced that the Spring art classes at the Bronx River Art Center have begun. They are offering printmaking, photography, intro to art, digital illustrations, basics of drawing, collage, people in nature (painting class), and digital animation classes. They are also continuing their mural workshops for the Cultural Immigrant Initiative project. The next mural workshop will be on May 22, 2021 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Bronx River Art Center and the mural activity will be held on May 29, 2021 from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM at Vidalia Park. Ms. Nathan also announced that their next exhibition will be, *In Honor of Black Lives Matter*, an exhibit that brought together politically engaged curators who have been actively collecting and/or photographing the Black Lives Matter movement. The exhibit's open reception will be on May 22, 2021 at 5:00 PM and will be available from May 22, 2021 through June 26, 2021. The exhibition reception will be followed by the kickoff of BRAC's 2021 Bronx River Sounds Performing Arts Festival.

Nicole N'diaye, representing NYRP Bathgate Community Garden

Ms. N'diaye announced that NYRP Bathgate Community Garden will be having a community health and wellness fair in partnership with NAHE Hemp Farm, the New York Restoration Project, and Bronx Community Board #6 on Saturday, May 22, 2021 from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the Bathgate Community Garden located at 1818 Bathgate Avenue. There will be a number of health screenings and resources available for the community.

Virginia Quinones, New York Public Library (NYPL) West Farm Library

Ms. Quinones informed us that part of their phased reopening, the West Farms Library is expanding their services. They are now offering limited browsing for 30 minutes and computer reservations for 45 minutes. They are also still providing virtual programming for adults, youth, and children.

Frank Franz, Board Member

Mr. Franz expressed his concerns about the proceeding of the Department of Transportation's Safety Improvement Project at Southern Boulevard from East Fordham Road to East 182nd Street. He expressed that this project will result in the loss of numerous parking spaces and traffic congestion. He also requested the support and assistance with stopping the completion of this project to the Elected Officials that were present at the meeting.

Senator Luis Sepulveda will be meeting with Bronx Borough Commissioner Nivardo Lopez in regards to this project.

Lisa Sanchez, Board Member

Ms. Sanchez strongly believes that the Safety Improvement Project at Southern Boulevard needs to be reevaluated and redesigned before proceeding. She also expressed her frustration with the lack of notice that was not given to the community members and cultural institutions in this area of the district.

Nancy J.W. Stombaugh, representing Nora Feury Child Development Center of the Mosholu Montefiore Community Center

Ms. Stombaugh announced that Nora Feury Child Development Center of the Mosholu Montefiore Community Center is now accepting applications. She also thanked the 48th Police Precinct for increasing police presence in the Crotona Park North area of the district.

IV. BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr's report was presented by his Community Board Liaison, Ms. Alexis Ruiz. The report included, but was not limited to, the following information:

- Ms. Ruiz informed us that the Community Board report for the month of May was shared by email.
- Ms. Ruiz also informed us that the board members that submitted a membership reappointment application should continue to serve as board members until they have received their response letter from the Borough President Diaz Jr.
- Ms. Ruiz also informed us that Bronx Borough President Diaz Jr. is honoring the loss of the Honorable Aurelia Greene. He kindly asks that we keep her family in our prayers. The Honorable Aurelia Greene will lie-in-state in the Rotunda of the Bronx County Courthouse located at 851 Grand Concourse, for public viewing on Monday, May 17, 2021 from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM.
- Ms. Ruiz also informed us that Bronx Borough President Diaz Jr. was joined by Deputy Borough President Marricka Scott-McFadden, sponsors and elected officials for the official kick-off of "Bronx Week 2021," his final Bronx Week serving as Borough President, at the New York Botanical Gardens on May 8, 2021. Individuals are welcome to participate by viewing the events live on his website.

V. ELECTED OFFICIALS' REPORTS

New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda

Senator Sepulveda informed us that Senate Bill S2212 that prohibits approved providers of child health insurance coverage from discriminating against health care providers not participating in the

insurer's network was passed. He also informed us that Senate Bill S4520 will amend the public health law, in relation to expanding the Doctors Across New York program to include dental services to under-served areas of the state was also passed. Senator Sepulveda also informed us that the moratorium on residential evictions has been extended until August 31, 2021 for tenants who have endured COVID-related hardship. Tenants must submit a hardship declaration, or a document explaining the source of the hardship, to prevent evictions. He also informed us that funds have been allocated to provide relief to small businesses who have also endured COVID-related hardship. Senator Sepulveda announced that the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program, commonly known as Section 8, is a federal program designed to provide rental assistance to low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. The New York State Division of Homes and Community Renewal (DHCR) opened the Section 8 waiting list on May 17, 2021 thru May 28, 2021 at 11:59 PM. Applications will not be accepted outside of this period. He also reported that he has been able to get over 2,000 individuals vaccinated against COVID-19. As a continuation of his efforts, he will be working with health care providers to create vaccination pop-up sites. Senator Sepulveda's office can be reached by telephone at (718) 991-3161 or by email at team@senatorsepulveda.com. Individuals may also directly contact Senator Sepulveda at (347) 582-8173.

New York State Assemblywoman Karines Reyes

Assemblywoman Reyes encouraged us to get vaccinated against COVID-19. She informed us that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommended use of Johnson & Johnson's Janssen (J&J/Janssen) COVID-19 Vaccine resume in the United States, after a temporary pause. She also informed us that the New York State Assembly passed legislation to remove antiquated language from family court proceedings. She explained that the term "incurable" is defined as a person who is incapable of being corrected or reformed, and does not align with the goals of New York's family court system. Therefore, under this bill, the word "incurable" would be removed from the Family Court Act. She also informed us that the New York HERO Act, a critical bill requiring businesses to have enforceable safety standards to prevent further spread of infectious diseases, was passed. Assemblywoman Reyes announced that the East 180th Street Subway Station will be a pop-up vaccination site on Wednesday, May 1, 2021 to Sunday, May 16, 2021 from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM. She also announced that the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance will accepting applications starting June 1, 2021 at 9:00 AM for the New York State Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) in which will provide significant economic relief to help low and moderate-income households at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability by providing rental arrears, temporary rental assistance and utility arrears assistance.

Assemblywoman Chantel Jackson

Assemblywoman Jackson announced that she has partnered with VIP Community Services to host a community fair on Saturday, May 22, 2021 from 1:30 PM to 4:00 PM inside of the Morrisania Air Rights Basketball Court located on East 158th Street and Park Avenue. There will be food distribution, COVID-19 testing and vaccinations, and activities for the children available at the fair. She also announced that there's going to be a virtual informational session, *Marijuana Expungement is Automatic: What's next?*, on Tuesday, May 25, 2021 at 6:30 PM to explain the automatic expungement, implications for non-citizens, collateral consequences and employment, and changes to criminal

penalties. Assemblywoman Jackson also requested input from the meeting's participants to determine why the youth and young adults of our communities aren't getting vaccinated as expected. She also mentioned that she was going to be addressing the Department of Transportation's Safety Improvement Project at Southern Boulevard from East Fordham Road to East 182nd Street.

Nanette Alvarado, representing United States Congressman Ritchie Torres

Ms. Alvarado informed us that Congressman Torres has been working with environmental groups in the Bronx towards pushing the Biden Administration to invest in fixing the Cross Bronx Expressway through the American Jobs Plan. She also informed us that they have received numerous complaints in regards to the Mount Carmel Post Office Station located on East 187th Street. He is working towards arranging a meeting with the United States Postal Services (USPS) to address the community complaints and concerns. He is also working towards making the Child Tax Credit permanent. Individuals can contact Congressman Torres' district office by telephone at (718) 503-9610.

Surey Miranda-Alarcón, representing Mayor Bill de Blasio

Mrs. Miranda-Alarcón informed us that she has been in receipt of numerous concerns and complaints in regards to the Department of Transportation's Safety Improvement Project at Southern Boulevard from East Fordham Road to East 182nd Street. She also announced that the New York City Mobile Vaccine Bus will be administering the Johnson & Johnson Vaccine from 12:00 PM to 8:00 PM at Fordham Plaza on Saturday, May 15, 2021 through Tuesday, May 18, 2021.

Nick Peters, representing New York State Assemblyman Victor Pichardo

Mr. Peters expressed that Assemblyman Pichardo shares the community's concerns and frustration in regards to the Department of Transportation's Safety Improvement Project at Southern Boulevard from East Fordham Road to East 182nd Street and is willing to assist if needed. He reported that Assemblyman Pichardo partnered with Friends of Tremont Park for a community planting day at Walter Gladwin Park (previously known as Tremont Park) on Saturday, May 8, 2021. He also hosted a virtual Understanding and Managing Student Loan Debt Information Session on Thursday, May 6, 2021. Mr. Peters also reported that Assemblyman Pichardo attended a public hearing on the electronic and remote notarization in New York State. The purpose of this public hearing was to examine the impact of authorizing licensed notaries public to conduct notarizations through electronic or remote methods. He also announced that Assemblyman Pichardo is going to hold a virtual 2021 Budget Townhall Meeting on Thursday, May 27, 2021 from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM to discuss the recently passed budget. Mr. Peters also took the opportunity to remind everyone that the last day to complete income tax returns is on Monday, May 17, 2021. Their office currently has a free tax services site one-pager to share with those individuals who need assistance. For more information, individuals can contact Assemblyman Pichardo's district office by telephone at (718) 933-6909 or by email at petersng@nyassembly.gov. They can also follow him on social media @vpichardo86. The district office is operating in-person on Monday through Friday from 10:30 AM to 5:30 PM. However, individuals are required to schedule an appointment for in-person assistance.

Francisco Aquino Ramirez, New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera

Mr. Aquino reported that the New York State Senate passed new and improved hospital and nursing

home staffing standards and protocols in which Senator Rivera sponsored. The bill requires hospitals to establish Clinical Staffing Committees to develop, implement and oversee annual clinical staffing plans for nurses and non-nurse support staff at each hospital in the state. He also informed us that the moratorium on residential evictions has been extended until August 31, 2021 for tenants who have endured COVID-related hardship. He also informed us that the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance will accept applications starting June 1, 2021 at 9:00 AM for the New York State Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). Individuals requiring assistance with the applicants can contact their district office for assistance. Their district office can be reached by telephone at (718) 933-2034 or by email at grivera@nysenate.gov. Their district office is still operating remotely until further notice. Mr. Aquino also announced that individuals over the age of 16 are now eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccination. Individuals who are homebound and other eligible New Yorkers (those age 75 and up and those with a disability) can fill out the Interest Form for In-Home Vaccinations or call 877-VAX-4-NYC (877-829-4692) to be contacted by the City for this service. He also announced that Senator Rivera's Spring Employment Guide was released.

VI. DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Sanchez's district manager's report included the following information:

- Mr. Sanchez thanked Assemblyman Victor Pichardo for joining Friends of Tremont Park for their It's My Park Day event on Saturday, May 8, 2021.
- Mr. Sanchez reported that he is reviewing applications (resumes and cover letters) for the Summer Internship Program that will begin in July.
- Mr. Sanchez also announced that Bronx Community Board #6 will be a Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) site this summer.
- Mr. Sanchez will also be providing an update in the near future about in-person meetings.

VII. PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing on the Elevate Transit: Zoning for Accessibility (ZFA) Text Amendment was held.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and Department of City Planning (DCP) are proposing a citywide zoning text amendment that will allow the MTA to work more efficiently with private developers to help achieve system wide accessibility. The proposal includes a system-wide transit easement certification and an authorization for transit improvement bonuses in high density areas to facilitate the implementation of ADA access at stations throughout the city more quickly and efficiently.

No one requested to testify for the public hearing on the Elevate Transit: Zoning for Accessibility (ZFA) Text Amendment.

VIII. ROLL CALL ATTENDANCE

A roll call attendance was taken confirming the presence of a quorum with the presence of twenty-four (24) 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 April 14, 2021 was made by Ms. Jacquetta Whaley, seconded by Ms. Lisa Sanchez, and adopted by a vote of twenty-four in favor, zero opposition and zero abstention.**
- 2. A motion to issue a conditional recommendation to the New York City Department of City Planning on the Zoning for Accessibility (ZFA) Text Amendment that includes the West Farms Sq. subway station in the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA)'s plan to be an accessible subway station was made by Ms. Jacquetta Whaley, seconded by Ms. Noorjahan Wells, and adopted by a vote of twenty-three in favor, zero opposed and zero abstention. *(Please note that Board Member, Paul Ramirez, was not present during this motion.)***
- 3. A motion to issue a letter of support to the Bronx Zoo on their new temporary Budgie Feeding exhibit was made by Ms. Margarita Espinosa, seconded by Ms. Nicole Carter, and adopted by a vote of twenty-three in favor, zero opposed and zero abstention. *(Please note that Board Member, Paul Ramirez, was not present during this motion.)***

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to discuss, the May 12, 2021 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was adjourned at approximately 8:09 PM pursuant to a motion made by Mr. Gil Simmons, second by Ms. Noorjahan Wells, and unanimously adopted by acclamation (twenty-three in favor, zero opposed and zero abstention). *(Please note that Board Member, Paul Ramirez, was not present during this motion.)*

Respectfully submitted:

**Carla Leon
Community Associate**

ATTENDANCE AND VOTING RECORDING FOR BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #6 MEETING OF MAY 12, 2021

NAME	ATTENDANCE	MINUTES OF APRIL 14, 2021	LOS CITY PLANNING	LOS BRONX ZOO	ADJOURMEN T					
Clarita Bailon	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Virginia Bird	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Cornell Brown										
Milagros Cancel										
Evonne Capers	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Nicole Carter	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Sadija Cekovic										
Diana Diaz										
Margarita Espinosa	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Frank Franz	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Maria Garcia										
Lanell Gardenhire	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Julisa Hamilton										
Audrey Harden	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Laura James	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Maria Latimer	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Assana Lloyd										
Matthew Martinez	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Francine Miller										
Michael Nelson										
Floretta O'Brien	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Rev. Marilyn Oliver										
Jorge Ortiz										
Rosa Peraza										
Reggie Powell	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Paul Ramirez	Present	Yes								
Carmen Rivera	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Kristine Rivera	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Wendy Rodriguez	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Maria Ruiz Gutierrez	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Lisa Sanchez	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Divine Sikanku	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Gil Simmons	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Lillie Steed	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Noorjahan Wells	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Jacquetta Whaley	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					