



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 6
1932 Arthur Avenue, Room 403-A, Bronx, NY 10457
Telephone: (718) 579-6990 Email: BX06@cb.nyc.gov Website: nyc.gov/bxcb6
Honorable Vanessa L. Gibson, Bronx Borough President
Honorable Oswald Feliz, New York City Council Member

EVONNE CAPERS
Board Chairperson

RAFAEL MOURE-PUNNETT
District Manager

Bronx Community Board 6
Meeting minutes of Wednesday, December 17, 2025

Members Present:

Nicole Carter, Sofia Delgado, Margarita Espinosa, Frank Franz, Maria Garcia, Fousani Hamidou, Shantavia Inabinet, Gail Irby, Laura James, Julio Jimenez, Maria Latimer, Magdamary Marcano, Angel Nunez-Garcia, Jessii Parham, Lamont Parker, Carmen Rivera, Hoshi Salcedo, Lisa Sanchez, Gladys Sotomayor, Annette Wright, and Angelina Zervos.

Members Absent:

Brigette Brantley, Cornell Brown, Evonne Capers, Ashonda Culcleasure, Patrick Downer, Nicole Ndiaye, Reggie Powell, Paul Ramirez, Katrina Rawlins, Renee Reed, Kristine Rivera, Carol Robinson, and Porcha Wilson.

Elected Officials Present:

New York City Council Member Oswald Feliz

Elected Officials Representatives Present:

Kenny Agosto, representing Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson
Santiago Baena, representing New York City Council Member Oswald Feliz
Ezperanza Diaz, representing New York City Council Member Oswald Feliz
Michael Torres, representing New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera
Ronn Jordan, representing United States Congressman Ritchie Torres

I. CALL TO ORDER

The December 17, 2025 meeting of Bronx Community Board 6 was held at the McShane Ballroom at Fordham University, Bronx, New York, 10458 and was called to order at approximately 6:38 PM by 1st Vice-Chairperson Laura James.

II. INVOCATION

The meeting's invocation was delivered by Board Member Maria Garcia.

III. COMMUNITY PERIOD

Individuals who addressed the Community Board during the meeting's Community Period were:

Mathew Smith, Young Democratic Socialists of America at Fordham University

Mr. Smith, a Fordham student, community resident, and member of the Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA), reports that the university has refused to recognize the YDSA as an official club for three years, despite the group's consistent efforts. He alleges that the university has engaged in a pattern of obstruction, intimidation, and retaliation. This has reportedly escalated following advocacy activities involving the distribution of Plan B and condoms. Specific incidents cited include the shutdown of a tabling event, a formal investigation into students distributing contraceptives on a public sidewalk, and summoning students to justify their actions. Mr. Smith argues these actions create an atmosphere of fear and violate the New York State Equal Rights Amendment. Additionally, Mr. Smith described the repeated last-minute cancellation of events, including a student government town hall intended to discuss a proposal for contraceptive distribution that respects the university's religious concerns. The administration reportedly attributed these cancellations to "backlog." Mr. Smith asserts that these measures are intentional efforts to suppress activism and erode student trust. He has called on the Board to intervene by holding the university accountable and issuing a formal letter or taking action to protect student rights and community health.

Maria Garcia, Saint Thomas Aquinas Church

Ms. Garcia has invited us to a toy giveaway event on December 24th, 2025, at Saint Thomas Aquinas Church, located at 1900 Crotona Parkway. The event will include toy giveaways, chocolate, and cake. Children will also have the opportunity to take pictures with the Grinch and Santa Claus. Ms. Garcia, who has been organizing fundraising events at the church for 25 years, noted that the church has hosted this annual toy giveaway for over two decades.

IV. BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson's report was presented by her Community Liaison, Kenny Agosto.

Mr. Agosto shared several important updates regarding community safety, recent events, and upcoming opportunities.

Following several recent major fires, the Borough President Gibson is emphasizing critical safety protocols. To prevent further tragedies, she urges you to adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Charging:** Never charge EV batteries indoors.
- **Electrical Safety:** Do not use power strips or extension cords for high-wattage appliances like space heaters, refrigerators, or microwaves, as they can melt and cause fires. Ensure Christmas tree lights are not overloaded.
- **In Case of Fire:** Close all doors to contain the fire; do not open windows. If you are in a building higher than six floors, shelter in place and put a wet towel under the door while waiting for help. In buildings below six floors, utilize your designated escape route or fire escape.
- **Equipment:** Borough President Gibson is partnering with the Mayor's Office, the FDNY, and the American Red Cross to distribute smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, and fire blankets.

Mr. Agosto also extended an invitation to attend the Menorah Lighting on Thursday, December 18, 2025, from 4:30 PM to 5:30 PM at Bronx Borough Hall located at 851 Grand Concourse. He also extended an

invitation to attend the LGBTQ+ Mixer: The "Divas, Crowns, and Flowers" event will take place on Friday, January 9, 2026 at the Bronx Brewery. This resource-focused evening is open to everyone and will feature live appearances and a celebration of Three Kings Day.

Ms. Agosto also informed us that applications Community Board membership will be available in early 2026 in both English and Spanish. He encourages members of the public to apply and stay involved by attending our meetings.

Mr. Agosto can be contacted at (347) 213-0375 for more information.

V. ELECTED OFFICIAL'S REPORTS

New York City Council Member Oswald Feliz

Council Member Feliz provided several important updates regarding upcoming community events and local capital projects. He announced that two holiday toy giveaways are scheduled, with one event taking place on Thursday, December 18, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. at Fordham University, and the second on Friday, December 19, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. at MS45. In addition, Council Member Feliz reported that the renovation of the Quarry Ballfields playground has been completed and that the facility is now open to the public. He further noted that \$10 million in funding has been secured to transform the vacant space beneath the Cross Bronx Expressway at Webster Avenue into new recreational amenities, including basketball or volleyball courts. Renovations are currently underway at the MS45 Playground, with an anticipated completion in Summer 2026. Moreover, \$2 million has been allocated for improvements to the Crotona Parkway Malls between 178th and 183rd Streets, where construction has already commenced and is expected to be completed by May 2026. Lastly, approximately \$20 million has been designated for a comprehensive renovation of Bathgate Playground, and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation is currently finalizing the design phase.

Michael Torres, representing New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera

Mr. Torres Senator Rivera's offices will be closed to the public from December 15th through the 17th. During this time, staff will work remotely on their regular schedule. The offices will then be closed from December 20th to January 4th; however, staff will be available on an on-call basis to monitor voicemails and emails for urgent matters. Community members are encouraged to call 718-933-2034 and leave a voicemail if assistance is needed. Additionally, Mr. Torres shared that the team has been conducting small-business outreach. This initiative involves visiting vendors and businesses in areas where ICE has been present to distribute palm cards and inform individuals about their rights.

Ronn Jordan, representing United States Congressman Ritchie Torres

Mr. Jordan reminded us that their hours of operation are from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, and they can be reached by telephone at (718) 503-9610. Mr. Jordan encourages anyone with issues related to the United States Postal Services, the IRS, immigration, or any other federal agency to call their office. They have interns available who are ready and able to support the public.

VI. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

1st Vice-Chairperson Laura James, on behalf of Chairperson Evonne Capers, reported the following information:

The Chairperson has formally announced the election for the vacant position of 2nd Vice-Chairperson. The Nominating Committee reviewed the By-Laws and confirmed that, as this executive committee vacancy was created by resignation, the Board is authorized to "fast track the process" by accepting nominations from the floor at the upcoming meeting. The District Manager has already sought nominations from board members via email. The election will be held immediately before any motions are adopted. Ballots will be counted concurrently while motions are being presented. The Chairperson reminded us that the duties of the 2nd Vice-Chairperson include serving as Chairperson for meetings when the Chairperson and 1st Vice-Chairperson are unavailable and occasionally attending Bronx Borough Board meetings, particularly when a voting item is scheduled.

Additionally, starting in January, all committees are requested to review their quorum records and discuss strategies to achieve quorum at meetings. Potential solutions include amending the virtual attendance policy or adjusting committee memberships to ensure in-person quorum requirements are met.

VII. DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT

District Manager Rafael Moure-Punnett reported the following information:

Mr. Moure-Punnett discussed the upcoming Board member reappointment process, which begins next month. To ensure members do not miss their reappointment windows, the District Manager will begin sending monthly reminders to those whose terms are expiring.

The following members are up for reappointment and will reach their initial term limits starting in 2026: Evonne Capers, Frank Franz, Maria Garcia, Paul Ramirez, Nicole Carter, and Lisa Sanchez. While their final term would theoretically be 2026–2028, the City Charter allows for a two-year extension, potentially extending their service to 2030. This extension is intended to prevent significant turnover; however, the 2028–2030 term remains at the discretion of the Borough President, and the Board has not yet received confirmation regarding its implementation.

The following members are also up for reappointment in January, but are not currently affected by term limits: Cornell Brown, Carmen Rivera, Kristine Rivera, Magdamary Marcano, Fousani Hamidou, Nicole N'Diaye, Kartina Rawlins, and Porscha Wilson. These members will receive official notices from the Borough President's office this month.

If a member fails to re-apply, their membership will conclude on March 31st. If the Borough President's office intends to reappoint a member, that individual will remain on the Board until June before re-applying during the summer cycle.

VIII. TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Magdamary Marcano reported the following information:

Ms. Marcano reported, excluding personnel services, the Board spent \$2,141.28 this month. Including \$19,089.29 for personnel services, the total monthly expenditure was \$21,230.57. To date, the Board has spent \$114,955.14, leaving a balance of \$184,761.95 for the remainder of the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026.

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Lamont Parker, Disciplinary Committee Chairperson

Mr. Parker reported that the Disciplinary Committee reviewed attendance for Community Board and Committee meetings over the past few months. It was found that three Board members have missed three consecutive meetings. Consequently, letters were sent to these members inviting them to respond to the Disciplinary Committee, which will decide in January whether to move for their removal. Additionally, the Disciplinary Committee reviewed the frequency of meetings held without a quorum and evaluated the Board's virtual attendance rules. The Disciplinary Committee has decided to contact the Board to express concerns that a quorum is frequently not being met due to virtual attendance.

Nicole Carter, Economic Development Committee Chairperson

Ms. Carter reports that the District Manager Rafael Moure-Punnett informed the Economic Development Committee of significant concerns from business owners regarding the newly implemented busway in Jamaica, Queens. Business owners there report that the busway discourages motorists from returning due to confusion over permissible driving, resulting in high-fine tickets. They emphasize that the loss of these customers is financially impactful, as those who drive typically spend more. The business owners on Jamaica Avenue link the busway to a sharp increase in commercial vacancy rates, which reportedly rose from 6% in 2023 to 13% in 2024 and 21% in 2025. The Economic Development Committee anticipates that the Tremont busway will create similar challenges for local businesses. The District Manager expects to receive comparable complaints when the New York City Department of Transportation revisits the Tremont Busway proposal.

Ms. Margarita Espinosa, Environment and Parks Committee Chairperson

Ms. Espinosa shared information regarding the New York Sea Grant's sustainable communities and resiliency program. Based at NOAA, Cornell University, and Stony Brook University, the Sustainable and Resilient Communities (SRC) Team was established two years ago to provide technical assistance and resources to communities within the Long Island Sound watershed. Key resources available through the program include the Long Island Sound Resilience Resource Hub—which offers maps, grant opportunities, and workshops—and the Planning Support Program, which provides funding for technical experts and consultants. Ms. Espinosa also informed us that the Environment and Parks Committee discussed several critical environmental challenges facing the District, specifically high-density construction, infrastructure needs, and flooding. Proposed initiatives to address these issues include climate literacy workshops and public awareness campaigns regarding reporting flooded catch basins. The Environment and Parks Committee also reviewed the New York City Department of Design and Construction's project at West Farms Square, which includes a street redesign, new sewers, and rain gardens and the Bronx River Alliance's proposal to convert New York State Department of Transportation-owned land near Drew Gardens into green infrastructure to manage rainfall.

Frank Franz, Housing and Land-Use Committee Chairperson

Mr. Franz reported that the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) has acknowledged the Board's letter and is currently considering the matter. The District Manager is awaiting a response to an email sent last week regarding Laura James' presentation and a formal request for inspection. A 2018 request to designate the church as a landmark has been combined with current concerns to ensure both are addressed in future development proposals. Additionally, the Housing and Land-Use committee is collaborating with a documentarian and discussing area scanning projects with Lehman College and Fordham University to support the investigation. While coordination with the State is ongoing, logistical hurdles remain, including

required approvals from the State and the property secretary, as well as an official opinion from the property owner for the LPC.

The Housing and Land-Use Committee also discussed significant issues at 915 Elsmere Place, including the misrepresentation of amenities on Housing Connect. Promised features such as on-site superintendents, laundry facilities, and functioning security doors are currently absent. Furthermore, a policy requiring tenants to carry renters' insurance or pay a \$15 monthly surcharge is under legal review by District Manager Rafael Moure-Punnett and counsel. District Manager Moure-Punnett identified Mark Stagg as the owner of several problematic properties and has been attempting to reach him since mid-October without success. Landlord unaccountability remains a challenge due to vague HPD guidelines and a lack of enforcement regarding regulatory agreements. Legal remedies are also limited, as many tenants lack the resources for private counsel and public-interest lawyers rarely handle false advertising cases. If these issues persist, the District Manager plans to alert the media to seek public pressure for improvements.

Carmen Rivera, Public Safety and Licensing Committee Chairperson

Ms. Rivera reported that the Public Safety and Licensing Committee recommended approval for liquor license renewals at Dancing Crane Cafe and Bronx Zoo Caterers (2300 Southern Boulevard), as well as a corporate change for Caridad Seafood Restaurant (410 East Tremont Avenue). No changes to operations or management were noted for these establishments. Additionally, the committee shared that the State Liquor Authority revoked the liquor license for Portmore Linkup Lounge due to serving alcohol to minors, resulting in its closure in November 2025. The establishment may appeal this decision.

Ms. Rivera also shared several updates regarding public safety and local concerns. First, she addressed the status of crossing guards. Following the 2022 citywide budget cuts that eliminated 475 positions, our area has been significantly impacted, dropping from 41 guards to only 16, despite a budget for 20. These figures do not currently include coverage for charter schools. The 48th Precinct is working with the Bronx delegation to reinstate the lost positions and secure funding for all local charter schools. This remains a high priority, especially for schools facing heavy traffic. Additionally, the new Commander at the 48th Precinct has requested a feasibility study from the NYC Department of Transportation to establish safer crossing corridors while we work toward restoring guard funding. At the recent Community Council meeting, the incoming Inspector was unable to attend due to an active police incident. It was reported that an individual fired several rounds into the air and was subsequently tracked to an apartment. Through drone surveillance, officers confirmed the individual was armed. Both the suspect and a second individual surrendered without incident, and a 9mm Glock with ammunition was recovered following a search warrant. No injuries were reported, and the incident was covered by News 12.

Lisa Sanchez, Transportation Committee Chairperson

Ms. Sanchez reported that District Manager Rafael Moure-Punnett provided the Transportation Committee with an overview of the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) project to rehabilitate the Cross Bronx Expressway. The project involves rebuilding five bridges and seeking \$150 million in federal funds for a community connector across the Bronx River. Construction is projected to take place from late 2026 through 2032. The committee noted several concerns regarding the Environmental Assessment (EA), specifically concerning the timeline, environmental impact, project options, and policy coordination. Consequently, the Transportation Committee moved to send official comments to NYSDOT and elected officials. Additionally, the committee will arrange a walking tour with the incoming Mayor.

Laura James, Youth and Education Committee Chairperson

Ms. James reported that the committee recently discussed the necessity of an analysis of education programs funded by the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) within our district. While the required data has been obtained, the lack of standardization in the City’s evaluation process—specifically differing metrics and scoring systems—has made comparative analysis difficult. To address this, Dr. Sonia James Wilson, a program evaluation expert and former committee consultant, has developed an analysis proposal. The ultimate goal of this proposal is to provide actionable steps for the district. Dr. Wilson will discuss the remaining details of her proposal at the next Youth and Education committee meeting.

X. ROLL CALL ATTENDANCE

A roll call attendance was taken confirming the presence of quorum with the presence of twenty-one (21) members.

XI. ELECTION OF FIRST VICE-CHAIRPERSON

The ballot for the 2nd Vice-Chairperson position was created by District Manager Rafael Moure-Punnett, based on email nominations received from Board Members. Laura James nominated Angelina Zervos and Maria Garcia nominated herself for the position from the floor. Following the nominations, the election was conducted.

The results of the election was as follows:

**Maria Garcia: 12 votes
Angelina Zervos: 9 votes**

Based on the results, Maria Garcia was elected as the 2nd Vice-Chairperson, effective immediately.

XII. ADOPTIONS OF MOTIONS

- 1. A motion to adopt the minutes of Bronx Community Board 6’s November 2025 Community Board and December 2025 Committee Meetings was made by Mr. Lamont Parker, seconded by Ms. Nicole Carter, and adopted by a vote of twenty in favor, zero opposed, and one abstention.**
- 2. A motion to issue a letter to New York City Council Member Oswald Feliz on the Sojourner Mapes rezoning was made by Mr. Lamont Parker, seconded by Mr. Frank Franz, and adopted by a vote of nineteen in favor, zero opposed, and two abstentions.**
- 3. A motion to issue a letter to the Bronx Zoo regarding the Sojourner Mapes rezoning shadow impact was made by Ms. Maria Garcia, seconded by Ms. Margarita Espinosa, and adopted by a vote of nineteen in favor, one opposed, and one abstention.**
- 4. A motion to issue a letter of comment on the Environmental Assessment for the Cross Bronx Expressway 5 Bridges Project of the New York State Department of Transportation was made by Mr. Lamont Parker, seconded by Ms. Lisa Sanchez, and adopted by a vote of twenty-one in favor, zero opposed, and zero abstention**

5. A motion to issue letters to elected officials representing Bronx Community Board 6 asking that they request an extension of the comment period for the environmental assessment of the Cross Bronx Expressway 5 Bridges project was made by Ms. Shantavia Inabinet, seconded by Mr. Lamont Parker, and adopted by a vote of twenty-one in favor, zero opposed, and zero abstention.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to discuss, the December 17, 2025 meeting of Bronx Community Board 6 was adjourned at approximately 8:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

**Carla Leon
Community Coordinator**

