



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 6
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District Manager

Environment and Parks Committee Meeting Minutes
Margarita Espinosa, Environment and Parks Committee Chairperson
Wednesday, June 10, 2026

The Environment and Parks Committee met on Wednesday, June 10, 2026 in-person at the district office and on Zoom Video Communications. The following board members attended the Environment and Parks Committee Meeting: Margarita Espinosa, Shantavia Inabinet, Laura James (Virtual), Magdamary Marcano, Reggie Powell, Renee Reed, Carol Robinson, and Angelina Zervos.

The Environment and Parks Committee discussed the following:

- **Summary Presentation on Community Board 6-Sponsored River Garden Programming**

Laura James, as a representative of Bronx River Garden, presented a report on the outcomes of the 2025 Wellness in West Farms and Gardening 101 programs. As an all-volunteer community garden located at the corner of East 180th Street and DeVoe Avenue, Bronx River Garden relies on grants, donations, and community partnerships to provide free educational and wellness programming for neighborhood residents. This year was especially meaningful for the organization as they celebrated their 50th anniversary. The \$2,800 sponsorship provided by Bronx Community Board 6 was instrumental in making these programs possible. The funding enabled Bronx River Garden to offer free, accessible programming that connected residents with nature, health and wellness resources, gardening education, and one another.

This year, our Gardening 101 program saw increased participation compared to the previous season, with the majority of attendees residing in the Bronx, particularly within Bronx Community Board 6. A total of 102 individuals registered for the program, and attendance averaged approximately 40 participants across each of the five workshop sessions. Through the program, participants gained hands-on gardening knowledge and skills while receiving free seedlings to take home and grow in their own gardens, yards, or containers. The response from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing appreciation for the practical information, welcoming atmosphere, and opportunity to connect with neighbors and nature. Survey responses highlighted the program's impact on participants' confidence, knowledge, and enthusiasm for gardening.

This year, Bronx River Community Garden expanded its programming by launching Wellness in West Farms, a free community wellness series that combined yoga, community health discussions, and introductory Tai Chi practice in a welcoming outdoor setting. They were fortunate to partner with professional yoga instructor Andrea Messen, who led weekly yoga sessions designed to be accessible to participants of all ages and experience levels. Initially, they had hoped to collaborate with Urban Health Plan to facilitate the health discussion component of the program. Due to scheduling constraints and limited Sunday availability, that partnership was not possible this season. In response, we successfully pivoted and invited community-based health coaches and wellness practitioners to lead engaging conversations on topics related to physical, mental, and emotional well-

being. A total of 85 individuals registered for the program, with an average of 15 participants attending each weekly yoga session. Notably, the program still has three Sundays remaining, and participation continues to grow. Community members demonstrated a remarkable commitment to their health and wellness, attending sessions despite high temperatures, rain, and other challenging weather conditions. Their consistent participation underscores both the need for and value of accessible wellness programming in West Farms. The enthusiasm, resilience, and positive feedback from participants have affirmed the importance of creating opportunities for residents to connect with one another, engage in healthy activities, and utilize neighborhood green spaces as places for healing, learning, and community building.

The committee was informed that Bronx River Garden used their limited available resources to put on the Gardening 101 program and Wellness in West Farms events. This is because the funds from Bronx Community Board 6 in the amount of \$2,800.00 have not been disbursed. Once the funds become available, the garden can pay the instructors and reimburse a garden member who paid for the seedlings and pots needed for the program.

- **Discussion and Selection of Community Garden Walk-Through Date**

The committee proposed visiting community gardens on July 18th and July 25th. The district manager will schedule visits with the garden coordinators to ensure they are present to open the gates for the committee members to tour the garden. Committee members will also scout locations for garden spaces that are large enough to host events, similar to the events hosted by Bronx River Garden around community wellness.