



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

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Honorable Ruben Diaz Jr., Bronx Borough President

MS. WENDY RODRIGUEZ
Board Chairperson

MR. JOHN SANCHEZ
District Manager

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #6
Meeting minutes of Wednesday, June 14, 2017

Members Present:

Jannie Armstrong, Evonne Capers, Alice Charles, Claudette Coles, Diana Diaz, Margarita Espinosa, Frank Franz, Maria Garcia, April Hurley, Jerry L. Jackson, Sara Nunez-Mejia, Michael Nelson, Floretta A. O'Brien, Rosa Peraza, Paul Ramirez, Wendy Rodriguez, Moussa Siby, Gil Simmons, and Carrie Taft

Members Absent:

Tair Aziov (leave of absence), Virdjil Asanov (leave of absence), Sahre Davis (leave of absence), and Octavia Lewis

Elected Officials Present:

Councilmember Rafael Salamanca Jr.

Elected Officials Representatives Present:

Famod Konneh, representing Mayor Bill De Blasio
Thomas Lucania, representing Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.
Israel Sanchez, representing City Councilmember Ritchie Torres
Hennessy Reyes, representing NYS Senator Gustavo Rivera
Charisse Suarez, representing NYS Assemblyman Jose Rivera
Dion Powell, representing NYS Assemblyman Michael Blake
Ibrahim Shatara, representing NYS Assemblyman Luis Sepulveda
Evangelina Medellin, representing NYS Assemblyman Victor Pichardo
Michael Lambert, representing Comptroller Scott Stringer

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The June 14, 2017 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was held at the Church of God, which is located at 1920 Crotona Avenue, Bronx, New York, and was called to order at approximately 6:35 p.m. by Chairperson Wendy Rodriguez.

II. INVOCATION

The meeting's invocation was delivered by Reverend Marilyn Oliver from Gethsemane Baptist Church.

*Honorable Ritchie Torres,
City Council Member, 15th Council District*

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

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III. COMMUNITY PERIOD

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

Nora Taggart, representing the New York Metro Area Postal Union

Ms. Taggart stated that Council Member Rafael Salamanca Jr., ordered an audit of the United States Postal Services which revealed a lot of information. She informed us that in 2012, seventeen (17) post offices in the Bronx were targeted for closure, but they have decided to instead make employee budget cuts. The Tremont Avenue station alone lost five (5) window clerk positions increasing their wait time to 57 minutes to 2 hours. However, the New York Metro Area Postal Union were able to save three of those positions. Ms. Taggart is currently trying to seek support from the elected officials in order to work together to prevent additional layoffs and to increase employee positions.

Glennis Gomez, representing the Department of Education

Ms. Gomez informed us about the Specialized High School Admission Test (SHSAT). She stated that the SHSAT is the competitive, objective, and scholastic achievement examination used as the sole factor to determine admissions to New York City's Specialized High Schools (with the exception of LaGuardia High School). All current New York City residents in 8th grade or in 9th grade for the first time, and in public, private, and parochial schools who plan to apply to one of these Specialized High Schools must take the SHSAT. The students are ranked according to their scores on the test and assigned to a school depending on their rank on the list, the priority in which they placed schools, and the seats available at each school. She also informed us that starting with the fall 2017 the SHSAT administration, for admissions to schools in the 2018-19 school year, the SHSAT will be redesigned. The test administered in October and November 2016 for admission to schools in September 2017 was the final administration of the test under the previous design. The SHSAT is changing in order to better align it to curriculum and instruction students experience in their classrooms on a daily basis.

Adrienne Antonio Palin, representing Workforce 1

Mr. Palin stated that West Farm's Workforce 1 is a career center serving young adults between the ages of 18 and 24. This career center is currently focusing on foodservice and retail careers.

He also informed us about the new initiative for New York City residents. This initiative is a training that provides education and the experience needed to land a job or advance within a career in the industrial and construction fields. To participate, you must be 18 years or older, have a high-school diploma or an equivalent and must have a certain level of English and Math comprehension. Participants must complete the program to go on to their apprenticeship.

Josephine Crisostomo, representing ThriveNYC

Ms. Crisostomo informed us about ThriveNYC the most comprehensive mental health plan of any city or state in the nation created by the First Lady of New York City, Chirlane McCray. As part of the initiative, the NYC Department of Health is offering free Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training to all New Yorkers.

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MHFA is a groundbreaking public education program that teaches the skills needed to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance abuse challenges and crises. First Lady McCray's goal is to get 250,000 of individuals trained. She stated that this training provides you with a three year certification. She also mentioned the training is offered in both Spanish and English and on weekends. The training is currently being offered in several locations in the five boroughs. However, if a group of 25-30 participants would like to receive the training, Ms. Crisostomo could be reached at (646) 574-3637.

Ms. Diaz, Chairperson of the Health and Human Services Committee, requested a presentation at the next committee meeting.

Yvonne Rodriguez

Ms. Rodriguez stated that Vidalia Park is being left opened after dusk, as a result, criminal and inappropriate activities are occurring late at night. Ms. Rodriguez is also requesting that the basketball courts and the benches located in the back of the park be removed and replaced with more playground for the children to prevent these activities.

Mr. Sanchez informed Ms. Rodriguez that he will be contacting the Department of Parks and Recreation to assure that the park be closed at dusk and that it is monitor.

Deputy Inspector Timothy McCormack from the 48th Police Precinct stated that he will be conducting sweeps in this area.

Councilmember Rafael Salamanca Jr. suggested that Ms. Rodriguez call his office to schedule a meeting with him to discuss ways that this park can be improved.

Mercelle Mason, representing Unique People Services

Mr. Mason introduced himself to the community and requested to be added in the community board's mailing list.

Esad Rizai, representing Albanian American Society

Mr. Rizai is kindly requesting the community board's support with the street renaming in honor of Adem Jashari.

IV. BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr's report was presented by his Director of Community Boards and Legislative Affairs, Mr. Thomas Lucania. The report included, but was not limited to, the following information:

- Mr. Lucania first thanked the board members who participated in community board appreciation last month.

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- Mr. Lucania stated that Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., joined the executives of York Studios to break ground on the Bronx's newest blockbuster - a state-of-the-art film and television production complex.
- Mr. Lucania stated that there would be a Caribbean Heritage Event on Thursday, June 15th from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM at the Bronx County Building - Veterans' Memorial Hall located at 851 Grand Concourse.

V. ELECTED OFFICIALS' REPORTS

Councilmember Rafael Salamanca Jr.

Councilmember Salamanca introduced himself as the Councilmember for the 17th District of the New York City Council, representing the South Bronx. He stated that he has dealt with two sessions of Expense and Capital Budgeting and has allocated about thirty million dollars to this district. He recently allocated \$100,000 for Vidalia Park. He also informed us that he has had the privilege of approving about 5,312 units of affordable housing and 11,000 of rent stabilized units. He announced that he will be hosting a job fair on Friday, June 16th from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at the New South Bronx Center - Police Athletic League (991 Longwood Avenue). He advise individuals who were interested in attending to dress in business attire and to bring copies of their resumes.

Famod Konneh, representing Mayor Bill de Blasio

Mr. Konneh introduced himself as the new Bronx Borough Director.

Israel Sanchez, representing Councilmember Ritchie Torres

Mr. Sanchez informed us that their offices continue to offer legal services for housing and immigration. To schedule an appointment, please contact their district office at (718) 842-8100.

Hennessy Reyes, representing Senator Gustavo Rivera

Ms. Reyes announced that their office is now offering free notary services every Tuesday. To schedule an appointment, please contact their district office at (718) 933-2034.

Charisse Suarez, representing Assemblyman Jose Rivera

Ms. Suarez announced that their office are currently organizing and coordinating a bi-monthly resource day event for senior citizens.

Dion Powell, representing Assemblyman Michael Blake

Mr. Powell reported that the My Brother's Keeper program, an initiative to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and ensure that all young people can reach their full potential, will continue to receive funding in our school district. He also informed us that the 2017 American Entrepreneurship Award will be held on Thursday, June 29th at the Bronx Museum of Arts. The American

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Entrepreneurship Award is a new annual award program that seeks to stimulate entrepreneurial spirit through practical support and start-up funding for America's most promising businesses. He stated that the Assemblyman Blake's office will hold 'Tenant Tuesdays' from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM for those needing assistance with housing issues.

Ibrahim Shatara, representing Assemblyman Luis Sepulveda

Mr. Shatara reported that Assemblyman Sepulveda has met with the Japanese Ambassador and Trade Delegation for a foreign investment in the Bronx. He announced that there will be a job fair on Friday, June 16th from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at the New South Bronx Center - Police Athletic League (991 Longwood Avenue).

Evangelina Medellin, representing Assemblyman Victor Pichardo

Ms. Medellin informed us that their office is providing housing assistance on Thursdays from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM. She also encouraged the community to engage with the services that their office provides as well as summer events.

Michael Lambert, representing Comptroller Scott M. Stringer

Mr. Lambert reported that Comptroller Stinger is currently focusing and addressing the current price hike that drug makers have put in effect for the EpiPen. Mr. Lambert also highlighted that New York City is the first pension fund in the nation to divest completely from private prisons. Lastly, he stated that Comptroller Stringer is calling for creation of NYC immigration fund for pathway to citizenship and to protect immigrants.

VI. PRESENTATIONS

Presentation by the Department of Transportation on a proposal for safety improvements along the Third Avenue corridor from East 184th to East 161st Street.

The Department of Transportation's School Safety Division is proposing safety improvements on Third Avenue. Third Avenue is a Vision Zero Priority Corridor with a high injury rate and is heavily traveled by students attending the dozens of schools with a five minute walk of the avenue. The proposal for Third Avenue between East 164th Street and East Tremont Avenue includes the construction of pedestrian refuge islands, left turn bays, a painted median, and bike lanes. In addition, the Department of Transportation proposes to install a curb extension at the complicated intersection of Third Avenue, Washington Avenue and East 187th Street, and to install plastic bollards along the centerline of Third Avenue at East 188th Street to calm movements through the intersection. The proposed improvements would shorten crossing distance, organize traffic, discourage speeding and improve safety for all road users.

Presentation by JROTC students from the Theodore Roosevelt Educational Campus on their community service in Bronx Community Board #6's district

The Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) participants informed us about their recent trip to West Point Military as well as how their experiences participating in JROTC has been for their lives. The

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Army Instructor from Theodore Roosevelt Educational Campus explained that the JROTC program is a federal program sponsored by the United States Armed Forces in high schools and also in some middle schools across the United States and United States military bases across the world. The purpose of this program is to instill in students in United States secondary educational institutions the values of citizenship, service to the United States, and personal responsibility and a sense of accomplishment. He lastly thanked Bronx Community Board #6, Councilmember Ritchie Torres and Assemblyman Gustavo Rivera for helping in making the West Point Military trip possible.

VII. DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Sanchez's district manager's report included, but was not limited to, the following information:

- Mr. Sanchez commends the JROTC students for their community service. He also thanked Councilmember Ritchie Torres and Assemblyman Gustavo Rivera for helping the JROTC students to visit the West Point Military on April 22, 2017.
- Mr. Sanchez announced that he attended the Phipps' Mother's Day luncheon along with board members Sara Nunez-Mejia, Diana Diaz, Virginia Bird, and Rosa Peraza. Bronx Community Board #6 provided gift cards for the senior citizens.
- Mr. Sanchez informed us that the Tremont Park clean-up was a success. He thanked the Park and Recreation Committee Chairperson, Margarita Espinosa and board members Sarah Nunez-Mejia, Maria Garcia, and Claudette Coles for attending.
- During the time City Hall was in the Bronx, He met with the Department of Parks and Recreation in regards to the release of a Request for Expressions of Interest for Tremont Park.
- Mr. Sanchez introduced the Bronx Community Board #6's summer interns and stated that they will be assisting with outreach and surveying the district through the summer.
- Mr. Sanchez also informed us that Bronx Community Board #6 provided their office space so that 10 young women were able to have their hair, makeup, and nails done for their high school prom. Mr. Sanchez thanked Officer Matos from the 48th Police Precinct for assisting in organizing this opportunity.
- Finally, Mr. Sanchez thanked the board members and community members that have helped him this past year.

VIII. CHAIRPERSON REPORT

Chairperson Wendy Rodriguez recognized Bronx Community Board #6's Community Assistant, Ms. Carla Leon, for recently graduating.

Chairperson Wendy Rodriguez announced that the Bronx Community Board #6 will be on summer recess for the months of July and August. The regular general board and committee meetings will resume back in September.

IX. DISTRIBUTION OF CERTIFICATES TO BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #6'S PERFECT AND EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE NOMINEES.

Certificates of Perfect and Excellent Attendance were distributed to the community board's members by 1st Vice-Chairperson, Mrs. Sara Nunez-Mejia and 2nd Vice-Chairperson, Ms. Evonne Capers. The nominees

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were: Jannie Armstrong, Claudette Coles, Sara Nunez-Mejia, Michael Nelson, Floretta O'Brien, Alice Charles, Margarita Espinosa, April Hurley, Wendy Rodriguez, Moussa Siby, Gil Simmons, and Rosa Peraza.

X. DISTRIBUTION OF AWARDS TO THE NEW YORK POLICE DEPARTMENT: 48TH POLICE PRECINCT AND NEW YORK FIRE DEPARTMENT: ENGINE 45, BATTALION 18

Deputy Inspector Timothy McCormack received awards from Bronx Community Board #6, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., Councilmember Ritchie Torres, Assemblyman Victor Pichardo and Senator Gustavo Rivera on behalf of the New York Police Department: 48th Police Precinct.

New York Fire Department: Engine 45, Battalion 18 received awards from Bronx Community Board #6, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., Councilmember Ritchie Torres, Assemblyman Victor Pichardo and Senator Gustavo Rivera.

XI. ROLL CALL ATTENDANCE

A roll call attendance was taken confirming the presence of a quorum of nineteen (19) members.

XII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

The committee reports was included in our meeting packages. Chairperson Wendy Rodriguez asked that we read the reports at our leisure.

XIII. ADOPTION OF MOTIONS

1. A motion to adopt the minutes of Bronx Community Board #6's meeting of May 10, 2017 was made by Ms. Evonne Capers, seconded by Ms. Maria Garcia and unanimously adopted by a vote of 19 in favor, zero opposed and zero abstentions.
2. A motion to approve Bronx Community Board #6's budget for Fiscal Year 2018 was made by Mr. Gil Simmons, seconded by Ms. Alice Charles and adopted by a vote of 17 in favor, 2 oppositions, and 0 abstentions.
3. A motion to table the issue of a letter of support to the Department of Transportation on the proposed safety improvement along the Third Avenue corridor from East 184th Street to the Cross Bronx Expressway was made by Ms. April Hurley, seconded by Ms. Rosa Peraza was defeated by a vote of 5 in favor, 12 oppositions and 2 abstentions.
4. A motion to issue a letter of support to the Department of Transportation on the proposed safety improvement along the Third Avenue corridor from East 184th Street to the Cross Bronx Expressway was made by Ms. Maria Garcia, seconded by Mrs. Sara Nunez-Mejia, and adopted by a vote of 12 in favor, 5 oppositions and 2 abstentions.
5. A motion to go into an executive committee session was made by Ms. Rosa Peraza, seconded by Ms.

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Diana Diaz, and was defeated by a vote of 3 in favor, 15 oppositions and 1 abstention.

XIV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairperson Rodriguez announced that an Executive Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 28, 2017 in the district office.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

The June 14, 2017 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was adjourned at approximately 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

**Carla J. Leon
Community Assistant**