



**THE CITY OF NEW YORK**  
**BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 6**  
**1932 Arthur Avenue, Room 403-A, Bronx, NY 10457**  
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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, November 8, 2017**

**Members present:**

Stephanie Addo-Zuniga, Jannie Armstrong, Virginia Bird, Glenda Bond, Evonne Capers, Nelson Chimilo, Claudette Coles, Margarita Espinosa, Kia Ferguson, Frank Franz, Maria Garcia, Lanell Gardenhire, Audrey Harden, Laura James, Maria Latimer, Michael Nelson, Sara Nunez-Mejia, Floretta O'Brien, Wendy Rodriguez, Moussa Siby, Gil Simmons, Carrie Taft, Jacquetta Whaley

**Members absent:**

Irene Borgen (Leave of Absence), Alice Charles, Diana Diaz, Jerry L. Jackson, Frank Kolovic, Octavia Lewis, Marie Louise Ocran, Victoria Pamas, Rosa Peraza, Paul Ramirez, Hiram Ratliff, and Michael Yu

**Elected officials present:**

Assemblyman Luis Sepulveda

**Elected officials representatives present:**

Thomas Lucania, representing Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.  
Famod Konneh, representing Mayor Bill de Blasio  
Israel Sanchez, representing Councilmember Ritchie Torres  
John Zaccaro Jr., representing Councilmember Rafael Salamanca  
Jay Baez, representing NYS Senator Gustavo Rivera  
Evangalina Medellin, representing NYS Assemblyman Victor Pichardo  
Antirson Ortiz, representing Comptroller Scott M. Stringer

**I. CALL TO ORDER:**

The November 8, 2017 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was held at the Grand Slam Banquet Hall, which is located at 478 East Tremont Avenue, Bronx, New York, and was called to order at approximately 6:54 PM by Chairperson Wendy Rodriguez.

**II. INVOCATION**

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

**III. COMMUNITY PERIOD**

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

**Angel Felix-Lopez, Fund for the City of New York Community Planning Fellow**

Mr. Lopez introduced himself as the Community Planning Fellow working with Bronx Community Board #6 through his academic school year. Mr. Lopez informed us that he will be working on the West Farms Neighborhood Plan. He hopes to work with residents and stakeholders to receive input on desired change and improvements in the community.

**Glenis Gomez, representing the Department of Education**

Ms. Gomez informed the community about the services she provides through the Department of Education to assist minority and/or low income families in the specialized high school admission process. The goal of these services is to increase diversity at specialized high schools, which have a history of low enrollment of African American and Hispanic students. She informed us that through this initiative thirty information sessions have been hosted at New York Public Libraries. Additionally, assistance is given to school counselors to administer entry exams as well as provide exam prep classes for students. Ms. Gomez will continue to remain active with the community board to disseminate information and hopes to work with elected officials to stretch the reach of this program. Ms. Gomez can be contacted at (212) 637-8010 and ggomez15@schools.nyc.gov.

**Lisa Buchanan, representing Trabajamos Head Start Early Child Care**

Ms. Buchanan informed the community about enrollment at Trabajamos Head Start Early Child Care. Trabajamos Head Start Early Child Care has five locations in the Bronx, one of which is at 1997 Bathgate Avenue in our district. She announced that enrollment is now open for children with ages ranging from six weeks to three years. The program provides on-site mental health counseling and health consultants. Tours are available for parents interested in the program.

**Jenise English, representing Volunteers of America**

Ms. English informed the community about the Client Care Coordinator Program now offered at Volunteers of America. The program provides short term counselling and resources to the community. The program falls under Social Workers in the Shelter Initiative, an initiative spearheaded by the Mayor's office.

**Reverend Marilyn Oliver, representing Gethsemane Baptist Church**

Reverend Oliver expressed her concerns to the community over affordable housing in the Bronx. She believes that the affordable housing that the city is building is not actually affordable. She also expressed concern about the city allowing homeless people to move into this housing. She believes the city is prioritizing hotel development in the Bronx instead of low income housing. She wrote a letter discussing these matters to Mayor de Blasio, as well as copied it to District Manager John Sanchez and Councilmen Ritchie Torres.

**Angel Rodriguez**

Mr. Rodriguez spoke about an incident at his previous home located at 2400 Crotona Avenue at the October's General Board meeting. Neighbors were playing loud music almost every weekend from 12:00

PM to midnight. He followed up with an NCO officer as per the recommendation of Board Member Gil Simmons and District Manager Sanchez. NCO Vazquez has spoken to the problematic residents and there hasn't been an incidence since. Mr. Rodriguez was very grateful to the Board for their assistance.

**Jason Caraballo, representing Montefiore Health Systems**

Mr. Caraballo informed the community about upcoming events at Montefiore Medical Center. November is National Diabetes Awareness month, so the events include diabetes management, exercise, and cooking classes. There are almost 50 events occurring throughout the Bronx. Many will be happening at the Family Health Center at Fordham Plaza and Grand Concourse/Fordham Road. To find more information on these events, people can go to [www.montefiore.org/diabetes-month](http://www.montefiore.org/diabetes-month).

**Shawn Whitehorn, representing Citizens Committee for New York City**

Mr. Whitehorn informed the community about a grant program through Citizens Committee for New York City. The grant supports grassroots groups such as block associations, tenants associations, and community gardens. He also strongly encourages high school groups and other youth groups to apply. In order to receive a grant, groups must have two or more people, clear articulation of an issue in their neighborhood, a project timeline, and a feasible budget. In order to be eligible, the group must not be affiliated to a religion, cannot have a budget over \$40,000, and cannot have paid staff members. The maximum amount of money for each group to be granted is \$3,000. Last year, Citizens Committee for New York City gave out \$1.8 million worth of grants to groups in New York City. This year, they want to give \$2 million worth of grants to 600 groups in the city. The deadline to apply for a grant is January 22, 2018. If a group sends in their application by January 5, 2018, they will receive insight and feedback on their application in order to improve and revise it 3 weeks before the deadline. Grantees are notified the first week in April, and Citizens Committee for NYC starts meeting with grantees in May. Grantees have a year to complete the project. There will be information sessions about this grant opportunity all over the city. To receive more information, contact Mr. Whitehorn at (212) 822-9563 or at [swhitehorn@citizensnyc.org](mailto:swhitehorn@citizensnyc.org).

**Dial Henriquez**

Mr. Henriquez expressed frustration with the city's computer system. He stated that whenever he has a problem and is searching for a solution, he finds that he keeps getting referred to a different agency. The city's website format changes continuously and he's filing paperwork endlessly. For example, when there has been a slither of sidewalk that has to be cleaned but there is construction occurring, the Department of Sanitation computer system has not been beneficial to solve the problem.

**IV. BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr's report was presented by Mr. Thomas Lucania. The report included, but was not limited to, the following information:

- Mr. Lucania informed the board that Executive Committee meeting minutes must be prepared in the same way as every other committee.
- Mr. Lucania announced that applications for new board membership of Bronx Community Board #6 will be posted on the website at the beginning of the week of Monday, November 13, 2017. Appointments will be made in the spring of next year.
- Mr. Lucania informed us that Bronx President Diaz Jr. is holding a leadership training seminar on December 2017 or January 2018.
- Mr. Lucania announced that Savor the Bronx, a twelve day event celebrating food establishments in the Bronx and features discounts and prix-fixe deals, is occurring through November 18, 2017. A list of restaurants participating in the event are listed on the event's website.

## **V. ELECTED OFFICIALS' REPORTS**

### **Assemblyman Luis Sepulveda**

Assemblyman Luis Sepulveda informed the community that his office will be distributing turkeys to families displaced by Hurricane Maria. He also announced that he will be holding a Christmas Toy Drive, at which he hopes to give 10,000 toys out to children from low income families. Assemblyman Sepulveda announced a program offered to African American and Latino students that provides tutoring for the specialized high school exam. Scholarships are negotiated for students who are accepted into the program. The program is an effort to bridge education gap in New York City, especially in the Bronx where one third of the workforce does not have a high school diploma.

### **John Zaccaro, representing Councilmember Rafael Salamanca**

Mr. Zaccaro spoke to the community about Participatory Budgeting, which is a program that allows community members to directly decide how to spend one million dollars of the public budget. He informed us that past proposals that have been funded include smart boards in schools, the construction of new playgrounds, and classrooms in senior centers. Additionally, Mr. Zaccaro called for volunteers to assist them in facilitating the program. Their offices will begin gathering volunteers to formulate the ballot and prepare for voting week. Mr. Zaccaro can be reached at (718) 402-6130 or at [jzaccaro@council.nyc.gov](mailto:jzaccaro@council.nyc.gov) for more information. Councilman Salamanca's office is located at 1070 Southern Boulevard.

### **Jay Baez, representing Senator Gustavo Rivera**

Mr. Baez informed the community that Senator Gustavo Rivera will be hosting a canned food drive for the holiday season begin on December 8, 2017 from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM until December 13, 2017.

Mr. Baez also announced that there will be an event at Belmont Library on November 29th from 2:00 PM until 4:00 PM for senior citizens and disabled individuals 18 and older who would like to sign up for Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE). Mr. Baez reminded the community about the tenant specialist services and notary services available on Tuesdays at their district office.

### **Evangelina Medellin, representing Assemblyman Victor Pichardo**

Ms. Medellin announced that tenant services are available at their district office every Thursday from 11:00 AM until 3:00 PM. Additionally, she invited the community to a job fair on November 15th from 10:30 AM until 2:00 PM at Creston Avenue Baptist Church. There are 41 businesses confirmed and 1,130 job openings. Their office is teaming up with Workforce One to help with resumes and cover letters.

### **Israel Sanchez, representing Councilmember Ritchie Torres**

Mr. Sanchez spoke to the community about Participatory Budgeting, which is a program that allows community members to directly decide how to spend one million dollars of the public budget. He also invited the community to a free citizenship application event on November 18th from 11:00 AM until 2:00 PM at I.S. 254. Mr. Sanchez announced that Councilmember Torres provided free Narcan training for employees at homeless shelters. Lastly, he announced that their office partnered with Bronx Community Board #6 in releasing a Request for Expressions of Interest for Tremont Park. He informed us that the last date to submit an idea or a request for Tremont Park is Monday, November 13, 2017.

### **Famod Konneh, representing Mayor Bill de Blasio**

Mr. Konneh invited the community to the Mayor's rally to oppose President Trump's tax cut for the nation's wealthiest. The rally will be taking place at City Hall and will begin at 1:00PM, but attendees are encouraged to arrive at 12:30 PM. Mr. Konneh also informed the community about a law that went into effect on October 31st prohibiting all for a New York City Employers from inquiring about salary history of job applicants.

Antirson Ortiz, representing Comptroller Scott Stringer

Mr. Ortiz informed the community about a proposed initiative that would allow residents to add rent data to credit histories and boost scores for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. Mr. Ortiz also thanked the New York City Police Department on behalf of Comptroller Stringer for their bravery and response to the terrorist attack in Manhattan.

**VI. PRESENTATION BY STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

Alvin Feng of the NYS Department of Transportation presented on the Arthur Sheridan Enhancement Project and Hunts Point Interstate Access Improvement Project

Mr. Feng informed us that the Sheridan Expressway Project is a federal aid project. The project will transform the expressway into an urban boulevard. The Department of Transportation will add intersections, medians, 11 feet wide parking lanes, and lighting, and improve signage. There will also be a pedestrian bridge over the Bronx River. Construction will begin in Fall 2018 and is estimated to be completed by Fall 2019. The estimated cost is about \$97 million.

Mr. Feng also informed us that the Hunts Point Interstate Access Project is a federal aid project that spans about two miles along 141st Street from Westchester Avenue to Sheridan Avenue. In June and September, two scoping meetings were held, at which they began developing the environmental impact statement. The report will be issued before the end of 2017. The goal of this project is to improve connections to Hunts Point Peninsula, remove trucks from local streets, and repair piers and other structures in the area. The project is estimated to cost about \$1.6 billion.

**VII. DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT**

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

- Mr. Sanchez informed us that Bronx Community Board 6 held two park cleanups in October. The West Farms Rapids clean up occurred on October 14 and the Charles W. Cooke Farm occurred on October 21.
- Mr. Sanchez announced that he hopes to visit every local school in the district. As of today, he has met with thirty schools in our district.
- Mr. Sanchez informed us that the Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Requests were submitted at the end of October.
- Mr. Sanchez announced that Bronx Community Board #6 is hosting an Open Mic Night on Friday, November 7 at University of the Streets at 7:00 PM.
- Mr. Sanchez also announced that Bronx Community Board #6 is partnering with Popular Community Bank to host an Investing 101 Workshop on Monday, November 20 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at Tremont Branch Library.

**VIII. ROLL CALL ATTENDANCE**

A roll call attendance was taken confirming the presence of a quorum of twenty-three (23) members.

## **IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Economic Development Committee: Vacant**

Mr. Sanchez informed the community that the October committee meetings were held at the visioning sessions for Mapes Ballfield and Prospect Playground renovations. The next Economic Development Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 14 at 6:30 PM at the district office.

### **Law Enforcement Committee: Ms. Claudette Coles, Committee Chair**

Ms. Coles reported on the business that transpired at the 48th Police Precinct Council meeting on October 24, 2017. She reported that shootings are up by one in a 20 day period, rapes are up by two, and that the amount of thefts has risen due to windows being left opened on fire escapes. She also advised the community not to leave bags in cars. Ms. Coles mentioned that there is a youth officer available to discuss the negative effects of bullying at schools throughout the area. The next Law Enforcement Committee meeting will take place on Tuesday, November 26th at the 48th Police Precinct office.

### **Parks and Recreation Committee: Ms. Margarita Espinosa, Committee Chair**

Ms. Espinosa began her update by announcing that the Mapes Ballfield and Prospect Playground will be reconstructed. The recommended improvements for Mapes Ballfield include a bathroom, concession stand, seating area, increased lighting, and a playground. The recommended improvements for Prospect Playground include a bathroom, increased lighting, and a renovation of the baseball field. She also discussed the outcomes from the park cleanups that occurred at West Farms Rapids on October 14th and the Charles W. Cooke Garden on October 21st.

The next Parks and Recreation Committee next meeting will be held on November 15th at 6:30 PM at the district office.

### **Sanitation Committee: Ms. Evonne Capers, Committee Chair**

Ms. Capers informed the community that the next Sanitation Committee meeting will take place on Thursday, November 16th at 6:30 PM at the district office.

### **Transportation Committee: Ms. Maria Garcia, Committee Chair**

Ms. Garcia mentioned that the Department of Parks and Recreation held a community input meeting, which included participation from committee chairs and committee members.

Mr. Garcia thanked District Manager Sanchez for including constituent complaints related to the Department of Transportation. She also announced that the next Transportation Committee meeting will take place on Thursday, November 16 at 6:30pm at the district office.

### **Veterans Committee: Ms. Carrie Taft, Committee Co-Chair**

Ms. Taft's asked the members of the Veterans Committee attended the Veterans' Day Parade.

### **Youth and Education Committee: Mr. Moussa Siby, Committee Chair**

Mr. Siby reported on the business that was conducted at the Youth and Education Committee meeting of October 18, 2017. He informed us that the committee discussed details about hosting a youth summit in the

spring to get young people involved in the community and in politics. He also informed us that there were two presentations at the meeting. The first presenter discussed starting a charter school for grades 5 through 8 focusing on computer science where students could receive high school credits for taking advanced classes. The second presenter discussed starting a charter school for students in Kindergarten through 8th Grade located in School District 12 if approved.

The next Youth and Education Committee meeting will take place on Wednesday, November 15 at 6:30 PM at the district office.

**Senior Citizens Outreach Committee: Mrs. Virginia Bird, Committee Chair**

Mrs. Bird informed the community that the Senior Citizens Outreach Committee also attended the visioning sessions in lieu of a regular meeting. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, November 16 at 6:30 PM at the district office.

**XI. ADOPTION OF MOTIONS**

1. The motion to the adopt minutes of Bronx Community Board #6's meeting of October 11th was made by Mrs. Virginia Bird, seconded by Mrs. Sara Nunez-Mejia and unanimously adopted by a vote of 23 in favor, zero opposed and zero abstentions.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

The November 8, 2017 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was adjourned at approximately 9:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Carly Wine  
Community Associate

*Honorable Ritchie Torres,  
City Council Member, 15<sup>th</sup> Council District*

*Honorable Rafael Salamanca,  
City Council Member, 17<sup>th</sup> Council District*