



**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 for Wednesday, March 8, 2017

Members present:

Jannie Armstrong, Virginia Bird, Evonne Capers, Alice Charles, Claudette Coles, Diana Diaz, Margarita Espinosa, Frank Franz, April Hurley, Sara Nunez-Mejia, Michael Nelson, Floretta O'Brien, Rosa Peraza, Moussa Siby, Gil Simmons, Carrie Taft

Members absent:

Virdjil Asanov, Tair Aziov, Sahre Davis, Maria Garcia, Jerry Jackson, Octavia Lewis, Paul Ramirez, Wendy Rodriguez

Elected Officials representatives present:

Joshua Cortes, representing Mayor Bill De Blasio
Bharati Sukul Kemraj, representing Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.
Aicha Bamba, representing Councilman Ritchie Torres
Jay Baez, representing Senator Gustavo Rivera
Dion Powell, representing Assemblyman Michael Blake
Nestor Medina, representing Assemblyman Victor Pichardo

I. CALL TO ORDER

The March 8, 2017 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was held at the Eagle Academy for Young Men, which is located at 4143 Third Avenue, Bronx, New York, and was called to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. by 1st Vice-Chairperson Sara Nunez-Mejia.

II. INVOCATION

The meeting's invocation was delivered by Chaplain Floretta A. O'Brien.

III. COMMUNITY PERIOD

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

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 6
Meeting Minutes of March 8th, 2017

Linda Merlo

Ms. Merlo thanked Councilman Ritchie Torres' office for helping her contact the Department of Housing Preservation and Development in order to resolve the issues with the heating in her home. She stated that this is was her second time getting help from their office.

Donna Benjamin, representing the Belmont Branch of the New York Public Library

Ms. Benjamin informed us about programs being offered at the library. One of the programs she informed us about is with Councilman Ritchie Torres' office, where they are offering a citizenship program at the library. Residents can also come to the library and pick up citizenship forms. Councilman Ritchie Torres' office also offers counseling on the steps for citizenship in his office every Monday. Ms. Benjamin also stated that there are teen programs available to help keep teens off the streets that could benefit from more funding. Adult programs such as computer classes, movies, arts and crafts, and senior times are available at the library as well.

Ana Felipe, representing the Belmont Branch of the New York Public Library

Ms. Felipe discussed programs available at the Belmont Branch Library that service mothers who do not speak English. She also stated that she wants to improve literacy rates, and she holds family literacy workshops once a month.

Kristalynn Leonard

Ms. Leonard discussed Idente Youth, a children and teen youth program she leads. This program is for 3rd to 5th graders and is primarily held in Bronx Community Board 11. Their meetings are held every Wednesday evening from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM. The group is holding a summer camp from July 11, 2017 to July 16, 2017 for \$280. Ms. Leonard spoke about WYP which meets every Friday at various locations. WYP gives youth the opportunity to travel. Lastly, Ms. Leonard announced that she is a Lyft Ambassador and shared the benefits of using Lyft. Lyft offers a safe alternative to another taxi services because it provides the rider with additional driver and vehicle information.

Jason A. Caraballo, representing Montefiore Medical Center

Mr. Caraballo informed us that the Montefiore Medical Center is addressing a safety issue where mothers fall asleep while breastfeeding. Doctors from the Montefiore Medical Center are partnering with mothers and clothing designers to design clothing to help prevent this problem. They are is looking for new mothers who have babies less than 6 months old for four focus groups. Two will be held in English and two in Spanish during the months of April and May. Lunch, a two-way metrocard, a package of diapers, and childcare will be provided for the participants.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 6
Meeting Minutes of March 8th, 2017

Jeremy Kaplan and Ivette DeJesus, representing Phipps Neighborhoods

Mr. Kaplan informed us that Phipps Neighborhoods is a multi-service non-profit offering programs in the West Farms Square area. These programs are for high school, middle school, and elementary school students. Phipps Neighborhoods has a Universal Preschool Program that is currently enrolling for next year. He also informed us that the Phipps Neighborhoods is opening a new reading room in the fall which will be holding storytime and parenting classes.

Fernando Jimenez, representing Massmutual

Mr. Jimenez informed us about the importance of having health insurance. He expressed concerns about the high percentage of unprotected families and businesses in the community and the resulting effects on its economic conditions. He also announced that some of the plans from Massmutual waive all doctor, pharmaceutical, or DMV exams. Massmutual offers a free policy for parents ages 18-42 which provides their children with \$50,000 for education should the parent pass away.

Mary Bianco, representing Legal Aid Society

Ms. Bianco reminded us that Legal Aid Society offers free legal services citywide. They hold a Foreclosure Prevention and Homeowner Assistance clinic every Wednesday at the Supreme Court.

Sylvia Hill, representing Good Shepherd Monterey Cornerstone

Ms. Hill announced that Monterey Cornerstone Community Center is looking for middle school students for their basketball program. The program is recreational but promotes other skills such as career awareness and life skills. There is also a high school basketball program which operates from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM and is free of charge.

IV. BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.'s report was presented by his Community Liaison, Bharati Sukul Kemraj. The report included, but was not limited to, the following information:

- The Bronx Borough President's office will be holding a number of free events this month including: a Greek Heritage Celebration on March 9th, a Women's History Month Celebration on March 23rd, an African American History Month Celebration which has been Rescheduled to March 10th, and an Irish Heritage Celebration on March 16th.
- The Bronx Borough President's Office is collaborating with the Brooklyn Task Force for gifted and talented youth.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 6
Meeting Minutes of March 8th, 2017

V. ELECTED OFFICIALS' REPORTS

Dion Powell, representing Assemblyman Michael Blake

Mr. Powell informed us that Assemblyman Michael Blake held a town hall on Saturday March 4th which focused on equality. There are two other town hall meetings that will be held on Saturday, March 11th and Saturday, March 18th.

Joshua Cortes, representing Mayor Bill De Blasio

Mr. Cortes introduced himself as the Bronx Community Coordinator for the Mayor's Office.

Nestor Medina, representing Assemblyman Victor Pichardo

Mr. Medina reported that Assemblyman Victor Pichardo is cosponsoring a bill to raise the age of criminal responsibility in New York. This bill would stop putting youths in adult incarceration programs and instead focus on rehabilitation. Additionally, Assemblyman Pichardo vetoed the plastic bag tax. Assemblyman Pichardo encourages everyone to call the governor's office about money that is owed to the district. A Tenant Support Unit is held every Thursday from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM in the Assemblyman's Office.

Jay Baez, representing Senator Gustavo Rivera's Office

Mr. Baez announced that Senator Gustavo Rivera released a monthly employment bulletin on February 23, 2017. Their Tenant Support Unit is held every Tuesday from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM at their office.

Aicha Bamba, representing City Councilmember Ritchie Torres' Office

Ms. Bamba announced that Councilmember Ritchie Torres will be sponsoring an LGBT Youth Summit at the Hetrick Martin Center. On Tuesday, March 14, 2017 Councilmember Torres will be holding a Senior Appreciation Day at the New York Botanical Garden. Seniors will receive a tour of the orchid gardens. Trolleys and golf carts will be available for transportation. Ms. Bamba also announced that Council Member Torres is sponsoring Coro Training for Bronx Community Board 6 members. Lastly, Council Member Torres's office wants to express to the public that they offer services to help constituents with immigration, family law, domestic violence etc. issues.

VI. PRESENTATIONS

Raybblin Vargas, Green Worker Cooperatives

Ms. Vargas informed us that the Green Worker Cooperative is a non-profit organization based in the Hunt's Point area. The organization helps those individuals who have an idea for a business and have a small team take it from an idea to launch. The program lasts five months and every participant is paired with a mentor to help them be successful. The next academy will begin in September. Participants are taught the lean start-up model not how to write a business plan. The initiative has been successful and businesses have stayed in business at least two to three years. A worker cooperative is where everyone shares in the responsibilities and goals. Each member has one vote. An information session will be held on March 14th from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at 1231 Lafayette Avenue.

Carmen Winchester-Reed, MEd, ABD, Breastfeeding Coordinator, Montefiore Medical Center WIC Program

Ms. Winchester-Reed presented on the Breastfeeding Empowerment Workshop hosted by the Montefiore Medical Center's WIC Program. Their program is available for residents of NYS, mothers and children must be nutritionally at risk, must be below the poverty line, and children must be between infants to five years old. Ms. Winchester-Reed stated that their Breastfeeding Empowerment Workshop is a way to educate and share the importance of breastfeeding. On Wednesday, March 29, 2017, the Montefiore Medical Center is bringing prenatal and breastfeeding mothers together to help empower and encourage prenatal mothers to breastfeed. She announced that in April heavy and light breastfeeding mothers will be brought together to determine why mothers do or do not choose to breastfeed. The Montefiore Medical Center's WIC Program is currently providing breast pumps free of charge to mothers who have no insurance. The Medical Center also has 50 pumps available for lend to mothers with a government issued ID who want to breastfeed.

VII. DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT: Mr. John Sanchez

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

- **The Department of Small Business Services is looking to improve storefront façades on East Tremont Avenue. They are applying for a state grant of \$500,000 which would benefit East Tremont Avenue.**
- **The District Manager stated that library nominations for a \$20,000 dollar grant are due Monday, March 13, 2017 and encouraged constituents to nominate the Tremont Branch Library.**
- **The District Manager thanked Councilman Ritchie Torres for funding Coro Training for Bronx Community Board #6's members and staff. This will be the first community board in NYC to receive this funding.**

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 6
Meeting Minutes of March 8th, 2017

- **On Saturday, April 1, 2017, Fordham University will hold a Celebrate the Bronx event from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM.**
- **The Popular Community Bank of East Tremont wants to help fund and partner with the Community Board on events in the district. They were pleased the community reached out to them after years of not being contacted.**

VIII. ROLL CALL ATTENDANCE

A roll call attendance was taken confirming the presence of a quorum of sixteen (16) members.

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Law Enforcement Committee: Ms. Claudette Coles, Committee Chair

Ms. Coles reported on the business that was conducted at the February 28, 2017 meeting on the 48th police precinct's community council. She stated that there is a rise in iPhone thefts amongst teenagers. Mailbox fishing is also on the rise. In regards to this, the 48th police precinct's community council encourages constituents to give their mail directly to a post carrier if possible. There has also been a rise in theft of items from automobiles. A new tire place has opened on the corner of Washington Avenue and East Tremont Avenue and they are parking vehicles on the pedestrian walkway.

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

Ms. Espinosa reported on the business that was conducted at the February 15, 2017 meeting. The Happyland 27th Memorial will be held on Saturday, March 25th at 4:00 PM. The memorial will begin with a mass at St. Thomas Aquinas Church followed by a candlelight vigil. It's My Park Day will be held on Saturday, March 18, 2017 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. She announced that the next Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 15, 2017.

Economic Development Committee: Ms. April Hurley, Committee Chair

Ms. Hurley announced that on Wednesday, March 29, 2017 an event will be held with the Small Business Services for credit counseling services. She also announced that the next Economic Development Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 14, 2017 at 6:30 PM.

X. ADOPTIONS OF MOTIONS

1. **A motion to adopt the minutes of Bronx Community Board #6's meeting of February 8, 2017 with a correction in the sequence of the numbered list was made by Mrs. Virginia Bird, seconded by Ms. Margarita Espinosa and adopted by a vote of 16 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions.**

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 6
Meeting Minutes of March 8th, 2017

2. A motion to approve Bronx Community Board #6's Letter of Comment to City Agencies for the Fiscal Year 2018 Preliminary Budget was made by was made by Ms. Margarita Espinosa, seconded by Mrs. Sara Nunez-Mejias and adopted by a vote of 16 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstention.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The March 8, 2017 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was adjourned at approximately 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Carla J. Leon
Community Assistant

Honorable Ritchie Torres,
Council Member, 15th Council District

Honorable Rafael Salamanca
City Council Member, 17th Council District