



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

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Honorable Ruben Diaz Jr., Bronx Borough President

MS. EVONNE CAPERS
Board Chairperson

MR. JOHN SANCHEZ
District Manager

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #6
Meeting minutes of Wednesday, April 14, 2021

Members Present:

Clarita Bailon, Cornell Brown, Evonne Capers, Diana Diaz, Margarita Espinosa, Frank Franz, Lanell Gardenhire, Audrey Harden, Laura James, Maria Latimer, Matthew Martinez, Michael Nelson, Floretta O'Brien, Rosa Peraza, Reggie Powell, Paul Ramirez, Carmen Rivera, Kristine Rivera, Wendy Rodriguez, Lisa Sanchez, Gil Simmons, Noorjahan Wells, and Jacquetta Whaley.

Members Absent:

Virginia Bird, Milagros Cancel, Nicole Carter, Sadija Cekovic, Maria Garcia, Julisa Hamilton, Assana Lloyd, Francine Miller, Rev. Marilyn Oliver, Jorge Ortiz, Wendy Rodriguez, Maria Ruiz Gutierrez, Divine Sikanku and Lillie Steed.

Elected Officials Present:

Council Member Fernando Cabrera
New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda

Elected Officials Representatives Present:

Cecil Brookes, representing United States Congressman Ritchie Torres
Davon Harris, representing New York City Councilmember Rafael Salamanca Jr.
Nick Peters, representing New York State Assemblyman Victor Pichardo
Terrence Miller, representing Public Advocate Jumaane Williams
Eleanor Warner, representing Council District 15
Surey Miranda, representing Mayor de Blasio
Mariel De la Cruz, representing New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The April 14, 2021 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was held via Zoom Audio and Video Conference meeting ID 972 1783 2459 and via Zoom Video at <https://zoom.us/j/97217832459> and was called to order at approximately by 6:35 PM by Chairperson Evonne Capers.

II. INVOCATION

The meeting's invocation was delivered by Board Member Jacquetta Whaley.

III. COMMUNITY PERIOD

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

Miguel Marrero, representing North Side Center Project Hope

Mr. Marrero informed us that Northside Center for Childhood Development is a local agency of New York Project Hope. New York Project Hope is a statewide crisis-coping program to assist individuals navigate the challenges during COVID-19. They offer mental health services and educational services through an emotional support helpline at (646) 329-7176 between 10 AM and 7 PM on Monday through Sunday. The calls are free, anonymous and confidential. He also informed us that they are offering meal, legal, and immigration services and COVID-19 testing. In addition, Project Hope also offers a hope from Monday through Sunday between the hours of 8 AM to 10 PM by calling (844) 863-9314.

Melissa Rivera, representing Metro Community Health Center

Ms. Rivera informed us that Metro Community Health Center is currently operating in-person and telemedicine. Metro Community Health Center specializes in services for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). They also offer primary care, mental health, physical therapy, and women's services. They are also administering the COVID-19 vaccine at their health centers. Ms. Rivera also informed us that their Bronx location has unused space that can be utilized for the community. Ms. Rivera also requested community input to address the community needs.

Gail Nathan, representing Bronx River Art Center (BRAC)

Ms. Nathan announced that the Spring art classes at the Bronx River Art Center have begun. They are offering printmaking, photography, intro to art, digital illustrations, basics of drawing, collage, people in nature (painting class), and digital animation classes. They also started their Team Project Studio Program Plus 2.0, an art program for teens and young adults up to the age of 26. This semester the program will be focusing on photography and activism with photographers that have been covering the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests. Ms. Nathan also announced that they are offering discounts for their Spring art classes. They are offering an early registration and COVID-19 discounts. The Bronx River Art Center has a new exhibition, *Cutting an Edge: Hard Edge Painting Today*, about contemporary art in America until May 15, 2021. Individuals are welcome to view the exhibition since they are able to open at 33% capacity (42 individuals). Ms. Nathan also informed us that they are starting a new project, Cultural Immigrant Initiative, a participatory art project involving mixed media workshops for different age groups culminating in three tape murals created with the community throughout the 15th council district in River Park (Flora and Fauna of our countries), Vidalia Park (Mythical Animals and Legends), and Van Nest Playground (Family Textiles and Memories). The project's workshops will begin on April 24, 2021. The mural activity at River Park will take place on May 8, 2021 between 10 AM and 6 PM. Individuals can register online at Eventbrite for these workshops and classes.

Juan Tavarez and Beauris Acosta, representing HealthFirst

Mr. Tavarez invited the community to participate in an educational townhall about COVID-19 vaccine with medical speakers from Montefiore Health System. HealthFirst is also administering the COVID-19 vaccines in partnership with Essen Health Care. Individuals wishing to get the COVID-19 vaccine can email Mr. Tavarez at JTavarez@healthfirst.org to schedule an appointment for vaccination. Mr. Tavarez also announced that HealthFirst is working to have a mass distribution of masks and hand sanitizers with all of the community boards.

Ms. Acosta informed us that they have been assisting the food pantries throughout the borough by distributing tote bags, hand sanitizers, masks, and health insurance educational information. She also announced that HealthFirst has a couple of upcoming events and would like to have community participation.

Nicole Thompson-Williams, representing Pace University

Mrs. Thompson-Williams introduced Ms. Juliet Duggins and Ms. Cynthia Dunbar from Zeta Phi Beta incorporated Kappa Epsilon Zeta.

Ms. Duggins informed us that Zeta Phi Beta incorporated Kappa Epsilon Zeta is a sisterhood of 75 women who either live or work in the Bronx to support the Bronx community by offering services. They have also partnered with other organizations throughout the borough to provide educational materials such as voting and prenatal.

Ms. Dunbar informed us about the scholarship program that Zeta Phi Beta incorporated Kappa Epsilon Zeta leads where they provide information to individuals about available scholarships that they are offering or that other organizations are offering. She also informed us that the Kappa Epsilon Zeta Scholarship Fund was established specifically to help young women of color in the Bronx in their pursuit of higher education and to alleviate some of the financial burdens associated with tuition costs. The Kappa Epsilon Zeta Scholarship Fund also helps to serve as a resource for academic financial aid. They are accepting applications from January 15, 2021 to April 16, 2021. The scholarship award recipient is announced in June.

Emily Burgos, representing ACDP Murphy Cornerstone Community Center

Ms. Burgos informed us that Murphy Cornerstone Community Center is a free after-school program during the school year and a summer camp program during summer recess. The program offers school homework assistance, arts and crafts classes, games and movies. The Murphy Cornerstone Community Center is located at 601 Crotona Parkway North. She also informed us that they are presently accepting applications for their summer camp.

IV. BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr's report was presented by his Community Board Liaison, Ms. Alexis Ruiz. The report included, but was not limited to, the following information:

- Ms. Ruiz informed us that the Community Board report for the month of April will be shared within the upcoming days.

- Ms. Ruiz informed us the board members that submitted a membership reappointment application to continue to serve as board members until they have received their response letter from the Borough President Diaz Jr.
- Ms. Ruiz also informed us that the board members who did not submit a membership reappointment application term ended on March 31, 2021.
- Ms. Ruiz also informed us that new membership applicants will receive a response letter from the Borough President Diaz Jr. in May.

V. ELECTED OFFICIALS' REPORTS

New York City Councilmember Fernando Cabrera

New York City Councilmember Fernando Cabrera informed the community that he is the Chair of Governmental Operations in the New York Council. Three years ago, Councilman Cabrera led an initiative that brought \$42,500 to all the community boards, which the boards received for two years and then pandemic happened. The administration took action and proposed new action to further defund community boards. This fiscal year community boards lost \$3,628 from the budget. This year, the administration is proposing another \$8,153 cut from the budget. The councilman is requesting to call for a resolution or to write a letter to the Office of Management and Budget or to the administration to ask them to not to try to cut the budget in light of the fact that the state just received federal funds, so it would not make sense to continue to further cut the budget. The cut will affect rent and salaries. All of the community boards that Councilman Cabrera has spoken to so far are agreeing to make sure that they get what is due to them. Bronx Community Board #6 District Manager, John Sanchez, adds that the community board was able to provide paid internships and they do not want to cut the pipeline of talent.

New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda

Senator Luis Sepulveda announced that the senate secured \$1.4 billion more in student funding for public schools. The Bronx will receive millions of dollars more for public schools. He has advocated strongly and successfully for \$2.1 billion dollars that has been secured for excluded workers, who are essential workers on the front lines but did not get compensated. They put their lives at risk and some of them died. They did not receive financial assistance for when the COVID relief packages were sent out. Most of them are undocumented immigrants who put in \$1.4 billion into our state. They will receive some level of assistance to support their families. The senate has also secured \$800 million dollars for small businesses. The office recently did a mailer all about COVID 19 and included in the mailer the financial hardship form for apartments. Senator Sepulveda suggested that if community members are in fear of losing their apartment because they lost their job or any sort of money due to COVID, then they should fill out a hardship form and send it to the landlord. Landlords can not commence eviction proceedings unless they serve tenants these documents. Unless tenants received and ignored it, landlords have to establish that tenants did not proceed filling out the form. If community members need assistance in filling out this form, they can reach out to the office. The office helped directly vaccinate 1,300 people in the district. There is a vaccination waitlist and the office was able to get 96% of them vaccinated. The office is working with providers to see if there are vaccines available and they call the office and staff members call constituents to see if they would like to get vaccinated. If community members want to get vaccinated, they should reach out to the office and they

will be added on the waitlist. The office is currently closed, but staff members still service 50 to 60 people a day. The office is still working on unemployment claims, and has helped over 900 people now. They are also helping with cash assistance and SNAP benefits. The office was also able to secure \$500 more per student for TAP. Students who go to a CUNY or SUNY institution can receive this money. Constituents can reach out to the office if they need more information. Excelsior doesn't pay for everything but will continue, so TAP will help fill in the gap. Senator Sepulveda's office can be reached at (718) 991-3161 or via email at team@senatorsepulveda.com. Individuals may also contact Senator Sepulveda at (347) 582-8173.

Cecil Brookes, representing United States Congressman Ritchie Torres

Congressman Ritchie Torres covers the 15th congressional district. The American Rescue Plan and funding that they have been fighting for many months have passed. The Congressman supports safe vaccine distribution. His office also supports funding and reopenings for local schools in a safe way. He also wants to jumpstart the economy with employment options and relief for small businesses. There are programs targeted for short term needs but also long term needs for the Bronx's future. They are currently operating in person in the district office. Constituents can make appointments and someone will be there to take care of them. There are a lot of immigration cases in the Bronx, especially west african and south east asian. Mr. Brookes warned community members to be careful of scamming. There is a practice called leeching, where you put in money order and get notice that someone has used it for something. However, constituents should not give away credit card information or payment methods if the person asking for it isn't a post office worker. There are resources on the city level to connect people to job opportunities.

Davon Harris, representing New York City Councilmember Rafael Salamanca Jr.

Mr. Harris informed the community that the office is conducting weekly COVID testing in the office at 1070 Southern Boulevard. Walk-ins are accepted and all community members need is their email address and identification card. The office is still doing food giveaways. Community members can also follow him on his social media. Every week, the office is looking to do food giveaways in different areas of the Bronx. Community members can reach out to the office if they have any concerns.

Nick Peters, representing New York State Assemblyman Victor Pichardo

Mr. Peters informed the community that session is currently ongoing and the next session is on Monday, April 19, 2021. The Assembly recently passed the budget and finalized the State 2021--2022 budget, which includes significant investments in the Bronx's pandemic recovery and support for higher education making critical investments in public health and school services. The budget also ensures immediate COVID-19 recovery relief for tenants and small landlords that have suffered extreme economic distress during the pandemic. The budget also includes funding for excluded workers. Assemblyman Pichardo was appointed as part of the General Budget Conference Committee on General Government and Local Assistance. The Assembly also passed the legalization of marijuana, which legalizes cannabis for those who are 21 years old and older. The sales tax is 13%. The assembly also passed legislation to restrict solitary confinement in New York State. The office is still giving out Personal Protective Equipment and hand sanitizer to parts of our community. If community members know anyone in need, they can reach out to the office. The office also partnered with Morris Heights Health Center and Bailey Senior Center to host a vaccine drive for the senior centers. The office also

partnered with Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner, Helen Keller International and Mt. Helena Church to provide free eyeglass exams to the community. Additionally, the office partnered with 90 Days Miracle and Este Medical to bring a COVID testing site to Fordham Lutheran Church and partnered with SBA, Cross River Bank and Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner and Citizens Committee for NYC to hold a webinar discussing small business loans and how local businesses and nonprofits are able to access them. Taxes are due on May 17. The office has a list of free tax assistance and community members can call for that information. Constituents can follow the assemblyman on any social media platform at vpichardo86. If community members want to get a newsletter, then they can call the office. Currently, the office is opening physically on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:30 AM to 5:30 PM. The office is closed for constituent services. The staff is going to get a second dose of the vaccine and they will slowly reopen more and more. The office can be contacted via telephone at (718) 933-6909 or by email by contacting Nick Peters at petersng@nyassembly.gov. Bronx Community Board #6 District Manager, John Sanchez, asked if he can get information on the \$2.3 billion that was allocated to tenants for rental support and how landlords or tenants would apply for it. He also requested for information on the billion dollars for business recovery, and how to apply for that.

Terrence Miller, representing Public Advocate Jumaane Williams

Mr. Miller informed the community that the Landlord Accountability Act would require Housing Preservation Development to respond to complaints regarding immediate hazard conditions within 5 hours, or about hazardous conditions within 48 hours of a complaint. This legislation would require owners of multiple dwellings to post a notice when making a building amenity unavailable to more than one lawful occupant.

Eleanor Warner, representing Council District 15

Ms. Warner informed the community that she has been covering Council District 15 for the past couple of months, and will continue for a few more days. Council district 15 is also offering constituent services and will hand off the services to the new council member but will stay on to help onboard the staff. Council district 15 is open every day Monday through Friday, 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM and they will be available until the election is finalized. They can be reached at (718) 842 - 8100 or via email at district15@council.nyc.gov.

Surey Miranda, representing Mayor's Office

Ms. Miranda informed the community that she was not able to attend the meeting in the last couple of months because she was positioned at the Vaccine Command Center. She wanted to address questions about the J&J vaccine. The distribution of this vaccine has been paused as it has been indicated by the CDC, state, and other dependencies. For those who had appointments for the J&J vaccine, the office will be scheduling appointments for them to get either Moderna or Pfizer. There will be educational campaigns once the matter has been addressed. This is just a pause and there will be more information available next week. The Mayor's office would also like to start doing fairs. The government offices and agencies are starting to provide services in person. They are aware of limitations that people may have and they are open to coordinating events to bring resources to the people in need. If community members or organizations are interested in participating or are in need of services, they can contact the mayor's office.

Maribel De la Cruz, representing New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer

Ms. De La Cruz informed the community that their office has a LGBTQI resource guide for community members who may need assistance and do not know where to look. The office would also like to be invited to more meetings to become better representatives for the community within their own office.

VI. DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Sanchez's district manager's report included the following information:

- Mr. Sanchez announced that Bronx Community Board #6 will be joining Friends of Tremont Park for their It's My Park Day event to clean Walter Gladwin Park on Saturday, April 17, 2021 at 11:00 AM.
- Mr. Sanchez also announced that Bronx Community Board #6 is now accepting applications until May 7, 2021 for our Summer Internship Program that will begin in July.

VII. PRESENTATION

Mr. Omar Suarez, representing the New York City Campaign Finance Board

Mr. Suarez presented on the Ranked-Choice Voting process. He informed us that New York City will use ranked-choice voting for Primary and Special Elections for the following New York City municipal offices: Mayor, Public Advocate, Comptroller, Borough President, and City Council elections. It will not be used for Federal or State elections such as President, Congress, or Governor. It will also not be used for local elections for District Attorney or Judgeships. Ranked-choice voting allows individuals to rank up to 5 candidates in order of their preference. Individuals can still choose to vote for only one candidate if they prefer. This gives voters more say in who wins, increases civility, and can lead to more diverse candidates winning. He also informed us that ranked-choice voting was established when the 2019 Charter Revision Commission voted to create Ballot Question #1, to establish ranked choice voting in primary and special elections for local office, effective January 1, 2021. As a result, 73.5% of New York City voters voted yes.

VIII. ROLL CALL ATTENDANCE

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

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS

The committee reports were sent by email and are available on Bronx Community Board #6's website. Chairperson Evonne Capers requested that we read the reports at our leisure.

X. ADOPTION OF MOTIONS

- 1. A motion to adopt the minutes of Bronx Community Board #6's meeting of March 11, 2021 was made by Mr. Gil Simmons, seconded by Ms. Margarita Espinosa, and adopted by a vote of twenty-three in favor, zero opposition and zero abstention.**
- 2. A motion to issue a letter of support to Protect New York City Special Education in support of funding and advocacy for special educational services and services for special needs was made by Ms. Noorjahan Wells, seconded by Ms. Margarita Espinosa and adopted by a vote of twenty-three in favor, zero opposition and zero abstention.**
- 3. A motion to issue a letter of objection to the Department of Transportation in regards to the Safety Improvement Project at Southern Boulevard from East Fordham Road to East 182nd Street was made by Mr. Frank Franz, and seconded by Mr. Gil Simmons, and adopted by a vote of twenty-three in favor, zero opposition and zero abstention.**
- 4. A motion to issue a letter to Mayor de Blasio to increase the Operating Budget for Community Boards for Fiscal Year 2022 was made by Chairperson Evonne Capers, seconded by Mr. Michael Nelson, and adopted by a vote of twenty-one in favor, zero opposition and one abstention. *(Please note that Board Member, Lisa Sanchez, was not present during this motion.)***

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to discuss, the April 14, 2021 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was adjourned at approximately 8:00 PM pursuant to a motion made by Ms. Jacquetta Whaley, second by Ms. Margarita Espinosa, and unanimously adopted by acclamation (twenty-two in favor, zero opposed and zero abstention).

Respectfully submitted:

**Sanzida Talukder
Community Associate**

**Carla Leon
Community Associate**

ATTENDANCE AND VOTING RECORDING FOR BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #6 MEETING OF APRIL 14, 2021

NAME	ATTENDANCE	MINUTES OF MARCH 10, 2021	LOS TO NYC PROTECT SPECIAL EDUCATION	LETTER TO DOT RE: SOUTHERN BLVD.	LETTER TO MAYOR RE: CB FY22 BUDGET	ADJOURNMENT				
Clarita Bailon	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Virginia Bird										
Cornell Brown	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Milagros Cancel										
Evonne Capers	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Nicole Carter										
Sadija Cekovic										
Diana Diaz	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Margarita Espinosa	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Frank Franz	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Maria Garcia	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Lanell Gardenhire	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Julisa Hamilton										
Audrey Harden	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Laura James	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Maria Latimer	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Assana Lloyd										
Matthew Martinez	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Francine Miller										
Michael Nelson	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Floretta O'Brien	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Rev. Marilyn Oliver										
Jorge Ortiz										
Rosa Peraza	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Abstain	Yes				
Reggie Powell	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Paul Ramirez	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Carmen Rivera	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Kristine Rivera	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Wendy Rodriguez										
Maria Ruiz Gutierrez										
Lisa Sanchez	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes						
Divine Sikanku										
Gil Simmons	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Lillie Steed										
Noorjahan Wells	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Jacquetta Whaley	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				