



**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. EVONNE CAPERS
Board Chairperson

MR. JOHN SANCHEZ
District Manager

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #6
Meeting minutes of Wednesday, December 8, 2021

Members Present:

John Barczak, Michelle Bialeck, Cornell Brown, Evonne Capers, Nicole Carter, Margarita Espinosa, Frank Franz, Marilyn Gurley, Angela Hernandez, Maria Latimer, Magdamary Marcano, Matthew Martinez, Francene Miller, Floretta O'Brien, Lamont Parker, Reggie Powell, Paul Ramirez, Kristine Rivera, Divine Sikanku, Lillie Steed, Noorjahan Wells, and Jacquetta Whaley.

Members Absent:

Clarita Bailon, Virginia Bird, Milagros Cancel, Michael Caraballo, Sadija Cekovic, Darwin Collazo, Diana Diaz, Maria Garcia, Lanell Gardenhire, Julisa Hamilton, Audrey Harden, Laura James, Asana Lloyd, Michael Nelson, Rev. Marilyn Oliver, Rosa Peraza, Carmen Rivera, Maria Ruiz Gutierrez, Lisa Sanchez, and Gil Simmons.

Elected Officials Present:

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.
New York City Councilmember Vanessa L. Gibson
New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda

Elected Officials Representatives Present:

Thomas Lucania, representing Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.
Alexis Ruiz, representing Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.
Adrian Cacho, representing New York State Assemblymember Chantel Jackson
Rachel Ferrari, representing New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera
Emilia Cabrera, representing New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda
Nanette Alvarado, United States Congressman Ritchie Torres

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The December 8, 2021 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was held via Zoom Audio and Video Conference meeting ID 979 0263 6154 and via Zoom Video at <https://zoom.us/j/979023636154> and was called to order at approximately 6:31 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:

Hillary Bosh, representing New York City Department of Sanitation

Ms. Bosh informed us about the Curbside Composting program. Composting makes our city more sustainable and it can reduce waste sent to landfills and create clean, renewable energy to heat or power homes. It also keeps our neighborhoods clean and healthy. Ms. Bosh informed us that their hard-sided brown bins reduce the chance of pests breaking garbage bags open at the curb, which decreases spillage and litter. The bins also have a latching lid, which makes it more durable and effective than plastic garbage bags at reducing rodent activity. The program is open to residential buildings of all sizes in neighborhoods based on the number of sign-ups in each area, and they want to make this service available to the residents of our district.

Carrie Taft, representing Hope And Victory Evolves (H.A.V.E.)

Ms. Taft informed us about the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). This program will provide significant economic relief to help low and moderate-income households at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability by providing rental arrears, temporary rental assistance and utility arrears assistance. However, the total requests for assistance exceed available federal funding for the program. Therefore, as of November 14, 2021 at 10:00 PM new applications for the program are only being accepted if tenants in the areas where allocations have not yet been exhausted and if households in any part of the state with income over 80 percent and up to 120 percent of area median income.

Gail Nathan, representing the Bronx River Art Center

Ms. Nathan announced that their *Mother Mold Project & Mama Spa Botánica* exhibition by Coralina Rodriguez Meyer is available for view until Saturday, December 11, 2021. This solo exhibition promotes programs to improve maternal health in communities targeted by the reproductive health crisis. She also announced that their art classes for the fall semester are coming to an end next week and they will be announcing the winter semester classes soon. Ms. Nathan encouraged individuals to visit their website to subscribe to their newsletter to receive information about their classes and programs.

Elisa Rigaglia

Ms. Regalia is a pending member of Hudson Valley Food Systems Coalition. She encouraged the community to reach out to local legislators in support of Bill A1304. Assembly Bill A1304 directs the commissioners of agriculture, markets, and economic development to study farmland dynamics and to develop long term strategies for sustaining farming practices and food production within New York State. She informed us that farmers are losing farmland at an alarming rate within New York State and her father, who is one of the farmers that contributed to Fordham Plaza's farmers market, is currently at risk of losing his farm to developers due to high maintenance costs. She informed us that policy enactment is necessary to keep farmers farming within New York State and to develop plans in order to keep New Yorkers healthy with local food options. The more farms they lose to industrialization, the less food they have to offer at local farmers markets such as the one in Fordham Plaza.

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 Borough President Diaz Jr.'s Community Board Report for the month of December will be available next week.
- Ms. Ruiz also asked the new Board Members to review the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) material and to complete the policy form. The policy form can be returned by fax, email or mail.
- Ms. Ruiz informed the Board Members that the Sexual Harassment Training will be available in the coming weeks.

V. ELECTED OFFICIALS' REPORTS

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr

Bronx Borough President Diaz Jr. thanked Bronx Community Board #6 for their support and hard-work throughout the twelve years that he has been the Bronx Borough President. He expressed his gratitude for the Bronx and is honored to have had the opportunity to be the Bronx Borough President. He has been able to create affordable housing, employment, recreation and educational opportunities for the borough.

New York City Councilmember Vanessa L. Gibson

Councilmember Gibson thanked Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and his team for their work they have accomplished throughout the years for the Bronx. Councilmember Gibson is disturbed by the increase of violence incidents and cases and illegal handguns throughout the borough. As a result, in her new role as the Bronx Borough President next year, she will develop an agenda that will address crime and violence. She also is looking forward to working with Bronx Community Board #6 and the organizations within our district.

New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda

Senator Sepulveda encouraged individuals to get the COVID-19 vaccinations. He also announced that his Workforce Diversification Project has successfully enrolled individuals in training programs or in employment. He encouraged individuals to take advantage of this employment resource by signing up. Senator Sepulveda also informed us that the New York State Homeowner Assistance Fund (NYS HAF) is a federally-funded program dedicated to assisting homeowners who are at risk of default, foreclosure or displacement as result of a financial hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The application will open on January 3, 2022. The NYS HAF provides homeowners financial support to address delinquent housing payments that result in an affordable outcome; access to a Call Center and case managers who can help you find out about any mortgage relief you may be entitled to and how it will affect your future housing payments; and referrals to professional housing counselors or legal service providers who are experts in this field. Senator Sepulveda also informed us that the moratorium on residential and commercial evictions is in effect until January 15, 2022. However, he's anticipating that it will be extended. Individuals can follow his office on his social media platforms to know more about future events, resources, and available services. Individuals who are interested in receiving further information and constituent assistance, can also contact his office by telephone at (718) 991-3161 or by email at team@senatorsepulveda.com. Senator Sepulveda can also be reached at his mobile at (347) 582-8173.

Nanette Alvarado , representing United States Congressman Ritchie Torres

Ms. Alvarado announced that their office has partnered with the New York City Football Club, UAE Embassy, New York City Department of Parks and Recreation to renovate Crotona Park Soccer Field and offer soccer programming. The field renovation is anticipated to be completed by the end of the month. She also informed us that Congressman Torres and Senator Schumer were able to secure \$2 million dollars in funding to administer a feasibility study for a better, greener Cross Bronx Expressway, to address the high rates of asthma in the Bronx. Congressman Torres also voted in support of the Billback Better Act, which will provide paid family leave, universal 3-k and investments in affordable housing.

Rachel Ferrari, representing New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera

Ms. Ferrari informed us that Senator Rivera shared his legislative wish list, which includes the New York Health Act, overdose prevention centers, medical debt protections, expanding the essential plan for New Yorkers, and the right to a commercial lease. She also informed us that their office is providing constituent services and individuals can call (718) 933-2034 or email grivera@nysenate.gov for assistance. Their office will also be closed from Friday, December 17, 2021 and through Monday, January 3, 2022.

Adrian Cacho, representing New York State Assemblymember Chantel Jackson

Mr. Cacho informed us that their office is providing assistance with the New York State Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) and New York State Homeowner Assistance Fund (NYS HAF) applications.

VI. DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT

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

- **Mr. Sanchez thanked the Board Members for their contributions to the Thanksgiving Food Distribution that was held on Tuesday, November 23, 2021 at Arties for Arties. He also thanked Board Members Magdamary Marcano and John Barzcak for attending the event.**
- **Mr. Sanchez also announced that that Bronx Community Board #6 will be having their 6th Annual Holiday Party and Toy Giveaway on Friday, December 17, 2021 from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM at the Community Board's district office located at 1932 Arthur Avenue, Room 403-A. Bronx Community Board #6 is collecting 150 toys for children ages 3-12. He advised individuals who wished to donate to mail their toy donations to the Community Board's district office.**

VII. PRESENTATION

Presentation by The Knowledge House

Constance Barnes, Director of Programs and Partnerships, informed us that The Knowledge House was designed to introduce low income young adults to basic coding skills and tech career exploration. Their course offerings have included an Exploring Technology program for high school students, and introductory to advanced programming in web dev, data science, and usability testing. Ms. Barnes also informed us that The Knowledge House is seeking candidates for the Innovation Fellowship, a 12-month program beginning Fall 2021 designed to promote technology-based career opportunities for NYS, Newark, Atlanta, and Los Angeles residents in the areas of web development, data science, cyber security, and UX/UI Design. This program is aimed at serving participants from diverse backgrounds with little to no formal post-secondary educational experience and turn them into entry-level programmers. The Innovation Fellowship takes place across 12 months and includes evening instruction, assignments outside of class, and internship experience.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

VIII. ROLL CALL ATTENDANCE

A roll call attendance was taken confirming the presence of a quorum with the presence of twenty-two (22) members.

IX. ADOPTION OF MOTIONS

1. **A motion to adopt the minutes of Bronx Community Board #6's meeting of November 10, 2021 was made by Mr. Frank Franz, seconded by Mr. Matthew Martinez and adopted by a vote of twenty-two in favor, zero oppositions and zero abstentions.**

2. A motion to issue a letter of support to Open Plans in support of their Building Blocks Program proposal to improve a block in Bronx Community Board #6's district was made by Mr. Frank Franz, seconded by Ms. Noorjahan Wells, and adopted by a vote of twenty-one in favor, zero oppositions, and zero abstentions. *(Please note that Board Member Divine Sikanku was not present during this motion.)*

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to discuss, the December 8, 2021 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was adjourned at approximately 7:31 PM pursuant to a motion made by Ms. Jacquetta Whaley, seconded by Ms. Lillie Steed, and unanimously adopted by acclamation (thirty in favor, zero opposed and zero abstention).

Respectfully submitted:

Carla Leon
Community Coordinator

Sanzida Talukder
Community Associate

