



**THE CITY OF NEW YORK**  
**BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 6**  
**1932 Arthur Avenue, Room 403-A, Bronx, NY 10457**  
Telephone: (718) 579-6990 Fax: (718) 579-6875 Email: [bronxcb6@bronxcb6.org](mailto:bronxcb6@bronxcb6.org)  
*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, March 11, 2020**

**Members Present:**

Nicole Carter, Diana Diaz, Margarita Espinosa, Frank Franz, Lanell Gardenhire, Audrey Harden, Laura James, Maria Latimer, Matthew Martinex, Floretta O'Brien, Rosa Peraza, Reggie Powell, Lisa Sanchez, Angel Santana, and Noorjahan Wells.

**Members Absent:**

Jannie Armstrong, Clarita Bailon, Virginia Bird, Evonne Capers, Nelson Chimilo, Christopher Collazo, Maria Garcia, Julisa Hamilton, Marilyn Oliver, Jorge Ortiz, Paul Ramirez (Leave of Absence), Helga Robles, Hiram Ratliff, Wendy Rodriguez, Angel Rosario, Maria Ruiz Gutierrez, Gil Simmons, Lillie Steed, Carrie Taft, and Jacquetta Whaley.

**Elected Officials Present:**

New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda

**Elected Officials Representatives Present:**

Fiorella Bini, representing New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda  
Nicholas Peters, representing New York State Assemblyman Victor Pichardo  
Wilfredo Mercado, representing Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark  
Mariel De La Cruz, representing Comptroller of the City of New York Scott M. Stringer

**I. CALL TO ORDER:**

The March 11, 2020 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was held at the Bronx River Art Center located at 1087 East Tremont Avenue, Bronx, New York 10460 and was called to order at approximately 6:37 PM by Board Member Frank Franz.

**II. INVOCATION**

The meeting's invocation was delivered by Board Member Matthew Martinez.

**III. COMMUNITY PERIOD**

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

**Takisha Dozier, representing KIPP Freedom Middle School**

Ms. Dozier informed the community that KIPP Freedom Middle School is in its second year with fifth and sixth graders. KIPP Freedom Middle School is hoping to expand to seventh graders and eventually, include eighth graders as well. Their enrollment application is available online at <https://kippnyc.schoolmint.net/> until April 1, 2020. Ms. Dozier also announced that there will be two open houses this month. The open houses will be held on March 21, 2020 and March 31, 2020 at KIPP Freedom Middle School located at 201 East 144th Street, Bronx, New York 10451.

**Tatiana Rivera, representing MGM Empire City Casino**

Ms. Rivera announced that representatives from Empire State Casino, located in Yonkers, are presenting at Bronx community board meetings in order to obtain a full gaming license, which would remove some of the games to add live tables and live card dealers. This would introduce an estimate of 3,000 union jobs in the casino for residents in the Bronx, Yonkers and Mount Vernon. Ms. Rivera informed us that the casino annually funds \$300 million towards education. She informed us that with the gaming license the casino can tap into a \$9 billion industry. She also informed us that the money would be going into the community.

**Jacqueline Batista, representing Administration of Children Services**

Ms. Batista informed us about the Kinship Care program. The Kinship Care program navigates children to family members or family friends when parents are unable to provide care for the children. To become a kinship caregiver, individuals can visit [www.nysnavigator.org](http://www.nysnavigator.org) or call (877) 454-6463. If individuals wish to foster children, then they can call 311, (212) 676-9474 or go to [www.nyc.gov/acs/foster](http://www.nyc.gov/acs/foster).

**Kristine Rivera, representing Excellence Community Schools**

Ms. Rivera announced that the enrollment application for Excellence Community Schools is open. She recommended that parents/guardians apply to as many charter schools as possible. Excellence Community Schools are accepting applications from kindergarten to eighth grade for all of their locations.

**Bronx River Art Center**

Bronx River Art Center is a community art center that offers programs to individuals of all ages. They also have art exhibitions that are showcased in the center, which are typically coupled with an event open to the public. One of their next projects will be a project restoring old signs or using more contemporary signs while artists teach youth about sign design techniques. The show will be open on April 16, 2020 and will run until June 13, 2020. The opening event on April 16, 2020 will allow people to meet the artists behind the project. We were also informed that their free youth program, Teen Project Studio, is available for 15 to 26 year olds. Individuals can sign up by visiting their website. We were also informed that the Bronx River Art Center has a space available for rent in their facility.

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

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr's report was included in our meeting packages. Mr. Frank Franz asked that we read the report at our leisure.

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

### **Fiorella Bini, representing New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda**

Ms. Bini informed us that their constituent services hours are open Monday to Thursday from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM and on Fridays from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM. She announced that Senator Sepulveda will be hosting a *Bronx Census Teach-In* on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM at the South Bronx Classical Charter School located at 977 Fox Street, Bronx, New York 10459. This event will teach individuals what the Census is all about. In relation to this event, their offices will be assisting residents in completing the Census form. She also announced that there will be an immigration forum in collaboration with Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, Assemblyman Marcos Crespo and Councilman Rafael Salamanca Jr. regarding the "*Green Light*" Law, how the community is affected by the public charge and how the state and city are fighting against it on March 13, 2020 from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM at The Point CDC located at 940 Garrison Avenue, Bronx, New York 10474. Ms. Bini also advised us to be on the lookout for any future updates regarding future events in case of postponement in relation to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. She also announced that on April 4, 2020, they will be hosting their annual Spelling Bee Contest for third, fourth and fifth graders within the thirty-two participating schools. The first place winner for each grade will be awarded \$1,000, second place winner for each grade will be awarded \$700 and the third place winner for each grade will be awarded \$500 in addition to receiving a Senate Certificate.

### **Nicholas Peters, representing Assemblyman Victor Pichardo**

Mr. Peters announced that there was an informational event partnered with Fresh Air Fund, which is the sleepaway camp that operates Camp Junior in memory of Lesandro "Junior" Guzman-Feliz, on February 29, 2020 at Monroe College. The representatives of Fresh Air Fund assisted parents/guardians complete the enrollment application and the children participated in the type of activities that are to be expected at the camp in the summer. Due to the progression of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), Fresh Air Funds will be temporarily halting outreach at their offices. He also informed us that Assemblymember Pichardo is focusing on the preparation of the New York State budget that is due in the next couple of weeks. He is prioritizing education and would like to visit as many schools in the district as possible. Mr. Peters recommended that we visit the New York State Assembly's website to view the committee meetings that are held to discuss and plan the State's budget and to read weekly updates. He advised us to follow Assemblymember Pichardo on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram @victorpichardo86 to be informed of all of his events and news. Mr. Peters also informed us that their office will be assisting individuals with the Census 2020 form starting on March 17, 2020. He also informed us that their office offers immigration services by appointment every last Friday of the month. Their office also has a tenant support unit available on Thursdays from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM and constituent services on Wednesdays through Friday 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Their office hours of operation are 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM from Monday to Friday. To obtain more information on the services offered, Mr. Peters asked to contact their office by telephone at (718) 933-6909.

### **Wilfred Mercado, representing Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark**

Mr. Mercado announced that the Annual Bronx Child Safety Fair that is scheduled for April 25, 2020 will be postponed until further notice. He will be sharing further information on the rescheduling of the event via email.

### **Mariel De La Cruz, representing New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer**

Ms. De La Cruz announced that Comptroller Stringer will be conducting a South Bronx Town Hall on Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at the Bronx Campus of Metropolitan College of New York from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM. Attendees will be able to ask questions, provide feedback and learn what Comptroller Stringer can do for you.

## **VI. DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT**

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

- Mr. Sanchez announced that Bronx Community Board #6 will be continuing their monthly series of Civics and Organizing workshops. The next workshop will be held on Saturday, March 14, 2020 at the New Tabernacle Baptist Church located at 990 East 181st Street at 10:00 AM-12:00 PM.
- Mr. Sanchez also announced that Bronx Community Board #6 will be leading an It's My Park Day at the Happy Land Memorial Monument located at Southern Boulevard and East Tremont on Saturday, March 14, 2020 at 10:00 AM.
- Mr. Sanchez also announced that the Bronx Community Board #6 is currently recruiting high school and college students, ages 16-21, for their summer paid internship program. The internship program application is open.
- Mr. Sanchez informed us about Bronx Community Board #6's Second Annual Scholarship Contest for high school seniors, who live in Bronx Community Board #6's district. The last day to apply is May 1, 2020.
- Mr. Sanchez also announced that the Bronx Community Board #6 is also sponsoring youth volleyball programming from now until Saturday, April 4, 2020 at Aquinas High School from 10:30 AM to 5:30 PM.

## **VII. ROLL CALL ATTENDANCE**

A roll call attendance was taken confirming the absence of a quorum with the presence of fifteen (15) members.

## **VIII. PRESENTATIONS**

### **Carmen Rivera, representing VIP Community Services**

Ms. Rivera informed the community that she attended Bronx Community Board #6's Health and Human Services Committee meeting on February 18, 2020 seeking a letter of support to continue the services offered at Abraham Plaza located at 1870 Crotona Avenue for their renewal contract. Abraham Plaza is a supportive housing building with 54 units and single occupancy for men or women.

### **Erica Peralta-Downing, representing Department of Mental Health**

Mrs. Peralta-Downing informed the community about the Coronavirus. The Coronavirus is a new virus that originated from China in December 2019. The coronavirus has not been seen in humans before. As of March 11, 2020, the mayor announced that there were 46 cases in New York. There will be an increase in the number of cases as more people get tested for the Coronavirus. The symptoms are similar to the flu in minor cases, including cough, body aches and fevers. In severe cases, symptoms

include pneumonia. The community should try to prevent the spread especially to vulnerable populations, including adults over 55 years old, individuals receiving chemotherapy and those with preexisting respiratory illnesses. The Coronavirus is usually spread through close contact with an individual who has been infected with the Coronavirus through droplets from sneezes or coughs that can be inhaled. Mrs. Peralta-Downing advised the community to check in on elderly or people of the more vulnerable populations. As a community, Mrs. Peralta-Downing suggests that we take caution including washing your hands for at least 20 seconds before you eat or touch your face, carrying hand sanitizer if you are unable to wash your hands and disinfecting your work area. If you're sneezing or coughing, try to do it with a tissue or a sleeve. She also advised to refrain from physical contact with others by hugging or shaking hands. People should avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth without washing their hands first. Mrs. Peralta-Downing advises people to stay home if they are experiencing cold-like symptoms and call their primary care physicians or call 311. If you are critically sick, then you should call your doctor. Mrs. Peralta-Downing is advising people to avoid public gatherings. There is a lot of fear and anxiety during this time and the NYCWell program can be of assistance. You can call, text or email NYCWell. The Department of Mental Health and Hygiene updates their website every day at noon. You can also sign up to receive text updates as well if you text COVID to 692692. Board Member Frank Franz asked how many cases are in the Bronx. Mrs. Peralta-Downing said that she would get back to him with an accurate answer. A community member said that it is allergy season as well and the symptoms may cause panic. Governor Cuomo and Mayor de Blasio are ensuring that we are preparing for a spike in numbers. The governor announced that due to the hand sanitizer shortage, inmates would be producing hand sanitizer and Mrs. Peralta-Downing will provide her email to those in need of hand sanitizers. Board Member Noorjahan Wells asked what preventive measures the state government is taking. Ms. Peralta-Downing answered that if you are feeling sick to call a doctor. If the symptoms are severe, they will check for a cold or allergies and then they will test for flu. If you don't have the flu and your systems match Coronavirus symptoms, then you will be tested for the Coronavirus. Rash hasn't been seen as a symptom for Coronavirus but it can be a reaction of high fevers. The mayor announced that we are in contract with two major companies to prepare for an increase in need for testing kits. Ms. Peralta-Downing is encouraging individuals to get flu vaccines if they haven't yet because it can prevent severe flu-like symptoms but it cannot prevent an individual from contracting Coronavirus. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has been working with sister agencies including Department of the Aging and the Department of Homeless Services. They have been visiting seniors at senior centers and shelters to ensure that all the workers are taking proper precautions. They are also asking people who are traveling often to keep distance from seniors and take precautions. For those without insurance or are undocumented, they can still get tested for the Coronavirus.

## **IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Mr. Frank Franz announced that the committee reports are in the general board meeting packets, which were provided to all the board members. He also announced that committee meetings are always the third week of the month. Unless otherwise specified, all committee meetings will begin at 6:30 PM and take place at the Community Board's district office at 1932 Arthur Avenue, Room 403-A.

### **Parks and Recreation Committee: Margarita Espinosa Committee Chair**

Ms. Espinosa also announced that the annual It's My Park Day at the Happy Land Monument will take place on Saturday, March 14, 2020 at 10:00 AM on East Tremont Avenue and Southern Boulevard. The Happy Land cleanup is in preparation of the 30th Anniversary Memorial mass in honor of the 87 victims of the Happy Land Social Club fire.

## **X. ADOPTION OF MOTIONS**

- 1. A motion to adopt the minutes of Bronx Community Board #6's meeting of February 12, 2020.**
- 2. A motion to issue a letter of support to VIP Community Services to continue its housing and health services at Abraham Plaza located at 1870 Crotona Avenue, Bronx, New York 10457 was not voted on.**
- 3. A motion to issue a letter of support in favor of SBH Health Systems' request for Medicaid cuts not to be enacted by the New York State Legislature was not voted on.**

## **XI. ADJOURNMENT**

**There being no other business to discuss, the March 11, 2020 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was adjourned at approximately 7:48 PM.**

**Respectfully submitted:**

**Sanzida Talukder  
Community Associate**

**Carla Leon  
Community Associate**

**ATTENDANCE AND VOTING RECORDING FOR BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #6 MEETING OF MARCH 11, 2020**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>ATTENDANCE</b>	<b>MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 12, 2020</b>	<b>LOS VIP COMMUNITY SERVICES</b>	<b>LOS SBH HEALTH SYSTEMS</b>	<b>ADJOURMENT</b>		
Jannie Armstrong							
Clarita Bailon							
Virginia Bird							
Evonne Capers							
Nicole Carter	Present						
Nelson Chimilio							
Christopher Collazo							
Diana Diaz	Present						
Margarita Espinosa	Present						
Frank Franz	Present						
Maria Garcia							
Lanell Gardenhire	Present						
Julisa Hamilton							
Audrey Harden	Present						
Laura James	Present						
Maria Latimer	Present						
Matthew Martinez	Present						
Michael Nelson							
Floretta O'Brien	Present						
Rev. Marilyn Oliver							
Jorge Ortiz							
Rosa Peraza	Present						
Reggie Powell	Present						
Paul Ramirez	Leave of Absense						
Helga Robles							
Rev. Hiram Ratliff							
Wendy Rodriguez							
Angel Rosario							
Maria Ruiz Gutierrez							
Lisa Sanchez	Present						
Angel Santana	Present						
Gil Simmons							
Lillie Steed							
Carrie Taft							
Noorjahan Wells	Present						
Jacquetta Whaley							