



**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, May 13, 2020

Members Present:

Clarita Bailon, Evonne Capers, Nicole Carter, Nelson Chimilio, Maria Garcia, Lanell Gardenhire, Julisa Hamilton, Audrey Harden, Laura James, Maria Latimer, Matthew Martinez, Michael Nelson, Jorge Ortiz, Rosa Peraza, Reggie Powell, Helga Robles, Lisa Sanchez, Lillie Steed, Carrie Taft, Noorjahan Wells, and Jacquetta Whaley.

Members Absent:

Virginia Bird, Christopher Collazo, Diana Diaz, Margarita Espinosa, Frank Franz, Floretta O'Brien, Reverend Marilyn Oliver, Paul Ramirez, Reverend Hiram Ratliff, Wendy Rodriguez, Angel Rosario, Maria Ruiz Gutierrez, Angel Santana, and Gil Simmons.

Elected Officials Present:

New York City Council Member Rafael Salamanca Jr.
New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera
New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda
New York State Assemblyman Michael Blake
New York State Assemblyman Victor Pichardo

Elected Officials Representatives Present:

Surey Miranda, representing New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio
Alexis Ruiz, representing Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.
Davin Harris, representing Council Member Rafael Salamanca Jr.
Miguel Rondon, representing New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera
Fiorella Bini, representing New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda
Nicholas Peters, representing New York State Assemblyman Victor Pichardo
Glendalys Salgado, representing New York State Assemblywoman Karines Reyes
Brian Polanco, representing Public Advocate of the City of New York Jumaane Williams

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The May 13, 2020 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was held via Zoom Audio Conference meeting ID 891 8183 9782 and via Zoom Video at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89181839782> and was called to order at approximately by 6:37 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:

Dr. Vanessa Salcedo, representing Union Community Health Center

Dr. Salcedo informed the community that telemedical services including mental health services and medication delivery are available upon request. They are utilizing social media platforms to inform community residents about their services and updated information on COVID-19. She also informed us that Union Community Health Center is not offering COVID-19 antibody tests at the moment until further information pertaining to having antibodies is released. The recent discovery of a new inflammatory disease in children has led them to research and gather information to determine actions. Dr. Salcedo reported that the incidence rates of COVID-19 has decreased. She also reported that there is a shortage of medical masks and PPE.

Chantal Chantal, Community Resident, provided information about Cut Red Tape 4 Heroes. Cut Red Tape 4 Heroes is an initiative developed by Rhonda Roland Shearer that distributed medical equipment and resources to clinics and hospitals.

Carmen Rivera, representing VIP Community Services

Ms. Rivera informed the community that VIP Community Services moved from 1910 Arthur Avenue to 770 East 176th Street. VIP Community Services are providing primary care and mental health services through telehealth. They are also preparing children for camp by providing immunizations for the children. If an individual would like to receive any of their services, they can do so by calling (718) 466-8244.

Marie Palladino

Ms. Palladino is concerned about East Fordham Road's gentrification and the expansion of the Fordham University campus is limiting the housing availability for community members. She expressed that since Fordham University students are able to afford high rent, landlords are increasing rents. Ms. Palladino also requested a dog park or community garden that will allow community residents to have access to green space in the Arthur Avenue neighborhood.

Mr. John Sanchez, District Manager, informed Ms. Palladino of the community gardens that are in the Arthur Avenue neighborhood of the district. Mr. Sanchez indicated that he will be sharing the listing of community gardens with Ms. Palladino.

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 Community Board Members that applied for membership reappointment will be receiving their letter from Borough President Diaz Jr. at the end of the month.
- Ms. Ruiz encouraged us to visit Borough President Diaz Jr.'s website at <http://bronxboropres.nyc.gov/> for updated information on COVID-19.

V. ELECTED OFFICIALS' REPORTS

New York State Assemblyman Victor Pichardo

Assemblyman Pichardo announced that the Assembly budget was passed in April and he was able to include \$125,000 for the purchase of laptops and tablets for college students in partnership with Bronx Community College. He also announced that the State of New York is 2.5 to 13.5 billion dollars indebted in terms of where the State it's supposed to be. As a result, he signed a letter to ask state governors and leadership in both houses to produce and propose new revenue generators to shortcut the budget deficit and create a more progressive and equitable taxation system for the State of New York. Assemblyman Pichardo informed us that he has provided resources to hospitals, community residents and organizations. He has also been communicating and educating community residents on the importance of social distancing. Assemblyman also informed us about the present legislative virtual discussions and hearings in relation to small businesses, housing, domestic violence, and inequality in communities of color. There's a bill with both New York State chambers that would provide up to \$100 million worth of rent relief to individuals who are not able to afford their rent because of the pandemic. For more information and updates, individuals can follow Assemblyman Pichardo on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram at vpichardo86 or contact his district office at (718) 933-6909. His office is open from 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM from Monday through Friday.

New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera

Senator Rivera informed us that his district office is still providing constituents services in relation to food security, unemployment, housing assistance. Individuals can contact his office by phone at (718) 933-2034. He also informed us about the importance of filling out the Census. Senator Rivera announced that on May 18, 2020 he is going to be co-sharing an online joint public hearing to explore solutions to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on minority communities. The purpose of this joint public hearing is to seek recommendations on how to approach and mitigate these disproportionate adverse impacts of COVID-19 on minority communities, which may include

disparate impacts to industries, services and local governments and institutions including the surrounding health care system, through enhanced federal funding and appropriate policy initiatives. He also informed us about the New York Health Act. The New York Health Act guarantees healthcare for every New Yorker regardless of race, economic status or immigration status. In addition, he informed us that the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has done testing and tracing for many infectious diseases in the past, however, Mayor de Blasio has decided to take that responsibility away from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and gave to NYC Health + Hospitals, which is the public hospital corporation in New York City. They are public health provider, but not a public health system. They actually stalled on the hiring by about a week.

New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda

Senator Sepulveda informed the community that Bronx Community Board #6 and his office were able to work with Fresh Direct and donate 500 boxes of food to The FLOW Kingdom Ministries Church Flows located at 901 East Tremont Avenue for community distribution. His district office is still assisting with constituent services and food distribution. Individuals who require assistance with food can contact his office at (718) 991-3161. He also informed us that there is a state housing, mortgage and student loans repayment moratorium in effect. With that said, tenants cannot be legally evicted in New York until August 20, 2020. He also informed us about the New York State bill that is being sponsored by Assemblymember Catalina Cruz that will assist individuals with financial assistance with burial arrangements. Senator Sepulveda wants to ensure that this assistance is accessible to undocumented families. Senator Sepulveda and Senator Jamaal Bailey will be meeting with the New York Police Department Commissioner Shea in regards to the unequal enforcement of social distancing rules among individuals. Senator Sepulveda also announced that COVID-19 testing sites are expanding across the City. Individuals can contact 311 or his district office to determine their nearest location. He also encouraged community members to practice social distancing and to wear face masks in public at all times. He also encouraged community members to fill out the Census and vote to ensure that our borough is well represented and equipped with the adequate funding and resources.

Assemblyman Michael Blake

Assemblyman Blake informed the community that the New Tabernacle Baptist Church and Union Grove Baptist Church will be testing sites. The Bronx Community Relief Effort includes assistance regarding food, non-profits, small businesses, housing, health care, education, equity, unemployment. All of this information is on thebronx.org. There is about an average daily engagement rate of 84% for students in the Bronx. There won't be any tolerations for an increase in the Department of Corrections, while cutting the budget for schools. Currently, they are still looking for ways for students to engage in summer youth programs without being in the same space. There are still jobs hiring right now. Military families and veterans can use empirevets.com. Simultaneously, the Educational Opportunities Center is doing online training and connecting people to jobs. The office has been working with World Central Kitchen, they will be surpassing 1 million meals in the Bronx by the end of the week. There are about 61 sites in New York distributing food every day. Bronx Draft House is distributing food every day at noon. People must remain engaged in democracy, including filling out the census. Every registered person in New York can vote absentee if they choose to via

nycabsentee.com. The absentee application form is sent by mail, you can fill out and send it back. You will then receive the ballot by mail. He wants to make sure that they call the office if they are in need of anything or have any concerns.

Council Member Rafael Salamanca Jr.

Council Member Salamanca Jr. informed the community that they should call his office if there are students in public schools who don't have technology. NYC will provide an iPad with internet access for each student who needs one. Certain streets are closed to vehicles, but open to pedestrians to walk freely since the parks are closed. His office will post the streets that are open to the public. Currently, the city is negotiating with the administration on what the priorities are and there will be a \$6 billion budget cut. They are asking each department where they are going to make cuts but the administration didn't ask the NYPD to make any cuts. DYCD has been asked to take a 58% budget cut. It makes no sense to have NYPD patrolling stadiums, when there won't be any sports this summer. He is also advocating for more technology-based jobs, so people can work remotely. The office will also be posting testing sites. The Mayor's office will be opening testing sites for walk-ins without appointments. The council member is asking for testing sites for antibodies. Board Member Noorjahan Wells asked "Why is the Bronx last, in terms of mask and testing sites?" Council Member Rafael Salamanca said that there are masks available and you can reach out to elected officials for masks. It always has been that the Bronx has been last. You should vote for who will fight for you. He didn't go into why the Bronx is last but rather what can be done now. First, fill out the census. You also have to work with local elected officials and stakeholders. If you are hungry, you can reach out to any elected officials, call 311, or your district manager. Council Member Salamanca also doesn't understand why the mayor put politics before public health. The city should have left the responsibility with the Department of Health not with the HAC, who are overburdened with taking care of individuals. Adding on to this responsibility is delaying the testing and tracing process. He is part of the group that is asking the mayor to redirect the responsibility. The state has designated certain locations for testing. State sites are paid by the state and city sites are paid by the city. He was notified today that certain city sites are being designated as walk-ins and no prior communication would be required. Currently, the council member doesn't have information on hiring contact tracers but he will get John that information. The goal of this project is to hire Bronx residents for the Bronx sites. If there are any workers who are hired outside of their borough, then they should contact his office or any other elected officials to get relocated to their own borough. In terms of zoning, the city has put a pause on land use applications. In the months of July and August community boards are on recess. However, they may ask the community board to vote on those applications during summer months. When the applications get pushed back, city subsidies get pushed back leading to higher cost, which means a higher rent. Once we move forward with the projects, more jobs will be created. The governor has put in a seven metric system on how to open up different counties. There has been an announcement made that 2-3 counties are able to open up. So far, the city of New York has reached 4 or 5 metrics of the system. If you're interested when we will reopen, just track how New York City is doing in terms of the governor's 7 metric system. The communities are very dense. The council member believes that to ask residents to close off parks is difficult and New York City has to come up with a better system to allow people to enjoy parks and socially distance at the same time. He also stated that the mayor and his administration need to come up with a better system. We are working with the Park Department and the Mayor's Office to figure out how to be at parks, enjoy the weather, and be safe. Fences put around

parks because individuals were not social distancing. Responsibility does not only fall on the government only but community as well and also falls on young people to recognize we are in pandemic. They have to follow rules to get through this. Every year, Community Boards get \$42,000 in discretionary spending from the city council. Councilmember Salamanca recommends that the Community Board don't include that \$42,000 in the new budget that takes effect July 1st, because it may be allocated to health services. This isn't definite but it's just a recommendation when planning for the next fiscal year budget.

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 the State and City of New York will be initiating a "Test and Trace" program in efforts of slowing the spread of COVID-19.
- Mr. Sanchez also informed the community that the Community Boards are facing a \$4,00 decrease in Fiscal Year 2020 and a \$9,000 decrease in Fiscal Year 2021. As a result, Bronx Community Board #6's Internship Program will be held in the month of June with a decrease in weekly hours.
- Mr. Sanchez also announced that the Bronx Community Board #6 is working with local elected officials to provide food resources to local churches and local residents. Board members and community members contributed in raising more than \$10k in the gift giveaway. Bronx Community Board #6 gave out more than one hundred \$50 grocery gift cards.
- Mr. Sanchez announced that the next sessions of the Bronx Civics and Organizing Workshops will be conducted via Facebook live and Zoom Video Conference on Thursday, May 14 and May 21 at 6:00 PM. The discussion topics for these sessions include local representation, State and City budget, what the implications of the budget cuts are and how we can work around it.

VII. ROLL CALL ATTENDANCE

A roll call attendance was taken confirming the presence of a quorum with the presence of twenty-one (21) members.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Chairperson Evonne Capers announced that due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Bronx Community Board #6 did not hold committee meetings for the month of April. Therefore, there were no committee reports to report.

IX. ADOPTION OF MOTIONS

- 1. A motion to adopt the minutes of Bronx Community Board #6's meeting of April 1, 2020 was made by Ms. Noorjahan Wells, seconded by Ms. Jacquetta Whaley, and adopted by a vote of twenty in favor, one opposed and zero abstaining.**
- 2. A motion to issue a letter of support in favor of renaming West Farms Rapids to Restoration Park was made by Ms. Helga Robles, seconded by Mr. Matthew Martinez, and adopted by a vote of fourteen in favor, five opposed, and two abstaining.**

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to discuss, the May 13, 2020 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was adjourned at approximately 8:42 PM pursuant to a motion made by Mr. Nelson Chimilios, second by Ms. Noorjahan Wells, and unanimously adopted by acclamation (twenty-one in favor, zero opposed and zero abstention).

Respectfully submitted:

**Sanzida Talukder
Community Associate**

**Carla Leon
Community Associate**

ATTENDANCE AND VOTING RECORD FOR BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #6 MEETING OF MAY 13, 2020

NAME	ATTENDANCE	MINUTES OF APRIL 1, 2020	LOS WEST FARMS RAPID	ADJOURNMENT				
Clarita Bailon	Present	Yes	No	Yes				
Virginia Bird								
Evonne Capers	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Nicole Carter	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Nelson Chimilio	Present	Yes	No	Yes				
Christopher Collazo								
Diana Diaz								
Margarita Espinosa								
Frank Franz								
Maria Garcia	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Lanell Gardenhire	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Julisa Hamilton	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Audrey Harden	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Laura James	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Maria Latimer	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Matthew Martinez	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Michael Nelson	Present	Yes	No	Yes				
Floretta O'Brien								
Rev. Marilyn Oliver								
Jorge Ortiz	Present	Yes	No	Yes				
Rosa Peraza	Present	No	No	Yes				
Reggie Powell	Present	Yes	Abstain	Yes				
Paul Ramirez								
Helga Robles	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Rev. Hiram Ratliff								
Wendy Rodriguez								
Angel Rosario								
Maria Ruiz Gutierrez								
Lisa Sanchez	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Angel Santana								
Gil Simmons								
Lillie Steed	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Carrie Taft	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Noorjahn Wells	Present	Yes	Abstain	Yes				
Jacquetta Whaley	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes				