



**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, October 14, 2020

Members Present:

Cornell Brown, Evonne Capers, Nicole Carter, Frank Franz, Maria Garcia, Lanell Gardenhire, Laura James, Asana Lloyd, Matthew Martinez, Francine Miller, Michael Nelson, Floretta O'Brien, Jorge Ortiz, Rosa Peraza, Paul Ramirez, Carmen Rivera, Krystine Rivera, Divine Sikanku, Lillie Steed, and Jacquetta Whaley.

Members Absent:

Clarita Bailon, Virginia Bird, Milagros Cancel, Sadly Cekovic, Nelson Chimilio, Diana Diaz, Margarita Espinosa, Julisa Hamilton, Audrey Harden, Maria Latimer, Rev. Marilyn Oliver, Reggie Powell, Rev. Hiriam Ratliff, Helga Robles, Wendy Rodriguez, Maria Ruiz Gutierrez, Lisa Sanchez, Gil Simmons, and Noorjahan Wells.

Elected Officials Present:

New York City Council Member Vanessa L. Gibson
New York City Council Member Rafael Salamanca Jr.
New York State Assembly Member Victor Pichardo
New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda
Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark

Elected Officials Representatives Present:

Surey Miranda, representing New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio
Alexis Ruiz, representing Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.
Davon Harris, representing New York City Council Member Rafael Salamanca Jr.
Zoe Petrak, representing New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda
Nicholas Peters, representing New York State Assemblyman Victor Pichardo
Marc Cruz, representing New York State Assemblywoman Karines Reyes
Robert Barnes, representing Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark
Victor Martinez, representing New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The October 14, 2020 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was held via Zoom Audio and Video Conference meeting ID 923 2934 9697 and via Zoom Video at <https://zoom.us/j/92329349697> and was called to order at approximately by 6:40 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:

Beate Hein Bennet, representing Bronx River Art Center

Ms. Bennet has been a board member and a donor for the Bronx River Art Center for ten years. Ms. Bennet informed the community that the Bronx River Art Center has a lot of activities available and has done a lot for the community for both the youth and adults throughout the years. The organization has been enriching for the community and has even gained international attention.

Francisco Lugovina, representing Bronx River Art Center

Mr. Lugovina introduced himself to the community. He is presently the chairperson for the Bronx River Art Center, which is a community-based organization that has been serving the community over 40 years. He also informed the community that he is open to have conversations with community members who have concerns to improve the operations of the Bronx River Art Center.

Angel Chevrestt

Mr. Chevrestt is a freelance photographer and he has been familiar with the Bronx River Art Center since the early 1990s. Mr. Chevrestt taught a photography class at the Bronx River Art Center. He stated that he has observed an amazing difference at the Bronx River Art Center and Ms. Gail Nathan has done a great job of ensuring that the courses offered were community-based.

Bruce Rosen

Mr. Rosen has been familiar with the Bronx River Art Center and Ms. Gail Nathan for a couple of decades. Mr. Rosen informed the community that Ms. Nathan took a place with a lot of potential and added to it. He explained that she dealt with many city agencies to remake the structure. She has done numerous things including programming offsite when the organization was displaced, doing activities when in place, expanding the program and utilizing the river. Mr. Rosen believes that the Bronx River Art Center is great for the community.

Gail Nathan, representing Bronx River Art Center

Ms. Nathan announced that the Bronx River Art Center has started their Fall virtual art classes. They will be conducting seven to eight classes virtually every day for the remaining of the year. Individuals interested in registration can take advantage of their 20% discount. There is also an extra 20% discount for students from the West Farms area of the district. Classes begin on October 5, 2020 and registration is still open.

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 Borough President Diaz Jr.'s report for the Community Boards for the month of October was emailed. If any individual would like to receive the report, they can email send her an email request at aruiz@bronxbp.nyc.gov.
- Ms. Ruiz also informed us that there are only 48 hours to fill out the Census and encouraged community members to fill out the Census.
- Ms. Ruiz announced that the Borough President Diaz Jr. 's office will be sending a notification via mail or email the online orientation that will be taking place in early November for new Community Board members.

V. ELECTED OFFICIALS' REPORTS

New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda

Senator Luis Sepulveda informed community members that elected officials are concerned about a second surge of COVID and reminded the community to continue to wear masks and wash hands. His office worked with the Taiwanese Economic Cultural Office and the Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce to provide thousands of masks for Bronx residents. His office also gave out face masks at train stations throughout the Bronx. Senator Sepulveda informed the community that they can call the office if they need more masks. Additionally, Senator Sepulveda's office is still giving out food. There will also be a giveaway of 12 palettes of food at Longway Academy, which is across the street from his office. Senator Sepulveda explained that the Supreme Court allowed the administration to stop counting individuals, but people still have until 5:59 AM on Friday to fill out the Census. Senator Sepulveda also informed the community that early voting begins on October 24. Constituents can drop off absentee ballots at board of elections or at the early voting sites. If anyone wants to go into the office, then they should call ahead of time. His office is still providing service to the community and serving about 50 to 60 people a day with issues like health care and food insecurity. The office can be contacted via phone at 718-991-3161 or email team@senatorsepulveda.com.

New York State Assemblyman Victor Pichardo

Assemblyman Victor Pichardo reminded community members that they have until 5:59 AM Friday to fill out the census and early voting begins on October 24. There have been spikes in cases in the

following zip codes in the Bronx: 10468, 10453, 10452, and 10455. Assemblyman Pichardo's office will forward resources to help these zip codes. He announced that Nilda Velazquez, the state committeewoman for 78th assembly district, passed away and 6th assembly female district leader's son also passed away. He offered condolences during this difficult time for the families. Assemblyman Pichardo will be hosting a DOE Town Hall with State Senator Gustavo Rivera and hopes to hold more town halls. His office is also working with the Helen Keller International organization to offer free eye exams and prescriptions for seniors at the Bailey Senior Center. The office is physically open Monday to Thursday but they aren't accepting any Walk-Ins at the moment, so constituents must make appointments prior to going into the office. On Fridays, 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM, the office is open remotely. For more information and weekly updates, individuals can follow Assemblyman Pichardo on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram at vpichardo86 or contact his district office at (718) 933-6909. He also informed the community that newsletters are sent via email. The community can also contact Nick Peters at petersng@nyassembly.gov if they have any questions for the office or need assistance.

New York City Council Member Vanessa L. Gibson

Councilwoman Vanessa announced that it was the last day of Hispanic Heritage Month and she wanted to recognize all of Hispanic and Latin New Yorkers for the contributions that they are making. She is currently the Co-Chairman of the Women's Caucus of the City Council and she is recognizing Carlina Rivera and Diana Ayala. She also announced that it is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and encouraged community members to wear purple to bring awareness to all types of domestic violence and the rate of domestic violence increased during COVID. Councilwoman Vanessa Gibson joined with domestic violence providers who provide services all across the Bronx. The City Council was able to allocate \$223,000 for these organizations, Her Justice, Sanctuary for Families, Violence Intervention Program, Seten Yetu Center for African Women and Families, Bronx Legal Services, and Urban Justice Center. She informed the community that if they know someone in a dangerous situation, especially in communities of color, they should reach out to (800)621-HOPE. Councilwoman Gibson also announced Breast Cancer Awareness Month and encouraged community members to wear pink in recognition of survivors and those who are still fighting to raise the level of awareness for early detection and screening. She is working with all of the healthcare partners, Community-based organizations, and hospitals to provide critical services for families in need. She also explained that there has been an upward trend of COVID cases in some neighborhoods. She encouraged people to continue to wear masks. Community members can reach out to any elected official for hand sanitizer and masks. There will be Proper Protective Equipment popups in popular corridors. She informed the community that elected officials will do everything possible to keep trends below 1.7. She told people to continue filling out the census, take advantage of early day voting, election day voting and absentee voting. She is collaborating with Councilman Ritchie Torres, Councilman Rafael Salamanca and Councilman Fernando Cabrera to fund "health bucks" and \$2 coupons for the farmer's markets and green markets for healthier eating. She informed the community that there are 29 farmer's markets. There will be Farmer's Market pop ups starting Thursday, October 15, at Bronx Borough Hall, Lincoln Hospital, Poe Park, Mount Eden and Bronx Lebanon. A legislation to make outdoor dining permanent all year round might pass on Thursday, October 15, 2020. Currently, indoor dining is at a 25% capacity and Councilwoman Gibson doesn't see it moving higher because of the upward trend. Elected officials are trying to provide support by maintaining outdoor dining. There will be rapid testing, mobile testing, testing tracing and Proper Protective Equipment pop up sites in areas with higher levels of COVID cases. Carmen Rivera at VIP Community Services did a pop up site in her

district. Councilwoman Gibson thanked Bronx Community Board 6 for hosting the Day of Remembrance for victims of homicide to recognize men and women we lost due to gun violence. She also announced that the City Council's "Go Purple Day" is on October 22. The office has visibility at subway stations and bus stops as they give out literature about domestic violence services with the Mayor's Office and family justice centers to end domestic and gender based violence. Councilwoman Gibson informed the community that the office will be opening in two weeks. The office can be contacted via phone at (718) 588-7500 and via email at district16bronx@council.nyc.gov.

Surey Miranda, representing the New York City Mayor de Blasio

Ms. Miranda informed the community that there is a sign release form for students going to school to get tested for school safety and understanding of spread rates. There have been an increased number of COVID cases in the West Bronx. The mayor's office is looking at different initiatives for ppe availability and testing availability. If anyone wants to get involved or help then they can reach out. The office can be contacted at 212-788-1412 or 347-985-5692 or via email at smiranda@cityhall.nyc.gov.

Chantel Jackson

Ms. Jackson is the Democratic nominee for the 79th assembly district. She is a licensed social worker at a high school in Queens. She worked as a college advisor for nine years before then and she is now in the political realm. She is working alongside Councilwoman Vanessa Gibson and Senator Luis Sepulveda in handing out Proper Protective Equipment and making sure people have access to information. Ms. Jackson reminded everyone to have a plan to vote and encourage other people to have a plan. She recommends that early voting is safer because there are less people on line and the government spent so much money for early voting but not enough people are taking advantage of it. She would like to talk about wellness, housing and education via virtual meetings, including real estate business credits and stocks in which she will be getting experts to give training, which is how we will get out of being called the poorest congressional district. Her office can be reached via email at schedulingbx79@gmail.com and via phone at (516) 595-9675.

Robert Barnes, representing Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark

Mr. Barnes informed the community that if they want to know about events or want the District Attorney to attend any events, then they can reach out to the office. Recently, the office hosted an anti-gun violence event on October 3 at Belmont Playground with the 48th Precinct. The District Attorney's office will be doing events with Bronx Community Board #6. There will be a gun buyback event on Saturday, October 24 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 777 E 222nd Street Bronx, New York 10467. The drop-off site time is from 10 AM - 4 PM. Participants will receive prepaid \$200 cards for guns. For more information, community members can email Mr. Barnes at barnesro@bronxda.nyc.gov. The office is located at 198 E 161st Street Bronx, New York 10451 and is currently working 25% in person. The direct phone number is (718)838-7461 and the cell phone number is (929)361-8240.

Davon Harris, representing New York City Council Member Rafael Salamanca Jr.

Mr. Harris announced that Councilman Rafael Salamanca will be hosting food giveaways because the Bronx is at 24.9% unemployment and 25% of soup kitchens and pantries have been shut down. The office has been all over the Bronx with hot plates, fresh fruits, nonperishables and vegetables. Community members can follow the councilman on social media @cmsalamancajr on Instagram and Councilmember Salamanca Jr. on Facebook to follow his posts. The councilman will be at section two of Co-op City with Kevin Riley. The councilman also allocated \$1.5 million for construction of Evelina Antoinette Playground and worked with the Hunts Point Market and held Proper Protective Equipment pop ups. The office can be contacted at daharris@nyc.council.gov if anyone needs help.

Victor Martinez, representing New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer

Mr. Martinez announced that the Comptroller introduced a new workforce development plan including tuition free community college and a universal paid internship program for CUNY students, more career-oriented and technical education and early college high school expansion. Mr. Martinez informed the community that the Comptroller was thinking of the economic crisis and thought of the recovery of our city when devising the plan. If anyone wants any information on workforce development in the city, then the office can be contacted via phone at 646-647-7491 or via email at vmartin@comptroller.nyc.gov.

Marc Cruz, representing New York State Assembly Member Karines Reyes

Mr. Cruz informed the community that Assemblywoman Karines Reyes held a few events in West Farms including a back to school giveaway, hand sanitizer and face masks giveaway and antibody testing. There will be more events coming up. West Farms Rapids just opened up behind the Bronx River Art Center and Mr. Cruz encourages the community to go see how there is direct access to the river and walking paths. He also informed the community that the office has been open since June. If anyone has any questions or problems, they should email or call beforehand to prevent the risk of coming out if it can be resolved over the phone. The office is located on 1920 Westchester Ave and the office can be contacted via email at cruz@nyassembly.gov or via phone at (718) 931-2915.

VI. DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT

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

- **Mr. Sanchez informed us that Bronx Community Board #6 hosted an It's My Park Day clean up at Tremont Park and Crotona Parkway Malls earlier in the month.**
- **Mr. Sanchez announced that Bronx Community Board #6, Fordham University's Office of Career Services and the Manresa Scholars will continue to offer resume and interviewing workshops this month. Individuals can register by emailing bronxcb6@bronxcb6.org.**
- **Mr. Sanchez also announced that Bronx Community Board #6 will be hosting a Thanksgiving food drive. We are currently accepting non-perishable food items to fill baskets to assist families in our district. The donations will be accepted every Friday from October 30th through November 13th from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the district office.**
- **Mr. Sanchez also informed us that Bronx Community Board #6 presently has two paid interns in their internship program this semester.**

VII. PRESENTATION

Ms. Gail Nathan, representing Bronx River Art Center

Ms. Nathan informed us about the Bronx River Art Center's Fiscal Year 2020 and 2021 operations and programming. The Bronx River Art Center offers a wide range of art classes for youth and adults. They offer ceramics, intro to drawing, 3-D art, digital animation, cartooning, and photography. Their art classes are presently being offered virtually. Ms. Nathan also informed us that the Bronx River Art Center's TPS+2.0 workshop projects have been installed throughout the Borough. The Bronx River Art Center has also gained numerous partnerships with community-based organizations, city agencies, and local elected officials that has led to many community events. They have also held workshops, events, presentations, exhibitions, studio space, and performances.

Dr. Sonia James-Wilson, representing The Coalition for the Revitalization of the Bronx River Art Center (BRAC)

Dr. James-Wilson informed us that Bronx River Art Center is not fulfilling its stated mission and its raising numerous concerns, but not limited to: limited and ineffective community outreach and collaboration, lack of cultural understanding of the local community, publicizing of events that never happen, questionable employment practices, and failure to apply for grants. The goal of The Coalition for the Revitalization of the Bronx River Art Center is to create the conditions under which the Bronx River Art Center is used to its full capacity as a vibrant community resource that serves professional, emerging, and amateur art makers in and beyond the borough of The Bronx. The Coalition for the Revitalization of the Bronx River Art Center made several attempts to meet with the Bronx River Art Center's Board to discuss these concerns. With the community board's support The Coalition for the Revitalization of the Bronx River Art Center will be moving towards their next stage of filing a complaint with District Attorney's Office for the investigation of claims including: violation of labor regulations, harassment and hostile work environment, mis-management of funds and false information on funding reports. They are also going to appeal to Department of Cultural Affairs and elected officials to stop funding the organization and to reclaim unused funds and appeal to the City of New York for eviction of BRAC from 1087 East Tremont Avenue, and work with City and elected officials to identify alternative groups, so that the art center is worthy of our community.

VIII. ROLL CALL ATTENDANCE

A roll call attendance was taken confirming the presence of a quorum with the presence of twenty (20) members.

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS

The committee reports were sent by email. 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 September 9, 2020 with corrections was made by Mr. Matthew Martinez, seconded by Mr. Cornell Brown, and adopted by a vote of nineteen in favor, one opposed and zero abstaining.**
- 2. A motion to provide a letter of support to the Coalition for the Revitalization of the Bronx River Art Center in support of their revitalization plan for the Bronx River Art Center (BRAC) was made by Ms. Jacquetta Whaley, seconded by Mr. Paul Ramirez, and was not adopted by a vote of eight in favor, five opposed, five abstaining and two recusals.**

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to discuss, the October 14, 2020 meeting of Bronx Community Board #6 was adjourned at approximately 8:48 PM pursuant to a motion made by Ms. Floretta O'Brien, second by Ms. Carmen Rivera, and unanimously adopted by acclamation (twenty 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 OCTOBER 14, 2020

NAME	ATTENDANCE	MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 9, 2020	LOS REVITALIZATION OF BRAC	ADJOURMENT						
Clarita Bailon										
Virginia Bird										
Cornell Brown	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes						
Milagros Cancel										
Evonne Capers	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes						
Nicole Carter	Present	Yes	Abstain	Yes						
Sadlye Cekovic										
Nelson Chimilio										
Diana Diaz										
Margarita Espinosa										
Frank Franz	Present	Yes	No	Yes						
Maria Garcia	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes						
Lanell Gardenhire	Present	Yes	Abstain	Yes						
Julisa Hamilton										
Audrey Harden										
Laura James	Present	Yes	Recused	Yes						
Maria Latimer										
Assana Lloyd	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes						
Matthew Martinez	Present	Yes	Abstain	Yes						
Francine Miller	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes						
Michael Nelson	Present	Yes	Abstain	Yes						
Floretta O'Brien	Present	Yes	Recused	Yes						
Rev. Marilyn Oliver										
Jorge Ortiz	Present	Yes	No	Yes						
Rosa Peraza	Present	No	No	Yes						
Reggie Powell										
Paul Ramirez	Present	Yes	Yes	Yes						
Carmen Rivera	Present	Yes	No	Yes						
Kristine Rivera	Present	Yes	No	Yes						
Rev. Hiram Ratliff										
Helga Robles										