

# **Bronx Community Board 8 Activities Focused on Advancing Racial Equity**

## District office:

- Expanding materials in multiple languages including Spanish as well as links to additional languages for broader community engagements.
- Tabling in every community that the board represents with board volunteers
- CB8 engagement more inclusive including explaining rules to people so they understand appropriate engagement at CB8 monthly meetings, encourage their participation within meeting parameters, consider how comfortable the space is, incorporate younger people
- Emphasis on conducting Board and committee meetings throughout the entire district to provide for the opportunity for the underrepresented communities to engage with local issues affecting the CB8 area and ensuring bilingual office capabilities (Spanish/English)
- Five-year effort to gain approval to move the CB8 office to a central location for the entire district.

## Aging:

- In a study of people living in the US aged 50+ regarding ageism and health: 93% experience ageism, and, at least, 20% experience ageism in healthcare settings. Racism and ageism have a compounding negative impact in health care.
- Discussed caregivers who are largely women, people of color and immigrants and that their efforts are undervalued. Efforts for pay equity to increase caregiver wage recently passed with most funding from the State, but still not a true living wage. Governor Kathy Hochul gave an executive order to undergo a 10-year master plan for aging and how NY will address aging and caregiving issues.
- Cautioned fraudulent behaviors in wake of crises
- Advocated at City Council for increased Covid -19 testing and vaccination sites throughout the district
- Growth of bilingual support such as translating Aging resources guides into Spanish
- Support of the start of meals at Ft. Independence seniors program

## Budget

- Standing committees are encouraged to assess equity issues in drawing up annual capital and expense budget requests. We define equity broadly to include race, gender, age, sexual identity, income, disability, geography, and similar factors. Information about these issues in the community board district is available on various websites that the committee can recommend to the standing committees. The Special Committee on Racial Equity (SCRE) encourages committees to consider the map of previous standing committee budget requests that was created by SCRE committee chair Margaret Della and which can be found on the SCRE committee link on the community board website.

As of June 2023

#### Economic Development:

- Considering only 9% of Bronx businesses received support during the COVID-19 pandemic, a predominantly Black and Latino Borough, the Bronx Empowerment Zone is an aspect of the Empire State Developments Empowerment Zone Initiative that will target low-income Bronx neighborhoods that have been underinvested.
- Conducted meetings focusing on access to capital for minority and low-income businesses
- Developed relationships with BOEDC, SBDC, and SOBRO to help numerous minority businesses with customized services and resources.
- Collaboration with SOBRO on M/WBE certification process and access to procurement contracts for minority-owned businesses. (meeting and webinar).
- Conducting commercial corridor walkthroughs to bring resource service providers to underserved areas of the district and minority-owned businesses.
- Partner with entrepreneurial training programs at local universities to raise program awareness in underserved populations, including older adult learners and underrepresented demographics.
- Continue to collaborate with NYCEDC regarding opportunities associated with the redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory for local small businesses.

#### Education, Libraries and Culture:

- Resolution in support of the Freedom Trail
- Celebrated that an Indigenous Studies teaching certificate to be introduced in NYC

#### Environment and Sanitation:

- CB8 continues to push for safe, public access to the Jerome Park Reservoir, a community green space
- CB8 requested that the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) relocate its transportation waste transfer/storage from its Marble Hill tracks to improve the neighborhood health and quality of life as well as permit Tibbetts Brook to resume its historic flow directly into the Harlem River, eliminating New York City's largest Combined Sewer Outflow at that site..
- Contribute to Mayor's Office Environmental Justice (EJ) for all by contributing comment on delineation of EJ areas in our district and environmental justice outcomes
- Adopt Environmental Justice areas, as designated by US Census, for determining community Environment and Sanitation needs
- Prioritize Environmental Justice areas in budget requests
- Collect and analyze 311 calls into Board office according to neighborhood and Environmental Justice area in district

#### Health, Hospitals and Social Service:

- Provided testimony to NYC on seniors and COVID-19 vaccinations, timely informational updates on Covid-19 by leading medical experts
- Challenged vaccine equity for communities of color and rewarding only those who are computer savvy with swift vaccination appointments

As of June 2023

- Requested NYS to provide additional COVID-19 testing sites in the District
- Promote access to financial resources for vulnerable (elderly, disabled, homeless, and those with low income and limited English proficiency) individuals during COVID as a measure to assist the Social Security Administration in their national campaign and outreach to vulnerable communities
- Letter to City Council to allow senior centers as pop-up vaccination sites

Housing: (promotion of budget, legal and advocacy)

- Changing the definition of Area Median Income (AMI) to a more localized definition that will better serve communities in need of affordable housing.
- Discussing NYCHA's Preservation Trust Program, which is a 10 year program which will allow NYCHA residents to use the housing developments as collateral to take out loans for renovations of their properties and the need for effective oversight.
- Discussion had on the high volume of rent regulations, lack of legal assistance for renters, and the need for increasing legal aid funding.
- Growth of bilingual support such as translating the Housing resources guides into Spanish
- NYCHA quality of life improvements and safety related repairs (Capital Budget Request)
- Shared resources on legal assistance in the wake of the end of the eviction moratorium (Right to Counsel)
- Advocacy in the wake of the end of the eviction moratorium (Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development: ANHD | Homepage)
- Promotion of "Where We Live" goals, strategies and actions to advance fair housing

Land Use:

- Affordable Housing Discussion suggesting a change in the definition of affordable housing to ensure greater accessibility to those who need it most with effective oversight.
- Assisting building code violations and enforcement in Kingsbridge with the Department of Buildings
- Advocacy for tenant association at 22 Marble Hill Avenue
- Ongoing testimony at the Board of Standards and Appeals in opposition to inappropriate development at 7-15 Terrace View Avenue in Marble Hill
- Work closely with neighborhood groups to preserve neighborhood character in Kingsbridge Heights
- Revisiting the 197A Plan and assess entire District to determine matters addressed and unaddressed

Law Rules and Ethics: Revision of nominating committee rules regarding committee composition

Parks & Recreation:

As of June 2023

- Advocated for Kingsbridge Heights Community Center as an important provider of community services and is located in a Parks Department owned building that is in need of substantial repairs
- Working with Van Cortlandt Museum House Enslaved People's Project
- Funding for Van Cortlandt Park Enslaved People Project curriculum

#### Public Safety:

- Raise issues of quality of life concerns with NYPD for residents as well as increasing hate crimes against houses of worship.
- Inclusion of hate crimes in monthly precinct crime statistic reports
- Working with the DA's office
- Promotion of NYPD Reform report for public comment and engagement survey
- Worked with 50th to remove totaled vehicles from Broadway where walkable communities shop and adjacent to transitional housing improving quality of life
- Graffiti Removal in Marble Hill

#### Traffic and Transportation:

- Pressure DOT to move forward its step-street repairs in the Kingsbridge area that have been dilapidated for years

#### Youth:

- Requests that DYCD commits funding to at a minimum maintain, if not expand Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), and promotes SYEP application to ensure youth connected with paid summer engagements
- Digital divide project
- Resource fair planning for workforce development and career readiness
- Presentation of the effects on office and drug laws on youth with citation of statistics from the 50th precinct followed by short question and answer session.

#### Special Committee on Racial Equity:

- The Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-based Violence [presented on Racial/Gender Disparities in reported Domestic Violence \(DV\) and Intimate Partner Violence \(IPV\)](#) victimization data across New York City, in all 5 boroughs and nearly all 59 community districts, Black women experienced higher IPV victimization rates than any other population of residents. In CB8 specifically, Black and Hispanic women are disproportionately victimized.
- [The Bronx Health Link](#)(TBHL) created by the Bronx Borough president in response to Bronx health outcomes especially Black and Brown women who are 10x more likely to die from childbirth than other women. Other presenters shared how Black and brown community members have shied away from medical treatments because of past experiences including being mistreated, blamed and not heard when seeking medical care. Some even commit survival crimes to get access to basic health care and services or just utilize ERs to access services.

- Raise issues of quality of life concerns with NYPD for residents as well as increasing hate crimes against houses of worship
- Attended information sessions on hate crimes in New York City and facilitated conversations on how our District can change and improve safety for disproportionately impacted groups as well as the wider community.
- Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC) presented its work in the community as a social justice organization. They work in housing/tenants rights, community land development, economic development, voter registration, education and offer an agenda that focuses on the advancement of the Bronx.
- Advocated for community engagement in the input phase of redesigning the Kingsbridge Armory
- Urge broader community conversation on the lack of affordable healthy food and insufficient nutrition education in the CB8 neighborhoods. Emphasized work at neighborhood resources like KHCC, Riverdale Senior Services and Friendly Fridges. The relatively high rate of poverty in the Bronx leads to food insecurity and poor nutrition. It also results in a lack of medical care. Combined, these factors cause a higher death rate among black and brown people compared to white people. Systemic racism is the underlying issue in disparate health outcomes. Nutrition education is essential in better health outcomes, which is why this is part of the Food Justice Coalition's mission.
- Discuss and explore various city and state tools are useful in identifying disparities within our own communities, including the Mayor's Office of Economic Opportunity (which initially assessed poverty); the 2019 expansion of that office to include racial equity (through Executive Order 45); the resulting Equity NYC [initiative](#)
- Advocating for strong census participation that shapes resources to our community as well as overview of redistricting, which has implications on community resources and representation
- Mayor's Office of Climate & Sustainability released a scope of work for the Environmental Justice for All Report. The scope outlines the environmental justice concerns the report will study and our approach to analyzing them. These areas overlapped with the highest concentration of capital asked by the Board (as noted in the CB8 capital project mapping).
- Revised CB8 Community Statement: Bronx Community Board 8 proudly represents the diverse communities of Fieldston, Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights, Marble Hill, Riverdale, Spuyten Duyvil, and Van Cortlandt Village, who reside or work here, inclusive of all races and ethnicities, gender expressions, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability, national origin, and citizenship.
- Gather and evaluate information about the Board's contribution to racial equity, identifying where there are greatest needs in the community, and share resources to meet those needs