

Pending Committee Approval
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8
Education, Libraries & Cultural Affairs Committee
Minutes of Meeting held on December 22, 2021

PRESENT

Sylvia Alexander
Moses Esema
Judith Green
Myra Joyce
Ramdat Singh
Constance Barnes Watson
Martin Wolpoff

AFFILIATION

Chair, ELCA Committee
CB8-Committee Member
Community Committee Member
CB8-Committee Member
CB8-Committee Member
CB8-Committee Member
CB8-Committee Member

ABSENT

Joy Campbell Priveterre
Sebastian Chittilappilly
Marvin Goodman

CB8-Committee Member
CB8-Committee Member
CB8-Committee Member

GUESTS

Laura Spalter
Bob Bender
Nick Fazio
David Gellman
Rosemary Ginty
Dan Padernacht
Maria Benhey
Rebecca Brown
Max Applebaum
Nicole Holloway
Zeehan Ott
Gayle Mandaro
Lorenzo Manzano
Ira Charles Levenberg
Araceli F
Alma C

CB8, Chair
CB8-Vice Chair
CB*
CB8
CB8
CB8
Manager, Spuyten Duyvil Library
Manager, Riverdale Branch Library
School Construction Authority
School Construction Authority
School Construction Authority
School Construction Authority
CM. Eric Dinowitz

Literacy Inc.

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM.

The minutes of October 26,2021 were approved as written.

The Chair invited the SCA Team to start their presentation regarding the site selection for a 696 seats primary school on the site of Visitation Church at 160 Van Cortlandt Park South. Nicole Holloway is the lead person on this issue for SCA. School District 10 has a school seat need of 1,978 seats and 696 of those seats are in this sub-district (Kingsbridge, Norwood and Bedford Park). The committee and board members had many important questions about this project. The SCA was only interested in getting the approval on site selection this evening. The team did not have design plans for the building available. In answer to our questions, we were told that the building could be 6 stories or less with a roof top recreation use for the older students. Primary school covers Pre-Kindergarten to 5th grade. There will be a playground in open space (ground level) for kindergarten students. The building is expected to have a gym, cafeteria and auditorium. The entrance will be on John Collins Place for the safety of students. The process will not start until mid-January and can take 4 to 6 months till it gets to the City Council for approval. SCA will not meet with the committee during the process until after the City Council site selection approval.

The committee agreed that the extra seats are sorely needed to relieve the overcrowding in our schools and voted on this resolution on behalf of the Education, Libraries & Cultural Affairs Committee and Bronx Community Board 8 as authorized by the Board at their general meeting on December 14, 2021.

Education, Libraries & Cultural Affairs Committee Resolution

WHEREAS, On November 19, 2021 the School Construction Authority notified Bronx Community Board 8 that Pursuant to Section 1731 of the New York City Construction Act notice that a proposed site selection of lot 150 Block 3271 in the Bronx for construction of a new 696 seat primary school in Community School District 10, including a statutory due date of January 3, 2022 for submitting comment, and

WHEREAS, On December 1, 2021 Bronx Community Board 8 received a Notice of Filing from School Construction Authority with a proposal of site selection for a

primary school at the former Visitation Church site at 160 Van Cortlandt Park South, and

WHEREAS, Approximately 35 years ago School District 10 began having overcrowding conditions in their schools and the need for more seats to alleviate this overcrowding condition which is especially severe in Community Board 8 schools, and

WHEREAS, In 2010 the Department of Education promised a new school in Kingsbridge in their 5-year plan which was never sited, and

WHEREAS, Bronx Community Board 8 passed a resolution at their General Meeting on December 14, 2021 to authorize the Education, Libraries & Cultural Affairs Committee to represent the Board at their meeting on December 22, 2021 in order to make the statutory deadline of January 3, 2022 for comment, and

WHEREAS, School Construction Authority's presentation at the Land Use meeting on December 7, 2021 proposed a 696-seat primary school but had no site plan for the building, environmental studies, school bus parking, traffic plan, teacher parking, open space for the students catchment area, etc.,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Education, Libraries & Cultural Affairs Committee and Bronx Community Board 8 believes that the former Visitation Church site is an appropriate site for a primary school; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the School Construction Authority returns to Bronx Community Board 8 at the earliest possible time with a site plan including design and operational details and information not available at this time including but not limited to environmental studies, school bus parking, traffic plan, teacher parking, open space and catchment area.

Committee Vote: In Favor- 6 S. Alexander, M. Esema, M. Joyce, R. Singh, C. Barnes Watson, M. Wolpoff

Community Board Poll: In Favor: 9 S. Alexander, B. Bender, M. Esema N. Fazio, M. Joyce, R. Singh, L. Spalter, C. Barnes Watson, M. Wolpoff

Community Board Members- Approve but concerned that not enough information available- D. Gellman, D. Padernacht

Community Board Member- Did not vote- R. Ginty, J. Green-CCM

The Chair welcomed the new manager of the Spuyten Duyvil Branch Library, Maria Benhey. Ms. Benhey was a children's librarian at a East Bronx library and now is here in Riverdale. She spoke of some programs at her branch and encourages adults and children to enjoy the Spuyten Duyvil branch which is open for in-person usage now. Ms. Brown, the manager of the Riverdale Branch, did attend the meeting but had left zoom before this segment was brought up.

The Chair called on Myra Joyce regarding Riverdale Art Association and Myra shared that she is no longer Vice President. Choral Society practice is on January 12, 2022. At this time there are no events scheduled because of the pandemic.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia Alexander, Chair
Education, Libraries & Cultural Affairs