

(PENDING BOARD APPROVAL)

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Held on Tuesday, November 10, 2020 via Zoom Conference

PRESENT (29):

S. Alexander	R. Fanuzzi	M. Joyce	L. Spalter
R. Bender	N. Fazio	L. Lopez	C. Tepelus
M. Della	S. Froot	T. Morris	D. Travis
E. Dinowitz	R. Ginty	O. Murray	S. Villaverde
M. Donato	M. Gluck	D. Padernacht	M. Wolpoff
P. Ellis	E. Green	R. Pochter-Lowe	
D. Escaño-Bell	R. Jacklosky	J. Reyes	
M. Esema	D. B. Jackson	G. Santiago	

ABSENT (14):

J. Campbell- Priveterre	C. Dartis-Galvin	L. Daub
E. Garcia	D. Gellman	J. Gomez
M. Goodman	R. Kaplan	D. Leverett
C. G. Moerdler	T. Pardo	K. Pesce
R. Singh	J. Townes	

STAFF:

P. Romano, Community Associate
T. Ochoteco, Community Coordinator
C. Gannon, District Manager

GUEST:

Council Member Andrew Cohen, Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz, Sam Liedtka (AM Dinowitz's Office), Miguel Rondon (Mayor's Office), Andy Laub & Angela (Sen. Biaggi's Office), Eric Sawyer (BX DA Office), Assembly Member Nathalia Fernandez, Council Member Vanessa Gibson, Ish Gonzalez (BX BP Office)

Chair Spalter convened the meeting at **7:05 PM** and welcomed all.

1. GALLERY SESSION: *NONE*

1. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – LAURA SPALTER

- Chair Spalter referred to her report in the Executive Committee minutes.

- Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. held an orientation meeting for new Community Board Members. His office has added Diversity and Inclusion Training as a requirement and the training, and he stressed the importance of attendance at Board meetings. Chair Spalter asked that Board Members send an email to the office if they are unable to attend a meeting.
- Chair Spalter mentioned she attended the 14th Annual Memorial Grove Veterans Ceremony at Van Cortlandt Park. She thanked board members that attended the ceremony. A special acknowledgement was made for Herb Barrett for his dedication and work with Memorial Grove.

1. TREASURER'S REPORT: District Manager CIARA GANNON

- District Manager C. Gannon thanked Former Treasurer R. Zavras for preparing a final Treasurer's Report. She indicated that there isn't too much spending since the office is working remotely. Most common expenses are currently rent and cleaning services.

9. DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT – CIARA GANNON

- The FY 21 budget requests and District Needs Statement were submitted to the NYC Department of City Planning.
- The office website will be switching over to Word Press as required by DOITT. The new user-friendly website should be up and running in the next few weeks.
- The NYC Department of City Planning has issued a citywide certification of a text amendment change regarding Zoning for Coastal flood resiliency. A special hearing of the Land Use Committee will take place on November 30th at 7pm. The NYC Department of City Planning will make a presentation during the special hearing. The board office will then have to submit a recommendation by the end of the year.

1. REPORT FROM COUNCIL MEMBER ANDREW COHEN

- CM Cohen informed the board that he plans to resign at the end of the year. He thanked board members for their service. The office is open Monday to Thursday and by appointment on Friday. They have a supply of masks and hand sanitizers. Reusable bags from DSNY are available.
- The Parks department held a ribbon cutting for four capital projects in Van Cortlandt Park sponsored by CM Cohen's office and the Skate Park has opened.
- The Mayor has allocated 4 million dollars for the Van Cortlandt House Museum.

2. SPECIAL ADDRESS BY ASSEMBLY MEMBER NATHALIA FERNANDEZ

Assembly Member Fernandez is running for Bronx Borough President. She expressed her gratitude to the board for allowing her to address CB8. She also thanked CM Cohen for his service in the City Council.

3. REPORT FROM DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING – **NONE**

Vice Chair Bender Conducts Roll Call. A quorum is present with 29 board members.

4. ELECTION OF TREASURER

E. Green nominates Diomarys Escaño-Bell for the position of Treasurer. D. B. Jackson seconds the nomination.

Chair Spalter having not seen any further nominations from the floor. Deems closed the nomination process.

Board Member Diomarys Escaño-Bell accepts the nomination of Treasurer. She addresses the Board with a few brief words about her time on CB8 and her interest to take on a leadership role to work with the officers and office staff.

With no objections or abstentions, D. Escaño-Bell is elected Treasurer unanimously by acclamation.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE – CHAIR ED GREEN

E. Green presented the following resolutions:

RENEWAL APPLICATION: Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider.

WHEREAS, Francis Hage, owner of Frankie's Tavern (5670 Mosholu Ave) appeared before the Public Safety Committee on October 20th, 2020 to renew the establishment's liquor license.

BE IT RESOLVED, Bronx Community Board 8 approves this application

RENEWAL APPLICATION: Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider.

WHEREAS, Juan B Castillo, owner of Plaza Bani Food Corp (3001 Kingsbridge Terrace), appeared before the Public Safety Committee on October 20th, 2020 to renew the establishment's liquor license.

BE IT RESOLVED, Bronx Community Board 8 approves this application.

RENEWAL APPLICATION: Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider.

WHEREAS, Representatives of Yokomo (216 West 242nd Street) appeared before the Public Safety Committee on October 20th, 2020 to renew the establishment's liquor license.

BE IT RESOLVED, Bronx Community Board 8 approves this application.

RENEWAL APPLICATION: Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider.

WHEREAS, Efrain Farciert, President of Santa Fe Grille (6025 Broadway), appeared before the Public Safety Committee on October 20th, 2020 to renew the establishment's liquor license.

BE IT RESOLVED, Bronx Community Board 8 approves this application.

NEW APPLICATION: Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider.

WHEREAS, Anil Ahmed, President of Neem Indian Cuisine Inc. (3549 Johnson Ave.), appeared before the Public Safety Committee on October 20th, 2020 for a new liquor license.

WHEREAS, Anil Ahmed, President of Neem Indian Cuisine Inc. (3549 Johnson Ave.), agreed to a 2AM closing time for the first year (**Said agreement is contingent on signed document being received and recorded at the Bronx Community Board 8 office*).

BE IT RESOLVED, Bronx Community Board 8 approves this application.

VOTE:

In favor (28): S. Alexander, B. Bender, M. Della, E. Dinowitz, M. Donato, P. Ellis, D. Escañó-Bell, M. Esema, R. Fanuzzi, N. Fazio, S. Froot, R. Ginty, M. Gluck, E. Green, R. Jacklosky, M. Joyce, L. Lopez, T. Morris, O. Murray, D. Padernacht, R. Pochter-Lowe, J. Reyes, G. Santiago, L. Spalter, C. Tepelus, D. Travis, S. Villaverde, M. Wolpoff

Abstained: For Cause - (1): D. B. Jackson

Opposed: 0

Chair Green informed the board that there was an increase in grand larceny by 41% compared to last month's report which reflected a decrease. The committee will monitor the situation. Drag Racing was addressed at the last committee meeting and possible legislation will be discussed at the November meeting.

B. TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION – CHAIR DAN PADERNACHT

- Vice Chair D. Travis is leading the working group for Independence Ave.
- Concerns from Residents have led to a working group being created for Mosholu Ave. DOT plans to bring back proposals for bike lanes.
- Keeping an eye on the Retaining Wall at Dash Place with construction projects happening in the area.

C. YOUTH – (J. Gomez not present, report given by Sergio Villaverde)

- Referred members to the committee minutes
- Committee plans to host a Socially Distanced Resource Fair to bring all organizations and service providers together.
- Thinkubator will make presentation at next meeting on November 16 at 7:30pm

D. AGING – CHAIR ERIC DINOWITZ

- Economic Development & Aging Committees have developed a resolution related to the closing of the Chase Bank. Reads Resolution see below:
- N. Fazio reads a letter from local business asking Chase Bank not to close which was also part of a petition.

The following resolution was presented:

WHEREAS, Chase Bank at 13B Knolls Crescent serves the vast majority of small businesses in the Knolls Crescent shopping center and on Kappock Street, allowing them to conduct in-person transactions, and

WHEREAS, Chase Bank at 13B Knolls Crescent is the exclusive provider of all of the financial services necessary for running Knolls Crescents' small business, and

WHEREAS, small businesses in Knolls Crescent and the surrounding area are struggling under the financial hardships imposed by the economic environment due to COVID19, and

WHEREAS, the closure of the branch will not only make day-to-day operations more arduous, it will adversely impact the livelihoods of the businesses, the quality of life of residents, and the entire neighborhood's commercial ecosystem, and

WHEREAS, Chase Bank in Knolls Crescent serves residents in Knolls Crescent and surrounding buildings, including apartments on Kappock Street, and large apartment complexes including Riverpoint Towers at 555 Kappock Street and the Century at 2600 Netherland Ave, which house a significant number of older adults, and

WHEREAS, older adults are typically less likely to utilize online banking and therefore require in-person banking, and

WHEREAS, the other Chase branches in the neighborhood require the use of public transportation and significant walking, which for older adults can be a barrier to utilizing banking services, and

WHEREAS, older adults are more likely to fall or sustain injury when traveling, resulting in a loss of independence, and

WHEREAS, significantly increasing travel and number of encountered populations increases the risk of contracting COVID19, which has disproportionate negative effects on older adults, and

WHEREAS, the Chase branch at Knolls Crescent is adjacent to Riverdale Senior Services, one of the largest senior centers in the North Bronx, which has an average attendance of 100 people per day, and

WHEREAS, the Chase branch at Knolls Crescent is adjacent to many professional and medical offices, and

WHEREAS, JP Morgan Chase is a very successful global organization with vast resources at its disposal and a clearly stated commitment to community development and consumer banking, and

WHEREAS, Chase Bank has provided the community with high-quality service over the years and has cultivated a loyal customer base in Knolls Crescent and across Spuyten Duyvil and South Riverdale, and

WHEREAS, Chase has demonstrated a history of community development initiatives in targeted neighborhoods, and, according the Chase's stakeholder memo, "continues to help customers weather the crisis, pay their workers and bills, and provide the essential goods and services on which we all depend," and

WHEREAS, the businesses and residents of the area around Knolls Crescent are in desperate need of the services Chase Bank provides,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Aging and Economic Development Committees on Bronx Community Board 8 strongly urge Chase Bank to keep their Knolls Crescent branch at 13B Knolls Crescent to remain open to serve vulnerable residents, local businesses and professional services, and to fulfill their commitment to underserved community development and service, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 requests that Chase Bank engage with community stakeholders prior to any final decision regarding the branch's future.

Board members discussed the resolution.

VOTE:

In favor (26): S. Alexander, B. Bender, M. Della, E. Dinowitz, M. Donato, P. Ellis, D. Escaño-Bell, M. Esema, R. Fanuzzi, N. Fazio, S. Froot, R. Ginty, M. Gluck, E. Green, R. Jacklosky, D. B. Jackson, M. Joyce, L. Lopez, T. Morris, O. Murray, R. Pochter-Lowe, J. Reyes, G. Santiago, L. Spalter, D. Travis, M. Wolpoff

Abstained (3): D. Padernacht, C. Tepelus, S. Villaverde

Opposed: 0

E. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – CHAIR NICK FAZIO

- Referred members to the minutes of the October 22 meeting. N. Fazio informed that it was a great meeting with guest speakers that presented about access to capital.
- The next meeting is November 12. A presentation about access to capital will be provided by Spring Bank.
- A discussion was held about Knolls Crescent at the Economic Development Committee meeting of October 22. Chair Fazio informed that he has spoken to business owners and that they are happy that CB8 is helping.
- The city passed legislation for Open Retail which is similar to Open Restaurant.
- The city has very strict guidelines for heating lamps for outdoor dining usage.
- Hunter College is developing a report about Economic Development in CB8 and will present at the December committee meeting.

F. EDUCATION, LIBRARIES, CULTURAL AFFAIRS – CHAIR SYLVIA ALEXANDER

- Referred members to her minutes.
- Chair Alexander informed the board that she inquired about the test for the Gifted & Talented program at PS 24. She was told that the test is given in January. The test date is announced in November. DOE expressed during the budget consultation that the test is expensive. The agency is considering doing away with it and replacing it with accelerated classes.
- Students that have not received a device for remote learning are receiving work packets from DOE.
- Next meeting is November 24.

G. ENVIRONMENT & SANITATION – CHAIR ROBERT FANUZZI

- Thanked CM Cohen for his service especially for his help obtaining a small grant for the North West Bronx Collective from the NY Restoration Corp for soil restoration and gardening efforts.
- Jerome Reservoir area has seen an increase in illegal dumping
- Friends of Knolls Crescent are coordinating efforts for garbage pick up
- DEP is working on a new law passed in September 2020 with Managing stormwater at Construction sites. This new law would take effect in 2021.

- Con Edison reported at the Committee meeting about their response during tropical storm Isaiiah. CB8 saw an interruption of service in over 3000 locations. In the Bronx a total of 33,000. Con Edison has filed a report about their response with New York State. A copy of the report is at the board and can be requested via email.
- There will be no November Committee Meeting

H. HEALTH, HOSPITAL, & SOCIAL SERVICES – CHAIR OMAR MURRAY

- Referred members to the October minutes
- The next meeting will be November 18th which will include various guest speakers from the health sector that will discuss vaccines for COVID-19. New York State has seen an increase in COVID-19 testing which total 128,000; there were over 3,965 positive cases.

I. HOUSING – CHAIR DARIS B. JACKSON

- Referred members to the October 26 committee minutes
- Next meeting will be November 23.

J. LAND USE – (C. Moerdler not present, report given by M. Wolpoff)

- Stak Mobility made a presentation about a parking lot at 3120 Heath Ave.
- Stagg Developers attended the last committee meeting where committee members asked many questions about two proposed developments on Broadway..

K. LAW, RULES & ETHICS – CHAIR MARTIN WOLPOFF - **NO REPORT**

L. PARKS & RECREATION – CHAIR ROSEMARY GINTY

- Noted the strong board and community participation at the Memorial Grove Veteran ceremony
- CM Cohen provided updates on the Capital projects at Van Cortlandt Park
- The Parks Department hosted two scoping meetings. One concerned the renovation of the Strong Street playground. The other concerned adult fitness equipment in Van Cortlandt's Classic Playground. Another scoping meeting will be held in the near future.
- Reports have been received of electric bikes being used at the recently completed capital project at Putnam Trail. This is a safety concern, and the committee will work with the Parks Department and Van Cortlandt Park Alliance to address the matter.
- Next meeting will be December 1st

M. SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON RACIAL EQUITY – DARIS B. JACKSON

- The last meeting was September 23

- An open draft report was shared for comment. All submissions were reviewed.
- Next meeting will be December 3rd.

The Committee Chairs, Officers and all Board Members congratulate Diomarys Escaño-Bell on her election to Treasurer.

6. REPORT FROM ASSEMBLY MEMBER JEFFREY DINOWITZ

- Thanked the community for re-electing him to another term.
- The office will continue to conduct giveaways of mask and hand sanitizers
- COVID-19 is getting worse. The Governor reported that state-wide cases are over 3%. In the Bronx the positive cases at 2.7 with 32 deaths.
- Will be attending Public Safety meeting to address concerns about Drag Racing and discussion about possible legislation

7. ADDRESS BY COUNCIL MEMBER VANESSA GIBSON

- CM Gibson expressed best wishes to CB8. She expressed that elected officials are working together with the community about testing, and PPE material distribution.

8. APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 13, 2020

S. Alexander requested an amendment to the ELCA report

- Motion to approve minutes as amended made by Omar Murray
- Seconded by Bob Bender

VOTE:

In favor (26): S. Alexander, B. Bender, M. Della, E. Dinowitz, M. Donato, P. Ellis, D. Escaño-Bell, M. Esema, R. Fanuzzi, N. Fazio, S. Froot, R. Ginty, M. Gluck, E. Green, R. Jacklosky, D. B. Jackson, M. Joyce, L. Lopez, T. Morris, O. Murray, R. Pochter-Lowe, J. Reyes, G. Santiago, L. Spalter, D. Travis, M. Wolpoff, D. Padernacht, C. Tepelus, S. Villaverde

Abstained: 0

Opposed: 0

9. DISCUSSION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 4th, 2020 – **NO DISCUSSION**

Motion to Adjourn at 9:43PM, seconded and passed by unanimous consent.

Prepared By: Pablo Romano, Community Associate

Reviewed By: Bob Bender, Vice Chair / Meeting Secretary