

# **Bronx Community Board 8 Activities**

## **Focused on Advancing Equity**

### District office:

- Expanded materials in multiple languages including Spanish as well as links to additional languages for broader community engagements.
- Tabled in every community that the board represents with board volunteers
- Encouraged rules to be explained at the start of each meeting so people understand appropriate engagement at CB8 monthly meetings, encourage their participation within meeting parameters, consider how comfortable the space is, incorporate younger people
- Held meetings in locations across the 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)
- Continue to push the five-year effort to gain approval to move the CB8 office to a central location for the entire district.

### Aging:

- Discussed 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
- Explored growth of bilingual support such as translating Aging resources guides into Spanish
- Supported meals at Ft. Independence seniors program in expense items

### Budget

- Advocated for Standing Committees to identify 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.

#### Economic Development:

- With the Land Use Committee, debated the City of Yes and sought consideration if this proposal will diversify and create more of a sustainable and self-sufficient economy in NYC.
- Held a meeting with the Bronx Chamber of Commerce to discuss MWBE. The Bronx Chamber of Commerce offers assistance for merchants who are interested in obtaining MWBE certification.
- Discussed disparity in that 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.
- Collaborated with SOBRO on M/WBE certification process and access to procurement contracts for minority-owned businesses. (meeting and webinar).
- Conducted commercial corridor walkthroughs to bring resource service providers to underserved areas of the district and minority-owned businesses.
- Partnered with entrepreneurial training programs at local universities to raise program awareness in underserved populations, including older adult learners and underrepresented demographics.
- Collaborated with NYCEDC regarding opportunities associated with the redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory for local small businesses.

#### Education, Libraries and Culture:

- Reviewed proposed citywide zoning changes in “City of Yes” and discussed ways to facilitate school development opportunities as student population increases through this proposal, migrant families and potential affordable housing dynamics
- Discussed NYC to train educators on having: “difficult conversation”. The city is updating its diversity training to delve more deeply into antisemitism and Islamophobia. Principals will be trained so they will have more leeway to crack down on bullying and other bigoted behavior.
- Passed resolution in support of the Freedom Trail
- Celebrated that an Indigenous Studies teaching certificate to be introduced in NYC

#### Environment and Sanitation:

- Called upon the NYC DOB Bronx Commission or Deputy Commissioner meet with elected officials, community board representatives, and community members; and issue a full stop work order on a construction project that negatively impacted the environment and quality of life of the Kingsbridge community.

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- Called upon MTA and elected officials to make all pertinent plans, including capital budgeting, easements, and space planning. for the continuation of the Putnam Greenway south of 230th Street so that it can connect with the planned Harlem River Greenway.
- Announced that eligible homeowners will be contacted by DEP or the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) if they qualify to participate in the program to replace their old, lead service lines for free. The program targets homes in environmental justice areas, with a medium household income of less than \$47,600.00, and in areas identified as having a high density of lead service lines.
- Urged MTA track usage in Marble Hill as a waste transfer location was discussed and a resolution urging the MTA not to use the track area next to NYCHA Marble Hill Houses for this purpose was passed by the committee unanimously to be brought up at the next full board meeting.
- Wrote a letter advocating for CB8 continues to push for safe, public access to the Jerome Park Reservoir, a community green space
- 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..
- Contributed to Mayor's Office Environmental Justice (EJ) for all by contributing comment on delineation of EJ areas in our district and environmental justice outcomes
- Adopted Environmental Justice areas, as designated by US Census, for determining community Environment and Sanitation needs
- Prioritized Environmental Justice areas in budget requests
- Collected and analyze 311 calls into Board office according to neighborhood and Environmental Justice area in district

#### Health, Hospitals and Social Service:

- Discussed Bronx health care indicators and a Strategic Plan laid out by the Borough President designed to improve the broad areas of health care, especially on maternal health, mitigating HIV, diabetes, treating asthma, domestic violence, mental health, sexual and reproductive rights, etc.
- Discussed the effects of hate on health: how humans cope with stress, how stress like hate or perceived hate can become toxic on the body, what can individuals do to care for themselves and how can the community rally to look out for each other, and proposed a joint conference with the Special Committee on Racial Equity (SCRE).
- Worked with SCRE to create a resource guide to combat hate and polarization, and planning 'conference' with experts to inform the community on legal, societal and physiological implications
- 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

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- Requested NYS to provide additional COVID-19 testing sites in the District
- Promoted 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
- Wrote a letter to City Council to allow senior centers as pop-up vaccination sites

Housing: (promotion of budget, legal and advocacy)

- Continued to request New York City agencies and Council members to improve upon the use of Area Median Income (AMI) to a more specific and realistic measurement that will define an affordable housing threshold.
- Updated the CB8 Housing Resource Guide and will provide published copies in both English and Spanish, initially published in 2017, to improve access to critical information in the community.
- Discussed the poverty rate in NYC which rose to 23% of the city's residents in 2022 up from 18% in 2021 according to a Columbia University research group. These residents are unable to afford basic necessities like housing and food.
- Discussed that NY City Council is suing Mayor Adams for failure to implement a series of bills they passed to make more people eligible for a housing voucher program. The Council overrode a mayoral veto but the program was not implemented.
- Discussed NYS Local Regulated Housing Restoration Adjustment (LRHRA) program to assist in funding the rehabilitation of vacant rent-stabilized housing units, which could then be rented with housing vouchers.
- Discussed 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.
- Discussed the high volume of rent regulations, lack of legal assistance for renters, and the need for increasing legal aid funding.
- Advocated for 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)
- Advocated in the wake of the end of the eviction moratorium (Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development: ANHD | Homepage)
- Promoted of "Where We Live" goals, strategies and actions to advance fair housing

Land Use:

- With Economic Development Committee, advocated for NYCHA residents to be informed of Department of Building and given the opportunity to provide feedback of zoning text amendments and how it affects their development.
- With Economic Development Committee, discussed Marble Hill Houses areas for benches and trees that Houses would like to fill. Discussed lack of funding has been provided to NYCHA by the government to maintain properties in proper shape, and as such they have declined. They are concerned about attempts to privatize to NYCHA.

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- Continued to request New York City agencies and Council members to improve upon the use of Area Median Income (AMI) to a more specific and realistic measurement that will define an affordable housing threshold.
- Led discussion on the Tibbetts Brook Daylighting Easement Acquisition ULURP, an acquisition of real property by the City of New York to facilitate a permanent easement within 5 MetroNorth properties in the Bronx to support the Tibbetts Brook Daylighting and Hester and Piero's Mill Pond Improvements project, the construction of pipeline conduits, and create recreational and open space opportunities for the surrounding area in Kingsbridge Heights, Community Districts 7 and 8, Bronx.
- Assisted building code violations and enforcement in Kingsbridge with the Department of Buildings
- Advocated for tenant association at 22 Marble Hill Avenue
- Provided testimony at the Board of Standards and Appeals in opposition to inappropriate development at 7-15 Terrace View Avenue in Marble Hill
- Worked closely with neighborhood groups to preserve neighborhood character in Kingsbridge Heights
- Revisited the 197A Plan and assess entire District to determine matters addressed and unaddressed

#### Law Rules and Ethics:

- Reiterated the CB code of conduct in its service to the community: "Beyond adherence to the formal rules, members are expected to treat with dignity and respect all the members of the Board and members of the public whom we serve."
- Followed up on 'Zoom-bombing' in which attendees attempt to project hate speech and visuals to intimidate members and attendees
- Revised nominating committee rules regarding committee composition

#### Parks & Recreation:

- Encouraged the Parks Dept. in Van Cortlandt Park to look for operators that were committed to programming and activities that could be of broad interest, relevant, affordable and accessible to as many people as possible across our diverse district.
- Encouraged the Van Cortlandt House Museum operator, National Society of Colonial Dames of America to be more inclusive of its membership, recruit a new Executive Director, and expand its programming and activities that could be of broad interest, relevant, affordable and accessible to as many people as possible across our diverse district.
- Recommended capital request to redesign and reconstruct Bailey Playground to repair deteriorated drains and reconstruct play equipment, safety surfacing, fencing along the Deegan and incorporate adjacent Tibbet's Tail area into an expanded Bailey Playground; and install Marble Hill Playground Lighting within the interior of Marble Hill Playground.
- Worked with the Harlem River Greenway on plan to expedite protected bike pathway and a long term greenway as part of the Daylighting of Tibbet's Brook.

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- 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
- Worked with Van Cortlandt Museum House Enslaved People's Project
- Requested funding for Van Cortlandt Park Enslaved People Project curriculum

#### Public Safety:

- Followed up on 'Zoom-bombing' with NYPD in which attendees attempt to project hate speech and visuals to intimidate members and attendees
- Discussed government oversight of police encounters with the public and disproportionate amounts of police interactions with racial minorities. NYC Council deliberating how to best gather and maintain statistical data on "Level 1" police encounters to establish a proper measure of oversight.
- Discussed how police officers can encourage positive dialogue in the community to mitigate crime and improve accountability for criminal behavior.
- Raised issues of quality of life concerns with NYPD for residents as well as increasing hate crimes against houses of worship.
- Requested and monitor the inclusion of hate crimes in monthly precinct crime statistic reports
- Worked with the DA's office on hate crimes
- Promoted 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

#### Traffic and Transportation:

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

#### Youth:

- Discussed hate and bullying with participants and looked for an opportunity to discuss with youth across district
- Requested 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
- Requested funding for the Digital divide project
- Promoted opportunities for workforce development and career readiness
- Presented 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 Veterans Affairs:

- Hosted NYS Commissioner Viviana M. DeCohen, USMC, New York State Department of Veterans' Services and NYC Commissioner Greeley presented on outreach and benefits available to veterans, need for wider access to information and benefits, and reducing hurdles veterans may have had to receiving benefits due to discrimination and other

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challenges. All local veterans, especially Bronx residents, are encouraged to review the availability of benefits.

- Discussed Veterans History Project which will uncover and celebrate stories of Bronx service members.

#### Special Committee on Racial Equity:

- Called out any discrimination and oppression by any community. In calling out the oppression of one group in their hour of need underscores our collective responsibility to each other and value of each of us.
- Ensured statement of values is back on the CB8 page and emphasizing our values especially in the face of bigotry, violence, and anti-semitism, anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic movements. CB8 office requests that community members suffering under these actions contact them and the 50th police precinct, if appropriate.
- Reiterated that the tone in the community also starts with us. What more can we do as CB8 members to uphold our commitment to each other as colleagues and neighbors. Agree to disagree without being disparaging, find a way forward together, etc.
- Created a resource guide to combat hate and polarization, and planning 'conference' with experts to inform the community on legal, societal and physiological implications
- Discussed recent FBI report on Hate Crime statistics between 2018-2022\* in which hate crimes at school are the third most likely place where individuals reported instances. Of that sector, elementary-aged Black children have been exposed to the greatest frequency of hate crimes. Antisemitism and anti-LGBTQ crimes followed.
- Hosted presentation from the Mayor's Office of African American Affairs
- Hosted presentation from 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.
- Hosted presentation from the [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.
- Raised 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.
- Hosted presentation from the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC) on 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
- Urged 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.
- Discussed and explored 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](#)
- Advocated for strong census participation that shapes resources to our community as well as overview of redistricting, which has implications on community resources and representation
- Discussed the 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.
- Gathered and evaluated 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