

Bronx Community Board 8
Minutes of the Full Board Meeting
October 8, 2024, 7PM
Amalgamated Houses – Vladeck Hall
74 Van Cortlandt Park South, Bronx, NY 10463

Meeting Recording

Committee Members Present (20 present – no quorum)

Sylvia Alexander, Debby Allen, Constance Barnes-Watson, Kelli Buford, Joy Campbell Priveterre, Margaret Della, David Gellman, Mary Ellen Gibbs, Dr. Julia Gomez, Edward Green, Rhashida Hilliard, Angel Ortega, Julie Reyes, Adiana Rivera, Daniel Rowen, Jessica Sosa, Laura Spalter, Caesar Tobar Acosta, Debra Travis, Martin Wolpoff

Committee Members Absent (23)

Bob Bender, Carol Blake, Sebastian Chittilappily, Lee Chong, Dr. Wayne DeBeatham, Yngrid DeLeon, Johanna Edmondson, Nicholas Fazio, Steven Froot, Rosemary Ginty, Emily Hausman, Barbara Kail, Rabbi Bob Kaplan, Josh Land, Oscar Martinez, Charles Moerdler, Omar Murray, Georgia Santiago, Ramdat Singh, Jyll D. Townes, Sergio Villaverde, Kevin Wade, Karen Walker

Staff

Farrah Kule Rubin (District Manager), Ardy Malziu (Community Coordinator), Jaylyn Adorno (Intern)

Guests

NYS Senator Gustavo Rivera, NYS Assembly Member (AM) Jeffrey Dinowitz, NYC Council Member (CM) Eric Dinowitz, NYPD 50th Precinct Commanding Officer Captain Ryan Pierce; Representatives from Mayor Adams - Alina Dowe, Bronx Borough President (BP) – Alexis Ruiz, Bronx District Attorney (DA) – Marilex Santana-Tavarez, US Congress Member Ritchie Torres – Joseph McManus, NYS Senator Gustavo Rivera – Brent Schneider, NYS Assembly Member (AM) Jeffrey Dinowitz – Randi Martos, and NYC Council Member (CM) Eric Dinowitz – Stephenie Rodriguez; Stephanie Ehrlich (Van Cortlandt Park Alliance), Rebecca Brown Barbier (New York Public Library – Riverdale Branch), Martha Gonzalez-Buitrago (New York Public Library – Kingsbridge Branch), Aga Chen (New York Public Library – Spuyten Duyvil Branch), Christopher Smith (New York Public Library – Van Cortlandt Branch), Frances Urroz (New York Public Library), Rachel Miller Margolin (Gallery Speaker)

Chairperson J. Reyes convened the Full Board meeting at 7:03 pm.

Public Gallery Session

Rachel Miller Margolin – Request for the Sand Box in Paul's Park to be Filled

Report from the Mayor's Office

This is the ninth straight month that crime is down in New York City. As the winter season is coming, it is required by law, that you have heat in your apartment. If you do not have heat, contact 311, get the complaint number and follow up with Alina Dowe at the Mayor's Office at adowe@cityhall.nyc.gov. There are a lot of co-ops in Bronx Community Board 8 and the Mayor did announce a project to help affordable housing go green with accordance to Local Law 97.

Report from the NYPD 50th Precinct

There is a single digit reduction in crime. Small upticks in burglary, felony, assault and robbery for the 28 days. There has been FedEx robberies where there is a crew tracking iPhones. An individual was arrested so it should be the end of that. There has been a burglary pattern, but arrests were made this week. Looking at lower numbers going into the next month. Two hate crimes for the year and it is usually graffiti.

Report from NYS Senator Gustavo Rivera

Various events: The office hosted the first Environmental Justice Fair on September 5th at the Williamsbridge Oval Park, Scavenger Hunt at the Bronx Zoo on September 21st, Mammogram Van event occurred in front of Yo-Burger on October 8th.

Commemorated the anniversary of the October 7 attacks in Israel. The elections are coming up in the following weeks so make sure you know where your Early Voting site is. Encourage you to learn about the six ballot proposals on the back of your ballot.

Recognized Board Members Laura Spalter and Margaret Della for their community work with NYS Senate Proclamations.

Senator Rivera will get back to the board on a response regarding the letters sent in June 2024 and September 2024 on Senate Bill S1647-A to reduce the size of quorum for community board meetings. Virtual discussion on community funding will be held on October 16 from 3pm – 5pm.

Report from the NYS Assembly Member (AM) Jeffrey Dinowitz

Acknowledge Chris Calhoun who was a board member of Bronx Community Board 8 and passed away in September. Commemorated the anniversary of the October 7 attacks in Israel. Compliment the Department of Transportation on the removal of antisemitic graffiti in the district. Hundreds of people have participated on two shredding events held in the community in the past couple of weeks. Secured \$10 million for Amalgamated Houses in the last legislative session. AM Dinowitz is against Senate Bill S1647-A to reduce the size of quorum for community board meetings. The City needs affordable housing instead of just

building more housing in the City of Yes. Encourage you to learn about the six ballot proposals in the back of your ballot.

Report from the Bronx Borough President's (BP) Office

Welcome back to the members and welcome to the new members. The latest Borough President's report has been emailed. The BP announced a joint \$6 million capital allocation with Speaker Heastie and Assembly Member (AM) Septimo to combat the opioid epidemic in the borough. The BP joined NYPD Chief Ramsey, Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) and other leaders on the steps of Borough Hall last month to announce her Fiscal Year 2025 allocation of nearly \$400,000 for state-of-the-art surveillance cameras and new mobile command van to support public safety efforts in the borough. Thank you to everyone who participated in the Tour De Bronx. Reso-A Funding Information Session on October 10th.

Roll Call

M. Della announced the roll call. A quorum was not present, the meeting was called to order.

Approval of Board Meeting Minutes of September 12, 2024

The vote on Board Meeting Minutes of September 12, 2024 was tabled for the next board meeting on November 12, 2024.

Discussion of Executive Committee Meeting Minutes of September 4, 2024

None.

District Manager's Report (DM)

Happy New Year to those that celebrate. It is with a heavy heart that we learned of the passing of Board Member Chris Calhoun. He will be greatly missed.

Thank you to Board Member L. Spalter, Community Coordinator A. Malziu and Intern J. Adorno for tabling and distributing resources and goodies at the IN-Tech Academy Block Party.

The next event that we will be attending is "Boo on Mosholu" on October 26th from 1pm – 4pm.

Working on holding a Thanksgiving Turkey Giveaway event in November.

Attended meetings with fellow Bronx District Managers and the city agencies set up by the NYC Mayor's Office of Management and Budget to discuss the answers given to our boroughwide questions, issues and projects. Sent the committee chairs the answers and questions we received from the city agencies.

Have been meeting with our elected officials with Chairperson J. Reyes. Next meeting is with NYC Council Member (CM) Pierina Sanchez.

Recently held a walkthrough with the NYC Parks Department to address the overgrowth at Half Moon Overlook and the Parks Forestry Unit will give a proposal for the cost and hope to receive discretionary funds from our elected officials to do the work needed for this.

Held the District Service Cabinet (DSC) meeting. The next DSC meeting is on November 6th.

Working on Summer-Fall 2024 Newsletter that will coming out soon.

Encourage chairs to send your agenda within 10 days before the meeting and minutes within 10 days after the meeting.

Chairperson's Report

Extend our condolences to the family and friends of the recent passing of Board Member Chris Calhoun.

Thank you to Board Vice Chair S. Villaverde for representing the Community Board at the Street Co-Naming Ceremony for Betty and Lloyd Adams.

Acknowledge the work conducted by the Board's Community Coordinator and Intern while the District Manager was away.

In attempts to get more participation from the community and board members to show up to committee and board meetings, ask everyone to start connecting, following and sharing the Board's social media accounts.

Treasurer's Report

The total budget is \$276,915 and it is broken down by Personal Services (PS) and Other than Personal Services (OTPS). There is \$18,546 left in the OTPS budget. No budget modifications this month. \$0 in requested and encumbered funds. \$31,644 remains in the Rent and Energy Detail.

Committee Reports:

a) **Environment & Sanitation** – Curbside composting and recycling collection will be on the same day. The Environment & Sanitation passed the following resolution:

ENVIRONMENT & SANITATION COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

Resolution to Urge EPA to Adopt a Not Protective Determination in its Third Five-Year Review Concerning the Hudson River PCB Cleanup

WHEREAS, the Hudson River is an American Heritage River and the Hudson River Valley is a National Heritage Area, the health and beauty of the Hudson River is critical to the economic vitality of the communities surrounding it; and

WHEREAS, Bronx Community Board 8's district borders the lower-Hudson River Valley; and

WHEREAS, Bronx Community Board 8 has been a long time advocate for improved river access (including for the extension of the Hudson River Greenway) as well as cleaner water for all residents; and

WHEREAS, for 30 years, from 1947-1977, General Electric ("GE") dumped polychlorinated biphenyls ("PCBs") into the Hudson River from two capacitor manufacturing plants located in the towns of Fort Edward and Hudson Falls, N.Y.; and

WHEREAS, as a result of GE's PCB contamination, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") designated a 200-mile stretch of the Hudson River from Fort Edward to New York Harbor as a Superfund Site in 1984; and

WHEREAS, PCBs are man-made, bioaccumulative, persistent organic pollutants that have been linked to a wide variety of adverse health effects, including, among others: cancers, liver, and kidney disorders; reduced birth weight, conception rates, and live birth rates; persistent and significant deficits in neurological development, including visual recognition, short-term memory and learning; and developmental problems due to interference with thyroid hormone levels; and

WHEREAS, PCBs discharged by GE are still found at dangerous levels throughout the Hudson River ecosystem and as far south as New York Harbor: in soils and sediments within the river and the surrounding floodplains; in the living tissues of wildlife, from low-level organisms to larger animals such as birds and fish; and, periodically, suspended in the river itself or in the air; and

WHEREAS, in 2002 EPA selected a two-part cleanup plan to address in-river sediments in the Upper Hudson River, a 40-mile stretch of the Hudson River between Fort Edward and the Federal Dam at Troy, which called for targeted dredging of PCB-contaminated sediment from the river bottom, followed by an extended period of natural recovery; and

WHEREAS, the selected cleanup remedy was designed to reduce the dangerous health risks to humans and wildlife living in and near the Hudson River PCBs Superfund Site in an expedited time frame and reestablish the ecological and economic health of the Hudson River; and

WHEREAS, EPA's original cleanup plan also focused on minimizing the long-term downstream transport of PCBs to the Lower Hudson River, a 160-mile stretch of the Hudson River from the Federal Dam at Troy to New York Harbor; and

WHEREAS, with the completion of dredging in 2015, the cleanup has transitioned from the dredging phase to the natural recovery phase; and

WHEREAS, federal Superfund law requires EPA to conduct a study every five years to evaluate the implementation and performance of the remedy to determine if the remedy is protective of human health and the environment; and

WHEREAS, on July 10, 2024, EPA released its draft third five-year review concluding that EPA needs more years of fish data to determine if the cleanup is meeting the expectations of the original cleanup plan; and

WHEREAS, EPA's draft third five-year review report does not adequately address scientific data and analysis that show that there has been little improvement in fish and sediment PCB concentrations since the completion of dredging; and

WHEREAS, PCB concentrations in Upper Hudson River fish and sediment are not declining as anticipated by EPA to reach key remediation targets and adequately minimize the downstream transport of PCBs to the Lower Hudson River; and

WHEREAS, the continued presence of PCBs in the Hudson River has significantly diminished economic activity and recreational use and enjoyment of the river; and

WHEREAS, the understanding of the relationship between how much PCB was left behind in the sediments and the rates of recovery in sediment and fish needs to be updated to determine if further remedial work is necessary to protect human and environmental health; and

WHEREAS, the data available supports the conclusion that the selected remedy is not protective of human health and the environment. The human health and ecological risks are well in excess of EPA's acceptable risk ranges, and will not be in the acceptable range for the foreseeable future; and

WHEREAS, the Bronx Community Board 8 Environment & Sanitation Committee hereby urges the EPA to adopt a "not protective" determination" in the third five-year review and acknowledge the failure of the Upper Hudson River remedy to meet the goals and objectives of the cleanup.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Bronx Community Board 8, hereby urges the EPA to adopt a "not protective" determination" in the third five-year review and acknowledge the failure of the Upper Hudson River remedy to meet the goals and objectives of the cleanup.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the EPA must begin the process of assessing additional remedial actions to protect the environment and our vulnerable communities along the Hudson River, who will otherwise continue to be exposed to toxic levels of PCBs for generations to come.

Since there is no quorum, a letter will be sent out. The next meeting will be on November 20th and DEP will be in attendance to talk about flooding.

b) Special Committee on Veterans' Services – The 18th Annual Veterans Day Ceremony at Memorial Grove in Van Cortlandt Park will be held on Sunday, November 3, 2024 at 12PM.

c) Public Safety – Acknowledge the passing of Chris Calhoun who was a member of the Public Safety Committee. The Public Safety Committee met on September 17th and refer the board and the public to the minutes. The following resolutions passed the Public Safety Committee meeting on September 27th:

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
RESOLUTION**

RENEWAL APPLICATION: Wine, Beer & Cider

WHEREAS Jon Beqiraj, a Representative of Savor Coffee and More, located at 3725 Riverdale Avenue, appeared before the Public Safety Committee on September 17th, 2024, to renew this establishment's liquor license.

WHEREAS, Representatives of NYPD's 50th Precinct stated they were unaware of any prior notable disturbances or complaints at the location of this establishment.

WHEREAS the Public Safety Committee unanimously approved this application.

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

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
RESOLUTION**

RENEWAL APPLICATION: Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider

WHEREAS Franklin Vargas, a Representative of Caribe Bites Bar & Restaurant, located at 5586 Broadway, appeared before the Public Safety Committee on September 17th, 2024, to renew this establishment's liquor license.

WHEREAS, Representatives of NYPD's 50th Precinct stated they were unaware of any prior notable disturbances or complaints at the location of this establishment.

WHEREAS the Public Safety Committee unanimously approved this application.

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

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
RESOLUTION**

RENEWAL APPLICATION: Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider

WHEREAS Adam Clayton Powell, a Representative of Tijuana Nites, located at 216 West 242nd Street, appeared before the Public Safety Committee on September 17th, 2024, to renew this establishment's liquor license.

WHEREAS, Representatives of NYPD's 50th Precinct provided documentation of numerous complaints and disturbances at the location of this establishment within the last 12 months, including: 101 311 calls, 29 911 calls, 64 summons, 1 complaint of attempted rape, 1 complaint of assault, and 3 people aided for physical sickness, injury and emotional disturbance.

WHEREAS the Public Safety Committee has received complaints about this establishment for several years, including public drunkenness and drug use outside the club, harassment of building residents by the club's patrons and employees, assaults resulting in injury, and excessively loud music routinely disturbing residents until 4am.

WHEREAS the Public Safety Committee has seen no attempt by this establishment to accommodate area residents and address the well documented history of complaints.

WHEREAS the Public Safety Committee voted unanimously to disapprove this application.

Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED, Bronx Community Board 8 disapproves this application.

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
RESOLUTION**

NEW APPLICATION AND TEMPORARY RETAIL PERMIT: Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider

WHEREAS Kenya Peralta, a Representative of EL DF Mexican Patio, located at 5602 Broadway, appeared before the Public Safety Committee on September 17th, 2024, to apply for a new liquor license and temporary retail permit.

WHEREAS, the applicant agreed to sign a 2AM closing agreement for the first year of operation.

WHEREAS the Public Safety Committee unanimously approved this application.

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

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
RESOLUTION**

NEW APPLICATION: Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider

WHEREAS He Chen, a Representative of Tokyo House, located at 5648 Riverdale Avenue, appeared before the Public Safety Committee on September 17th, 2024, to apply for a new liquor license.

WHEREAS, the applicant agreed to sign a 2AM closing agreement for the first year of operation.

WHEREAS the Public Safety Committee unanimously approved this application.

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

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
RESOLUTION**

NEW APPLICATION AND TEMPORARY RETAIL PERMIT: Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider

WHEREAS Josefina Tineo, a Representative of Sweet Billiards Corp, located at 3004 Heath Avenue, appeared before the Public Safety Committee on September 17th, 2024, to apply for a new liquor license and temporary retail permit.

WHEREAS, the applicant agreed to sign a 2AM closing agreement for the first year of operation.

WHEREAS the Public Safety Committee unanimously approved this application.

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

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
RESOLUTION**

CORPORATE CHANGE: Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider

WHEREAS Gemmy Quelliz, Owner of Bokagua, located at 3541 Riverdale Avenue, applied for a corporate name change (unrelated to operational methods already approved by Bronx Community Board 8).

WHEREAS, Representatives of NYPD's 50th Precinct stated they were unaware of any prior notable disturbances or complaints at the location of this establishment.

WHEREAS Ms. Quelliz requested in writing to be exempt from appearing before the Public Safety Committee and her request was granted by Chair E. Green.

WHEREAS the application was filled out incorrectly and corporate change was not indicated.

WHEREAS the Public Safety Committee unanimously approved this application (contingent upon the Board receiving a proper application before our next Full Board meeting. **The Board Office received the properly completed application the following day*).

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

Letters will be sent to the New York State Liquor Authority (SLA) with the Committee's resolutions. The next Public Safety Committee meeting will be on October 15th at 7pm at the NYPD 50th Precinct.

d) Traffic & Transportation – Echo everyone's sentiments on the passing of Chris Calhoun. Chris served as the Vice Chair of the Traffic & Transportation Committee during K. Buford's tenure as Chair of the committee. He will be missed. The Committee met on September 19th and passed the following resolutions:

**TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
RESOLUTION**

**STREET ACTIVITY PERMIT (SAPO) APPLICATION
HORACE MANN HOMECOMING EVENT**

WHEREAS, Peter Clancy representing Horace Mann School attended the Traffic & Transportation Committee meeting on 9-19-24 to ask for support of their SAPO application to celebrate their Homecoming Event on October 19, 2024, and

WHEREAS, Horace Mann School is requesting the street closing of Tibbett Avenue between West 246 Street and College Road from 9:00am - 5:00 pm, and

WHEREAS, the Homecoming event has been held in the past with no issues, and

WHEREAS, 2,000 persons are expected to attend the all-day event, food will only be served in the cafeteria, and there will be on-site Security all day, and

WHEREAS, on condition that the Fieldston Property Owners Assoc. as well as the residences nearby will be notified of the event and a fifteen-foot lane for emergency vehicles and resident vehicles will be available on the closed street,

WHEREAS, the Bronx Community Board No, 8 Traffic & Transportation Committee approves this SAPO application.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED Bronx Community Board No, 8 approves this SAPO application.

**TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
RESOLUTION**

**DINING OUT NYC SIDEWALK APPLICATION
CASA TOBALA CORP. 3732 RIVERDALE AVE. BRONX NY 10463**

WHEREAS, Elie Lopez representing Casa Tobala Corp. attended the Traffic & Transportation Committee meeting on 9-19-24 to ask for support of their Dining Out NYC Sidewalk application, and

WHEREAS, there were no comments or concerns related to the Café's physical footprint and dimensions, and

WHEREAS, there were no comments or concerns related to pedestrian flow, and

WHEREAS, there are no potential conflicts with existing curb use, and

WHEREAS, there were no complaints from the NYPD or community, and

WHEREAS, the Bronx Community Board No, 8 Traffic & Transportation Committee approves this SAPO application.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED Bronx Community Board No, 8 approves this SAPO application,

The Committee would appreciate if a letter is submitted on behalf of the Committee regarding the resolutions. The Traffic & Transportation Committee is not meeting in October due to the holidays and the next meeting is on November 21st.

e) Law, Rules & Ethics – The Law Department was contacted regarding the implementation of ADA circumstances for board members to which they responded that

this has come up before and they've advised that members of a public body can be granted temporary disability status for a condition which prevents them from attending meetings in person for a time. The LRE Committee will meet on October 29th and draft a resolution establishing parameters on ADA circumstances for board members.

f) Budget – Acknowledge the passing of Chris Calhoun, one of the only two Mets fans in Bronx County alongside D. Gellman. The FY26 Public Budget Hearing was held this evening. The requests need to be submitted to the NYC Mayor's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) by month's end. Consensus reached to include additional requests from the Aging Committee and Health, Hospitals & Social Services Committee to the FY26 expense and capital budget requests. In December, committees should start thinking about FY27, discussing the future requests in January, put the requests on paper in February, then the committees should put together an initial prioritization in March, and voting on it in the April committee meeting.

g) Education, Libraries & Cultural Affairs – The next meeting will be held on October 22nd.

h) Health, Hospitals & Social Services – No report.

i) Housing – First meeting was held on September 23rd and L. Chong is the new Vice Chair of the Committee. Moving forward, the Committee will be meeting at 6pm instead of 7pm. In the process of securing speakers and the next meeting will focus on tenants' rights.

j) Youth – The Youth Committee meeting was held on September 16th and the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) came and spoke about the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) in the district. C. Tobar Acosta is the new Vice Chair of the Committee, and the next meeting will be held on October 21st.

k) Special Committee on Racial Equity (SCRE) – Acknowledge the passing of Board Member Chris Calhoun – he will be missed. The next SCRE meeting will be held on November 7th where the goals for the year will be discussed.

l) Special Committee on Hudson River Greenway – No report.

m) Aging – The next meeting will be held on October 10th at RiverSpring Living and the speaker will be the CEO of RiverSpring Living, David Pomeranz. Sentiments on Chris Calhoun – he will be missed.

n) Parks & Recreation – Acknowledge the passing of Chris Calhoun. The Parks & Recreation Committee meeting was held on September 25th and the speaker was the new Managing Director of the Van Cortlandt House Museum (VCHM) Margaret Holmes. Refer to the minutes. It is the Fall and remind everyone to volunteer with local Parks groups.

o) Land Use – Both items (building of townhouses along Henry Hudson Pkwy and the construction of a housing complex where the Van Cortlandt Jewish Center is located) in the

Land Use Committee Agenda in October were tabled to the next Land Use Committee meeting to give more time for the community to have discussions with the applicants.

p) Economic Development – No report.

Report from the NYC Council Member (CM) Eric Dinowitz

Share the sentiments that everyone shared about Chris Calhoun – it is a real loss to the board and the community. Three shredding events held in the community in the past weeks. Held a flu shot event as well. Street Co-Naming event for Betty and Lloyd Adams was held on September 22nd. The hearing date for the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity has been set with the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises and it will take place on October 21st. On October 22nd, that is when there will be a public hearing and you can attend and testify.

Next Monthly Board Meeting: November 12, 2024

Adjournment

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:54 pm.

Submitted by: Ardy Malziu, Community Coordinator, Bronx Community Board 8

Reviewed by: Farrah Kule Rubin, District Manager, Bronx Community Board 8