

COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8 BRONX

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OCTOBER 9, 2007 AT AMALGAMATED HOUSES, VLADEK HALL, 74 VAN CORTLANDT PARK SOUTH

PRESENT: R. Abbott, R. Bender, D. Bowden, A. P. Cassino, W. Dolny, T. Durham, A. Fana, R. Fanuzzi, T. Feerick, A. G. Feldmeier, B. Fettman, P. Friedman, T. Giallorenzi, M. Katzenstein, G. O. Koppell, D. McShane, K. O'Brien, K. Pesce, C. Prentice, J.M. Reyes, T. M. Rubinstein, S. Scheinbach, I. W. Stone, E. Tossas Tucker, L. Vazquez, M. Wolpoff

ABSENT: A. P. Creaney, Rev. N. Dixon, B. Feinberg, J. Giergerich, J. Goris, J. Higgins, M. Khury, J. Kreppell, I. Ladimer, V. Gray Lewis, C. G. Moerdler, R. Moll, J. O'Reilly, J. M. Pilsner, J. Plaza, L. Spalter, B. Trebach, H. Young

STAFF: R. Guether – Department of City Planning
N. Stent – District Manager, CB 8
S. Alexander – Clerical Assistant, CB 8
D. Bay – Community Associate, CB 8
P. Manning – Community Associate, CB 8

GUESTS: J. Dinowitz - Assemblyman
R. Press – rep. State Senator Efrain Gonzalez' Office
R. Martos – rep. Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz' Office
A. Garcia – rep. Assemblywoman Naomi Rivera's Office
D. Contreras – rep. Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum's Office
J. Gordon – rep. Councilman G. Oliver Koppell's Office
J. Sewell – rep. Councilman G. Oliver Koppell's Office
Capt. D. Shea – Commanding Officer, 50th Precinct
J. DeSio – Riverdale Review
J. Goldman
M. Grossman – Riverdale Press
R. Montesano - FDNY
J. Moss
M. Perron – Administrator, VCP
P.O. M. Ramos – Community Affairs, 50th Precinct
Det. L. Rodriguez – Community Affairs, 50th Precinct
P. R. Smith
J. Toussaint
J. Warman
E. Yaker – Amalgamated Houses

Chairman Cassino convened the meeting at 7:40 PM. He thanked Ed Yaker, Amalgamated Houses for hosting the Board meeting at their facility.

1. Chairman Cassino called upon K. O'Brien, Budget Chairman, to conduct the public hearing on the Board's Budget Priorities for FY 2009.

K. O'Brien called for public speakers, hearing none, the budget hearing was closed.

K. O'Brien proceeded to engage the Board in discussion of the budget priorities and started with a review of several positive responses resulting from the FY 2008 budget priorities requests. Of the capital requests: the Putnam Line right-of-way was extended to West 225th Street; the Van Cortlandt Park entrance at the southeast corner close to the lake was reconstructed; renovations were completed at Caryl Field in Van Cortlandt Park and included a backstop, new dug out, and chain link fence. Of the expense requests: Sunday trash pickup commenced in commercial areas; and an audible traffic signal has been installed at the corner of Knolls Crescent and Kappock Street. Thanks to lots of hard work on the part of Irving Ladimer. In addition, a request for proposals had been issued for a feasibility study for the reconstruction of Van Cortlandt Stadium; and Libraries are open six days a week. Furthermore, signage will be installed along the Van Cortlandt Old Croton Trail funded by New York State mitigation funds. It includes drainage, plantings and erosion control and is anticipated to be completed by December 31, 2007.

K. O'Brien announced that several budget priorities fell within the Mayor's new tree planting initiative and were taken off the budget priority list. The Mayor's initiative is called **plaNYC**, which includes planting, tree stump removal and pruning throughout the city. The 10 year program will give CB8 1800 trees and commences in the spring. Thus, requests for tree planting, etc. will be included in this initiative. A presentation to the Board will occur in the future.

K. O'Brien added that due to the law initiated in 2002, the city is required to make wheelchair accessible to the 158,000 street corners (NYC) and install pedestrian ramps at all pedestrian walkways cross curbs. Currently 61.5% of the City's corners have already been completed and started with those areas most heavily traveled (80% in Manhattan are completed). There are 7007 curb ramps in the Bronx and the remaining areas will now be addressed.

Additionally, he advised that where city agencies responded to Board priorities with "funds were insufficient for the project and requests should be directed to the elected officials," a letter for funding requests will be sent directly to public officials. Also, at the recommendation of city

agencies/departments, certain requests will be removed from the list entirely.

K. O'Brien presented the FY 2009 Budget priorities which had been prioritized and distributed to the Board for review. Discussion ensued and recommendations for amendments and additions were reviewed. The final capital and expense budget priorities were presented to the Board. The question was called and seconded. Chairman Cassino called for a vote on the budget priorities and requests as amended.

The budget was adopted by a vote of 25 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

In Favor –

R. Abbott, R. Bender, D. Bowden, A. P. Cassino, W. Dolny, T. Durham, A. Fana, R. Fanuzzi, T. Feerick, A. G. Feldmeier, B. Fettman, P. Friedman, T. Giallorenzi, M. Katzenstein, D. McShane, K. O'Brien, K. Pesce, C. Prentice, J.M. Reyes, T. M. Rubinstein, S. Scheinbach, I. W. Stone, E. Tossas Tucker, L. Vazquez, M. Wolpoff

2. Gallery Session

Lynn Schwarz, Vice President, Fort Independence Park Neighborhood Association, presented testimony regarding the long abandoned construction site at 3329-33 Giles Place, which has an incomplete foundation and deteriorating fencing that is covered with graffiti, all of which poses a safety problem and stands as an eyesore in the community. Ms. Schwarz called upon Community Board 8 to intervene with the Department of Buildings to take measures to cure this dangerous condition.

3. Approval of Regular Board Minutes of September 11, 2007

S. Scheinbach corrected the Environment & Sanitation Committee's report to reflect that the park with the graffiti issue is Brust Park, rather than Ruth McLaughlin. The minutes were approved as amended.

4. Chairman Cassino welcomed Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz and staff member Randi Martos; Councilman G. Oliver Koppell and staff members Joseph Gordon, and Jamin Sewell; Richard Guether, Department of City Planning; Margot Perron, Administrator, Van Cortlandt Park; Capt. Dermot Shea, Det. Luis Rodriguez, and P.O. Mindy Ramos, 50th Pct.; Roger Montesano, FDNY; Daniel Contreras, representing Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum; Andrew Garcia, representing Assemblywoman Naomi Rivera; John DeSio, Riverdale Review; and Manny Grossman, Riverdale Press.

5. Chairman's Report –

- Chairman Cassino listed dates for the “fall tour” for inspection of progress at construction sites throughout the Board area, which include the Russian Mission, Chapel Farm, and SAR Academy.
- Chairman informed that there was no new update, with respect to the West 230th and Broadway development.
- Chairman apologized to the Board for citing his Board affiliation in signing-off his “Letter to the Editor” in the Riverdale Press publication of September 27th, on the topic of “congestion pricing.” His title was inadvertently added by the Riverdale Press and a correction was issued.

6. Chairman invited Councilman Koppell to address the Board.

The Councilman commented on his support of the Board's budget priorities. He further elaborated on issues regarding the chain link fence that had been proposed along a section of the Henry Hudson Parkway, which the Board was instrumental in negotiating an agreement with the Department of Design & Construction (DDC) to abandon the chain link type fence for different design, one more aesthetically pleasing. Councilman advised that DDC had proposed metal guard rails, but he preferred wood face construction material, and has allocated funds to that end. Councilman Koppell requested that the Board adopt a formal resolution in support of the wood face fence. He also advised of his opposition to increase the toll on the Henry Hudson Bridge; and his objection to the 18% water rate increase.

7. Chairman invited Assemblyman Dinowitz to address the Board.

Assemblyman Dinowitz discussed the BSA variance application for the development at 3210 Irwin Avenue for the addition of transient parking spaces. He voiced his opposition to the variance stating that the developer's purpose was to off-set additional construction costs incurred from building next to a retaining wall. He also referred to an issue with parking spaces at 3720 Independence Avenue and requested that the Board contact the Department of Buildings to inquire about the number of parking spaces permitted under the zoning regulations; and how long the existing 24 parking spaces would be unavailable while construction was underway. Assemblyman Dinowitz advised of his intervention with the Department of Health regarding the vermin infestation behind Key Food Store. He expressed opposition to the toll increase on Henry Hudson Bridge, and like Assemblyman Koppell, questioned the legitimacy of the water rates increase. The Assemblyman provided flyers announcing a meeting at Benjamin Franklin Democratic Club regarding “Congestion Pricing” on October 11th, 7:30 PM; and flu shot dates and locations.

8. Chairman invited Captain Shea, Commanding Officer of the 50th Precinct to address the Board.

Captain Shea discussed the rash of recent robberies, at North Fork Bank, and at several bodegas. Riverdale's notorious burglar was released from incarceration and is a suspect of the attempted burglary of Hudson's Pharmacy. Meanwhile, there have been no car tires stolen within the last three weeks. Captain Shea responded to a complaint from the audience pertaining to drug activity at 70 Marble Hill Avenue. He advised of Police presence in the area.

9. Report from the Department of City Planning – R. Guether

No report.

10. Election of Parks & Recreation Committee Chair

Chairman Cassino advised of the chair vacancy created in the Parks & Recreation Committee due to N. Stent leaving the post to assume the District Manager's position at the Board office. He opened the floor for nominations.

D. Bowden nominated R. Bender. Hearing no other nominations, the question was called, seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Vote: 25 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions

In Favor –

R. Abbott, R. Bender, D. Bowden, A. P. Cassino, W. Dolny,
T. Durham, A. Fana, R. Fanuzzi, T. Feerick, A. G. Feldmeier,
B. Fettman, P. Friedman, T. Giallorenzi, M. Katzenstein,
D. McShane, K. O'Brien, K. Pesce, C. Prentice, J.M. Reyes,
T. M. Rubinstein, S. Scheinbach, I. W. Stone, E. Tossas Tucker,
L. Vazquez, M. Wolpoff

R. Bender commented about the many issues facing the Committee; and in keeping with the Committee's regular meeting date, he immediately set a Parks & Recreation meeting date of October 24th, Board Office, at 7:30 PM.

11. Committee Reports –

A. Libraries & Cultural Affairs – L. Vazquez

The Riverdale Branch Library will reopen on October 15th following refurbishing, and the Committee will hold its next meeting there on November 5th, at 7:30 PM.

B. Public Safety – A. G. Feldmeier

1. The Committee will meet on October 21st, 50th Pct., at 7:30 PM. The November meeting will be held at an earlier time at 7:00 PM, because there will be a demonstration and tour of an ambulance.

2. Complaints at Fort Independence Park have quieted.

C. Traffic and Transportation

In the absence of B. Trebach, Chairman Cassino presented a resolution, for a 2nd vote, for the street naming of Police Officer Forster as follows:

Whereas, the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale, the 50th Precinct Community Council and the Church of Saint Margaret of Cortona request that the Southwest corner of Kingsbridge Avenue and West 236th Street be renamed in memory of Police Officer Neil A. Forster; and

Whereas, Police Officer Neil A. Forster worked in the 50th Precinct and it is the 10th anniversary of his passing;

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that Community Board No. 8, Bronx, recommends that it would be fitting that he be so remembered with a street renaming.

Vote: 25 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions

In Favor –

R. Abbott, R. Bender, D. Bowden, A. P. Cassino, W. Dolny, T. Durham, A. Fana, R. Fanuzzi, T. Feerick, A. G. Feldmeier, B. Fettman, P. Friedman, T. Giallorenzi, M. Katzenstein, D. McShane, K. O'Brien, K. Pesce, C. Prentice, J.M. Reyes, T. M. Rubinstein, S. Scheinbach, I. W. Stone, E. Tossas Tucker, L. Vazquez, M. Wolpoff

D. Aging – K. Pesce

The Committee will meet on October 23rd, Hebrew Home, at 3:30 PM.

E. Economic Development – J. Reyes

Refer to Committee minutes for report.

Discussions on the trolley proposal continue. The Committee's next meeting will be held on October 25th, at 7:30 PM, location to be announced.

F. Education – D. Bowden

1. Announced that there would be a fair for small public high schools held on October 10th, at Mosholu/Montefiore Community Center, at 6:30 PM. For additional information, call 718-652-0282.
2. The Community Education Council will hold its next meeting on October 18th, at P.S. 279, located on 180th Street & Jerome Avenue.
3. New school principals have been invited to speak at Committee monthly meetings such as: Principal Scharper, PS 24 on October 23rd; Principal O'Mara, MS/HS 141 on November 27th; and Principal Davis, PS/MS 95 on December 18th (not confirmed). Bronx High School of Science, although not in CB 8's district, will be invited, since students from this community board area attend the school.

G. Environment & Sanitation – S. Scheinbach

The September Croton Water Filtration Monitoring Committee meeting turned into the longest meeting. Discussions included the major problem of dealing with water run-off at the filtration site. It was proposed that Parks utilize the run-off for irrigation of their grounds.

Con Ed's high voltage line project may not start until 2008.

The Committee's next meeting will be held on October 17th, Board Office, at 7:30 PM.

H. Health, Hospitals & Social Services – M. Katzenstein

M. Katzenstein commented on the benefit of the joint meeting held on the topic of an EMS facility in the Board area. He stated that good relations were established with the representatives of EMS.

I. Land Use

M. Wolpoff reported in the absence of C. Moerdler. He presented the following resolution:

It Is Resolved, that Community Board No. 8, Bronx, approves City Planning Commission Application No. N 060236 ZAX, 4550 Livingston Avenue, Block 5810, Lot 417, located within the Special Natural Area District (NA-2) and Fieldston Historic District – for the grant of authorizations involving development on a portion of a zoning lot having a steep slope or steep slope buffer, alterations of rock outcrops, and modification of botanic environments to allow the construction of a second single family residence.

Vote: 18 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention*

In Favor –

R. Abott, R. Bender, D. Bowden, A. P. Cassino, T. Durham,
R. Fanuzzi, B. Fettman, P. Friedman, M. Katzenstein, D. McShane,
K. O'Brien, C. Prentice, J.M. Reyes, S. Scheinbach, I. W. Stone,
E. Tossas Tucker, L. Vazquez, M. Wolpoff

Abstention –

P. Friedman

*It was noted that the vote does not represent a quorum of the Board.

Meeting adjourned 9:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Manning
Community Associate