

**COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8 BRONX**

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
**HELD ON NOVEMBER 13, 2007**  
**AT ST. STEPHEN'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

The meeting of Community Board No. 8 Bronx was called to order at 7:40 P.M. by Chairman Anthony Perez Cassino.

Chairman Cassino conveyed thanks to Board Member Reverend Dixon of St. Stephen's United Methodist Church for graciously extending an invite to the Board to hold its meeting at the Church. Chairman added that the location was helpful in allowing the Board to meet at different venues throughout the Board's District.

1. Gallery Session –

- A. Rosemary Murray, Riverdale Branch Library, advised that the branch re-opened October 15<sup>th</sup> following refurbishing. She provided flyers of the new hours, which are Monday – Wednesday 10:00AM to 6:00 PM, Thursday 12:00 PM to 8:00 PM, Friday 1:00 PM – 6:00 PM, and Saturday 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM. Upcoming events, and a program calendar for children of ages 6 months to 2 years were left for distribution. Additionally, Ms. Murray announced future library events which include special health care lectures by AARP on November 28<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 PM, and a Mystery Author night on December 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM.
- B. Genevieve Davis, Community Liaison, Department of Design and Construction, provided an update on the Kappock Street Retaining Wall project. Work on the north side of the wall is in progress, with an estimated completion of four months. It will be necessary to have traffic diversions and water shut downs. Ms. Davis advised that monthly news pamphlets will be distributed to the surrounding area as a way to keep the community informed and updated on the project. She stated that notification is widely posted for water shutdowns and that the water is always turned back on at the end of the day. Additionally, the Fire Engine 81 has requested removal of parking for emergency access on Netherland Avenue between Kappock and West 227<sup>th</sup> Streets for the four month period. Thirteen months remain for full project completion.
- C. Manhattan College Garage Project. Chairman Cassino gave a brief background of the project, explaining that the Board had been involved

with the proposal since its inception and had approved the zoning and various other aspects of the development. At the time of approval the project included a Pathmark store and it was disappointing to learn that the Pathmark component had fallen through. This change has caused Manhattan College to revise its plans for the use of the sight.

The Chairman introduced Brother Robert Berger, representing Manhattan College. Brother Robert conveyed an apology from Brother Scanlon, President of the College who was unable to attend the Board meeting. He proceeded to introduce the representatives associated with the project, June Eisland, Paul Travis, and Thomas Ryan. Mr. Travis and Mr. Ryan presented the revised plans for the parking garage and retail space. Mr. Travis explained that the project had been reduced with Pathmark's withdrawal. The building's height was reduced from 74 ft. to 55 ft. due to the removal of rooftop parking, and the building's size was reduced from 200,000 sq. ft. to 170,000 sq. ft., due to the reduced retail space of 12,000 sq. ft. on the ground floor. The hope is that the space will be leased by a food retailer. In addition, parking for shoppers will be located at the rear of the building and the loading dock has been removed. An elevator will be constructed as mandated by ADA requirements. It was pointed out that the appearance of the building still resembles the original rendering with the exception of the "Pathmark" signage and the building setback on Manhattan College Parkway. The building no longer directly abuts the neighboring apartment building. Furthermore, the entire façade will be landscaped and will serve as a buffer between the apartment building and the garage. The property will have an entrance to the garage on the northern end and exit on the southern end.

All components of the plan are in place and approved with the exception of the pedestrian bridge access from the garage crossing over Manhattan College Parkway. The design approval is currently under review by the NYC Art Commission. The Commission prefers a contemporary, glass design, while the College prefers a design that is less obtrusive. Meetings on the issue of the design continue. At this time, permits are ready to be requested and construction is due to begin at the end of November 2007.

C. Moerdler asked that in view of the fact that the College is requesting to utilize Van Cortlandt Park Golf Course for parking during construction of the garage, what parking rights would Manhattan College afford the community especially on weekends. He stated that some reciprocal agreement should be made otherwise he would vigorously oppose the parking plan in the Park. Brother Robert agreed that the College would offer parking to the community on weekends, and during the week to accommodate track meets. C. Moerdler requested that the agreement be given in writing to the Board.

Chairman Cassino commented favorably on the revised scaled down plans that allow for the property setback from the street and from the apartment building, and the removal of the loading dock. He thanked Manhattan College representatives for their presentation to the Board. Chairman added that there will be further discussion on the issue of the "bridge" as the project goes forward.

D. Rolland Garcia, Centercare reported regarding the State Children Health Insurance and reported that 240,000 children in public schools do not have health insurance, of which 150,000 may qualify for free insurance through the State if income criteria are met. Promoting this health insurance opportunity has occurred is being done at Community Board meetings and at Police Council meetings. Applications will be available through schools. Strong efforts are being made to close the gap of children without health care.

E. Courtney Weiss, PS 81 co-president of the Parent Teachers Association, discussed traffic safety concerns at three intersections on the approach to the school: Riverdale Avenue and West 25<sup>th</sup> Street eastbound; West 256<sup>th</sup> Street between Mosholu Avenue and Riverdale Avenue; and Riverdale Avenue and West 254<sup>th</sup> Street. She advised about motorists disregard of the traffic sign indication no turns onto West 256 Street off Mosholu during the designated school day morning, and other unsafe practices of motorists within the school's boundary.

B. Trebach, Chairman of Traffic & Transportation responded to Ms. Weiss' comments stating that the letter received from PS 81 on this same issue had been forwarded to Borough Commissioner Moran, Department of Transportation.

E. Urban Ellis, New Marble Hill Tenants Association and Civic Association, announced that classes are offered for music and journalism for children 7 – 13 years of age at the St. Stephens United Methodist Church. He also advised about the Association's College Preparedness and Scholarship Program and efforts to promote it. For more information call Mr. Ellis at 718-562-7031.

2. Approval of Regular Board Minutes of October 9, 2007

D. Bowden corrected the Education report on Page 7, to reflect that the new principal of PS 37 and not the principal of PS 95 had agreed to attend the Education Committee meeting on December 18<sup>th</sup>.

The amended minutes were approved unanimously.

- 3. Discussion of the Executive Board Committee Minutes of November 3, 2007

The minutes were adopted as written.

- 4. Chairman welcomed.....

- 5. Chairman’s Report

- Chairman Cassino announced that Cassandra Prentice had accepted the appointment for Youth Chair.

C. Prentice advised that the Committee would meet on November 29<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00 PM, at the Board Office.

- Chairman presented the following resolution concerning proposed community boards budget cuts:

**Whereas**, the proposed \$5000 cut in fiscal year 2008 would adversely affect Community Board No. 8 Bronx and its functions; and

**Whereas**, the proposed \$5000 cut in fiscal year 2009 would additionally adversely affect Community Board No. 8 Bronx and its charter mandated responsibilities; and

**It is hereby resolved**, that the Community Board No. 8 Bronx opposes the budget reductions to the community board and requests that it not be included in these reductions.

The resolution was approved unanimously by a vote of 30 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions

In favor  
.....

- 6. Report from the Office of the Borough President – A. Toledo

- Applications for Community Board Appointments will be made available on November 19<sup>th</sup>, and may be obtained through community boards and/or the Borough President’s Office. Also, the application may be downloaded on the Borough President’s website.

- Borough President Carrión funding allocations for the 2008 budget equals \$31 million to various institutions and organizations in the Bronx:

➤ **Housing** - \$8 million for 22 housing projects;

- **Education** - \$5 million for school improvements including creation new science labs, upgrading libraries and computer equipment as well as various new playgrounds throughout the borough;
- **Libraries** - \$1.9 million in funding for library construction and renovations including \$400,000 for boroughwide technology upgrade, \$600,000 for Kingsbridge Branch Library construction.
- **Cultural Institutions** - \$2 million for Bronx cultural centers including the construction of a new state of the art admission center.
- **Street Improvements** - \$1.9 million for improving roads, plazas and curbs throughout the Bronx.
- **Borough Services** - \$163,000 to fund various service related Borough initiatives including the creation of a fire safety van that will tour the Bronx to educate children about the importance of fire safety.

7. Report from the Department of City Planning – N. Danyluk

There have been no new applications within the last 30 days.

3. Chairman invited Christopher Stilianesis, Executive Officer of the 50<sup>th</sup> Precinct to address the Board.

- Captain Stilianesis reported that graffiti offenders will now be sentenced to clean-up graffiti in the area of their residing precinct.
- There has been an increase in car accidents with passengers not using the seat belts. Seat belt enforcement will be aggressive.
- There have not been any car break-ins reported since the last meeting.

8. Committee Reports

A. Parks & Recreation – B. Bender

The Committee will meet on November 28th, at 7:00 PM, at the Board Office.

B. Public Safety – A. G. Feldmeier

There will be an ambulance tour on November 15th, at 7:00, at the 50<sup>th</sup> Precinct, in advance of the Committee's monthly meeting at 7:30 PM.

C. Traffic and Transportation – B. Trebach

1. B. Trebach thanked the 50<sup>th</sup> Precinct for summoning a vehicle parked in a "No Parking Anytime" location, with a non-exempting placard displayed on the dashboard at West 246<sup>th</sup> Street between Henry Hudson Parkway and Independence Avenue earlier during in the day.
2. The Committee will meet jointly with the Environment and Sanitation Committee on November 20<sup>th</sup>, at the Riverdale Y, at 7:30 PM. The agenda will include the issues regarding PS 81; update on the proposal for traffic pricing congestion; and reform of Alternate Side Parking regulations will be reviewed.
3. C. Moerdler inquired of the legitimacy of Police enforcement of traffic laws in Fieldston, a private community. Captain advised that Police does have the authority on those streets.

#### D. Aging – K. Pesce

The Committee will meet on November 20, at the Methodist Church Home for the Aged, at 3:30 PM. Assemblyman Dinowitz will present on new legislation in the Assembly on Aging.

#### E. Economic Development

R. Fanuzzi reported in the absence of J. Reyes.

1. Starbucks will open on Johnson Avenue on November 16<sup>th</sup>.
2. The next Committee meeting will be held on November 29<sup>th</sup>. To clarify the trolley proposal, he explained that an investigation is underway with Bronx Trolley Tourism for a cultural trolley to serve the Riverdale Kingsbridge area. This service now operates at four different Bronx locations. This will be discussed at the next Committee meeting. For further information go online at Center for Urban Future.

#### F. Education – D. Bowden

1. Refer to Committee minutes for full report.
2. D. Bowden discussed the School Grades issued by the Department of Education. She explained that three different categories are rated for determining the grade as follows: School Environment, from results of surveys taken by parents, along with Student Attendance for return of surveys – 30%; Student Performance for reading and math proficiency of elementary and middle school students, and graduation rate of high school students - 15%; and Student Progress, which measures student improvement each year – 55%. Two of the best schools in Community

Board 8, PS 81, & PS 24 were graded with a “B”, while some schools that had been trying to improve their reading and math scores received an “A.” JFK High School has been added to the list of “Schools under Review” and received a “D.” Bronx School District 10 middle schools received 32% of A’s, more than any other borough, and high schools in Manhattan received 26% of A’s, higher than any other borough.

#### G. Environment & Sanitation - S. Scheinbach

1. S. Scheinbach reviewed aspects of the Con Edison M29 transmission line. Construction is expected to begin at the start of 2008. Con Edison has issued a revised Environmental Management and Construction Plan. It is a document of 91 pages and has been submitted to the office of Community Board No. 8, the Riverdale Library, and the Spuyten Duyvil Library. Con Edison representative Myra Linares has been dedicated as the community liaison for the project. Her telephone number is 1-800-788-1093. Con Edison’s website also provides information. Some of the items in the agreements include: two day notification of property owners before work begins at specified locations; with respect to the Fire House, there will be no interference with emergency service; no construction on Henry Hudson Parkway overpass at West 252<sup>nd</sup> Street (since conduit is already in place). Coordination will occur with schools and houses of worship; noise mitigation plans, and covering of open trenches at end of work day. Con Edison representatives will attend the Committee joint meeting with Traffic & Transportation on November 20<sup>th</sup> to provide more detail.
2. The higher cost for DEP’s Filtration Plant construction was explained at the of Croton Water Filtration Monitoring Committee meeting. With regard to the Plant’s water run-off problem, DEP may decide to construct a pond and use for landscaping irrigation. DEP graduated 29 apprentices for employment at the construction site.
3. It has been determined that Community Board No. 8’s entire district qualifies for removal of Alternate Side Parking regulations. This will be discussed at the Committee meeting.
4. The “No Flyer” bill law was enacted October 15, 2007. Fines have risen from \$200 to \$1000 for violation of this law. Liability is assumed by owner of flyer/advertisement.

Chairman Cassino thanked S. Scheinbach for his follow-up.

#### H. Housing – J. Kreppel

1. Reviewed the Committee minutes covering the Bronx Historic Preservation's proposed sites for Landmarking; a letter from Borough President regarding Enforcement of Street Address Displays. Information on both issues are attached to Committee minutes.
2. A communication from a Queens Board regarding the preservation of trees 25 years or older on private property will be referred to the Land Use Committee.

I. Land Use – C. Moerdler

1. The following resolutions passed at the Land Use Committee meeting on November 8, 2007 were presented:

**RESOLVED**, that Community Board No. 8 Bronx approves Board of Standards and Appeals Calendar No. 651-60-BZ, 600 West 246<sup>th</sup> Street – Application to extend the term of a variance previously granted, which allowed the conversion of cellar space in an existing multiple dwelling to a valet service, office/stationary store and packaged goods store.

Vote: 30 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions

In favor –

**WHEREAS**, Community Board No. 8 Bronx, approved the request of Manhattan College for the construction of a pedestrian bridge over Manhattan College Parkway, in a residential area of Riverdale; and

**WHEREAS**, Community Board No. 8 Bronx, gave its aforesaid approval conditioned upon an undertaking by Manhattan College that it would make that pedestrian bridge as unobtrusive as possible; and

**WHEREAS**, Manhattan College crafted a design for the Pedestrian bridge that was relatively unobtrusive; and

**WHEREAS**, Manhattan College has advised Community Board No. 8 that the Art Commission of the City of New York, none of whose members reside in the community, has demanded that Manhattan College use lighted or reflecting panels and other appurtenances that will make the pedestrian bridge obtrusive;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that Community Board No. 8 Bronx strongly urge the Mayor, City Art Commission, City Planning



Commission, the City Council, City Council Member G. Oliver Koppell, the Bronx Borough President, and all elected officials from the Community Board No. 8 Bronx area to take whatever steps may be required to insure that the pedestrian bridge and the adjacent appurtenances will be no more obtrusive than were submitted by Manhattan College to Community Board No. 8 Bronx prior to its aforesaid approval.

Vote: 30 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions

In favor –

.....

2. C. Moerdler referred to the Land Use Committee meeting held in July where representatives of the Landmarks Preservation Commission presented the Draft Proposed Rules for the Fieldston Historic District. Recommendations on the Rules from the Fieldston Property Owners Association (FPOA) have yet to be submitted. In the interim, FPOA met with the Commission to discuss these issues but has not submitted any written comments.

C. Moerdler had asked that FPOA member J. Pilsner contact the Association's president on the matter. A draft recommendation will be sent by the next Land Use Committee meeting.

J. Law, Rules & Ethics – R. Moll

No report.

K. Libraries and Cultural Affairs – L. Vazquez

1. The Committee met on November 5<sup>th</sup>, at the Riverdale Library which was newly renovated and was given a tour. There are 15 new computers, new toddlers' area, and two new seating areas. The Reference section is smaller with less shelves and books. A new book self check out has been added.
2. There will be no December Committee meeting. The next meeting will be held January 2008 at the Spuyten Duyvil Library.

Meeting adjourned 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Patricia Manning  
Community Associate