

## BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

### MINUTES OF THE LIBRARIES & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 10, 2013 AT THE BOARD OFFICE

#### Present

Marvin Goodman  
Sylvia Alexander  
Maria Khury  
Mercedes Zegarra-Soja  
Martin Wolpoff  
Gesille Dixon  
Holly Makin  
J. Klapper

#### Affiliation

CB8, Committee Chair  
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NYPL Network Manager  
Sinfonietta of Riverdale

The meeting began at 7:20 p.m.

The Chair introduced Holly Makin, Outreach Coordinator for Sinfonietta of Riverdale. The Sinfonietta is a small chamber orchestra of twelve to fifteen musicians that specializes in classical music. The group was founded in 2009. There are three upcoming concerts: October 27, 2013 and June 1, 2014 at Riverdale Temple and January 12, 2014 at Wave Hill. Announcements of these concerts are available in flyers placed in local libraries. A presentation may be made at the public hearing of community board 8.

The minutes of May 9, 2013 were approved.

The Chair introduced Gesille Dixon, Bronx Network Manager for the New York Public Library system. The Bronx library network has been renamed the Grand Concourse Network. Of the 16 branch libraries in the network, five are located in community board 8. These libraries, with their head librarians, are, as follows:

- Kingsbridge Library, headed by Martha Gonzalez-Buitrago
- Riverdale Library, headed by Rebecca Brown-Barbier
- Spuyten Duyvil Library, headed by Timothy Turetsky
- Jerome Park Library, headed by Liana Acevedo
- Van Cortlandt Library, headed by Peter Pamphile

There are eighteen additional libraries in the Parkchester network of the New York Public Library system.

Gesille worked in the NYPL system for 13 years in various capacities before assuming this new position as network manager. Her primary responsibilities include overseeing staffing, budgets, education programs and services at each of these sixteen branches. Some branches have after-school programs, especially for school children, but none exist in community board 8 libraries. However, Jerome Park Library and Kingsbridge Library are scheduled to receive funds for these new after-school programs. There are calendars and flyers available at each branch library detailing the days and time of each program available at that branch. It was noted that a popular new program being offered is tech-connect, which involves computer technology-training classes and is offered at various times and locations, from early morning to evening, to accommodate students schedules. For adult retirees, crafts programs (jewelry making, knitting and crocheting) are popular. For young adults, the gaming program is popular. There is a creativity lab where young adults work on designing programs, including a networking program to work with students from other countries. For school kids, the STEP program focuses on students having fun while they learn more science and math. Parents are enthusiastic about these programs.

In trying to reach out to all groups, there are programs for preparing work resumes at a career and job workshop at the Bronx Library Center. There are programs that range from internet baseball to social media, and a couponing program got a big turnout of participants at a branch not in our community. Monthly calendars of program events are available at each library branch.

The Chair brought forth the capital budget requests and expense budget requests for our community libraries for 2015. These budgetary requests had come from the New York Public Library directly and were all approved by our community board at their capital hearings, and incorporated into the capital budget requests, as follows:

- Item #2 is libraries: a full interior renovation for the Spuyten Duyvil library, including a new roof.
- Item #6 is libraries: Riverdale library-partial interior renovation and new furniture
- Item #8 is libraries: Van Cortlandt library – full interior renovation, new roof and new windows, new furniture.

The expense budget requests lists, as item #17, the need to maintain 6 day service at all libraries to include increased hours, diverse programs, strong collections and sufficient support staff. There was a public hearing and the full community board voted for these.

In response to questions from the floor, it was noted that the City Council and the Mayor make the final decision on the budget. Local council members can use discretionary funds for specific projects, and Councilmembers Cabrera and Rodriguez are thus sponsoring specific library projects.

Under new business, the chair indicated a visit made to the City Hall Library, which has archival documents on display dating back to Dutch times. The municipal library also has available “The City Record”, the official journal of New York City with all daily details of governmental activities. Our community board 8 public hearing date of October 8<sup>th</sup> was listed for discussion of the capital budget requests and expense budget requests for 2015.

The Chair noted that there is an active organization called “Citizens to save New York City Libraries”, which has held protests and rallies against the closing of libraries. The Donnell Library which had been a valuable research and reference library for students was shut down and the site sold to a developer to build a multi-level luxury housing complex. Leading library areas in Brooklyn and Queens are to be targets. This is also a program called “Hands Across the Seas for Libraries” where representatives from the U.N. and from other places will be joining in citizens defending libraries endeavors.

The Chair noted that some charter schools have no libraries and students must rely on public libraries.

It was noted that last year there was an outreach program begun to train teachers running school libraries where there is no school librarian, in how to catalogue books. There is a need for more library staff to visit schools for staff training in maintaining an open circulation library. Security cameras have been installed at some libraries, but none in CB8 libraries.

The meeting ended at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marvin Goodman, Chair  
Libraries & Cultural Affairs Committee