

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Libraries & Cultural Affairs Committee**  
Held at the Van Cortlandt branch library on November 2, 2009

**Present**

Robert G. Abbott  
Bridget Maybury  
Martin Wolpoff  
Horace Harrison  
Michael Alvarez

**Affiliation**

CB#8, Committee Chair  
CB#8  
CB#8  
NYPL, Van Cortlandt Site Manager  
NYPL, Network Manager

**Guest Speaker** – Mr. Michael Alvarez, Network Manager for the NYPL, provided an overview of activities at the local branches and background on the Van Cortlandt branch specifically.

**Activities at Van Cortlandt** – Elaborating on Mr. Alvarez’s overview, Mr. Harrison described a very active level of programming. The branch is only 2715 square feet in size (second smallest in the Bronx). They have no community room and no separate space for special events. Their patrons include approximately 1,600 students of PS/MS 95. There will be an increase in usage when the new Ampark school, PS 344, is fully populated with another 300 students. Outreach includes the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center and the librarian will go there – due to space constraints. Outreach also includes a Day Care center. The collection features a large number of publications in Spanish and Russian. After English, the Russian collection gets the largest circulation. Mr. Harrison noted that this branch was one of the first to offer DVDs for circulation and they have one of the largest such collections in the area. Staffing is adequate for the current program.

**Discussion** - Following Mr. Harrison’s report, we casually discussed the problem of branch size. The current facility is leased (currently on a 10 year lease). The owner recently passed away and was uninterested in expansion of the building. The NYPL may want to explore this possibility with her estate. We also wondered if the current temporary home of the Ampark school on Hillman Avenue would be available once the school moves out in 2011. The building is owned by the Amalgamated. Perhaps our Councilman can be instrumental in exploring options. Expansion and or significant renovation of the Van Cortlandt branch is one of the priority capital projects for the Community Board.

**Next Meeting** – the next meeting will be December 7, 2009 at the Jerome Park branch.

Robert G. Abbott, Chairman  
Libraries & Cultural Affairs Committee