

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

MINUTES OF THE LIBRARIES & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 11, 2016 AT THE KINGSBRIDGE BRANCH LIBRARY, 291 WEST 231 STREET

Present

Marvin Goodman
Sylvia Alexander
Amy Joy Robateau
Philip Friedman
Martha Gonzalez-Buitrago
Nicola McDonald
Rebecca Barbier
Muslima Adams

Affiliation

CB8 Committee Chair
CB8 committee member
CB8 committee member
CB8 committee member
Branch Manager, Kingsbridge Branch Library
Branch Manager, Jerome Park Branch Library
Branch Manager, Riverdale Branch Library
Community Association of Marble Hill (CAMH)

Absent

Marty Wolpoff

CB8 committee member

The meeting was held at the Kingsbridge Library and began at 5:00PM. The minutes of the January meeting were approved by a unanimous vote of committee members.

The committee chair noted that no funding was granted to the NYPL in the 2016 budget by NYC for any additional operational expenses, unlike The Brooklyn Public Libraries System and Queens Libraries System which did receive funding for expanding operational expenses. No funds were allocated by the City for any new capital improvements projects for any of the projects requested by Community Board 8 in its capital budget requests for FY2017. The chair informed all that the NYPL has recommended the relocation of the Van Cortlandt Branch Library from its current inadequate location to a newly refurbished site at 3882 Cannon Place, one block away from the current library site. The NYPL recommends full funding for this relocation in the FY2017 budget requests and plans to identify full funding sources in FY2018 to acquire the site and begin schematic design work on this new branch library. It was noted that the department of Design and Construction was finalizing the architect's contract to repair the retaining wall at Riverdale Branch Library which has led to the sink hole and the water damage within the library. It was noted that the Kingsbridge Branch Library would be closed from February 29 to March 5 for painting due to water main damage break from a block away that occurred two years ago.

The chair introduced our guest speaker, Martha Gonzalez-Buitrago, the Branch Manager of the Kingsbridge Branch Library. The library is now a hub for six day services per week, starting each day at 10AM and closing some days as late as 8PM. Programs at the library service all ages, from pre-k to senior citizens, all without cost. These include computer classes at all levels, meditation groups, Wii bowling for adults, knitting and crocheting, stay well exercise sessions and writing through memory. This latter activity involves techniques of short story writing and basic theater techniques to create, develop and present a short story. There is a weekly film program, usually on Saturday. There are programs in Spanish. As a result of the new funding for operational expenses for FY2016, not only were hours expanded, as noted earlier, but two new librarians were added, one specializing in working with older adults and one with children under age 5. This latter move, has

enabled the library to establish and maintain a good relationship with the Kingsbridge Day Care Center located next door.

Nicola McDonald of the Jerome Park Library reported that the additional operational funding has resulted in the hiring of two new librarians and the expansion of hours of service. The library has been asking for capital funds since 2008 to repair a leaking roof, which only continues to get worse each year.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

The next meeting of the Libraries and Cultural Affairs Committee is tentatively scheduled for March 10, 2016, location and time to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,

Marvin Goodman
Chair, Libraries and Cultural Affairs Committee