

## BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

### MINUTES OF THE LIBRARIES & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 8, 2016 AT THE BOARD OFFICE, 5676 RIVERDALE AVENUE, SUITE 100

#### Present

Marvin Goodman  
Sylvia Alexander  
Amy Joy Robateau  
Philip Friedman  
Jennifer Zarr  
Tim Tureski  
Rebecca Barbier  
Karen Green  
Peter Pamphile  
Danny Liebman  
Judith Green

#### Affiliation

CB8 Committee Chair  
CB8 Committee Member  
CB8 Committee Member  
CB8 Committee Member  
Associate Director, West Bronx Library Network  
Branch Manager, Spuyten Duyvil Library  
Branch Manager, Riverdale Branch Library  
Community Member  
Branch Manager, Van Cortlandt Branch Library  
Community Resident  
Education Community Committee Member

#### Absent

Martin Wolpoff

CB8 Committee Member

The meeting began at 6:10pm. The minutes of the June meeting were unanimously approved.

The Chair introduced Jennifer Zarr, Associate Director of the West Bronx Library Network, which covers the five branch libraries in CB8 to discuss the budget priorities for libraries for fiscal year 2017-18 as well as to comment on on-going fiscal requests for fiscal year 2016-17. Ms. Zarr is new to the Bronx, after ten years of service in Manhattan.

Among her notations about our libraries:

- Two library branches are designated “family literacy” sites for early literacy for children under five: Riverdale Branch and Kingsbridge Branch. Both have undergone renovations in the children’s section, with furniture and toys, as well as new books and increased workshops programming.
- There are coding workshops for teens at Jerome Park, Kingsbridge and Spuyten Duyvil, which include games, to increase digital fluency.
- Rebecca Brown-Barbier spoke about the Riverdale Library, there are ESOL classes on Saturday mornings. The program “We are New York” is on Saturday afternoon, which is an oral history project. There is an early childhood initiative with 4 early childhood programs hosted by a specialized librarian. There are bilingual programs too. There are computer classes. There is a painting class for adults. Outreach attempts are made to encourage all in the community to participate.

- Judith Green, who serves on the Participatory Budget Committee of Council Member Cohen, invited all to attend any desired sessions of the committee to help determine the funding of capital budget items for our community for the coming fiscal year for libraries and schools. A question was asked about funding for our cooling systems at two libraries where requests had been made, but not included in this year's fiscal budget.
- Tim Tureski spoke about the Spuyten Duyvil Library. There is a toddler program, which is popular; there is a coding program for young adults. There is on-going training for the children's librarian so she can conduct a coding training program also and a simple electronics program, as part of training in science, math and technology. There is a monthly book discussion program and a book talk program. There is a film program every Saturday, unless it is superceded by a music program or a lecture.
- Peter Pamphile of the Van Cortland Library spoke about the server space limitations at this library. There is only one small room. When there is a program going on, such as "toddler time", there is severe space restrictions for adults to access books. There is an electronics program for young people. There is a class for seniors for introduction on the use of i-Pads.
- Peter Pamphile pointed out that there were press releases about relocating the library to a new location on, 3880 Cannon Place. It's not yet a done deal. The site is more than double the current site. Nothing has proceeded as yet, even though funding has been granted for the acquisition and use of this space for a new library.

The chair reported that our local newspapers have continued to list on-going programs at our local libraries. The Kingsbridge library has a novice program on Saturday and an exercise program during the week. There are internet classes for beginners and book discussion meetings. There are classes in Spanish. There is an advanced e-mail class. The Spuyten Duyvil library has a knitting class.

The Chair went back to the capital budget for libraries' for 2017-18. People would like to have a system where attendees could sit at their seats and charge their equipment on-line for usage, such as Wi-Fi. No funding exists for this. Judith Green suggested that this item be considered for the participating budgeting program. The Chair brought up the items listed for the 2017 budget. Three library branches needed an ADA upgrade for the bathrooms to accommodate persons with disabilities; these were not funded. Two branches have been asking for renovation and upgrading of the air-conditioning systems; these branches are designated cooling centers for the summer. The Chair noted that the Spuyten Duyvil Branch is in dire need of expansion. All nearby schools have increased enrollment greatly. Land for expansion is available, but has not been funded. Boiler replacements are needed too. The Riverdale Branch is asking for a full interior renovation. The Van Cortlandt Branch has asked for many improvements at the current site, since it is very unclear as to when, and if, a new improved site will be available.

Jennifer Zarr felt additional funding for cultural and educational programs would be desirable for all branches.

The Chair gave the report on the number of visitors to each branch during the last fiscal year. The Jerome Park Branch had over 110 thousand, the Kingsbridge Branch had 171 thousand, the Riverdale Branch had 100 thousand, Spuyten Duyvil Branch had 154 thousand and Van Cortlandt Branch had 65 thousand visits.

A discussion arose about possible cultural affairs visitors to our meetings. It was noted that we have both cultural affairs meetings and libraries meetings, each at different months, and that we will aim for a cultural affairs speaker for our next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Marvin Goodman  
Chair, Libraries and Cultural Affairs Committee