

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

MINUTES OF THE LIBRARIES & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 9, 2014 AT SPUYTEN DUYVIL BRANCH LIBRARY

Present

Marvin Goodman
Sylvia Alexander
Robert Fanuzzi
Philip Friedman
Martin Wolpoff
Mercedes Zegarra-Soja
Tim Tureski
Karen Green
Jeffrey Klapper

Affiliation

CB8, Committee Chair
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Branch Manager, Spuyten Duyvil Library

The meeting began at 6:15 PM.

Tim Tureski, the branch manager, was introduced by the chair of the Libraries Committee and made the initial presentation, which included an overview of the physical features of this branch. In response to a question about dealing with rowdy teenagers from nearby schools, Tim indicated the library patrols this area carefully to ensure good behavior. There are several computer areas available in different parts of the library. There is a young adult section of books and the largest collection of Hebrew books of any NYPL branch. The highest circulating collection is the Russian. Because of very poor circulation, the library eliminated its Spanish collection. There is a small reference section because most space is needed for the circulating collection. This is the fifth highest circulating branch of the 34 in the Bronx. This branch opened in late 1970 or early 1971. The library has a decreasing music CD section, since circulation is decreasing. There is a large DVD collection, of which the Russian is the largest. There is a collection of talking books for those unable to read regular print because of visual impairment. The Children's section has an extended, very popular area of soft seating. There is a unique ceiling panel there, painted by an artist named Spivak. The furniture is all down-sized to children's size, and the fabric covering and carpentry are washable. There is a read-aloud program for various age groups. The multi-purpose room is large enough to accommodate all adult programs. Films are shown there too, on a large TV screen, Saturdays. Lectures and concerts are given there, as well as book discussions. Tim indicates this branch has the largest book discussion participatory groups. This has been an on-going activity for over ten years. Most children are from P.S. 24, MS/141 and Saint Gabriel's. Tim visited 141 and Saint Gabriel's to tell their seventh grade students about the offerings of this library branch. He says 141 have a good school library (and librarian) but 24 does not, since it has lost its librarian. The chair reminded the group of the inter-visitations and training programs between school librarians and NYPL librarians and the need to enhance these services to improve school library use by students. In response to a question, Tim indicated that it is current NYPL policy not to accept any donations of books. He indicated that in the past, such donations had included old, out-dated, and unsuitable books and that it had taken much of a librarian's time to go through them. The NYPL has been cutting staff, in part due to pre-processing of books and various automation systems. The chair reminded the group about all the possibilities of obtaining books through the inter-library floating book collection procedure.

The chair held a discussion about the history of Spuyten Duyvil. The chair called attention to the small street on the east side of Broadway, called Verveelen Place. The Verveelen family was early Dutch settlers in the area, and one Verveelen was the ferryman who took passengers across the swirling waters of the Harlem River between the Bronx and Manhattan. Once, he vowed to get this passenger across, "Spuit ten Duyvil" (in spite of the devil), and that gave rise to the name of the area, according to one story. The alternative derivation of the name resulted from this early time, when Marble Hill was an island in the Harlem River and where the Hudson River met the island, much turbulence resulted, and the

name "Spitting Devil" was applied "Spuit ten Duyvil." These swirling waters were eliminated by the building of the Harlem River Ship Canal and the joining of Marble Hill island to the mainland of the Bronx in 1910.

The chair then described how the Spuyten Duyvil Library was built on a section of the old site of Seton Hospital, named after Mother Seton, and where Seton Park now exists. When the hospital was demolished, Community Board 8 worked hard to establish a park on the site and a library on the site. Tim then produced a book from their archives which detailed, through all articles and pictures the construction and dedication of Seton Park and Spuyten Duyvil Library. This book had been collated by an active Community Board 8 member in 1976 named Phyllis Post Goodman, and who was the wife of the current chair of this CB8 Libraries Committee.

A presentation was made by Tim, and others, of new programs to begin at different branch libraries.

A change was made to the December minutes to add Jeff Klapper's name to the attendees. The minutes were then unanimously approved.

On the issue of recording and uploading committee meetings to a community board website and retaining these recordings in the community board's archives, the voting members of the libraries and Cultural Affairs Committee voted against this proposal, but there were dissenting opinions. One community person felt these recordings should be maintained and archived. She cited an instance, from another committee, where she had a dissenting opinion, which was not noted in the minutes of that committee's meeting. It was noted that, technically, anyone could attend any meeting and record, or photograph, such meetings. It was felt that having all these discussions available on permanent sites would discourage actual attendance at these meetings, since someone could sit at home and listen to the tape, instead of being able to exchange opinions.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

The next meeting will be February 13th at 6:00 PM at Van Cortlandt Branch Library.

Respectfully submitted,

Marvin Goodman, Chair
Libraries and Cultural Affairs Committee

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