

**BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8**

**MINUTES OF THE LIBRARIES & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD ON NOVEMBER 13, 2014  
AT THE RIVERDALE BRANCH LIBRARY  
5540 MOSHOLU AVENUE**

**Present**

Marvin Goodman  
Sylvia Alexander  
Martin Wolpoff  
Rebecca Brown Barbier  
Holly Makin

**Affiliation**

CB8, Committee Chair  
CB8  
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Riverdale Branch Library  
Sinfonietta of Riverdale

The meeting began at 6:45PM. The committee minutes of September 11, 2014 were approved.

The Chair read a report from Citizens Defending Libraries, titled "From Papyrus to Pixels" which detailed the historical importance of libraries in developing civilizations. In our time, it is noted that i-pad, e-books like kindle, don't really compete with more meaningful hard copy books.

Rebecca Brown Barbier, head librarian of the Riverdale Branch, pointed out the dangers that can be caused from flooding by groundwater because of the library's defective wall, and why capital funding is needed to remedy this. Capital funding for 2014 will alleviate the HVAC system. A half-million dollars was granted.

Rebecca spoke about the connections between this branch library and local schools. There is an effort to get teachers involved, especially early childhood teachers. Teachers can take out 100 books at a time for a class. The library is located across the street from Riverdale Neighborhood House and a strong collaboration between the two has saved the library thousands of dollars. There are a variety of on-going programs for all age groups. After-school programs for pre-teens and older children featured an arts and crafts program and a puppet show (students used apple heads for figures in the show). There is a jewelry making program for adults, headed by a professional artist, at no cost to participants. Most artists and performers are local community people. There is a dance workshop. Programs are so popular that the jewelry-making class and the Tai-chi class have waiting lists. In the morning session, "We Are New York" program for adults is an English language conversational group for ESL learners.

The library has foreign language books in a wide variety of languages, including Indian, Chinese, and Hindu. About 75% of these books are in Russian, followed by Spanish as the second largest collection. It is to be noted that the library adjoins the former Russian Embassy and a large number of Russian speaking people still live and work there.

Rebecca reported that there is a slight decline in e-books. Many visitors to the library rely on the library for WI-FI service. The internet program is federally funded and is free.

Holly Makin, Program Coordinator for the Sinfonietta of Riverdale, spoke about their program. Performances are held at the Riverdale Temple. This season, the 3 performances are

for October 26, 2014, January 18, 2015 and April 12, 2015. All begin at 2:30 PM. The Sinfonietta was founded in 2008 and gave its first performance in 2009 at Riverdale Temple. This is a chamber music orchestra and features 12 to 20 performers at each presentation. These experienced musicians have performed at locations from London to Carnegie Hall. Locally, some concerts have been held at Armor Hall at Wave Hill and at concerts in the park, such as Seton Park and Van Cortlandt Park. Instruments may include a harp, string instruments such as violins, violas, cellos and bass, wind instruments such as an oboe, a French horn or a clarinet and occasionally, drums. Most concerts feature a blend of well-known classic 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century composers and also 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century modern classic composers. The audience is generally local Riverdalians, although efforts are being made to widen the audience. They have received some funding from Jeffrey Dinowitz, and the Bronx Council on the Arts and Loews Corporation. Admission fees and private donations supply the rest. The artistic director of the Sinfonietta of Riverdale is Mark Mandarano.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

The next meeting will be on December 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM at the Spuyten Duyvil Branch Library.

Respectfully submitted,

Marvin Goodman  
Chair, Libraries and Cultural Affairs Committee