

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING Held on Tuesday, September 8, 2020 via Zoom Conference

PRESENT (32):

S. Alexander	R. Bender	L. Daub	M. Della
E. Dinowitz	M. Donato	D. Escano	R. Fanuzzi
N. Fazio	S. Froot	D. Gellman	R. Ginty
J. Gomez	M. Goodman	E. Green	R. Jacklosky
D. B. Jackson	M. Joyce	D. Leverett	R. Lowe
C. G. Moerdler	O. Murray	D. Padernacht	K. Pesce
J. Reyes	G. Santiago	L. Spalter	C. Tepelus
J. Townes	D. Travis	M. Wolpoff	R. Zavras

ABSENT (6):

P. Ellis	E. Garcia	M. Gluck	L. Lopez
T. Pardo	S. Villaverde		

STAFF:

C. Gannon, District Manager
P. Romano, Community Associate
T. Ochoteco, Community Coordinator

GUEST:

Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz • Council Member Fernando Cabrera
• Council Member Andrew Cohen • Police Officer Mercedes Conejo
(NYPD 50th Precinct) • Francisco Ramirez (Sen. Gustavo Rivera Office) •
Patrick Hill (Council Member Cohen’s Office) • Patrick Lindo (Riverdale
Press) • Emmanuel Martinez (Sen. Biaggi’s Office) • Ishrael Gonzalez
(Bronx Borough President’s Office) • Mariel De La Cruz (NYC
Comptroller’s Office), Caesar Tobar-Acosta, David Beller

L. Spalter convened the meeting at 7:00 PM and welcomed all to this month’s virtual Board Meeting.

1. GALLERY SESSION:

Caesar Tobar-Acosta from the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center (KHCC) informed the board that KHCC has served a total of 30,000 meals during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most participants live in the 10463 & 10468 zip codes. The Community Center is looking for volunteers to assist in the pantry.

David Beller from the US Census informed the board that the response rate nationwide, before census worker follow-up, is 65.5%, New York State 61.9%, New York City 58.8%, and The Bronx 59.8%. Response rate in Riverdale and Kingsbridge is slightly higher but one section track in Riverdale is only 52%. Door to door follow-up is in process which include no response to census, question omissions and possible errors. The last day to complete the 2020 Census has been moved up to September 30, 2020.

2. REPORT FROM THE BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT OFFICE – Ishrael Gonzalez

Mr. Gonzalez reported that the Borough President’s report was distributed. Everyone is encouraged to complete the census. The new board member appointments should be finalized by the end of September and new members will be in attendance for the October Board Meeting.

3. REPORT FROM THE NYPD 50TH PRECINCT – Police Officer Mercedes Conejo

Community Affairs Officer Conejo provided stats indicating a decrease in robberies, burglaries, and grand larceny with a 7% increase in assaults. PO Conejo invited questions for Captain’s reply which included monthly hate crime statistics, information on armed robbery at Amalgamated, work with NYC MEND and impact of budget cuts on the precinct’s capacity. Also received thanks for work in parks over the summer.

REPORT FROM ASSEMBLY MEMBER JEFFREY DINOWITZ

Assembly Member Dinowitz informed the board that the State Assembly recently passed the (1) Tenant Safe Harbor Act which would prevent evictions and (2) Absentee Ballot Requests Due to Risk of Illness to allow all New York State residents to apply for absentee ballots for this year and next by checking off temporary illness; this is important for those with concerns about the Coronavirus. Noted several events including parks, food and mask giveaways and flu shots and discussed census, speeding and absentee voting.

REPORT FROM COUNCIL MEMBER FERNANDO CABRERA

Council Member Cabrera informed the board of the untimely passing of his mother due to COVID and reminded everyone to take precautions and stay safe. His office has recently participated in meal and face mask distribution events and highlighted the huge number of people in need of food. His office has also partnered with non-profit organizations to distribute bookbags and school supplies. Noted overcrowding on Bx3 and an upcoming pilot for safe electric bike sharing.

A board member highlighted the work at Church of the Mediator to provide food for our many neighbors in need.

REPORT FROM COUNCIL MEMBER ANDREW COHEN

Council Member Cohen informed the board about the many difficult choices while passing the budget this summer. The NYC Council Committee of Consumer Affairs will be holding a hearing on Con Edison’s response to tropical storm Isaias. Councilmember Cohen is upgrading park water features to be comparable to others in the city and is pleased that the feature in Spuyten Duyvil Playground is complete with VCP at Mosholu Ave., Woodlawn, and Mosholu Pkwy to follow.

Chair Spalter invited D. B. Jackson to discuss concerns about Con Edison's response to the storm. He shared his experience stating the lack of response from Con Edison with regards to trees down, power lines down and road blockages which affected major bus routes. District Manager C. Gannon was instrumental in the tree removal. He expressed gratitude for the elected officials that responded immediately to the situation.

4. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

L. Spalter welcomed all board members and meeting attendees from the summer break. L. Spalter highlighted important work of board members over the summer and acknowledged C. G. Moerdler for being selected #18 in City & State Bronx Power 50, C. Tepelus for being selected as Senator Biaggi's 2020 Women of Distinction and N. Fazio and D. Padernacht for their successes in getting Open Streets for Johnson Avenue approved. L. Spalter also thanked the office staff for all their hard work.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

R. Zavras provided an overview of the Treasurer's Report and the Spending Report for FY 2020 and referred members to the Executive Committee minutes for a more detailed report.. There is no special funding this fiscal year.

6. DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT

C. Gannon thanked the Mayor's Office and Public Advocate's Office for donating facemasks and hand sanitizer to the Board office. The Board Office distributed masks to Engine 52, Ladder 52 Fire Hours, the 50th Precinct, homeless shelter, merchants throughout the district and volunteer groups.

The District Service Cabinet minutes were distributed last week, and C. Gannon asked that Board members read them and reach out if they have any questions or concerns.

The board office has increased its presence on Social Media, the office began using twitter over the summer and will review social media processes in December. The Board Office is also working with DOITT to transition the website which will make it more user friendly and accessible. The Board Office will be responsible for maintaining the site.

The Board Office staff was required to complete an Anti-Sexual Harassment Training in August. The Borough President's Office is reaching out to Board Members who were not able to complete the training due to the pandemic. They will be able to complete the training at home.

C. Gannon emphasized the importance of reporting municipal service issues with 311. She reminded board members and residents to call complaints into 311 and send the confirmation number to the board office for follow up with the appropriate agency.

C. Gannon updated the Board on census outreach. The Board Office has sent an email with census information to community partners, such as community centers, libraries and civic

groups. The Board Office has also provided building contact information to census representatives. C. Gannon also participated in an outreach event on Riverdale Avenue with census workers and is currently working to organize one in Marble Hill. The Office regularly posts census information on social media.

7. REPORT FROM DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING – Not present

L. Daub conducted a **Roll Call of Board Members** and determined that a quorum is present.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Law, Rules & Ethics – M. Wolpoff

M. Wolpoff reported that the committee will convene on Monday, September 14th. M. Wolpoff briefly reminded board members about the Ethical Guidance Manual which is on the website. It was produced in 2013 by the late Irving Ladimer with M. Wolpoff and R. Ginty and revised in 2016. Noted the section on voting and abstentions. At the next meeting, the committee will discuss the street renaming guidelines, special committees, recommendations made by the Nominating Committee and the use of the community board email list.

b. Parks & Recreation – R. Ginty

Due to technical difficulties L. Daub reported on behalf of R. Ginty that the committee will convene on September 23rd at 7pm.

c. Public Safety – E. Green

E. Green informed the board that many complaints had been received about street racing and stated that the NYPD is working with highway patrol to address the matter. Over the summer, the Board office received many quality of life complaints including illegal BBQs, noise and crowds at local parks. E. Green, R. Ginty, C. Gannon, the 50th Precinct and Parks Commissioner met to discuss the influx of complaints. Will revisit argus security cameras.

E. Green presented the following resolution for a new liquor license at Fenwick's Pub that is under new ownership.

WHEREAS, Richard Puentes of Fenwicks Pub (432 West 238th Street) appeared before the Public Safety Committee on June 16th, 2020 for a new liquor license.

WHEREAS, Richard Puentes, the new owner, has agreed to a 2AM closing for the 1st year. Said agreement has been recorded at the Bronx Community Board 8 office.

WHEREAS, Richard Puentes and Officer Cintron of the 50th Precinct agreed to discuss placement of security cameras.

BE IT RESOLVED the Public Safety Committee unanimously approves this application.

VOTE → In Favor (31) Opposed (0) Abstention (1)

IN FAVOR: S. Alexander R. Bender L. Daub M. Della E. Dinowitz
 M. Donato D. Escano R. Fanuzzi N. Fazio S. Froot
 D. Gellman R. Ginty J. Gomez M. Goodman E. Green
 R. Jacklosky M. Joyce D. Leverett R. Lowe C. G Moerdler
 O. Murray D. Padernacht K. Pesce J. Reyes G. Santiago
 L. Spalter C. Tepelus J. Townes D. Travis M. Wolpoff
 R. Zavras

Abstention D. B. Jackson (For Cause)

d. Special Committee on Racial Equity – R. Zavras

R. Zavras presented the following resolution regarding the 2020 US Census.

Whereas Article I, Section 2 of the United States Constitution requires that residents be counted every ten years; and

Whereas that count, currently known as the census, determines proportional representation in the House of Representatives; and

Whereas the U.S. federal government uses the census to determine the allocation of federal funding for roads, social services, education, and other essential services; and

Whereas the U.S. Census Bureau defines its mission as “to serve as the nation’s leading provider of quality data about its people and economy;” and

Whereas the census is also the central database for many municipalities and agencies, such as the New York Department of City Planning and Department of Education, to determine future policy and planning needs; and

Whereas certain groups such as people of color, immigrants (regardless of status), non-English speakers, and hard-to-reach residents have been historically undercounted according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s own reporting, which affects the resources that are allocated to those communities; and

Whereas it has been widely reported that an accurate census process has been hindered with exclusionary, fearful, and contradictory tactics to minimize participation by the aforementioned groups; and

Whereas an accurate census can help governments to address structural inequalities; and
Whereas the U.S. census is currently underway; and

Whereas in August the date for completion of the census count was suddenly moved from October 31, 2020 to September 30, 2020; and

Whereas the change of date and the hindering of census operations call into question the reliability and accuracy of the information; and

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic also exacerbates obstacles to an accurate count of the population and has already delayed and disrupted U.S. Census Bureau operations;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Bronx Community Board No. 8 condemns the decision of the U.S. Census Bureau on August 3, 2020 to alter the timeframe for the census count and urges all of our government and non-government partners to work together to ensure as accurate and complete a count as possible in furtherance of the U.S. Census Bureau's stated mission.

VOTE RESULT →	In Favor (32)		Opposed (0)		Abstention (0)	
IN FAVOR	S. Alexander	R. Bender	L. Daub	M. Della	E. Dinowitz	
	M. Donato	D. Escano	R. Fanuzzi	N. Fazio	S. Froot	
	D. Gellman	R. Ginty	J. Gomez	M. Goodman	E. Green	
	R. Jacklosky	M. Joyce	D. Leverett	R. Lowe	C. G Moerdler	
	O. Murray	D. Padernacht	K. Pesce	J. Reyes	G. Santiago	
	L. Spalter	C. Tepelus	J. Townes	D. Travis	M. Wolpoff	
	R. Zavras	D. B. Jackson				

R. Zavras informed board members that the initial report draft from the seven members on the Special Committee on Racial Equity had been distributed for review and feedback. All feedback will be reviewed by the committee members and the deadline to submit initial comments is September 25, 2020. She highlighted that the charge of the committee is racial equity but acknowledges that there are many other issues to address.

R. Zavras read the introduction to the draft Initial report and continued with an overview of the different chapters including the background of this historical moment, the overall role of the board, demographics, the committee's initial framework of engagement and finally initial recommendations on how SCRE can help to build a practice of equity for Community Board 8.

Board members provided some suggestions and applauded the committee for their work.

e. TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION – Daniel Padernacht

D. Padernacht provided an update from the working group that is working on the Palisade Ave & Kappock Street intersection. The working group recently met with DOT Commissioner Trottenberg at the site to discuss different options. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

The next committee meeting will be September 17, 2020. The committee has a full agenda to discuss the impact of budget deficits, the DDC project in Van Cortlandt Village, street racing, resurfacing on Independence Ave, and the 3893 Waldo Ave retaining wall A proposal to change a 2-way street into 1-way at West 238 Street between Sedgwick and Cannon Place will be discussed in October

f. AGING – Eric Dinowitz

The next committee meeting is September 17 at 4pm.

g. BUDGET – David Gellman

All committees have submitted their initial capital/expense budgets for FY 2022. The Public hearing will be held on October 13th, right before the Full Board Meeting.

h. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Nick Fazio

The next meeting will be September 24 at 7pm. The committee will discuss the economic impact on businesses due to COVID-19. Small Business Development Center will participate. Businesses are opening slowly, and residents are shopping locally. N. Fazio & C. Gannon distributed flyers to local businesses with information on the Neighborhood Business Grant program. N. Fazio thanked the board office and fellow board members for all their hard work and assistance,

i. EDUCATION, LIBRARIES & CULTURAL AFFAIRS – Sylvia Alexander

S. Alexander informed the board that there are many changes due to COVID-19. There are major concerns with school openings and the safety of staff, teachers, and students. Chair Alexander suggested that DOE be invited to the District Service Cabinet meetings. A member noted that thousands of teachers could be laid off due to city budget cuts. The next meeting is September 22nd.

j. ENVIRONMENT & SANITATION – Dr. Robert Fanuzzi

R. Fanuzzi informed the board about the recent resignation of the Commissioner of the Department of Sanitation, Katheryn Garcia. Former Commissioner Garcia outlined some budget cuts to essential services such as snow removal, recycling education, and the reduction of garbage collection. The committee will discuss environmental justice and organic recycling and composting at the next meeting which will be held Wednesday, September 17th.

k. HEALTH, HOSPITALS & SOCIAL SERVICES – Omar Murray

O. Murray informed the board that New York State continues to see a decline in COVID-19 cases. New York state currently has 445 new hospitalizations, 57,000 tests of which 557 were positive, 4 more states were added to the list of states seeing an increase in positive cases, bringing the total to 35 states. Noted food debit cards for students and other initiatives. At Wednesday's meeting, the committee will hear from a doctor and a representative from TNYC Test & Trace. Test sites are still open.

l. HOUSING – Daris B. Jackson

D. B. Jackson informed the board that David Beller from the US Census and Adina Alert from NYU hospital provided presentations at the last committee meeting which was moved up to September 3rd. Mr. Beller spoke about the current US Census and process and Ms.

Alert provided health suggestions and explained the current CDC guidelines. The next meeting will be on October 26th.

m. LAND USE – Charles G. Moerdler

C. G. Moerdler brought forth a resolution for Board approval stemming from deliberate building of a house in plain violation of SNAD rules. Thanks to the work of Sherida Paulsen and others, the violations are documented. The resolution strives to gain meaningful enforcement and deterrence:

BE IT RESOLVED, that Bronx Community Board No. 8 requests that Council Member Andrew Cohen, Council Member Fernando Cabrera and Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez and any / all relevant Council Members seek the enactment by resolution or otherwise a measure that would require that where a plan of restoration is filed by an applicant who has not fully complied with the zoning resolution particularly with respect to restoration plans relating to SNAD and subdivisions, that the relevant Community Board be kept advised of those proceedings and be afforded an opportunity to submit comment and recommendations, if any.

VOTE RESULT →	In Favor (32)	Opposed (0)	Abstention (0)		
IN FAVOR	S. Alexander M. Donato D. Gellman R. Jacklosky O. Murray L. Spalter R. Zavras	R. Bender D. Escano R. Ginty M. Joyce D. Padernacht C. Tepelus D. B. Jackson	L. Daub R. Fanuzzi J. Gomez D. Leverett K. Pesce J. Townes	M. Della N. Fazio M. Goodman R. Lowe J. Reyes D. Travis	E. Dinowitz S. Froot E. Green C. G Moerdler G. Santiago M. Wolpoff

Mr. Moerdler provided an update on the work to preserve homes on and around the fully integrated Webb Avenue area that may fall to gentrification. He also suggests another look at the 197a plan to address local concerns.

n. YOUTH – Julia Gomez

J. Gomez informed the board of several Committee initiatives this year including workforce development in conjunction with the Economic Development Committee, voting initiatives and building police and local youth relationships. The next meeting is scheduled for September 21 and Ms. Gomez welcomes participation, input and ideas.

9. DISCUSSION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 2, 2020

No discussion. [*Valid vote only at committee meeting*]

10. APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 9, 2020 & JULY 9, 2020

Full Board Meeting minutes vote, as corrected, for June 9, 2020:

VOTE RESULT →	In Favor (31)	Opposed (0)	Abstention (1)
IN FAVOR	S. Alexander M. Donato D. Gellman R. Jacklosky O. Murray L. Spalter R. Zavras	R. Bender D. Escano R. Ginty M. Joyce D. Padernacht C. Tepelus	L. Daub R. Fanuzzi J. Gomez D. Leverett K. Pesce J. Townes M. Della N. Fazio M. Goodman R. Lowe J. Reyes D. Travis E. Dinowitz S. Froot E. Green C. G Moerdler G. Santiago M. Wolpoff
ABSTENTION	D. B. Jackson		

Full Board Meeting minutes vote for July 9, 2020:

VOTE RESULT →	In Favor (32)	Opposed (0)	Abstention (0)
IN FAVOR	S. Alexander M. Donato D. Gellman R. Jacklosky O. Murray L. Spalter R. Zavras	R. Bender D. Escano R. Ginty M. Joyce D. Padernacht C. Tepelus D. B. Jackson	L. Daub R. Fanuzzi J. Gomez D. Leverett K. Pesce J. Townes M. Della N. Fazio M. Goodman R. Lowe J. Reyes D. Travis E. Dinowitz S. Froot E. Green C. G Moerdler G. Santiago M. Wolpoff

11. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Chair Spalter reported that intra community board communication and guidelines has been referred to the Law, Rules & Ethics Committee for discussion.

Motion to Adjourn at 10:00 pm by Chair Spalter.

Prepared By: PABLO ROMANO, Community Associate
Reviewed By: Lisa Daub, Secretary