

**Community Board 9
890 Nostrand Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11225**

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING
HELD ON OCTOBER 27, 2015
AUDITORIUM, MIDDLE SCHOOL 61
400 EMPIRE BOULEVARD, BROOKLYN, NY 11225**

Board Members Present

Patricia Baker
Stuart Balberg
Rev. Douglas Banks
Fred Baptiste
Yaacov Behrman
Simone Bennett
Warren Berke
Augustine Blackwell
Rev. Phyllis Brown
Ben Edwards
Milton Ellis
Dr. Zorina Frederick
Rabbi Jacob Goldstein
Rabbi Nochum Gross
Tessa Hackett-Vieira
Sylveta Hamilton-Gonzales
Kyra-Lee Harry
Aron Hershkop
Daniel Ingvoldstad
Louis Johnson
Demetrius Lawrence
Francisca Leopold

Board Members Present

Avi Lesches
Mattijs Limberger
Carmen Martinez
Maria Molina
Musa Moore
Patricia Moses
Beverly Newsome
Riel Peerbooms
Pia Raymond
Hector Robertson
Mary Rollerson-Blackett
Roosevelt Rose
Kenya Sollas
Chanina Sperlin
Rabbi Joseph Spielman
Ada Terry
Lorraine Thomas
Timothy Thomas
Nevon Watson
Jacqueline Welch
Evelyn Williams

Board Members Absent

Veta May Clarke
Shelia Foster-Golding
Michael Liburd
Denise Mann
Unella Rhone-Perry

Elected Officials/Agency Representatives Present

Tahirah A. Moore – Hon. Bill DeBlasio
Eli Slavin – Hon. Yvette Clarke
Karen Chambers – Hon. Kenneth P. Thompson
Edu C. Hermelyn – Hon. Diana Richardson
Arna Lipkind – Hon. Darlene Mealy
William Boone – Medgar Evers College

Brian McLaurin – Hon. Letitia James
Jamal Pollard – Hon. Eric Adams
Joseph Yanis – Hon. Walter T. Mosley
Matthew Pitt – Hon. Laurie Cumbo
Honorable Shirley Patterson

PUBLIC SESSION:

Public Hearing on Community Board 9's FY 2017 Capital and Expense Budget Requests.

Chairman Demetrius Lawrence called the meeting to order and read the Community Board 9 Rules of Conduct into record. He read the agenda which calls for the adaptation of the **Capital and Expense Budgets for Fiscal Year 2017**. These budget requests were initiated by their respective committees. He opened the floor to the public for comments on the budget items.

Comments:

- Please add speed bumps for all residential streets as a priority.
- The public does not understand the document as formatted. Clarify the budget, including an explanation as to why District Manager Pearl Miles makes \$134,000 a year. She violates laws, including the Freedom of Information and Public Meetings Acts, disrespects us and requests a raise. The Board currently does not let us speak until the end of the meetings. Do not limit speaking time to a total of fifteen minutes.

Chairman Lawrence: I have heard those complaints and shared them with the Executive Board which will deliberate on this.

DM Pearl Miles: This document for comment is a budget request to the City and our purpose here is to comment on the current list and suggest changes or removal of items, not to add new items. These have already been submitted and we will get a response from the City by February.

- Request security cameras for Maple Street and Schenectady.
- Request “real affordable housing” and specify a definition of “affordable”. Raise the percentage of affordable units required in new housing.
- The document generally calls for renovating schools? Which schools and why? The other neighborhoods have lesser school crowding. Seniors need more space. The document was not properly sorted out by type of budget (capital; expense). Why does MS 61 need more teachers? The whole document is a mess and needs much revision, Board 9 did this?

DM Pearl Miles: This is the format that was sent to us online and put together in this way by the City, not Board 9. Furthermore, the entry MS 61 was a typo and should read PS 161, which, as we note, doesn't have a gym. Moreover, the Capital and Expense items were duly labeled.

- I never got an email from CB9 in 2 years. I request that the “Empire Boulevard study” be funded.
- We asked for speed bumps and nothing was done. Schenectady and Maple needs a traffic light.
- Medgar Evers High School, population over 1000, needs a gym, an auditorium, and a cafeteria so the students do not have to make the trek to the Senior College campus.

DM Pearl Miles: This is already in the requests.

(Q) How do we resolve the homeless shelter issue that falls on deaf ears?

DM Pearl Miles: By requesting support from the City Council. Committees start the process. If you don't get our emails, we will correct that.

Chairman Lawrence: We want a list of civic organizations and we will work on putting it together and work with them.

(Q) Why was the budget submission not posted to the public?

DM Pearl Miles: We printed 100 copies and they are in the back.

- Some of the items appear unclear and complex, so please let us know why the items were refused by the City.

DM Pearl Miles: We will have that information when we receive the City's response.

Chairman Lawrence: Feel free to contact us by email for further information on the Budget items.

- We need money for the "Empire Boulevard study" to hire our own independent planner.

Presentation by Richard Carmona, NYC Department of Transportation, Project Manager for Empire Boulevard Project.

We are here because our current proposal is the Mayor's priority, the Empire Boulevard Reconstruction Project. This is for the Utica, Schenectady, and Washington Avenue corners. We propose adding a "pedestrians only" lane on both ends of Empire, and "net downs" to shorten pedestrian crossings. The Parks Department will add trees and seats to make the corners public pedestrian space. We will construct in place of one of the car lanes, a pedestrian triangle. We will extend the Utica Green Street structure. We will close a driving lane proximate to the Duane Reade; and add pedestrian ramps.

Questions:

- Why don't you just put gates on the island, so pedestrians can get through?

- Why extend the Schenectady island to plant trees?

- For the last 2 months all you came here for was to assist pedestrians. This has made driving conditions terrible. A five minute wait is now a half hour. We need to support the drivers instead.

Transportation Chairman Tim Thomas: We are not here to give drivers preference, but to equally serve drivers, walkers and bikers. DOT did a serious analysis to get to this. The money was already allocated by federal dollars and is a done deal. They didn't come here for an up or down vote, but for our support letter.

- On Sterling behind Western Beef, we now have to wait 30 minutes to park. And they are taking away 14 parking spots!

- Empire is being torn up by them on behalf of the commercial landlords to increase the property values.

-This is pure anti-car. And unlike your previous Kingston plan, here you didn't even do the calculations. Where are the time-lapse video models that would support to prove your theories that this wouldn't crimp traffic? You don't have them.

NYCDOT: That's because Kingston is a different issue. Here, we know where the peaks lie and chose this model carefully.

- Rogers and Midwood, I was injured by a car so I appreciate vision zero, but this is not thought out. Now I live on Maple and Schenectady. I see how bad it will be for kids walking to school. You made it worse when removing one traffic lane to support Express Buses and are making it even worse by removing yet another lane. At Duane Reade, just erect a fence. And don't put a tree to prevent me, a pedestrian, from crossing. Leave the traffic lane there, as the hospital's ambulances need it.

- I live on Washington Ave. and applaud the DOT's work.
- This street has been traveled for 100 years with no problems except the usual accidents once in a while. The reality is that net downs only choke traffic. That's what DOT has done on Throop near Woodhull, making its ambulances crawl for twenty blocks. Stop spending money choking the streets.
- Why didn't you take our opinions down first?
- We need bike lanes on the Prospect Park corridor.
- They claim that the safety has been endangered there. Where are the statistics proving this? It's not more dangerous there than elsewhere. Now that you are here, let us vote you down. Don't come here to ram this down our throats.
- (Midwood) I bike, I did my own study on directionality of traffic and it shows that the backup is now up to Sterling Street. The previous plans didn't work. The "Empire obstacle bells" is an example of failure. Now you have to wait for four reds to drive through one corner. And what's with the ridiculous "green spots"?

Chairman Lawrence: They want a recommendation letter.

- DOT is doing a great job. The problem is the density caused by large population increases. Who owns the triangle and will benefit from the property value increase?

NYCDOT: The City.

- That will change because the City sells out property to developers like hotcakes.

And, Tim, I don't want to hear the term "done deal" ever again.

Tim Thomas: I apologize for that term.

- I am already usually thirty minutes late to drive home. Not this! Use the money to give Medgar Evers HS the gym.

(Q) You are closing the lanes but are you considering adjusting the red lights?

NYCDOT: Yes.

Jay Sorid, Esq: Nothing you can do? Follow my lead in what I have already done; it gets New York State money. Citizen participation laws and due process allow us to first demand the data and study information. They claim that "RVA" has the detailed analysis. Demand at each instance that they first provide you with these studies.

- The Vision Zero initiative for Washington Avenue is not as it not a contentious area. Why a park in front of a parking lot? Why not bike lanes instead of trees? Are there other plans of which we have not been made aware? Who are RVA consultants that DOT hired?

NYCDOT: A private engineering consultant firm.

Tim Thomas: We will consider requests to modify its federal funding by asking our Congresswoman only if the committee and full Board agree, so it's not in that sense, a completely "done" deal. Now, we are asking for the Board's support letter.

- Don't detour Empire traffic to the side streets. Consider the residents of the adjacent side streets. And, no, this is state money.

DM Pearl Miles: No. It's federal.

- We want RVA to first document their reasons.

- Washington Avenue drivers are being increasingly blocked by this.

- In London, there are pedestrian cross bridges. They make the walk take some more time but the safety is worth it. We should use that instead.

Tim Thomas: Please attend Transportation meetings, every third Wednesday at the board office.

BUSINESS SESSION:

The Chairman acknowledged the presence of notables and elected officials. He took attendance. Forty-three members present (a quorum).

Upon motion, the May and September 2015 minutes were adopted. The office had just received the April minutes; their adoption was tabled to the next meeting.

DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT

- Because of repairs to the Brooklyn Public Library Schenectady branch, it will be closed until April 2016. Borrowed books may be returned at any branch.
- The Budget consultations with the City were attended by three Board Members.
- Albany, Bedford, Brooklyn, Clarkson, East New York, Empire, Franklin, New York, Nostrand, Schenectady and Washington are slated for countdown clock stop lights.
- We met with the 71 Precinct and property owners regarding closing some clubs.
- I addressed Global Citizenship High School students on the background history and function of community Boards.
- Our current intern is a New York University student who has been helping plan speed bumps and contiguousness of bike lanes.
- Co-op owners on Ocean Avenue complained about flooding problems and we addressed these concerns with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

COMMITTEE REPORT ADDITIONS

Public Safety - Avi Lesches, Chairperson: AMBC LLC, Caribbean Spotlight (The Buzz), LowKey Lounge and D Avenue approached the board with applications. 3 have renewal requests and were non-problematic, so we voted to renew. AMBC LLC will be open only from 7am to 7pm, so it was approved. Three others: Keg Lounge - 451 East New York Avenue; T.A.M.S. Indian Corp. d/b/a King of Tandoor - 600 Flatbush, and Parkside Corner Deli Corp. - 713 Flatbush Avenue failed to appear. We reviewed the maps for proximity to schools and churches and accordingly found those approved to be in compliance.

STATEMENT BY CHAIRMAN DEMETRIUS LAWRENCE

On October 15, 2015 the Executive Committee met and recommended the removal of District Manager Pearl Miles, with a unanimous vote of six to zero. We will allow her to respond to the full board as required by our by-laws. Because such deliberations by the Board are not subject to public view, we will entertain a motion to go to executive session for deliberations. Motion moved, duly seconded, voted by voice vote; approved, only one vote opposed.

(THE SEALED SEGMENT OF THE MINUTES ARE CONFIDENTIAL)

BUSINESS SESSION CONTINUED

Chairman Demetrius Lawrence: 43 members were present. Pearl Miles had an opportunity to hear the charges and address them. (Mr. Lawrence then read the appropriate section of the by-laws covering District Manager serving at the pleasure of the Board). The vote was: 32 **yes**; 7 **no**; and 3 **abstentions** to remove Ms. Miles immediately. She is now removed. The Chairman will continue to respect all of the community regardless of race or ethnicity. We thank the District Manager for her over thirty years of service.

Pearl Miles: It was a pleasure for me to serve. I will need three days to clear my office.

Moved and accepted by voice vote.

Chairman Lawrence: Pearl, Please give me the keys. (She gave the keys.) We will accompany her to the office to remove the materials.

Chairman Lawrence read the appropriate sections of the by-laws regarding the replacement of the District Manager. He appointed seven members of a search committee to suggest replacements: Avi Lesches, Bishop Sylveta Hamilton-Gonzales, Chanina Sperlin, Daniel Ingvoldstad, Hector Robertson, Patricia Baker and Patricia Moses.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

One person spoke, asking for a home.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion was made and seconded to table the rest of the agenda because of the time constraints, items tabled. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Stuart Balberg, Board Secretary

November 24, 2015