

**COMMUNITY BOARD 9
890 NOSTRAND AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NY 11225**

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING
HELD ON NOVEMBER 14, 2010
MIDDLE SCHOOL 61 AUDITORIUM
400 EMPIRE BOULEVARD, BROOKLYN NY 11225**

Board Members Present

Pastor Robert Ambrose
Gwen Carter
Brian Dean
Edmund Fanning
Shawn Francis
Rabbi Jacob Z. Goldstein
Sylveta Hamilton-Gonzales
Ruby Hodge
Brenda Hutto-Lucas
Maurice Jean-Baptiste
Yaakov Katz
Demetrius Lawrence
Samuel Marmulzsteyn
Carl Morgan
Frank Nicholas
Rosemarie Perry
Myrtle Roberson
Eleanor Rollins
Rabbi Joseph Spielman
Jacqueline Welch
Evelyn Williams

Board Members Absent

Robert Agyemang
Jenay Alejandro
Dion Ashman
Stuart Balberg
Rev. Phyllis Brown - sick
Michael Cetera
Aldith Clarke
Julian Daniels - sick
Leslie Davis
Geraldine Dease
Shelia Foster-Golding
Theopia Green
Rabbi Nochum Gross
Tessa Hackett-Vieira

Board Members Absent

Mary Rollerson-Blackett
Roosevelt Rose
Brenda Scott
Chanina Sperlin
Victoria St. Clair
Yvonne Straker
Denise Thomas
Edu Hermelyn
Aron Hershkop
Jannie Johnson
Dr. Marco Mason
Dwayne Nicholson
Romania Roachford
Karlene Robinson

Elected Officials/Agency Representatives Present

Reuven Lipkind – Hon. Eric Adams
Alfred A. Chiodo – Hon. Letitia James
Debra Lesane – Kings County Hospital Center
Ann Marie Adamson – Hon. Marty Markowitz
Smith Georges – Hon. Mathieu Eugene
Dr. William H. Boone – Medgar Evers College
Sam Pierre – Hon. Michael Bloomberg
Hon. Olanike Alabi
Arna Lipkind – Hon. Darlene Mealy

PUBLIC SESSION

Mr. Aaron Bouska, Director of Government and Community Affairs; Mr. Richard Coleman, VP of Facilities, Planning, Construction and Management, Brooklyn Botanic Garden; along with a representative from the firm Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Inc., will presented to the community, the design for the restoration and upgrade of the original entry gate to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden on Flatbush Avenue. The garden is seeking the Community Board's support of the design.

Mr. Aaron Bouska informed that he was here in January regarding the support for Brooklyn Botanic Gardens Day and the Centennial Celebrations. Many people enjoyed the free activities for the celebration.

Mr. Bouska went on to introduce the following programs: The Garden Apprentice Program, which is the Teen Internship program ages 8-12 years of age. Applications are due December 8, 2010. Many job skills are being taught. Application is available to everyone living in Brooklyn. He then introduced Mr. Richard Coleman Vice President of Facilities, Planning and Construction and Management of Brooklyn Botanic Gardens.

Mr. Coleman informed that the Flatbush Avenue entry gate to the Garden is the third gate that is planned to be upgraded and improved as part of the program which started five years ago. The firm to be used is the Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Inc. The object of the upgrading is to make it a cleaner, nicer area. The ticket booth, near the subway station, restrooms as well as the area leading to the Garden will be improved.

Mr. Michael Van Valkenburgh discussed the area to be renovated at the Flatbush Avenue gate: This will include an arch over the gate and the restrooms. The materials of the building to be used as the very long hybrid. The arch will have a fancy area around it.

Public Hearing on the application from Pebbles Transportation Co., Inc., to review its Authority under Chapter 9, Section 9-01 to 9-19 of the Rules of the City of New York and in local Law of the City of New York No. 115 to operate a van service; and to expand the currently authorized number of vans from 16 to 26 with the proposed addition of 10 vans, to operate 24 hours daily, in an authorized service area which includes areas within Community District 9.

Mr. Edward Fanning, Chair of the Transportation Committee informed that he has a few points to make: First Pebbles is a Brooklyn based company. The vehicles, maintenance, garage etc are all done in Brooklyn. Secondly, the operations are not the cowboys you see on Flatbush Avenue. They are licensed, stationed, and steady within the City, and within various aspects of their business. Thirdly, they are employer issued.

This is the second time they are seeking renewal of their license. They will provide more service to the community. The Committee recommended to the Board to renew the license.

Representing Pebbles Transportation Co. Inc., Mr. Leroy Morrison, CEO of Pebbles Transportation and Alexis Van Lines. Mr. Morrison informed that he has five legal companies in Brooklyn. That is his service to the community. He has been in Brooklyn for over 29 years. His work is to build transportation service in Brooklyn so that when the City buses go on strike they are always there. Whenever the yellow cabs are on strike they are always there.

They also have service in Queens and Manhattan. They have serviced Brooklyn for over twenty-one years. He would like to service people of Brooklyn for many more years. They are licensed by New York State Department of Transportation; New York City Department of Transportation and by the Taxi and Limousine Commission; and also by the Federal Government. There are people who would love to go to Jersey and Pennsylvania. They can go anywhere. They are properly insured.

Pebbles Transportation is not part of the "cowboys". The Taxi and Limousine Commissioner has been weeding out the "cowboys". For the past months there has been heavy enforcement on Flatbush Avenue. These are young people who want to provide for themselves and not for their family. Pebbles job is to provide jobs, to provide service to the Brooklyn ridership. The vans are provided with cards from the Taxi and Limousine so that when pulled over by the police they can see that they are legitimate. They can show them their cards.

There are van stops that the City provides for them i.e. by the Target between Avenue H and Flatbush Avenue, Avenue L and Flatbush and Downtown Brooklyn.

The politicians in Brooklyn: Councilmember Mathieu Eugene, New York State Senator Nick Perry and Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz support the commuter vans. They are there to provide service for the people in Brooklyn so that when the City transportation or the yellow cabs fail they can help to pick up the slot.

Question and Answers

How much is the fare? The fare is only two dollars. Even when the bus might go up in cost a year or more from now the cost will remain at two dollars.

Chairman Goldstein is pleased that they are providing this kind of service to Brooklyn because the cabs at times pose a danger to people.

Mr. Morrison thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the licensed renewal of Pebbles Transportation.

Mr. Luis Daniel Caridad, Community Education Coordinator, Neighborhood Economic Development Advocacy Project (NEDAP) will make a presentation on fair housing and foreclosure prevention. NEDAP is a non-for-profit resource and advocacy center for community groups in New York City.

Mr. Caridad informed that NEDAP work all over the City on various community issues, particularly financial issues. They also do teaching, research mapping, that kind of advocacy. They work with community groups; they let people know what their rights are in property management.

Mr. Caridad presented a map of Brooklyn. Every dot he said represents homes in Brooklyn that are in foreclosure. He is here today to talk to homeowners who might be struggling and what has to be done is to get a home modification, a change to the term of the mortgage so that the monthly payment goes down. The best way to do this is to apply to the Federal Home Affordable Education Program. It is a Federal Program which began under the Obama Administration last year. It is a program where homeowners can sit with counselors to discuss the programs, who can tell you where to get a good percentage of the finances and to see if they are qualified. In the back of the room there are sheets which tell you about non-profit organizations all over the City that will provide information to homeowners completely free.

There is an increase of scams out there targeting homeowners, "we want to buy your home, and we want to save your property". These are promises that people never keep. There are people who will do all this for free. People can call 311 they will be referred to them. Another point change in the law this year it is called Settlement Conferences. Agencies in New York before the lender can foreclose the property they have to meet with the homeowner before a court appointed referee. This is called a property Conference. Homeowners will be notified about the conference, the date of the conference and the required documents. This way you will know your rights. The best way to do this is through a legal not-for-profit group.

Lastly, before with foreclosure properties, tenants had no rights. Before, as soon as the property was foreclosed the banks had the right to take them out. The city created two important rights: 1. Tenants must be notified whether by mail or it should be posted. The tenants now have the right to stay in the foreclosed

property for 90 days or to the end of the lease depending on which one is longer. This was created by the city last year due to the high volume of tenants who were placed in that situation. Looking at the map there was one hundred and twenty foreclosures last year. The number of people in the situation of losing their homes last year within the Community was very high; Brooklyn had the most foreclosures last year.

Questions and Answers

Chairman Goldstein – Looking at the maps Community Board 8 and 16 had a massacre last year. Mr. Caridad - Community Board 8 had about two hundred last year and Board 16 was similar. Queens was the most affected area in the City.

Chairman Goldstein – I live in Brooklyn. I do not want to see people being chased out of their homes. The question is, is there a large preponderance of people who were snookered into by finance companies to refinance. Mr. Caridad: that is really a good point. He thinks the recession contributed to this, it also goes further back in the 1990's when groups like NEDAP were not the ordinary culture in certain parts of the City, in certain parts of Brooklyn and Queens. This was the result of predatory lenders. Homeowners have had their homes for years built a lot of equity. They were told, "Oh you can take money out of your home, and you can lower your mortgage." It is the same way now that they are targeting lowering of mortgages. There are people mainly seniors on a fixed income, didn't have a lot of money coming in. These people were targeted for abusive lending. Those mortgages were unaffordable to begin with.

Inaudible question. Mr. Caridad - You can do two things, Call 311 for a housing counselor or a legal services provider. You can draw the line. It takes like a month to receive the papers on assistance or how to work with the lender. Once the process begins if it is a legal process in New York State they should go through a legal service organization. Either get in touch with the City or call legal groups like CAMBA, etc. All these groups provide free legal services. Reach out to groups as early as possible because after facing foreclosure it might be too late. People don't have to be behind in their mortgage they can contact the Federal Home Affordable Program which also helps people who are up to date with their mortgage.

Inaudible question. Mr. Caridad - Now the City has informed tenants who are faced with foreclosure to stay in the apartment to the end of the lease or 90 days whichever is longer. For example, if the lease up in one day, you can remain for 90 days. If you have no lease at all you can remain for 90 days. If the property has changed hands either the bank or new owners, you must be notified.

Chairman Goldstein thanked Mr. Caridad for providing this important information on the process of foreclosure.

Business Session

The business session began at 7:30 pm with 21 members present.

District Manager's Report

Ms. Pearl R. Miles thanked Councilmember Mathieu Eugene for providing \$50,000 dollars in the budget for the exercise area of Hamilton Mets Park. There will be a workout area in the park for adults. This is in addition to the rehabilitation of the park. Thanks also to Councilmember Letitia James. We learned that all the funds

to do the phone system at the 71 Precinct, One hundred thousand dollars, is now in the Police Department's budget specifically for the 71 Precinct. Finally they will have a decent phone system.

She would like to make an appeal to the council members representing Community District 9 regarding the 71 Precinct. The Precinct is located in Councilmember James' district; however, the Precinct serves the needs of this entire community. We would like the needs of the Precinct not to be confined to Councilmember James alone. She has a big district to be contend with. The Precinct serves the 40th, 41st and 35th districts. We are in the budget process for fiscal year 2012 and we are going to be reaching out for collective input in providing funding for the precinct which is falling apart. The Precinct looks like a dump. It would be great if all three of the Council members came together and provided funding for the 71 precinct.

There is also the Fire Department on Rogers Avenue. It is in Councilmember Eugene's district, but it serves the entire community. The roof is totally gone. They cannot put anymore buckets to catch the water. It needs a new roof. This could be a collaborative effort among council members. The committees will be reaching out to all the Councilmembers and the Borough President, to meet with them to get funds for projects in the community.

Ms. Miles took the opportunity to wish everyone a happy Thanksgiving, to be safe and enjoy.

Committees' Reports

Transportation – Mr. Edward Fanning, Chairperson.

Mr. Fanning reported that in addition to the Pebbles Transportation licensed renewal, the committee discussed other issues: Update on the B44 Flatbush service. A traffic study has been produced. They state that during the day there will be an extra problem in slowing down traffic. Regarding double parking, they are now looking at delivery zones and parking spaces. The Nostrand Avenue Merchants Association in conjunction with Pratt Center is working with the merchants to get their ideas about Nostrand and Rogers Avenues. The B14 from Utica Avenue to Flatbush Avenue was also discussed.

Housing Committee – Ms. Gwen Carter, Chairperson.

Ms. Carter reported that in October she attended two meetings on behalf of the Housing Committee. The Foreclosure Forum sponsored the Fordham and Brooklyn Law Schools. In the Boards office there are materials from that forum. The other meeting was the Ebbets Field Tenants Association. This meeting was in hope of getting the community to participate on the Housing Committee. The meeting will be held on December 14, 2010. Anyone having or knowing of issues concerning housing in the community, please attend so that together we can solve the problems.

Chairman Goldstein added that we are dealing with committee members who are not supporting their committees therefore on has to reach out to the community in order to make the committee stronger. We are dealing with a link that isn't strong. The weakest link is the link that doesn't work. These are the members who do not show up, who do not participate or take an active role. He invited Community people to join.

Acknowledgements

Chairman Goldstein acknowledged the following individuals representing agencies and elected officials: Reuven Lipkind – Hon. Eric Adams, Debra Lesane – Kings County Hospital Center, Smith Georges – Hon. Mathieu Eugene, Sam Pierre – Hon. Michael Bloomberg, Arna Lipkind – Hon. Darlene Mealy, Alfred A. Chiodo – Hon. Letitia James, Ann Marie Adamson – Hon. Marty Markowitz, Dr. William H. Boone – Medgar Evers College and Hon. Olanike Alabi.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Goldstein piggy backed on the District Managers report regarding the 71 Precinct. The precinct is unable to send out calls. The system is old. Some years ago it was air conditioned, they were ripped off. Their air conditioner doesn't work.

The construction on Kingston Avenue is in full swing. It should take 14-18 months.

He would like to report that there was a safe Halloween in the Community. There was a lot of participation. Many children were involved; there were a lot of goodies. Thanks to all those who helped. Everyone had an enjoyable time.

A meeting was held with the Committee chair people. The goals were discussed, where we plan to take committees in terms of issues to be addressed. Since we do not have a quorum to vote on issues, the minutes along with other voting items will be tabled. He will not ask the representatives to come back and report, however the report will be in the minutes so that they will be discussed and voted on. This is the first time in a very long time that we have not had a quorum. The following items were tabled. 1. The Botanic Gardens construction of the third gate. 2. Pebbles Transportation license renewal.

District Manager Pearl Miles informed that the hearing on Pebble's Transportation is on December 3, 2010. The Board does not meet until December 21, 2010. She would write a letter on behalf of the Board since there are no violations or complaints against the van service.

Announcements

Mr. Lipkind informed about tickets to the December 18, 2010 celebration at the New York Senator Eric Adam's office 570 Flatbush. From 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm. Call 718 284 -4700 for more information.

Mr. Sam Pierre – Mayor's Office made an announcement.

Ann Marie Adamson – Spoke about New York City Housing Authority. We are coming to the end of the year. We are looking at Boards members. This is the first time that there is not a quorum to conduct business. Anyone interested in becoming a board member she can be reached at 718-802-3874.

Debra Lesane – Kings County will have their annual public meeting on Kings County Hospital on December 14, 2010, beginning at 6:00 pm. This will be an opportunity to come and talk to the board. It is important for the public to attend. See flyer at the back.

Adjournment

Since there was no further business for discussion the Chairman adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelia Foster-Golding
Secretary
December 17, 2010