

*The City of New York*  
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR  
GENERAL BOARD MEETING  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2020 | 6PM  
ONLINE VIA ZOOM PLATFORM  
**Mr. Robert Garmendiz, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair, Presiding**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Ms. Rasheida Alston, Ms. Beverly Bond, Mr. James Boyd, Jr., Mr. Jason Caraballo, Mr. Maynard Charles, Mrs. Rossmery Dais, Mr. Gregory A. Delts, Mr. Michael Durant, Mr. Spencer Edwards, Mr. John Fielder, Ms. Ariane Garcia, Mr. Robert Garmendiz, Mr. Walter Harris, Ms. Frances Hudson-Marrow, Mr. Lionell Jackson, Ms. Mildred James, Mr. Paul Onyx Lozito, Mr. Mohammed Mardah, Ms. Marie McCullough, Bishop Earl McKay, Mr. Leandro Monzon, Mr. Anthony Nacerino, Mr. Ebrahim Dawda Ndure, Mr. Jonah Nigh, Mrs. Zonia Ortiz, Ms. Arelis Pineda, Ms. Martha Reyes, Ms. Yohanny Rincon, Mr. Jimmy Rivera, Ms. Lilliam Rosa, Ms. Kathleen Saunders, Mr. Avery Smith, Mr. Jackson Strong, Dr. Grace Zarate.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Ms. Jacqueline Calderon, Ms. Veronique Green, Ms. Nurys Laureano.

**STAFF:**

Mr. Paul Philps, District Manager  
Ms. Lynne Thompson, Administrative Assistant  
Ms. Elizabeth Gonzalez-Rodriguez, Senior Secretary

**ELECTED OFFICIALS:**

Ms. Alexis Ruiz, representing Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr.  
Mr. Khadim Niang, representing NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer  
Hon. Luis R. Sepulveda, New York State Senate Member  
Ms. Nipa Royees, representing NYS Senate Member Luis R. Sepulveda  
Ms. Latanya Christian, representing NYS Senate Member Gustavo Rivera  
Mr. Kelvin Cabrera, representing NYS Assembly Member Michael Blake  
Hon. Fernando Cabrera, New York City Council Member  
Mr. Russell Cheek, representing NYC Council Member Fernando Cabrera  
Hon. Vanessa Gibson, New York City Council Member  
Ms. Stacey Strong, representing NYC Council Member Vanessa Gibson  
Mr. Jose Rodriguez, representing NYC Council Member Diana Ayala  
Ms. Gloria Cruz, representing NYC Council Member Diana Ayala

**GUEST PRESENT:**

Lon Wilson-N.Y.Walkers Club/Parks Committee member, Brian Fagnoli-NYC Emergency Management, Chef Geneva Wilson-C.E.R.T., Detective Roberto Oviedo- NYPD 44<sup>th</sup> Precinct CAU, CO Louis DeCeglie-NYPD 44<sup>th</sup> Precinct, PO Juanita McMillian-NYPD 44<sup>th</sup> Precinct CAU, Todd Gayle-New York Cares, Anita Long-Resident, Miriam Tabb-Resident, Kimberly Jefferson-NYPL Melrose Branch, Deborah Allman-NYPL Grand Concourse Branch, Paul Tryon-Classical Charter School, Wendy Gallegos-MADD Equities LLC, Reynaldo Punzalan Jr.-Friends of 4 Parks, Ariela Heilman-Resident, Christopher Campbell-Resident, Kartika Fuentes-South Bronx United, Bladimir Bueno-Sofoke Lounge Restaurant Corp., Shycior Hong Fung-Restaurant Total Services, Althea Stevens-Resident, Rolando Aviles Jr.,-Resident, Mary Steffenhagen-NYC News Service CUNY Newmark Graduate, Greg Gonzalez-MPS Parking/BronxCare, Robert Sancho-VP Development & External Affairs/BronxCare, Debbie Bujosa-Resident, Atiya Ward-Resident, Katelan Newman, Emmanuel Martinez, Michelle-Lee, Winnie Campbell, Jennifer Pena, Belinda Gallegos, Edwin Guerrero, Charlene Freeman, iPhone, ID, HM, Beverly Bovian, Travis, K Hoffmann, Chantel, Chantel Jackson, LMSW, Ritch iPhone, Christopher Jon, Papa's phone, Jose Pares, Jacqueline, Soleil-Chineyre Arthur-Charles, \*\*\*-\*\*\*-1005, \*\*\*-\*\*\*-2955, \*\*\*-\*\*\*-3724, \*\*\*-\*\*\*-0354, \*\*\*-\*\*\*-9417

## Public Session

1. *Reynaldo Punzalan, resident* – Community Parks Cleanup-Friends of Four Parks – Garbage cans in the parks are color specific. He would like to work in coming up with a creative solution for litter disposal behavior.
2. *Chef Geneva Wilson, New York City Emergency Management* – Recruiting members for their online program. They have training available online for 18 years old and older. This is a certificate program starting in the fall. For more information: [www.cert.volunteer.nyc](http://www.cert.volunteer.nyc) or [www1.nyc.gov/site/em](http://www1.nyc.gov/site/em)
3. *Kartika Fuentes – South Bronx United* – Soccer program available for youths 5 – 18 years old. Promoting gender equality in sports. Contact: [kartika.fuentes@southbronxunited.org](mailto:kartika.fuentes@southbronxunited.org).
4. *Paul Tryon – South Bronx Charter School 4*– Provided update on the construction progress of the school located at 156<sup>th</sup> Street & Concourse Village West. The building passed inspection in the last week and it will be opening in three weeks. They are currently accepting applications for enrollment. There will be 20 students in each grade-Kindergarten through eighth grade. More info at [classicalcharterschools.org](http://classicalcharterschools.org). You can also follow on Instagram - [@classicalcharterschools](https://www.instagram.com/classicalcharterschools).

**Welcoming remarks and announcements** by Ms. Kathleen Saunders. The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:20 pm.

**Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance** led by Bishop Earl McKay.

**Special Announcement:** Chairperson, Ms. Kathleen Saunders, after the invocation announced that she would be resigning from the Board effective September 23, 2020. At the time of said announcement, she turned the meeting over to the First Chair, Mr. Robert Garmendiz.

**Roll Call:** Community Board Four Secretary, Ms. Elizabeth Rodriguez did the roll call of the board members. 31 board members acknowledged their presence, thus establishing quorum for this General Board Meeting via the Online Zoom Platform.

**Motion to Review/Correct/Adopt of General Board Meeting:** None at this time.

**Report by NYPD 44<sup>th</sup> Precinct** by Inspector DeCeglie

- The Inspector went over the crime stats comparison for 2019 Vs. 2020 for August 24 - September 20.
  - Murder 0 vs 0
  - Rape 0 vs 0
  - Robbery 35 vs 35
  - Felony Assault decreased 52 vs 60
  - Grand Larceny decreased 63 vs 68
  - Grand Larceny Auto increased 21 vs 9 – an increase of 133%
  - Shootings increased 5 vs 4
  - From June to July there were 20 shootings
- Public Safety Teams was implemented to replace the Anti-crime Team. There will be no more plain-clothes officers. All will be in uniform.
  - Consists of three teams
  - One sergeant and eight officers for a total of three sergeants and 24 officers.
  - Three tours from 12pm to 8pm; 6pm to 2am and 11pm to 7am.
  - They will also address quality of life issues
- Since the implementation of the Public Safety Teams, there has been a decrease in shootings
- From June to July
  - There were 20 shootings in the district
  - 40 guns were retrieved in the confines of the 44<sup>th</sup> Precinct since July
  - Upward trend when it comes to bail being set
- The Precinct is utilizing the assistance of The Grip and Violence Interrupters.

- Concerns have been brought to them from the elected officials about congestion in parks, garbage, parties and loud music. No ticketing has been enforced for social distance but rather they have been bringing awareness. Ticketing, however, have been given for drinking, urinating and littering.
- Concerns can be brought to the attention to Inspector DeCeglie at [louis.deceglie@nypd.org](mailto:louis.deceglie@nypd.org).

### **Nomination Committee**

- The committee is comprised of Mr. Avery Smith as the Chair and Ms. Zonia Ortiz and Ms. Lilliam Rosa.
- The nominations will be done after the nominating committee meets.
- Next month will be the nominations and the election will take place in November's General Board Meeting.
- A motion was made by Ms. Mildred James to move the nominations for the Executive Committee to October and the election to November. After the vote, the **motion carries**.

### **District Manager's Report**

- Jonah Nigh is running our social media sites on Instagram and Facebook. He will be highlighting people in the community and other useful information.
- Budget Priorities discussion have been going on throughout the summer.
- Public Hearing will be held at the October General Board Meeting.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT- HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES- HOUSING & LAND USE- MUNICIPAL SERVICES & EDUCATION - PARKS- YOUTH SERVICES**

**Economic Development Committee-** The committee report was presented by Mr. Jonah Nigh. 1) *Sofoke Lounge* located at 1285 Shakespeare Avenue. **New Application.** 2) *Sabrosura* - 124 E. 170<sup>th</sup> Street. **Renewal.** 3) *Geovanny's* - 579 Grand Concourse. **Renewal.** The Committee motioned to grant Letters of Support as stated on their report. It was seconded by Ms. Rasheeda Alston. After the vote, the **motion carries**.

**Municipal Services Committee** – Officer McMillan was in attendance and she provided updates such as an increase of additional patrols over the weekends for noise pollution. Committee members added some locations to keep in mind like, 1259 College Avenue, Highbridge Park, 156<sup>th</sup> Street and Grand Concourse and Concourse Village West, Selwyn Avenue at 172<sup>nd</sup> Street and Mt. Eden and Weeks Avenue. There was also a presentation by Steven Caruso of the DSNY. He mentioned the budget cuts of \$100M that DSNY is experiencing and the services that will be reduced as a result. Such as, elimination of garbage pick-up on Saturdays and Sundays, reduction of street cleaning, elimination of the Rat Initiative Program. We discussed the Dumping Program and the reporting of it especially if you can identify a license plate, etc. Bring to their attention and you will be rewarded for reporting it. The Committee also had a presentation from Bronx Care for the Acquisition of Lots to be used for parking for their employees and patients at Mt. Eden Parkway, Weeks Avenue and 1650 Weeks Avenue. District Needs discussion continued. 4 + 44 Program will be discussed further to consider if it will take place this year. The Committee motioned to grant a LOS to Bronx Care for the acquisition of lots for the development of parking lots for lots at Mt. Eden Pkwy, Weeks Avenue and 1650 Weeks Avenue. It was seconded by Ms. Martha Reyes. After the vote of 30 affirmative, 2 abstentions and 4 opposed, the **motion carries**.

**Housing & Land Use Committee** – The committee discussed the issuance of a study for parking in the district. This is a study to determine recommendations. Also, AMI averaging specific guidelines greater range of incomes so housing is available for everyone. Development of owner occupancy such as co-ops – HPD to consider as part of their affordable housing development. We discussed skill and license apprenticeship so that it provides greater opportunities for people in our district so that will be able to participate in high paying jobs. Also, assistance with rental arrears especially so that people will not lose their homes. Habitat for Humanity engagement to see if there is an opportunity to improve or develop new housing for Work Force training in the district. These are the priorities that we narrowed it down to. The Committee had a request for a LOS from West Federation for the construction of a newly developed senior and supportive housing at The Fisher Park at 97 W. 169<sup>th</sup> Street, a city-owned property.

The Committee motioned to grant said LOS to West Federation as part of their application for disposition of this city-owned land and with a recommendation that part of the property be used for public and recreational use. After the vote with 29 in the affirmative and 1 abstention, the **motion carries**. At a later date, they will do a ULURP application.

ULI report highlights encompasses the area within River Avenue between 161<sup>st</sup> Street to the north and 145<sup>th</sup> Street to the south and it extends west to the Harlem River. This area will be most impacted by the new soccer stadium and include a large amount of city-owned land. We would like to put a recommendation regardless of whether a stadium is built or not. It will add a foundation of future development and zoning features that will have a big impact in the community. The foundation of the recommendations in the report are transportation and connectivity to the Harlem River. We want connectivity to the Harlem River in order to create a vibrant use for the underused corridor. The report supports community programming, open space, MWBE participation and youth programs. We are not voting on a specific plan at this time but rather to support the objective outlined for future development. Mr. Strong motioned to support the objectives outlined in the ULI report with respect to the River Avenue corridor between 161<sup>st</sup> Street and 149<sup>th</sup> Street. It was seconded by Ms. Mildred James. After the vote of 25 in the affirmative, three opposing and 3 abstaining, the **motion carries**.

**Parks and Recreation Committee-** There are several capital projects in the district. The Committee would like to come up with resolutions to some of the existing issues. Currently there are some constrictions due to COVID but the design continues.

Bridge Park

Roberto Clemente Park

Steps at the Highbridge site on the Bronx side

Need to increase the number of garbage cans at least every 15 feet.

Need signage in different languages stating the hours and proper treatment of the parks

Replacement of missing signs

Pillars at entrances to prevent cars from driving into the parks. They can either be temporary or permanent.

Enforcement of parks – educate on using garbage bags, masks usage. If issues continue to persist, then issue violations

Macomb's Dam Park – silica sand

Joyce Kilmer Park – clear overgrowth

District Needs

**Health Services Committee** – Wellness in the School is a nationwide program to combat child obesity. They go into schools and teach children about nutrition and cooking. The Chair encourages everyone to get their influenza vaccine since the COVID and Flu are very similar in symptoms. She will be forwarding to the board member the publication for Bronx Community Board Four COVID Data Report. The data is broken down by zip codes. Some of the signs and symptoms of the corona virus are cough, shortness of breath, fever, sore throat, loss of taste and smell. If anyone develops any of these symptoms, they should go to the emergency soon immediately. The Dept. Of Health and Mental Hygiene has developed a Test, Track & Trace program. If anyone tests positive for COVID it is recommended that they quarantine for 14 days. Other precautions recommended are to wear a mask in public, wash hands and social distance. There have already been over 200,000 deaths from this illness. If anyone is not able to quarantine themselves, there are free hotel rooms available from the City. Msgr. Sakano of Highbridge Community Development Corp requested a mobile unit for COVID testing for their senior population. Bronx Care Hospital with assistance from the DOHMH will provide access to their mobile unit once they obtain the Certificate of Need in order to expedite the bus to their site. The mobile unit will provide other health screening.

**Youth Services & Education** – The committee discussed COVID's effect on kids and suggestions on how to alleviate concerns. Such as, portable electronic devices for kids that can't afford them as well as free wi-fi access. The cleaning of the HVAC systems in schools for when they eventually return to the schools. Suggested the increase of staffing especially healthcare staff. Services for special needs and homeless students. We have a large homeless student population in the district. Other items discussed were After-School programs, community resource centers, trade schools and year-round summer youth employment.

**Report by the Bronx Borough President's Office** represented by Alexis Ruiz

- September 22, 2020 – National Voter registration

- October 24, 2020 to November 1 – Bronx early posting
- Census
- Letter for re-appointment and new appointments

**Report by Local Elected Officials or their representatives.**

*Councilmember Diana Ayala represented by Jose Rodriguez*

- PPE and food distribution drives throughout the district
- Census fill out – 10 minutes, 10 questions - September 30 the Census will close out. Remind everyone that hasn't done so already to fill out.
- Article in Crain's New York - Need for the City to invest in affordable housing even though there is a stay as a result of this pandemic.

*Councilmember Vanessa Gibson*

- The COVID pandemic has been a setback, but we have to come back stronger. It has affected the health disparities and health care infrastructure.
- We have joined together for food distribution.
- Thank you to Four Parks Alliance, The Park is Blooming and many park groups that helped with cleaning our parks.
- We have a \$9B deficit. There is no revenue with no additional money.
  - \$100M cut to Sanitation
  - \$84M to Parks
- We are now facing potential layoffs to area central workers. Many are low-wage earners, women and people of color. This is not acceptable. We are working on potential to borrow money like we did on 9/11.
- We are waiting for a Cares package to be passed by Congress.
- Deadline next week for census on September 30, 2020.
- Election is November 3, 2020 and early voting is available.
- Farmer's Market in collaboration with Ritchie Torres will be giving out \$30,000 for health bucks.
- Jerome Avenue Task Force will be rolling out their recommendations
- Train Station at 170<sup>th</sup> Street will be getting elevators installed and construction has already started.
- New School at 1302 E. L. Grant Hwy is being built
- Proliferation of homelessness in the streets has increased. We are using the assistance of Coalition for the Homeless.
- Many of us met at the Lou Gehrig Plaza to recognize the loss and legacy of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.
- Sign up for our e-newsletter
- Invitation – 1430 Plimpton. Food to the seniors on September 23.
- Yan Casa food distribution at 3 pm.

- Food distribution also at Noonan Plaza

*Councilmember Fernando Cabrera* represented by Russell Cheek

- Funding allocated to the district
  - \$100,000 for the comprehensive model school
  - Project M.S. 20 Technology
  - \$307,000 for P.S. 170X library upgrade
  - \$58,000 for the STEAM Program upgrade

*NYS Senator Jose M. Serrano* represented by T. Brock

- Deadline for census is now on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Make sure everyone is counted. The response rate is 58.9 %. Can go to [my2020census.com](http://my2020census.com) to complete the census.
- Voting is safer for all voters. By mail by October 24 to November 1 or on election day.
- Further info can contact our office at 212-828-5829. You can also go online at [www.nycabsentee.com](http://www.nycabsentee.com). Ballot are available online
- Letter from Serrano to NY Congressional
- Targeted

*Assemblyman Michael Blake* represented by Kelvin Cabrera

- 9/23 at 6 pm – hosting back to school townhall

**Announcements:**

*Meeting adjourned at 9:52 PM.*

*Prepared and submitted by Ms. L. Rosa.*