

**COMMUNITY BOARD #5**Honorable Vanessa L. Gibson, *Bronx Borough President*Chairperson
Angel CaballeroDistrict Manager
Kenneth Brown**Public Session and General Board Meeting Minutes
October 23, 2024****Public Session for Fiscal Year 2026 Mayor's New York City Capital and Expense Budget****Start time:** 5:20 pm

- Richard Sierra, Support Lead and Special Assistant at Davidson Community Center
 - o Davidson Community Center has been part of the community for about 50 years. It needs additional support for the second phase of the expansion, which would add two stories and an elevator to the building.
 - Financially, expansions happening at the moment are funded, this request is for the additional expansion.
- Ms. Sally Smith, community member
 - o Bathroom at Echo Park. She has made this request several times and will continue to do so until it is completed.

Time end: 6:00 pm**General Board Meeting****Start time:** 6:05 pm**Quorum: 6:23 pm**

Attendance: Mario Acosta, Bobby Akumah, Eloise Bennett, Erachie Brown, Angel Caballero, Bakary Camara, James Coger, Catherine Cudjoe, Carrie Cuthbertson, Roxana Gonzalez-Jimenez, Osiris Guzman, Tisha Hatch, Marlene Jimenez, James Lin, Maribel Maria, Nanette Matthews, Robert Nieves, Tierra Pais, Juan Parra, Brenida Parsons, Diletta Pina, Patricia Rojas, Shenja Rudolph, Argenis Santiago-Payamps, Charles Shorter, Cheryl Westbrook, Chef Geneva Wilson.

Excused: Nekeisha Afful, Chantal Allison-Konteh, Yazmin Benitez, Phyllis Bowdwin, Annette Dejesus, Lucia Deng, Michele Heath, Gail Hill, Theresa Mims, Benjamin Richardson, Beverly Smith, Carlos Veras.

Absent: Wilfrido Bonilla, Felix Ceballos, Julian Cleveland, Stacy Infante, Suri Medina.

Welcome and Report from Chairperson, Angel Caballero

- November and December dates for Executive and General meetings
 - In November and December, instead of meeting 2 weeks before the General Board, the Executive meeting will be on November 6th and December 4th, General Board Meeting will meet on November 13th and December 11th
- 12/6 event: Tree lighting with activities for children
- 10/25 event: flu shots at the Davidson Community Center, from 2 pm - 6 pm

Approval of Minutes

- Juan motions to approve minutes from the September General Meeting, and Carrie seconds the motion.
 - Dilletta motions to correct the notes to reflect that Friends of Echo Park meets on the 4th Thursday, not the last Thursday of the month
- The motion passes, 24 yes, 2 abstentions. The minutes have been approved with corrections.

District Manager's Report

- Friends of Echo Park: Meets on the fourth Thursday of every month at 6 pm. Friends of Echo Park is a community conservancy group dedicated to making the park more inviting to the community and families.
- October 11: Nanette and Ken attended a Zoom meeting with Councilmember Pierina Sanchez about the City of Yes for Housing
 - Vote in City Council around the 2nd week of November
- Health Disparities Working Group: Fordham University has a Thriving Communities grant available.
- Dental Van/Mobile Unit: also available for any community group that serves youth
- The farm stand on University/Burnside runs every Wednesday, final day of this season is 10/30, from 11 – 3 pm.

Voting Item: Fiscal Year 2025 Community Board 5 Fiscal Year 2026 Budget requests

- Cheryl reviewed the list of FY 2026 Budget Requests. Going through each item, we will discuss and decide if we recommend removing certain items. A voice vote for each priority to determine next steps.
- Capital Budget:
 - Priority 1: Precinct: Ayes have it, and it remains as is.
 - Priority 2: Elevator at Burnside 4: Ayes have it, and it remains as is.
 - Priority 3: Davidson Community Center funding for expansion: Ayes have it, and it remains as is.
 - James C: If we want to reprioritize items, is this the space to do it?
 - Cheryl: Yes, but we must make that decision before voting.
 - Ken: MTA has said that improvements to Burnside are in the Capital Budget.
 - Question/Comment from Roxanna: Regarding why certain things have been in this order for a few years (Priorities 1-4). It has been advised that

we leave this order so our requests do not get bumped back to the bottom inadvertently.

- Question from Bakary seeking further clarification about the request
 - Cheryl: at the public hearing, Richard Sierra elaborated on the request.
- Priority 4: Repair of building step streets: Ayes have it, and it will be resubmitted for reconsideration.
- Priority 5: Ramp access at precinct
 - Question from James L: Should it be removed because it is already on the capital budget?
 - Response LaShawnda: Keep it on until it gets completed.
- Priority 6: Upgrading lighting University Woods
 - Roxanna: There is a lot of focus on park items on this budget but not much additional infrastructure. Bridge item at ~14. Beautifying the community beyond the parks
 - Answer: Please see notes about agency decisions.
- Priority 7: NYPL, Francis Martin: Already funded. Will remove
 - Roxanna: There needs to be a system to track these priorities.
 - Dilletta: Just because an item is removed does not mean it can't be tracked further.
 - Kenneth: Every month, agencies meet to follow up with the district. Ken creates agendas for these meetings.
 - Nanette: Does the chair attend Borough Services Board meetings?
 - DM Kenneth attends. Hosted by Borough Presidents.
- Priority 8: Improve environment walk: Already funded
- Priority 9: Renovation of Library Branch: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
 - Funds unavailable.
- Priority 10: Mount Hope Housing
 - Additional info needed from Mount Hope Housing Inc.
- Priority 11: Miscellaneous parks repairs: Will be removed.
- Priority 12: Lighting in Aqueduct Park: Already funded. Will be removed.
- Priority 13: New street lamps:
 - OMB: OMB supports the agency's position as follows: Wattage/lumen changes of streetlights are not permissible. The number of street lights can only be increased if the request is accompanied by funding to cover all equipment and construction costs and a Maintenance Agreement is signed with a City Chartered organization willing and able to pay for the associated maintenance cost of electricity, repairs, etc. - i.e. Business Improvement District.
 - Initial vote: Ayes have it to keep at current placement. Seeking a bid to move project forward.
 - Dilletta: since others have been removed, will this bump this up?
 - Cheryl: Up to District staff
 - Revisited: item will be removed.
- Priority 14: Rehabilitate bridges
 - Item will be removed.

- Priority 15: Loan programs to rehabilitate multiple dwelling buildings: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 16: Firehouse rehabilitation: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 17: University Avenue Park Malls: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 18: Streetscape improvements:
 - Initially, ayes voted to keep it as is. But upon revisiting, it will be removed.
- Priority 19: Surveillance cameras: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
 - No funding
- Priority 20: University Woods Phase II: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 21: Upgrade Galileo Playground: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 22: Upgrade Echo Park
 - The item will be removed
- Priority 23: Surveillance cameras: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 24: Sedgwick Avenue Step Street: Ayes have it, and the item will be resubmitted for consideration.
- Priority 25: United Pilgrim Church:
 - The item will be removed since it doesn't meet funding requirements
 - James L: What would be the appropriate place to redirect/challenge OMB's decision?
 - LaShawnda: Decision is because it is private property, not a city property
- Priority 26: Marion Avenue steps: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 27: Kingsland Place steps: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 28: New expanded park or amenity:
 - James L: Do we know who submitted this?
 - LaShawnda: it may have come from testimony at a public session, may have come from CB5. Most of these items are several years old.
 - Mario: there is no park at that current location. Possibly Townsend Garden at 175th/Walton instead. The previous manager of that garden passed
 - It will be corrected by DM
- Priority 29: Exterior building component: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 30: Surveillance cameras: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 31: Street lights: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 32: Street lights: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 33: NYPD parking: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 34: Street lights:
 - LaShawnda: agencies will not be responsible for this. Will need to be removed from this list, but a bid will be sought
- Priority 35: Bean-Morris Garden: Ayes have it, and it remains on the list
 - Marlene: 2996 Morris Avenue, current listed address is incorrect.
- Priority 36: Public health issues programs: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Expense Budget
 - Priority 1: Cornerstone and Beacon programs: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
 - Priority 2: Animal and pest control requests: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
 - Priority 3: Extended library hours

- Dilletta: Since it has been funded in part, should it stay/be removed?
 - LaShawnda: it should remain on
- Priority 4: Park security staff: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 5: Vulnerable New Yorkers
 - District office questions this
 - Mario recommends to keep
 - James: is the response from OMB vague due to the wording of request
 - DM Kenneth: phrased to “fund program,” although there are other programs. Do we want to keep this on to imply we want more funding.
 - LaShawnda: we can reword to mention we want “more” or “additional”
 - Bakary: programs already offered, but unknown where
 - Will be reworded and kept in list
- Priority 6: Adult education: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 7: Staffing/quality of parks and recreation programs: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 8: Cleaning requests: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 9: NYPD facilities and equipment: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 10: Transit service requests: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 11: Department of Environmental Protection request: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 12: NYPD staff resources: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 13: Illegal dumping law enforcement: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 14: Traffic improvement: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
 - Dilletta: what does the OMB mean by the response on the sidebar?
 - Kenneth: the agency is responding with current funds.
- Priority 15: Fire prevention: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 16: Education and recreation programs: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
 - Question James L: Should it be removed because funds are from federal/state?
 - DM Kenneth: money devolves from city, even if initial source is federal, other
- Priority 17: Senior center program: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 18: Transportation: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 19: Park maintenance: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 20: Traffic and parking studies: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
 - Question from Roxanna: Will Kenneth follow up?
 - Kenneth: will go on the agenda for district cabinet meeting
- Priority 21: Cornerstone and Beacon programs: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 22: Adolescent literacy programs
 - Osiris: this should be moved up, as learning about AI and coding skills would benefit the community. Kids may not be up to speed on topic compared to those in other districts. We need to prioritize technology. Proposing to move up in priority.
 - Roxanna: it needs to be moved above the adult programs based on Osiris’ comments. Number 3 or so

- Argenis: suggests putting it under NYPL expanded hours since they are related. Agrees with Roxanna.
 - Bakary: agrees
 - James: how much impact does the priority number have?
 - Cheryl: list allows CB5 and community to have a voice
 - Dilletta: agrees
 - Brenida: agrees
- Ayes have it to move up in priority to 3
- Priority 23: MWBE-focused programs: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 24: Victim Support Services Program
 - Reword to ask for more
 - Keep in list
- Priority 25: New street trees: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priorities 26/27/29: Several requests about library hours
 - Roxanna: recommends moving up to the general line request. There is already a general request at number 4 (?), Should be in the top 10 along with 4 at priority 5, 6, 7
 - James L: since it is already open, should it be changed to ask for 7 days?
 - Sam, Librarian at Sedgwick: it is open 6 days at the moment.
 - 27 will not be moved up or changed. Point 26 and 29 will be moved up
- Priority 28: Anti-violence youth programming
 - Osiris: it should be moved up.
 - Bakary: it should be moved up to 7
- Priority 30: Youth recreation
 - Osiris: it should be moved up to 8
- Priority 31: Liter baskets: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 32: Electronic waste: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 33: Greenspace: Ayes have it, and it remains as is
- Priority 34: Emergency Food Assistance Program
 - Patricia: the point should be moved up. Money was taken away from several food programs.
 - DM Kenneth: the point will be reworded to reflect post-COVID
 - Roxanna: since we are out of COVID, should it be removed or reflect that community groups do the work
 - Patricia: inflation and additional pressure after COVID make it so food insecurity is still an issue. Patricia's point remains to move up.
 - Dilletta: the elderly or those with serious medical conditions still require food delivery. It may not be due to COVID, but still require delivery.
 - To add to this point, Erachie mentioned that certain senior centers have stopped providing food supplies.
 - Osiris: it is possible that the distribution is the issue.
 - Kenneth: in this document, we are talking about how things should be prioritized. We are not advising how agencies provide services.

- Ayes have it to move the priority up to 9
 - Priority 35: Community Resiliency Network
 - Vote to remove. Funding already provided.
 - James L: we have more than 25 priorities, which is noted as the limit at the beginning of the document. Is this ok?
- Vote
 - This vote was revisited at a later portion of the meeting. For consistency, it is included with these notes.
 - The changes to the Budget Requests are approved, with the following vote: 25 Yes, 0 No, 1 abstention.

Elected Officials

- State Senator Gustavo Rivera, 33rd District
 - Updates are normally reported by Leah Guzman
 - 10/25 event at 10 am: State Senator receiving the flu shot, flu shots also available at Mt. Carmel Pharmacy.
 - Other events: Free housing and immigration services offered during NMIC clinic
 - Clinic on 11/18 and 11/22. Can schedule a meeting with an attorney. By appointment, please call office.
 - Office also has naloxone and fentanyl testing strips available. Call for information.
 - Election:
 - There are 6 proposals on the back of the ballot:
 - 1: Equal Rights addition to NYS Constitution.
 - 2-6 only apply to NYC, would change the NYC Charter to expand NYC Mayor's power in various capacities.
 - Addressing public drug use in CB5
 - Holds monthly convening about strategizing (mainly discussed CB7 – Poe Park area). Many co-conveners are service providers.
 - Syringe Kiosk in CB7 at St. James Park
 - Echo Park: On Point NYC provides services in that area. Tuesday/Wednesday services to any who may be using in that area.
 - Opioid Settlement Fund
 - Description: settlement from sales/overdose crisis caused by pharmaceutical companies that advertised opioids as safe to use and led to overprescribing by medical professionals.
 - Rivera: passed a bill several years ago so that any \$ from settlement can be used for community work, treatment
 - Has addressed Governor Hochul, and the inequitable amount of money sent to the Bronx for treatment has not been proportionate to the harm done. Housing funds. Writing a letter to Gov with sign-on from Bronx politicians that will directly ask for that funding as it relates to housing in the Bronx and in this area of the Bronx.
 - Presented CB members and leaders of Bean Morris Garden Carrie and Marlene with award for community work

- Presented Kenneth Brown, DM with award for leadership
 - Office: 718-933-2034
- State Assemblymember Landon Dais
 - Thanks people in the community board for volunteering.
 - State of the district last week: what will we do together to move forward
 - Coat drive with Zeta Phi Beta sorority, Phi Beta Sigma fraternity, and local organizations collected over 100 coats
 - Food drives in District 77 continue, with over 6.1 tons of food given out
 - Inflation, utilities like Con Edison are raising prices.
 - String of violence in the West African community, Rep. Dais is working on workforce development initiatives in the community.
 - Crime issues: The 44th precinct (in his district) has seen a drop over several months, but the 46th has only seen a drop in the last 2 months.
 - Office continues to work on community block cleanups in collaboration with DSNY
 - Important to change the perception of waste being produced by our community
 - Office: 718-538-2000. Bronx location: 910 Grand Concourse, Suite 1JK
- Leonardo Coello, Mayor Eric Adams's Office
 - Provided a fact sheet of mayoral accomplishments during this tenure.
 - Crime has gone down throughout the city for nine months straight.
 - The administration continues to focus on illegal smoke shops and vape sales in bodegas. It's a big issue among young people. About 1,200 smoke shops shut down so far.
 - Trash and waste issues: Trash containerization is picking up. Will be required in November. The city will hand out compost-related fines.
 - The NY Liberty's ticker tape parade will be held on 10/24 by City Hall.
- Alexis Ruiz, Borough President Vanessa Gibson's Office
 - Community board membership applications will open in November.
 - Announced in September her FY 2025 allocation of \$400,000 for new surveillance cameras and a new Mobile Command Van to support public safety efforts in the Bronx.
 - BP Gibson calls for the expansion of tree canopy coverage in CB 1-6. There is a tree canopy coverage disparity in CB 1-6 that contributes to extreme heat conditions that threaten the health and safety of elderly residents and Black New Yorkers. More on her website:
<https://bronxboropres.nyc.gov/2024/10/08/borough-president-gibson-calls-for-expanded-tree-canopy-coverage-in-community-boards-1-6-declares-extreme-heat-during-the-summer-a-public-health-safety-issue>
- Maria Villalobos, Councilmember Pierina Sanchez
 - Several upcoming events, including Fall Festival in St. James Park on 10/25
 - Department of Buildings will be hosting an event on issues like zoning and scaffolding. Contact the office for more.
 - Office: 347-590-2874
- Joanna Rivas, Congressman Ritchie Torres
 - Office continues to push for QOL improvements related to the Cross Bronx Expressway. Includes a study/workshop.

- In September, Rep. Torres led NYS congressional delegation on a letter expressing disapproval of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' proposed payment rule. It could limit payments and cause workforce issues.
- Department of State is now accepting passport renewals online. Easier process than via mail. Many constituents report it being a faster process.
- For those who may have been impacted by the 2024 NPD data breach, Rep. Torres' office recommends looking up their information on <https://npd.pentester.com/>
- Office: 718-503-9610
- Teraya Spencer, State Senator Luis Sepulveda
 - Reach out to spencer@nysenate.gov to invite Sen. Sepulveda to events
 - Follow the Senator on Instagram at nysensepulveda.
 - Visits to the office should be done by appointment. Monday–Thursday from 10 am–3pm. Office: 718-991-3161
- Jack Shaevitz, Assemblymember Yudelka Tapia
 - Reminder that voter registration for the upcoming election ends Saturday, 10/26
 - Office will be hosting a turkey giveaway in November. Details to come.
 - Office is hiring for a Director of Constituent Services
 - Contact: 917-414-5323, shaevitzj@nyassembly.gov

Public Session

- Inspector Jeremy Scheublin (Spoke earlier in the agenda)
 - Inspector Scheublin offered an overview of the last 8 and 1/2 months in his position
 - Introduced Lieutenant Edward Lawyerr and Sergeant Rosa of the NCO team, responsible for the 240% increase in quality-of-life enforcement
 - Sgt. Osmairys Avila has worked in commercial locations like Fordham. Her team has over 700 arrests in the past months.
 - Several crimes are down, but challenges still remain.
 - Top 5 Block Initiative: work being done with other city agencies, with the goal of helping improve how community feels about their quality-of-life needs being met. About 60% of requests have already been completed.
 - One of 2 precincts: the other is 73rd precinct (Brownsville in Brooklyn)
 - Halloween/Fall events, including Annual Fall Fest Pumpkin Patch on 10/30 at 4pm on Ryer Avenue
 - Cell phone: 646-306-9701
- Sally Smith, longtime resident
 - Expressed that the CB 5 budget portion of the agenda was confusing for the public. Ongoing concerns about public safety and quality of life: cars continue to be parked on sidewalks. Towing only addresses the problem for 2-3 days
- Housing Solutions of NY
 - Building Resilience in Youth (C2C: BRY): The organization is currently visiting schools/other organizations to promote available mental health resources for youth ages 13 – 21. Website: Talkspace.com/nyc
 - More about HSNY's BRY program: hsfn.org/programs-and-services
- Jairy and Krystal, BronxWorks' SNAP-Ed New York:

- SNAP-Ed offers nutrition workshops, cooking classes, and farm stands. General education about food, food insecurity, and wellbeing.
- SNAP-Ed also offers walking groups for older adults, where participants can also point out QOL and safety concerns
- More info online: bronxworks.org/our-services/health-wellness
- Diletta Pina, speaking as a member of the public
 - Reminder to the community on the importance of voting in the upcoming election, especially for communities like CB5.
 - Community education is essential for QOL issues like animal waste on the streets; these problems often reflect the hierarchy of individual community members' needs (for example, not everyone can prioritize buying doggy bags over groceries).
- Melissa Mejias, Family Enrichment Center
 - Located at 2001A Creston Avenue.
 - Offers free programs and resources for the community. Upcoming programs include a reflective journaling session for domestic violence survivors on 10/25 and a Spooky Cupcake workshop on 10/30.
- Tracie Gardner, member of the NYS Opioid Settlement Fund Advisory Board
 - Ms. Gardner provided an overview of the case, which was led by NY Attorney General Letitia James. However, work on the ground must continue
 - Zip code 10453 has shown no improvement in deaths or hospitalizations. Importance of turning grief to power. Especially called out CB5 member Nanette for her remarks at an open meeting. Wants other members of the public to attend such meetings and bring their comments.

Committee Reports

- Immigration Committee, Mario Acosta: the most recent committee meeting discussed issues related to asylum seekers, including differences in the terminology commonly used (asylum seeker vs migrant vs immigrant). Members who attended noted the meeting was highly informative.

New Business

- No new business was brought forth.

Old Business

- No old business was brought forth.

Time End: 8:47 PM