



## General Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 20, 2023

**Present:** Angel Martinez, Henry Pelayo, Ram Halder, Linda Soto, Abunoman Rahman, Sadie Davis, James Tynan, Loretta Masterson, Brent Woodie, Lashei Deoleo, Lorenzo Van Ness, Alizia McMyers, Anne Johnson, Brent Woodie, Victor Cordero, Twywana Bush, Tenisha Morrison, Sharyn Brown, Md Alauddin, Lena Johnson, Chandra Moore, Mitchell Halpern, Robbin Kelly, Anne Johnson, Julio Quinones, Shantee Chamblee, Lenora Easter, Kevin Kiernan, Sarwar Jahan, Wajied Hakim, Mohammed Mujumder

**Meeting Start Time:** 7:05pm

**Note:** A Moment of Silence was held for any members of the community that have passed away including BM Miriam Sanchez's mother and grandchild. The Public Session commenced.

### Public Session

1. Debra Oguamah, Founder/CEO - Creating Unity in the Community, Inc.  
Ms. Oguamah is requesting community support in getting a plaque or memorial for the only independent African Burial Site in the Bronx, located next to St. Helena Church at 1315 Olmstead Ave. and on the site of Chang Li Supermarket 2079 Benedict Ave. and Unionport Road Bronx, NY 10462. In 1849, a group of black men formed the first African American church in the Bronx and, alongside it the only independent African burial ground known to have existed in the borough. Ms. Oguamah and her organization wants to bring attention to commemorate this sacred site and honor their beloved Ancestors so that their stories are never forgotten. She is requesting help with organizing a dignified memorial by signing the petition below and sharing your name and contact, more information can be found at these links:
  - [https://nycemetery.wordpress.com/2020/06/18/bethel-a-m-e-church-cemetery/?fbclid=IwAR3bRBp9sNXtYhLkgd1\\_FGdE\\_XBQ0qQIq7IfXDcwbTjntULYPB7lpMu15AA](https://nycemetery.wordpress.com/2020/06/18/bethel-a-m-e-church-cemetery/?fbclid=IwAR3bRBp9sNXtYhLkgd1_FGdE_XBQ0qQIq7IfXDcwbTjntULYPB7lpMu15AA)
  - [https://www.change.org/p/independent-african-burial-site-in-the-bronx-ny?recruiter=1010729218&recruited\\_by\\_id=d6fc0200-f2ab-11e9-92b2-](https://www.change.org/p/independent-african-burial-site-in-the-bronx-ny?recruiter=1010729218&recruited_by_id=d6fc0200-f2ab-11e9-92b2-)

[93ed98bc472d&utm\\_source=share\\_petition&utm\\_campaign=share\\_for\\_starters\\_page&utm\\_medium=copylink](https://www.petitions.net/did_you_know_about_the_only_independent_african_burial_site_in_the_bronx_sign_the_petition_for_a_historical_marker?fbclid=IwAR0IQZu9o1tq-fVtDNMRA1tX1osmegrc_uF6Ur32JhfdBIOhNbPyP_FghvsE)

- [https://www.petitions.net/did\\_you\\_know\\_about\\_the\\_only\\_independent\\_african\\_burial\\_site\\_in\\_the\\_bronx\\_sign\\_the\\_petition\\_for\\_a\\_historical\\_marker?fbclid=IwAR0IQZu9o1tq-fVtDNMRA1tX1osmegrc\\_uF6Ur32JhfdBIOhNbPyP\\_FghvsE](https://www.petitions.net/did_you_know_about_the_only_independent_african_burial_site_in_the_bronx_sign_the_petition_for_a_historical_marker?fbclid=IwAR0IQZu9o1tq-fVtDNMRA1tX1osmegrc_uF6Ur32JhfdBIOhNbPyP_FghvsE)

2. Odette Wilkens of Wired Broadband and Theodora Scarato, Environmental Health Trust re: Link5G Cell Towers represent non-profit teams focusing on safe technology for the public, they recommend that community boards either ask for an extension of time if possible, as the comment period has expired, or vote for disapproval and a moratorium on the planning and construction of Link5G Cell Towers until questions and concerns are addressed. White Paper and presentation included numerous arguments against these tower/kiosk installations. As per Ms. Wilkens, 7 towers have been sited for District 9 with 2,000 kiosks sited citywide but this number can eventually go up to 4,000 or 7,500.

In addition, in relation to the previous speaker's request for support around the African Burial Site, 10 historical societies are on record opposing the installation in historic districts and that number is increasing. Furthermore, the FCC has ignored current scientific data related to damages resulting from Link5G Cell Towers installation, insurers rank 5G non ionizing radiation that comes from the towers as high risk, and that's why companies actually can't get insurance for damages, the International Association of Firefighters has officially opposed cell towers on their stations until research shows that the radiation is not hazardous to the health of their members. Kiosks are 32 feet in height, about 3 stories high and there are no setback restrictions, therefore towers can be placed close to resident windows and structures which poses a potential danger because polls can have structural failures. As per Ms. Wilkens, service will not be interrupted if 5G cell towers are not installed. Other negative consequences include decrease in property values of 20% or more and HUD has not been assigning mortgages within the fall zone of a tower. As per Ms. Scarato, the FCC was found to have ignored science on the record related to memory damage, children's vulnerability, DNA, damage, headaches, fertility, impacts, and a lot of other health effects related to RF radiation aka radio frequency radiation. In addition, insurers rank 5G non ionizing radiation that comes from the towers as high risk, and that's why companies actually can't get insurance for damages from exposure.

Citations can be found here: <https://ehtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/5G-New-York-City-Health-Effects-April-2023.pdf>

Research on cell towers: <https://ehtrust.org/cell-towers-and-cell-antennae/compilation-of-research-studies-on-cell-tower-radiation-and-health/>

3. Jill McManus, New Yorkers 4 Wired Tech  
Since FCC does not have the needed staffing, no one is measuring the aggregate levels and if early military studies are reviewed, there are effects that we should be aware of.

### **Elected Officials Report**

1. Senator Jose M. Serrano, Legislations include:  
Serrano Bill S 259: Requires Cultural Awareness and competence training for medical professionals. – PASSED  
Serrano Bill S.724: This legislation will prohibit the lease of state forests, wildlife management areas, and unique areas for the purpose of gas production. – PASSED

Serrano Bill S. 1458: To create a legislative task force on outdoor environmental education and recreation passes the NYS Senate. – PASSED

Senator Serrano held an Arts rally - On March 22nd, he joined colleagues and arts advocates from across the state at a rally in Albany supporting increased arts funding in the NY State budget. The arts and culture are vital to every corner of New York State. They provide countless benefits to our society, while serving as a major economic engine for our communities.

2. Senator Nathalia Fernandez, Legislative Updates:

The State Senator along with every state elected official are in Albany working to finalize the budget. Hopefully the budget can be passed this week, but there are no guarantees.

Upcoming Events: They are working to have a food giveaway and job fair in the district very soon. More information will be given out soon.

Resources and Information: Their office is still providing constituent services on any issues from housing, food stamps, unemployment, etc.

General Announcements: They are currently working remotely for the month of April, but you can still reach them at 718-822-2049.

By early to Mid-May, they should be moving to their permanent office location at Throggs Neck. Exact address will be given out soon.

3. Council Member Amanda Farias, Updates from the District Office:

- Services offered in DO: ○ Family Law Clinics last Monday of the month
- Immigration services every Wednesday

Updates from City Hall: ● Today, Council Member Farias held a joint hearing with the Small Business Committee on tourism and the economic impact to NYC's small businesses. ● Last Stated: ○ Council Member Farias introduced the following pieces of legislation: ■ Res 548: Resolution calling on the Commissioner of Citywide

Administrative Services to implement the band scoring method for establishing eligible lists for competitive civil service titles. ● Band scoring would promote equity and fairness by expanding civil service opportunities for a larger pool of eligible candidates

■ Res 554: Resolution calling on the New York State Department of Education to mandate bystander intervention training for all staff, educators and administrators, require annual training for students in grades 6-12, and resources for parents around the issues of harassment and bullying. ○ Council Member Farias co-sponsored and passed the following pieces of legislation: ■ Int 4-A: A Local Law to amend the administrative code

of the city of New York, in relation to prohibiting the sale of guinea pigs in pet shops

■ Int 128: A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in

relation to diaper changing accommodations in parks ■ Int 675-A: A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to the creation of a

telemedicine accessibility plan ■ Res 344-A: Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, A.4021/S.568A, in relation to establishing a housing access voucher program.

Upcoming Events: ○ Monday, May 8th: Urban Justice Family Law Clinic ○ Monday, May 15th: Urban Justice Family Law Clinic ● Monday, April 24th: Urban Justice Family Law Clinic

○ Resources: ■ Child/spousal support, custody/visitation, orders of protection, consumer debt and identity theft, options for victims of crimes, information about immigration legal remedies, financial abuse; general info about domestic violence, ACS advocacy and more ● TBD Until Further Notice: West Side Campaign Against

Hunger (WSCAH) SNAP Applications ○ Please Call our Office ahead of time and they will refer you to them.

Participatory Budgeting Updates: ● All Votes are in! Total Votes: 1433 ● Gym Air Conditioning Upgrades at X282 Women's Academy of Excellence (\$750,000) - Votes:858 ● Life Skills Classroom at P17X@X377 (\$500,000) - Votes: 441 ● Interactive Tech Upgrades at PS100X Issac Clason (\$181,500) - Votes: 312 ● Soundview Houses Camera Upgrades (\$900,000) - Votes: 292 ● Cafeteria Air Conditioning Upgrade at PS100X (\$750,000) - Votes: 285 ● CD18 Street Tree Planting (51,000) - Votes: 230 ● School Bathroom Upgrades at X567 Linden Tree Elementary Magnet School (\$450,000) Votes: 197 ● Street Resurfacing at Hugh Grant Circle (\$250,000) - Votes: 182 ● Auditorium Air Conditioning Upgrades at PS 531 Archer Elementary School - X102 Campus (\$750,000) - Votes: 153 ● School Air Conditioning Upgrades at Pan American High School (\$750,000) - Votes: 135 ● Auditorium Upgrade at PS 047 John Randolph (\$750,000) - Votes: 110

Spring Save the Dates: ● Friday, May 19th- Summer Kickoff Silent Disco Castle Hill Playground, Time- 3PM - 6PM ● Friday, June 2nd- Movie Night Under the Stars, Soundview Park ○ Showing Disney's Encanto ● Saturday, June 10th- Family Day at Caserta Playground, 12 PM - 4PM ● Friday, June 16th- Movie Night Under the Stars at Caserta Playground ○ Marvel's Thor: Love and Thunder ● Saturday, June 24th- Family Day at Soundview Park, 12PM - 4PM ● Friday, June 30th - Movie Night Under the Stars at Parque De Los Ninos ○ Disney Pixar Turning Red

Marco Luna, [MLuna@Council.nyc.gov](mailto:MLuna@Council.nyc.gov)

4. Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, The Office received over 540 applications- new and reappointments. The office is currently interviewing applicants as well as members applying for reappointment.

Borough President Gibson joined the BOEDC to announce their board of director nominations.

Black Maternal Health Week: This week we bring special attention to the health disparities that disproportionately affect Black women and birthing individuals across our city, state and nation. Borough President Gibson hosts bronx "My Sister's Keeper" initiative in partnership with Bronx school districts.

People's Choice Awards: For the first time, we are introducing the People's Choice Award for Bronx Week! We are asking residents to nominate a Bronx educator to be recognized among other Bronx Hall of Fame inductees. Application is live on [ilovethebronx.com](http://ilovethebronx.com).

Upcoming Events: Iftar Dinner on April 13<sup>th</sup>, Prom Dress and Suite Give away on May 19<sup>th</sup>, The King's Armory Community Tours on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>.

5. Congress Member Alexandra Ocasio Cortez, 1. They have opened their Hunts Point office at the Banknote building. It is located at 1231 Lafayette Ave, Suite L-610, Bronx, NY 10474. They are open Monday through Thursdays from 9-5pm. They are also open at their Co-op City office located at 177 Dreiser Loop, RM 3, Bronx, NY 10475 on Mondays and Tuesdays. On Fridays, they are available by phone at 718-662-5970 or online. 2. For many years, some community members have wanted to Cap the Cross Bronx: placing a cover over the Cross Bronx Expressway to make it easier to walk across and to reduce asthma and other illnesses that come from car pollution. Last year, our office helped secure a federal grant to study what the Cap should look like. The agencies

conducting this study want to know your input! Contact the project team by emailing [CrossBronx@planning.nyc.gov](mailto:CrossBronx@planning.nyc.gov) to share your opinion! 3. As a reminder, routine passport processing times are 8-11 weeks. Expedited passport processing times are 5-7 weeks. The Department of State is seeing an unprecedented volume of applications at this time, and expect demand will only continue to rise through the spring and summer. So please make sure to renew or submit an application for your passport well in advance to avoid delays. 4. They held our virtual town hall on April 13th. In addition to the Congresswoman, they heard from New York State Assembly members Zohran Mamdani and Kenny Burgos on the state budget and its impacts on you. To access the town hall you can search them up on their youtube or facebook pages by typing REPAOC. 5. Their office has kicked off the 2023 Congressional Art Competition. They invite high schoolers in NY-14 to submit their artwork via email to their office for a chance to have it displayed in the US Capitol. The deadline to submit artwork is April 26th at 5pm. If the public health situation allows for it, a reception for the winners will take place in DC this summer. If you have any questions or know of a school or student that would like to participate, please contact their office at [NY14Art@mail.house.gov](mailto:NY14Art@mail.house.gov). 6. Finally, they wanted to remind everyone that their internship application is always open. They are starting our hiring process for the spring session, beginning in early May. Please encourage any students or those considering shifting careers to public service to apply. Below there is a link with more information and the application.

Important Links: To be notified about their next town hall, please sign up for our newsletter to get updates:

- English Newsletter: <https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/contact/newsletter-subscribe>
  - Spanish Newsletter: <https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/contact/boletin-espanol>
- Submit a casework request: <https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/services/help-federal-agency>
- Legislative comments and general questions: <https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/contact>
- Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/@repaoc8965>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/repAOC/videos>
- Internship Application: <https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/services/internships>

**Note:** The District Manager began the business session of the meeting.

## **Business Session**

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

- DM Rivera announced that office renovations are nearly completed and should be finalized by the end of the fiscal session June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- He is unsure if remote meetings will continue to be extended and will share an update as soon as this is confirmed.
- There are 2 voting items for today's meeting. One is for a street renaming for the former District Manager and the other is for a letter of support for a pedestrian bridge in our district.
- Nominations will be held in the next General Board Meeting in order to vote for new Executive Committee Members in June.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair Mohammad Mujumder invited all to Bangla Bazaar for cultural event tomorrow on Starling Ave.

- Board Members inquired regarding training for rank choice voting for the upcoming June elections, DM Rivera will email Board Elections and share any feedback on this with the full board.
- BM Porro requested printed calendars, DM Rivera reminded all that our calendar is available online for all to access as well as printed copies are available at our office.

### **Committee Reports**

1. Youth & Education Committee Minutes were tabled by District Manager Rivera in the absence of a Chair/Vice Chair.
2. Land & Zoning minutes were submitted as is on behalf of Chair Mitchell Halpern. ULURP will be voted on in May
3. Social Services minutes were tabled by District Manager Rivera in the absence of a Chair/Vice Chair.
4. NYCHA minutes were submitted as is.
5. Public Safety & Transportation discussed the request for a full board vote of support regarding the street renaming on Turnbull Ave between White Plains Rd and Pugsley Ave for the former District Manager Francisco Gonzalez who worked as a District Manager for over 20 years in the community and passed away on November 30, 2022 due to medical issues. This item was previously approved unanimously by this committee. This item was motioned by Mohammad Mujumder and seconded by various board members including Ram Halder, James Tynan and Lind Soto with no objections or abstentions.
6. Parks & Recreation discussed the request for a full board letter of support regarding the Hunts Point pedestrian bridge for a feasibility study here, this item was previously approved unanimously by this committee. This item was motioned by Mohammad Mujumder and seconded by various board members including Alizia McMyers and Ram Halder with no objections or abstentions.

**Meeting adjourned: 8:00 PM**

#### **OFFICE INFO**

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