



# BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #1

3024 THIRD AVENUE

BRONX, NEW YORK 10455

(718) 585-7117 • Fax (718) 292-0558 • E-mail: brxcb1@optonline.net

SERVING PORT MORRIS • MOTT HAVEN • MELROSE

RUBEN DIAZ, JR.  
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

GEORGE L. RODRIQUEZ  
CHAIRPERSON

## FULL BOARD MEETING

MINUTES

January 31, 2019



CEDRIC L. LOFTIN  
DISTRICT MANAGER

### PUBLIC SESSION

**Ms. Myra Hernandez resident** said that I'm here tonight as a Concord Avenue homeowner and concerned citizen. Since hearing about de Blasio's Jail Expansion Plan this year I have been shocked about the betrayal and lack of communication and respect by Mayor de Blasio and Councilwoman Ayala. Last year Ayala assured me that multiple meetings were being held to allow residents to voice our concerns my neighbors and I have been invited to zero. Instead de Blasio and Ayala have resorted to closed door negotiations to persuade people to sign off on a jail that would only hurt the community disguised as a humane alternative to Riker's a jail is no more than a cage. Rest assured if de Blasio and Ayala build their jail they will fill it 88 percent of people detained at Riker's are black and brown of the thousands of people caged there many have to wait months, years until they get a trial while their families scramble to get the funds to post bail. To cage people for merely being poor and colored is criminal and to misguide our community into thinking a jail is humane is criminal. Do away with Riker's but don't stop there do away with pre-trail detainment, do away with cash bail, do away with the criminalization of minor offenses and our country shamefully ranks as number 1 in the world for incarcerating it's citizens and I urge you to refuse to invest billions of our tax dollars in jail structures that breakup families instead invest in a better future for us invest in quality schools, invest in clean air, invest in quality affordable homes, invest in employment opportunities, invest in making our community feel safe and valued. Many of us residents are in this fight for the long run and will make sure that the architects of our communities de Blasio, Viverito and Ayala will not be elected again. With no justice there is no peace.

**Ms. Josephine Perez resident** said that I am here as a parent of 8 children I adopted 4 of them and I got the opportunity to live in the community and be able to raise my 8 children as a single parent with the help of such program as ASPIRA which thank God still exists. I'm against all the jails to teach our children that this is where you're going to be going to. Putting a jail in a residential area there's a lot of places to put these jails and South Bronx shouldn't be one of them just because of color just because we're minorities it shouldn't be give our children a chance give our children their dreams. Thank God all my children ended up being professionals all went to College all graduated High School. Thank God as a single parent with the help of my community, I want that back in this community we have lost that let's give our children an opportunity to rise up and be productive men and women in society. No more jails.

**Mr. Walter Wally Christopher Nash resident** said that what I'm up here to speak about as a homeowner on Concord Avenue whose been living in my house 74 years we're the second family on that block. I am now the last surviving original homeowner on that block and what I'm up here about tonight is that Diana Ayala our City Councilperson has been holding secret meetings with Board Members of Community Board One. Homeowners on Concord, Jackson, Wales and Tinton not one of us has ever

been invited to a meeting until I busted their meeting and when I busted in they were shocked to see me. Our members Mr. Johnson is selling us out he asking for things for the projects there isn't no project around Concord Avenue, Clarisa I don't remember her last name but she is our Board Member all of them asking for things in projects nothing do they say about Concord Avenue. They represent Board 1 not the projects, not their own home, they represent Board 1 and Board 1 said from the beginning that we were opposed to the jail. Why do we have sellouts from the Board and what I want to know is it legal now for them to vote about the jail and if anything can be done about Ayala holding those secret meetings trying to overthrow our Board and she should not be elected again in this here community and I will fight my tail off until I'm dead none of them come on this Board again. We don't want no jail and Ayala now is trying to meet with Concord members after I called her out on it she's a snake in the grass.

**Mr. Raymond Figueroa, Jr.** said that I'm here speaking in opposition to the prison. You should know quickly just a little bit about me. I been based out of a Community Garden we run a Youth Community Farm. That Youth Community Farm has been integrated very successfully in an alternative to incarceration where we're actually doing workforce development, actually doing entrepreneurial opportunities with the field of the Green Economy. The program is very, very, very successful. The young people who have either been incarcerated in their past or current court adjudicated and we're doing this for pennies on the municipal dollar. I want to suggest to you all very thoughtful members of the Board and stakeholders in the community that we can accomplish reduction in recidivism for pennies on the dollar. Those \$10 billion dollars that are being advocated allocated for prison construction here and in China Town could be better spent. The New York Civil Liberties Union produced a report where they identified the issues around what is happening and not happening vis-a-vie our education system for Bronx District 7 has probably the highest school suspension rate in the city. One of the lowest academic outcome being reported out of this district and it's correlated with the New York Civil Liberties Union report which came out about 5 years ago. They said hay this puts people at risk for becoming incarcerated. So we really need to think how do we and let me just put out another information reference it's called a Justice Atlas it's an interactive mapping source it identifies all the communities from where people are incarcerated come from. It's over \$3,000 dollars to incarcerate one person in the State of New York we're not even spending a fraction of that in terms of education for 1 person in the State of New York. Something is wrong with this picture and it has to do with the expectations for the South Bronx. Let's be very clear structural racism has been a foot for decades in Mott Haven. Structural racism what I mean by this is the redlining, the concentration of poverty meaning the projects along with no job opportunities and urban renewal. So much so that there was a homeowner a conversation that she had with Councilwoman Ayala saying oh well this community is blighted, that's not a coincidence. We really need to address the issues that are effecting our community. This prison does nothing of the sort. We need to invest like what we're doing in workforce development and education. I've had young people come to my program serious gang bangers, people with gun charges very deeply involved in that type of activity for lack of other alternatives who have graduated High School and are now in College. Se we can actively do this for pennies on the dollar, and we ought to demand that our tax dollars be spent in the most effective way possible. What happens I was just having a conversation that you know there's still problems with employment for someone who incarcerated, there's still problems with entry after one is incarcerated. To be sure if you come from public housing and if you have a record of incarceration that means that you're going to be homeless, you can't come back. You're struggling not just financially to get a job, but also in terms of housing. How does one stabilize themselves after they've paid debt to society? So let's be very, very reasonable this prison is a non-starter our community needs to look at the real issues address it and stop going around with band aids and this is not a band aid it's structural racism

and structural oppression. We have to use it for what it is and that means it's not a coincidence that the community is blighted but guess what we can take the responsibility back as a community in terms of what we've been doing and what we continue to be establishing in this community.

**Ms. Tahniqua Williams Heketi Charter School** said that we have a community Charter School right on Concord Avenue which is in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx. What I'm here to do is to promote our upcoming Resource Fair. There's a lot of community members and organizations here in this room so if you are available it's this upcoming Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 to 5:00 PM. We would like for you to come in and share your resources to our community members and families.

#### **END OF PUBLIC SESSION**

#### **The District Manager called for the roll.**

The roll was called and there were twenty members present.

#### **The District Manager called for a vote on the Agenda.**

Motion made to approve the Agenda as presented. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and passed unanimously.

#### **CHAIRMAN AND DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT**

**The District Manager** said under the Public Hearing process we received an application on the item. Please be advised that we do not have a quorum the presentation is going to take place tonight. I ask for all Board members to adjust their calendars. There will be a meeting and vote on this item next Thursday. The item was approved by the Committee this month.

The presentation will be by Mr. Michael Wadman, Vice President Phipps Houses and Ms. Kay Real from HPD as part of this project.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING OPENED**

**Ms. Kay Real HPD** said that I represent HPD who is the co-applicant on this application along with Phipps Houses. We are here tonight to propose a project on the corner of East 156<sup>th</sup> Street Brook Avenue known as Brook 156. The development site is made up of 2 adjacent lots 1 and 3. Lot 1 is formerly an abandoned railroad trench owned by Phipps Houses and lot 3 is small and city owned. The city is willing to convey the city owned property to Phipps because together with their property it creates a larger assemblage to create more affordable housing. With Brook 156 we will be able to provide 55 units of affordable rental housing with 1 Superintendent in a new 9 story building and ground floor community facility. The railway was put out of use in 1999 and was formerly abandoned in 2005. For years the trench was full of trash with some undesirable uses. So this is a ULURP application to be voting on a

zoning map change R7-2 to C6-2, zoning text amendment to apply Mandatory Inclusionary Housing and a special permit to allow for development over the trench.

**Mr. Michael Wadman Vice President Real Estate Department** said that so the opening slide here is just a rendering of the new building which we're proposing and the backdrop to it is the Via Verde Development immediately to the south. This is the corner of Brook Avenue and 156<sup>th</sup> Street it's two lots one of them is the railroad cut that goes along there and you probably seen some other projects that are connected too and the other lot is a city owned lot.

So a little bit about Phipps Houses we're the largest non-profit housing developer in New York City. So we're an entirely charitable issue based organization that provides affordable housing and also community services through our Phipps Social Service affiliate. This is one of the main neighborhoods that we operate in very close to our mission and our heart. We have financial literacy programs just a little further up on Third Avenue we have something like two thousand apartments in this general area including some in Community Board 3 as well as your Community Board and will be the owner of the project. The Development Team Dattner Architects is here tonight as well they were one of the Architects on Via Verde and one of the most accomplished affordable housing Architects in the city. We do not have a General Contractor selected yet but we will select one through a bidding process and among the many things we make sure they do minority hiring and that kind of thing as well as Contractors Then Phipps has a Property Management Company that does the Property Management. This is the site in the red that's the ballfield there that's Via Verde over here. So there are a few items that are being done the zoning is being changed from R7-2 to C6-2 they'll be the mandatory Inclusionary Housing overlay that is always almost required now that's a very minimal amount of affordability compared to what we're actually going to be doing here. Everything we do is 100 percent income restricted and we're regulated we don't do any market rent housing. So the project itself will be entirely affordable housing. In terms of the building we're planning here the plan is for a nine story apartment building it's quite a small parcel and as a result we got about a 55 unit building on the project. The nine stories is quite a bit less than Via Verde across the street and there are other buildings in the neighborhood that are of similar sizes. We'll also have about 1,100 sq. feet of community facility space on ground floor potentially on the corner right of Brook and 156<sup>th</sup>. The goal is to have our Social Services in the Phipps Neighborhood related to Youth Employment. Youth is one of the main focus areas of Phipps Neighborhood both workforce and development training. So that's the goal for that space in the building. So these are the various corners that's the site there that's the railroad cut this is the Melrose Court Condominium and that's the development site. So it's been an eyesore for quite a while and we owned the part of the site that we own for almost ten years now and the reason that it has been delayed because of the railroad cut there were a series of bridges that DOT has to fill in. So DOT has actually chosen a Contractor and is preparing to do that closure. So as a result the site will be acceptable for development. There doing it throughout that stretch that goes all the way up to 163<sup>rd</sup> Street. So as I mentioned one of the lots is owned by a Phipps affiliate the Housing Development Company and the other site is owned by the City. This is the tunnel closure this thin triangle here is city owned and this rectangular thing here is Phipps owned. This is just showing you the bridge that's going to be closed by DOT as you guys all know it's a bit of a mess and has been for quite some time so this will eliminate that mess.

**Ms. Jen Switala Dattner Architects** said that this diagram shows the various components of the project. As you can see the ground floor on the south end on 156<sup>th</sup> Street as Michael mentioned will be an 11 hundred sq. foot community facility that will be operated by Phipps that will be open to the

community and we hope that will provide some kind of activity on that corner which is pretty much deserted there's nothing on the site right now. Then as you go north along Brook Avenue we've indented the building a little bit so that there's a little entrance courtyard to the building and I'll point out how you enter the building that will be landscaped in green and then on the north end a bright yellow portion on the ground floor will be a community room for the residents but again with windows facing the street so it will be kind of eyes on the street. Then above that and again we are proposing a nine story building and above the ground floor is eight floors of residential.

So these are renderings of the building the first rendering on the left is looking south towards Via Verde on Brook Avenue and the building will be clad in brick and the darker color of brick will be very similar to the brick that is at the base of Via Verde. At the ground floor of Via Verde it's kind of a dark color but kind of lively brick. Thought it would be a nice compliment to the Via Verde project to use that brick. On the south end wrapping around to the eastside Melrose Court side we're proposing to use a lighter colored brick which we think would complement the color of the Melrose Court buildings which are light colored buildings. So we're trying to balance even though admittedly this is a larger building than the Melrose Court buildings we're trying to relate to those buildings in terms of the color. In the ground floor Via Verde used you can't quite see in this photograph those are sort of orange accents. What we're proposing here is an orange glazed brick. So it's kind of a glossy brick that will add an element of color and again make the streetscape a little livelier and relate to the colors at Via Verde.

So this is the ground floor and I would like to point out here starting at 156<sup>th</sup> Street this is the community space and right off the corner of Brook Avenue is the community facility space that will be operated by Phipps and we have this landscaped area that I mentioned so again we have to finalize the details of it so we certainly welcome any input but we have kind of a low fence to kind of keep dogs from going in and keep people out but since the Super's apartment is right there overlooking that space it will be a little bit of a deterrent of garbage being thrown in there and so on. This area would be paved so it's almost like part of the sidewalk and residents would walk in through a vestibule into the lobby you have the mailroom so if you're a resident standing out here you can see right into the elevators right next to the entrance door will be the intercom for visitors. Phipps has a very robust security system of cameras and so on. To maintain security in the building is very important management function that Phipps does. Now in the rest of the ground floor right next to the lobby we have this room and this again will be for the residents with equipment for fitness and workout and then this yellow space it's not what the color of the room will be it's just for diagram is a community room for the residents that will have a pantry a small kitchen for resident events you know birthday parties and similar things. Then behind the building we have a small outdoor patio for the residents and the community and would expect that there would be a fence around there. This is Melrose parking that you were talking about I think we need to get into a more detailed discussion about the trash removal I was with Adam at that meeting two years ago and I do recall the discussion about refuse removal and I think we should get into how that's actually going to work. One possibility again depending on how much space is needed to utilize some portion of this space that opens off the former 157<sup>th</sup> Street something we'll definitely have to discuss and work out with Melrose Court.

So this is the typical residential floor we have a total of 55 apartments and 25 percent of the apartments are studios the average size is 360 sq. feet they have full bathrooms and full kitchens closets this is HPD's balancing the benefits to the individual family with the pressing need to build affordable housing for New Yorkers so there's a balance between the smaller the units the more units you can make versus larger units. These are the apartment layouts we have two elevators, stairs the corridors all have natural light we are going to be seeking what is called LEED Certification it's a measure of sustainability so that the building will be energy efficient. This is one of the upper floors it's a slightly different plan.

**Mr. Michael Wadman Vice President Real Estate Department** said that a direct segue into the income levels and marketing. So the income levels we're looking to serve here are pretty wide from 30 percent of the Area Medium Income up to 80 percent. HPD as you probably know requires a formerly set aside in all projects for the homeless so 10 percent of the units are in that 30 percent six families in this case. As mentioned there's a community room, fitness room. On the unit types this is much fewer larger units than Phipps typical provides. We primarily serve a low income family population. Basically because of the very small site we have a lot more smaller units than we would typically do. I think that the opportunity that is presents is to try to market more aggressively to senior citizens for those smaller units. We're not allowed to set aside units for seniors in a mixed population building. So it's not that they would strictly be set aside but it would be a marketing effort to try to get senior citizens into the building. The goal would be to find seniors who take advantage of the smaller units and that would be kind of a way of fitting the right kind of person to use them. So this shows you kind of specifically these are the income ranges for the families that would qualify for each of the ranges. There will also be units at the 30 percent income but not for the formerly homeless selection typically people that make that level of income then it goes up to 40, 50, 60 and 80. So the income goes all the way from people making \$20 thousand dollars for a single to about \$85 thousand dollars a year for a family. This is the Welfare Shelter Allowance that would apply for those rents the next category are people who are 30 percent of Medium but are not coming out of the shelter system and are not typically employed but earning less money and then we go up to 40 percent, 50, 60, and 80 percent of medium income.

So this \$18 million dollars is a construction estimate with another several million dollars of soft costs. As mentioned it will have Enterprise Green Certification will probably have solar energy panels we do that in almost all of our buildings now. As we've said before the construction employment will be overseen pretty rigorously. Then the last little piece this is HPD's ELLA Program which serves primarily the low income population. This is also a Brownfield cleanup site which is also typical of most of our projects. Then we're going to be applying to the State for the rest of the money. We're hoping to close the financing in 9 months to start construction and the building should take anywhere from 18 to 24 months. It will take about two years and then be occupied by 2020 or 2021 assuming all goes well.

#### **Questions and Comments**

**The District Manager** said that I sincerely want to thank those Board members that came out tonight, unfortunately since we did not have a quorum to take a vote. Therefore, I'm going to ask the Board members to come to the Board office next Thursday the 7<sup>th</sup> of February at 6:00 PM to complete the process it will be the only item up for discussion and vote.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED**

#### **ELECTED OFFICIALS REPORTS**

**The representative for the Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr.** said good evening folks, Happy New Year and many blessings to you and your family.

**Pg. 7**

Just several quick announcements. By now all those members up for reappointment have received their reappointment application, please submit it to the Borough President's office. If you are not reapplying for Board membership your term will come to an end on March 31<sup>st</sup>. Also for those Board members that are up for reappointment and have not completed the Sexual Harassment Training, if you don't get the training done you will not be reappointed to the Board. So if you've fallen under that category definitely make arrangements with Cedric, go to the office and get the training done. If not then your term will come to an end on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March. Also we're not sure how long DCAS will have the link up for the training. This is a training that you will have to do every year. Community Board applications are available for those wishing to serve on the Community Board, I've brought applications and the deadline is February 8<sup>th</sup>. Any questions or concerns.

The Borough President is giving his State of the Borough on Thursday, February 21<sup>st</sup> at Samuel Gompers High School. As is customary all the Board members are invited to the address. If you're not able to attend it will be on the Borough President's website.

**The representative for State Senator Jose M. Serrano** said good evening everyone and Happy New Year to all of you. I just wanted to highlight a couple of things. So the New York State Senate majority has passed a major legislation about voting reform, so to make it easier voting. Also a major legislation to combat gun violence to protect all New Yorkers. Finally we're always available to help with your concerns. We're going to hold Constituent Hours very close to here next Tuesday, February 5<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Betances Senior Center. If you have any questions you can always call us at 212 – 828-5829.

**The representative for State Senator Luis Sepulveda** said that we help constituents with any kind of issues that they might have in the neighborhood. One of the most common issues is that there are a lot of tenants with no heat. So they've called the office or come to the office and we try to put a push on the landlord to see what's going on with the heat. If anyone has any issues you can always come to the office at 900 Rogers Place on Intervale and East 163<sup>rd</sup> Street.

Our upcoming events we have a blood drive on February 20<sup>th</sup> at our office, I have some flyers. We're also having a volunteer program for anyone that would like to volunteer for events and I have flyers. Today we actually had a Tenant Workshop and we had a Lawyer that specializes in Tenants Rights come to the office and speak to our constituents about their rights. We have a College and Job Fair we don't have the dates yet but will iron out the details and the next time I come we should have a flyer on those two events. Does anyone have any questions?

**The representative for the Comptroller Scott Stringer** said good evening. So I'm here on behalf of the Comptroller Scott Stringer. I have a couple of announcements, one of them is that it's open for the Summer Internship Program this is for students that are Undergrads or at Graduate level if you need more information I have flyers. It has a compensation as well, there are few Internships that actually pay but this is a paid Internship. Another announcement is that this week we will have different workshops for people that are interested in having contracts with the city, one of the workshops is with Microsoft. If you have any questions.

**The representative for Councilwoman Diana Ayala** said good evening. Some of the concerns that were out was about the SNAP benefits because the people were wondering why they were getting two SNAP benefits in one month, the reason being is that they will not be receiving any in February or March until the shutdown is over. So if you know anyone that has any concerns about that, that's the reason why and the information is on the website. Commissioner Banks released a letter stating what the process was. Also we have a Tenants Support Specialist that comes to the office in East Harlem once a month to help people with any issues they have with evictions and tenant harassment and any issues like that. Any questions or concerns please call our office our number is 347 – 297-4922.

**The District Manager called for a motion on the Elected Officials Reports**

Motion made to approve the Elected Officials Reports as presented. Motion duly seconded. Motion duly called and passed unanimously.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**The District Manager** said that all the Committee Reports were in the Board member folders.

**The District Manager called for a motion on the Committee Reports**

Motion made to approve the Committee Reports. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and passed unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS**

NONE

**OLD BUSINESS**

NONE

**The District Manager called for a motion to adjourn.**

Motion made to adjourn. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and passed unanimously.

**MEETING ADJOURNED.**

**The results of the Special Full Board Meeting on February 7, 2019 on the Bronx 156 Project ULLURP item.**

Motion made to approve the Bronx 156 Project. Motion duly seconded. Motion called and passed with 2-abstentions and 1-opposition. Result of vote item passed.