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District Needs Statement

Fiscal Year 2012

INTRODUCTION

New York City is comprised of five boroughs of wonderful diverse cultures and ethnicities. This is the characteristic that makes New York unique and envied among all the great cities of this nation. There is something here for everyone. Each borough pulses with its own exclusive nuances. However, Bedford-Stuyvesant stands on its own as a one-of-a-kind community. It is this quality that breathes life into the phenomena that is New York City.

Bedford-Stuyvesant, in the borough of Brooklyn, is one of the largest African Diaspora communities in the nation known for our beautiful brownstone homes. As a district, we continue to adjust to changing times in the economy and look forward to working in conjunction with the Mayor's PlaNYC 2030. In order for this community to sustain its viability, we understand that we can not stagnate and continue in the business as usual mind set of the past century. In taking an assessment for the direction Bedford-Stuyvesant is to take, we are connecting our needs with the Mayor's vision for future growth of New York City.

Community District #3 has continued its tradition of community and municipalities, working concertedly to create the best community ever. Last year, we met with former Deputy Mayor Skyler to discuss getting Nostrand Avenue reconstruction moved up as a priority on the 2011 budget. This item had been moved from budget to budget since 1989. That is twenty-two years without action. Through the Deputy Mayor's (the Mayor), we are finally able to see that this project gets started.

Fulton Street, Bedford-Stuyvesant's major commercial strip now has a business improvement district, The Gateway BID. We are proud of the efforts of Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corp., the Fulton Nostrand United Merchants Association, this community which is represented by Community District #3 our municipal partners, the Department of Small Business Services, and the Economic Development Corporation.

The Community Board operates with 50 volunteer members and an office of three, including the District Manager. The members have accepted the responsibility of dealing with the New York City charter mandates. It is in this vain that the work and development of Bedford-Stuyvesant is accomplished with the strong and steady participation of the residents of this neighborhood. Our office, like the other 58 community boards in this city, works to rectify issues and concerns of the board's constituents to maintain a reasonable quality of life for all.

It is our privilege to give our municipal partners accolades for the wonderful partnership we have developed in order to bring the level of services in this community to a higher standard. We are now actively working

with City Planning on the rezoning of the northern district as well as the development of affordable housing along the Fulton Street corridor.

All of this being said, there are still major issues and concerns for Community District #3, even while great strides are being made, some of the old issues still remain and need to be worked out. These concerns, we attempt to work through, are not healed by band-aids, they require time, care and consistency of effort between the City of New York and the Community-at-large:

- We are still the epicenter of disastrous health issues such as HIV/AIDS, asthma, and obesity
- Our historically firm homeownership base has been undermined by vicious predatory lending schemes and the looming water and property tax lien system
- The educational system has undergone so many changes that it is difficult for parents and community to understand the processes that are now governing or children's education
- Employment opportunities are at a premium, exacerbated by a lack of access to workforce development programs
- Opportunities for the growth of small businesses has diminished
- Our young people and residents are menaced by the rise in gang culture and the proliferation of guns that are readily available in our public housing complexes
- Infrastructure and environmental issues such as the construction of the sanitation garage and large number of streets that require varying levels of attention are put off for years in the name of fiscal accountability

The progressive machinations of Community District #3 have been and continue to be a time honored tradition. The residents of this fine district are proactive groups of individuals that value this area and work without ceasing to ensure its continuity and growth. Bedford-Stuyvesant is moving upward and onward.

ARTS & CULTURE

As we continue to look towards having an African American Cultural Center within the borders of Bedford Stuyvesant, the community urgently bands together to hold on to the richness that is our diverse African Diaspora cultural experience. There should be funding made available for activities and programs that depict and enhance this community's eclectic culture. Our art and cultural institutions are teetering on the edge because of a lack of capital.

There are so many organizations, institutions, foundations and programs that we would like to see survive: The Central Brooklyn Jazz Festival, the Fulton Art Fair that is celebrating its 54th year in 2012, are two widely enjoyed activities each year, yet there is hardly enough income generated to keep them afloat. It is the love of the arts that has sustained them thus far. The Bedford Stuyvesant Artists' Association (BeSAA), as well as our galleries, need support to continue. It would indeed be a travesty to allow these time honored entities to fade into nothingness. Our children must be exposed to their culture that is so rich and beautiful. The youth should be able to learn who they are through the expressions of those who have come before them. To share what we have is a gateway to become who we are to be as a people. The diverse and rich culture of Bedford-Stuyvesant must be allowed to survive and be a prominent and integral part of the legacy that is the City of New York.

We are pleased that the City is looking at public spaces as a venue to have works of art. That is an exciting prospect for schools, parks and plazas. This is an opportunity for the local artists of Bedford-Stuyvesant to

showcase their talent. With our streetscape project along Fulton Street and other venues being considered, albeit tentative, it is yet another way to keep the culture alive and visual for all to enjoy. However, to foster a growth in cultural and economic upward mobility, it is imperative that these projects are allowed to move forward. This cannot come to its full fruition without funding from the City.

DAY CARE

The Division of Child Care and Head Start is designed to promote family well-being by giving parents the opportunity to pursue and maintain employment. Yet once again we iterate that comprehensive early childhood education is a crucial beginning for any child. There is still no bridge to connect the necessary components of demand, poverty and policy. The current financial climate is decimating our publicly funded day care in Community District #3 as well as throughout the City. So far, we have lost eleven head starts and four publicly funded child care centers. The centers that are remaining are experiencing greater and greater hardships to operate. It is like a physical attack on subsidized child care in the City of New York.

The City's Welfare to Work program is making demands that parents of young children cannot find their way around. Children that reach the age of five from the months of January to August must be discharged from day care; however, the parents cannot send them to public school mid-term so they are not eligible for public school until September. Where do they place their children so they can continue to work or seek employment? Money is being spent on re-entry programs, however as a preventative, we need to give our youth a solid foundation and maybe there will not be such a demand for re-entry programs.

In addition, there needs to be center-based care for our children. This is where most of them become socialized and learn to integrate with others. How are they to be prepared for the school system? Without this initial advantage, some of the children end up in special education programs or are labeled with attention deficit and other learning disabilities. These types of labels are caused in part because of inadequate socialization and integration. The deficiency in infant/toddler care in this community has not decreased. Parents needing a full-range of services from the Department of Social Services are still not getting it.

There is no way to look towards the future of our society without addressing the needs of our youth. It is the place of beginnings and we must not move away from that. By giving the early advantage is to remove the latter elements that undermine our community.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The site of the Pfizer Complex, which is now vacant, is a monumental opportunity for economic growth and development. It is one of the last bastions of land that can really impact the future economic development and employment opportunity in Bedford-Stuyvesant. The Pfizer site could be retrofitted to be a green entity, in keeping with the PlaNYC 2030 to be used as an outdoor mall, similar to the Gateway Mall in the Spring Creek section of Brooklyn, in keeping with the futuristic vision of New York City, while actually becoming a legacy to the progressive thinking of the City's current administration. The plant could be used as a Stop n Shop, an outlet store, a BJ's/Cosco, which would give a much needed boost to this neighborhood's employment opportunities. It is also a great site to increase green space. There are other uses that would benefit the community, i.e., recreational facility that would also create economic development as well as, employment opportunities. However, as we look at this site, it should be noted that we maximize the opportunities this site has to offer.

By moving into these types of arenas, we can curb the escalating unemployment rates here in Bedford-Stuyvesant. In January 2009 unemployment in Brooklyn was only 7.7% or 86,000 residents were out of

work. While the City itself is at 10.6% unemployment rate and the country is at 10%. In Bedford-Stuyvesant, the jobless rate is greater than 15%, third highest in the entire City. Here in Bedford-Stuyvesant, economic and employment opportunities are few. This is the reason we need more retail/service industries to be created. Our vision for Pfizer is so crucial. We need assistance, such as subsidies and aid to small businesses to keep them alive as we go through the current economic crisis.

Just as there are prospects in the northern section of Community District #3, there are also similar scenarios in the southern part of the district. There is a parcel of land on Atlantic Avenue which is Block 1557, Lot #s 3, 4, 23, 26, 28 & 31-37 totaling 25,616 square feet. Granted, this parcel is not particularly large, however, it is perfect for a residential community to benefit from. If utilized appropriately, this parcel can provide much needed commercial opportunities, leading to additional employment opportunities.

EDUCATION

Community District #3 is covered by School Districts 13 and 16. Unfortunately, very little has changed. What we are looking for is a 21st Century education for our youth that will equip them for success in the new global workplace. Our schools are still teaching to the test. This is not adequate to prepare them to think critically, solve problems, or use the knowledge they have gleaned. In this we are failing our children and our country. Our drop-out statistics have begun to rise, Boys & Girls High School has a 16% dropout rate, Acorn High School has a 20% rate, George Westinghouse, Vocational High School has a 13% rate and Bedford Stuyvesant Preparatory School has a 12% rate. This is just to name of few of the schools. As a nation, we cannot afford to have our children fall behind.

A prime example of how we are failing our children is the State test scores in English and math that has fallen at Brooklyn schools. More than half of Brooklyn's fourth-graders failed this year's harder-to-pass state reading exams than previous tests. 43% earned passing marks on reading tests which is down from 67% in 2009. Eighth-graders had 32.9% passing as compared to 54% in 2009. This is deplorable. Citywide reading scores dropped 27 points from 69% in 2008-'09 school year to 42%. The City test results have allowed us to fall into a false sense of confidence about the education children are receiving and retaining.

Charter Schools are popping up everywhere. While we applaud the charter schools, every child is not going to have access to one. Acceptance is usually done on a lottery basis and they can only accept so many students. What then should happen to the rest of the youth? It is imperative that all schools afford the youth quality education and not just a select few. As stated previously little has changed:

- **Resources for Classroom Essentials**

The continued budget cuts still stymie any progress gained. We were hopeful that these cuts would be restored, as part of the President's commitment to sound education. We applaud all of our educators in the District for "doing more with less"; however, the constant uncertainty surrounding critical funding for our schools begins to take a toll on our children

- **Comprehensive Approach to high Drop-Out Rates**

We are still concerned with the high rate of early-leavers in our middle schools and high schools. This is the time to call for the development of a comprehensive plan to address these issues within our community. Strategies should include research on best practices; the convening of a commission comprised of a broad base of stakeholders. We must utilize what is already in place the CEC for instance must be empowered to catapult changes. (There are groups already organized in the community that could address this issue, if given support from the Department of Education.)

- **School Safety**

Gang recruitment and “turf” battles are certainly moving forward in their efforts in and around our schools. There has to be a comprehensive strategy to this negative phenomena growing in our urban settings. This Community Board was successful in establishing safe passage zones around Boys and Girls High School and CS 21. In addition to funding for more safe passage zones, we are requesting that any guidelines that have been developed by DOE’s Gang Intervention Unit be carefully reviewed, in conjunction with the NYPD Gang Unit and the District Attorney’s resources. Our children deserve to be safe.

There needs to be programs established for art, music, and sports in an after school setting. This will be beneficial to parents that need to work long hours, while their children (latchkey) are left to their own defenses. This would allow for structured time spent in a safe environment. Not only does this help parents because of the extended day, but it could well be a deterrent to gang recruitment and activities.

- **Parental Involvement**

We need “teeth” in the parental involvement initiatives that have been set forth by the Department of Education. Our parents still feel adrift in a monumental bureaucracy, where they feel powerless to make any changes even in their own schools it is time for innovative models that draw parents into the decision-making process. It is apparent that the old approaches are ineffective in communities such as ours. There must be more attention paid to diverse cultures, mores, and history in order to develop initiatives that will make a difference. The supervisory design is still a mystery to many, with a superintendent who may, or may not be the evaluator of record for principals within the District. For example, where do parents and community go for assistance when schools do not work?

In each of our district needs statements, we have advocated strongly for more parental involvement. The community board, community organizations and the various task forces and our elected officials are ready to participate in any pilots that DOE would like to initiate. We are ready!

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

In 2007, the community of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn was targeted by the Mayor’s Office for Comprehensive Neighborhood Economic Development (CNED) to serve as testing ground for the sustainability initiatives outlined in PlaNYC 2030, Mayor Bloomberg’s suitability plan for New York City. At this point, CNED no longer exists. The Coalition for the Improvement of Bedford-Stuyvesant (CIBS) is now the organization that has been designated to function in that capacity. CIBS is a coalition of 25 non-profit organizations in Bedford-Stuyvesant dedicated to the cooperative planning of works to help improve this district’s quality of life.

The Environmental Protection Committee is concerned with how to make Bedford–Stuyvesant greener, healthier and more affordable, with the overarching goal of improving health outcomes and reducing energy costs to residents and businesses. In 2008, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) selected Bedford-Stuyvesant as a site for Smart Growth Technical Assistance, and many of the needs stated in this section reflect the EPA’s recommendations.

The EPA report recommended the expansion of Bedford-Stuyvesant’s building weatherization program, Retrofit Bedford Stuyvesant: block by block. The initiative aims to reduce housing costs, fight asthma, allergies and other health issues caused by poor indoor and outdoor air quality. It also improves housing conditions; decrease dependence on polluting energy sources, and improve environmental efficiency by providing energy upgrades to the homes and multifamily buildings. Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation launched the first pilot green block on Herkimer Street between Bedford and New York

Avenues. Homeowners on these blocks benefit from free energy audits, assistance accessing financial incentives, community garden improvements, street trees, and CFL light bulbs exchanges. In addition, Pratt Center is working with State Senator Velmanette Montgomery's office and the religious institutions of Bedford Stuyvesant to pilot an initiative to assist houses of worship to reduce their energy use while enabling them to make their spaces more available for community purposes. Lastly, Brooklyn Community District #3 applauds NYC City Council Speaker Christine Quinn for the recent 2010 allocation of \$400,000 to Pratt Center for the expansion of Retrofit Bedford Stuyvesant: block by block. We can best describe our needs as:

- Additional funding for the expansion of Retrofit Stuyvesant, block by block to retrofit 5,000 homes in the Bedford Stuyvesant Community in five years. Funding is also necessary to track reductions in energy use, dangerous emissions and costs.
- Adopting the goal to plant 10,000 street trees
- Improving and increasing the number of community gardens available to neighborhood residents
- Assisting CB3's religious institutions to undertake energy upgrades and become standard bearers for environmental sustainability.

The Nostrand Avenue Reconstruction Project (HWK1129), stretching from Flushing Avenue to Atlantic Avenue has been in the budget of Community District 3 since 1989. This project was moved from budget to budget since that time. It is now in the 2011 budget and we are excited to get the work started. Nostrand Avenue is a much-used thoroughfare that spans our district from north to south. The roadbed and abutting area are truly in deplorable condition. We need to see this venture begin without additional delays. We are asking that the Department of Environmental Protection complete their study of Nostrand Avenue so the construction can finally begin. HWK1129 is also the route for the Select Bus Service (SBS), which will span Brooklyn. Additionally, it ties in with the Streetscape Project of Fulton Street, once it has begun. All of these things are connected and should be happening concurrently.

Of preeminent concern to the Bedford-Stuyvesant community is the sale of liens on properties with outstanding water and sewer charges. The escalating cost of living in this neighborhood, higher property tax rates, predatory lending practices, and still financial failings due to the state of our economy, it is of particular interest to Community Board 3 what the impact of these issues will have on homeowners and the residents. This concern is of particular importance when applied to the seniors and others with either fixed or low incomes.

As advocates for the residents, it would be encouraging to see the implementation of some type of program that would protect the rights of the Central Brooklyn property owners to ensure they can continue to remain an integral portion of a community that most of them have been in for generations, with an intensive program of education and alternatives to this population for saving their homes.

Community District #3 is still requesting noise regulation enforcement by DEP and the Police Department. In addition, we would like to see signage regarding the prohibiting of honking horns in certain areas, including the fines for such posted on those signs, i.e., hospitals, residential sections, schools, et al. There really needs to be an increase in staffing for all agencies concerned to enforce all regulations.

HEALTH CARE

We were excited when President Barack Obama signed the legislation for Health Care Reform. This legislation will create affordable care, make the insurers accountable, expand coverage to everyone and make our health system sustainable. With this now being law, the information needs to be disseminated to the people of this country, especially the seniors and people with disabilities and major health concerns. It is crucial for the children as well. The information regarding health care reform needs to be detailed so it can be readily understood. There should be a comprehensive plan on ascertaining that senior residences, senior centers, and schools market the information so people can benefit from these great resources.

As a community, we continue to be the epicenter of many health challenges. The death rate in Central Brooklyn is more than 20% higher than in Brooklyn and 30% higher than in New York City overall. Some of the causes are cancer at 17%, heart disease at 16%, HIV at 14% and homicide at 8%. This is tragic and preventable. The Health Care Reform should ease these numbers once people understand. Healthier people mean longer life, more revenue productivity, and a better economy. Our prevalence of obesity contributes to diabetes in epidemic proportions at about 95% type 2 diabetes that is linked directly to obesity. In Brooklyn 12% of the adults have diabetes as compared to 9% in New York City overall.

This is another area where change is imperative for the good of this community. We are requesting increased funding in several critical areas. Unfortunately, we must again, repeat the call for more funding in these areas:

- HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment
- Expand emergency room services
- Innovative preventive programs that address the high rates of **diabetes, obesity and asthma**
- Increased resources for training EMT personnel
- Expanded emergency mental health programs at Woodhull and interfaith Hospitals
- More accessible locations for flu vaccinations

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene must make every effort to bring information to the public. In the past, we have requested that our local Health office become more visible in the community, and that it step up its efforts to get information to the public. Since funding is always an issue, more resources should be allocated for this purpose.

HOUSING AND LAND USE

This year 2010, we have begun to work on the re-zoning of Bedford-Stuyvesant North. Community District #3 is collaboratively working with City Planning to make comprehensive decisions regarding what the northern portion of Bedford-Stuyvesant will look like. The plan is to finish our studies as quickly as possible to preserve the integrity of this area. We are not willing to have a portion of our community slip through our fingers without regard to the people that live and work here. The area is home to diverse cultures and each of those ethnicities should be represented equally.

The Office of Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding should direct a study to assess the need and impact of active manufacturing in northern sections of Bedford-Stuyvesant. Clear opportunities for either the attraction of industrial manufacturing and/or the protection of areas for manufacturing should be identified. Additionally the study should include an assessment for the attraction of a green industry cluster appropriate and contextual to the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood.

There are several parcels of land in the south eastern quadrant particularly on Fulton Street and we know that there has been discussion regarding those pieces. It is the understanding of Community District #3 that the parcels on Fulton Street under the purview of HPD are Block 1548, Lot #s 26-30 totaling 10,000 square feet, block 1549, lot #s 407 totaling 8000 square feet and block 1549, Lot #s 19-34 totaling 26,000 square feet. We view this as a marvelous opportunity for economic development, employment, and affordable housing. The unemployment statistics of 15% in Bedford-Stuyvesant certainly warrant this.

With a Needs Assessment in place that has community input, these parcels can be maximized to their fullest potential. With the Mayor's push for affordable housing, we can utilize these parcels of land as affordable housing with commercial/public space below. It would be in line with the zoning along the rest of Fulton Street which is R7D, and keep the street as a major commercial strip in Bedford Stuyvesant throughout its entirety. A multi-use building with perhaps a mid-size supermarket or bank on the ground level would be perfect. We must not forget that Bedford-Stuyvesant is part of the pilot for economic development and greening. Commercial revitalization along Fulton Street will be a tremendous boost to this under-served area of Central Brooklyn. It will also connect the eastern portion of Fulton Street with the Bed-Stuy Gateway BID leading to a viable commercial corridor for the entire length of Bedford Stuyvesant.

In addition, Community Board 3 is interested in finding out the relationship between HPD and HUD with regard to funded projects in our area i.e., Risley Dent, Hunterfly Homes, Jackie Robinson, and Smith Woodward. We are looking to fully understand how that relationship works and its impact on this community.

Just as last year, we must re-emphasize that the Department of Buildings must have adequate inspectors to enforce their guidelines. There have been instances when complaints have come in and we involve DOB their replies are nebulous. A contractor/developer that has applied for permits should be held accountable to what has been applied for. On occasion, that is not happening. This should not be. The issues of such infractions violate the quality of life and can at times be hazardous to public safety. Once permits have been issued, there should be periodic inspections while the work is going on to ensure that the contractors are doing what they applied for. Sometime deviating from the specifications can cause major problems and even worse, possible injury or property damage to adjacent parcels of land. We experienced a problem like that on MacDonough Street this Spring, where the plans were deviated from and it almost cost the block three brownstone houses. If more inspectors are needed, then we should push to get the funding for them. It makes more sense to be proactive than it does to be reactive. Compliance with codes were established for a reason. DOB needs to have a vehicle to respond to violators. Rules, laws, guidelines were created for the safety and well being of all concerned. It is time to make people comply. Community District #3 is pushing for legislative action to give DOB more enforcement power that will help safeguard the City against unscrupulous developers and contractors from going around the proscribed methods and procedures that have been designed for the safety and well-being of all.

Our major need continues to be technical assistance from agencies such as City Planning and HPD, and elected officials, to help us make a comprehensive assessment of:

- Rezoning of Bedford-Stuyvesant North
- The status of the urban renewal plans
- The coordinated development of the plans (how they fit together)
- How our housing needs have (or have not) been met by these plans
- Vacant land under the aegis of several city agencies
- How Community District #3's Affordable Housing Policy impacts all of the plans

After a 32 year history, Community board 3 should have had all of these issues addressed already. We feel that looking at where we are is now a tremendous understatement. Such a study will require time, staff, and commitment from agency staff and members of our Community board, and other stakeholders but it needs to happen none the less. It is a project whose time is long overdue.

There is no domain in life that is not obliged to upgrade its relationship to the needs of Community District #3 residents with disabilities and their families. This is particularly relevant to housing development. The need for more “accessible” affordable housing is a given. However, utilization of “universal design” practices which go beyond the concept of “barrier free” living, is necessary to make living spaces accessible, safe, and practical for all residents. This will always remain crucial to Community Board 3.

LANDMARKS

Community District #3 is moving forth in its goal of identifying the historic properties throughout this community district and then to contacting the residents and inform them of the value of having their properties landmarked. Homeowners are entitled to receive a grant to restore the property to its original architectural aesthetic beauty that has set this community apart from other areas around the City. Preserving the historical properties enhances our community, promotes economic growth and allows the homeowner to have a heightened sense of self- worth.

There are several areas within the community that are deserving of city landmark status. The Community Board does all it can to preserve the historic housing stock for future generations. We continue to educate home owners regarding the benefits of going through landmark process; increasing your property value and elevating the values in your community. As an advocate, Community Board 3 would like to see programs and additional funding put in place that would allow property/home owners to become aware of the wonderful inheritance they have as the people of Bedford-Stuyvesant.

MTA

Late in the last fiscal year, MTA informed us that they are going to honor our request to place an elevator at the Utica Avenue Subway Station. This is on the “A” and “C” line and is a transportation hub for the B25 and B46 buses as well. This is a more than worthy project considering how deep this station is and the number of senior’s and disabled persons that live in this area. When MTA revealed the plans, they did not have the elevator going all the way to the platform. This is defeating the purpose. The ramps that are at the station and the depth of the station would make this a true hardship for persons in walkers and wheelchairs that are not motorized. We have requested that they come back with plans for the elevator to go to the platform and also have been in dialogue with our state elected officials to add additional funding to make this financial feasible.

The elevator will be beneficial to many Bedford-Stuyvesant residents, as the only other elevator is at the western end of the neighborhood. This will give greater accessibility to the residents that live in the eastern portion of the community.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Enhancing Bedford-Stuyvesant’s parks and providing ample opportunity for recreation is the key to combating the neighborhood’s nearly endemic problems of obesity and asthma. We applaud the fine job of renovating parks in Bedford-Stuyvesant. With the help of Council Members Vann and Mealy, in coordination with the Department of Parks and Recreation, Brevoort Park has been renovated and Pulaski Park is undergoing renovations. Councilman Vann has put funding in place to finish working on Von King Park’s cultural

facility. Talks have already begun regarding sprucing up St. Andrews Playground. The Chairperson, Henry L. Butler and the District Manager, Charlene Phillips met with the Borough Commissioner Spiegel to look at the preliminary plans. Charlie's Place Playground, a facility located on the northern section of Bedford-Stuyvesant had a section chosen to be a community garden. With the assistance of Commissioners Spiegel and Deputy Commissioner Linn, and at the community's urging, that idea has been re-evaluated and the playground is even going to be renovated. We give much praise and appreciation to Commissioner Spiegel for his cooperative manner and care he exhibits regarding the parks in this area. The playground at PS 309, has a new ball field and is quite nice. Marcy Playground, has also had some renovations done, the first phases of that facility have been completed. Our parks, under the current administration have been getting face-lifts and we are truly grateful on behalf of the residents of this great neighborhood. Additionally, Bedford-Stuyvesant residents have been making active use of the intensive programming taking place in city parks. Bedford-Stuyvesant's parks have come a long way toward meeting residents' needs, but the following needs remain:

Increased Maintenance of existing parks:

- Comfort stations, which include restrooms, are required at heavily used and/or programmed parks. Porta-potties should be put in place in the interim.
- Better enforcement on the cleanup of animal waste. Excessive animal waste in parks impedes their use by neighborhood residents.
- More sites for trash collection and increased frequency of trash collection in heavily utilized or programmed parks.
- Better enforcement against illegal dumping in parks. Construction debris often ends up in city parks.
- Funding for the complete renovation of Charlie's Place Playground
- Funding for an African American Cultural Center within the confines of Bedford-Stuyvesant
- Re-evaluation of the tree-pruning cycle. Higher temperatures have caused tree overgrowth. Additionally, overgrown trees on city sidewalks are damaging curbs, sidewalks, and roadbeds, and a revamped program of root slicing is required.
- Expanded opportunities for recreation:
- Sumner Armory, a highly regarded historic building, should be redeveloped for community use. Bedford-Stuyvesant residents lack adequate indoor recreational facilities, and Sumner Armory could accommodate an indoor track; tennis, basketball, volleyball, racquetball and paddle ball courts; a bowling alley; and a roller-skating rink.
- Kosciuszko Community Pool (K Pool)/Marcy Pool should be enclosed for year-round use. It is near the upcoming Nostrand SBS line and a public school. A concept plan (contained within the EPA Smart Growth report) already exists for the enclosure and solar heating of the facility

POLICE

The NYPD works tirelessly to keep our community safe. Each time an area becomes blighted with crime, the precincts flood the area with officers and equipment, when available. The problem is that the availability can really only concentrate on one area at a time. If there is an impact unit in the Fulton/Nostrand corridor, then the crime is committed further in the eastern sections of Bedford-Stuyvesant. Now there is an impact team in the 81st Precinct as well as in the 79th but the problem still remains. If the officers are concentrating

on one area, the crime moves to another.

The goal of Community District #3 continues to have a crime-free community, yet there are more and more shootings. Guns continue to pour into this community. School children are being accosted as they leave their schools. Gunshots ring out anytime of the day or night.

The community affairs officers make great efforts for police/community relations. We certainly appreciate all that they do, however, it is known that community relations is a top-down issue and must be dealt with that way. How directives are issued from 1 Police Plaza to the commands, affects how the officers carry out their responsibilities. It cannot continue with business as usual. The 81st Precinct incident lets us know that there must be some serious changes made in order for the law enforcement officers to view the residents of any community as valuable citizens of this city. We are not all criminals, in fact the number of criminals in comparison to fine upstanding hard working people in this district is astounding. With an infusion of new blood at headquarters, we are hoping to see Chief Banks work through the problems and create a law enforcement force that is reminiscent of days gone by when police officers were allies.

Community District #3 would like to have the following needs met:

- Funding for additional section cars for our precincts
- Funding for another Skywatch dedicated to Bedford-Stuyvesant
- Additional officers in place especially in the areas of NYCHA
- Each precinct should have its own gang and gun unit answerable to the precinct commander. With designated units, there is a greater opportunity to proactive rather than just reactive. The job is overwhelming in this present climate.
- The impact unit should be permanently assigned to their home precincts
- School children are being accosted as they leave their schools. We are much in need of safe passage programs for school districts 13 and 16, which cover the Bedford-Stuyvesant community.

SAFETY/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

By all accounts, we will eventually experience a major hurricane hitting the New York Metropolitan area. We need an Emergency Preparedness strategy designed for the uniqueness of the Bedford-Stuyvesant community. While it is true, we are not a coastal community, our sewer system and catch basins are not equipped to handle the deluge and inundation of rising water in our streets.

It is crucial to know and organize health care providers and first responders, as well as, CBOs equipped with the necessary information and skills in case of emergencies. We should be aware of appropriate shelter provisions and strategic locations that people can be directed to in the event there is a need. Educational tools need to be disseminated more readily throughout the neighborhood to allow residents to know that terrorist's attacks are not the only emergencies. We see that as a pressing need, in the event of natural disaster as well as impending terrorist attacks.

We are just beginning to explore all of the ramifications of establishing such a system, and there is a need for assistance in that development. City, state and federal agencies all have resources and plans that would be of value. There should be a major recruitment drive to train CERT teams throughout all communities, particularly within the confines of the community based organizations.

SANITATION

Community District #3 is still without our own Sanitation Garage. We have been making this request since 1980. This is a disgrace! We have been given every excuse imaginable. The site chosen was in controversy for years with numerous court battles. Now that the site is available, the money is supposedly no longer available due to the economic downturn. However in these dire times, capital projects are being constructed all over the city. So that tells us that if an agency and/or OMB view a project favorably, money mysteriously appears to keep a project funded.

This garage is important to the future of Bedford-Stuyvesant. With the current projections for the Bedford-Stuyvesant community, the increased density will necessitate having our own garage. With PlaNYC 2030 trying to make New York City a greener, cleaner, and leaner City, the lack of a facility in this district will truly become an intolerable condition. The great disparities in this district's health statistics, we cannot afford to have garbage and debris strewn around because we are utilizing a garage in Community Board #1 that will be unable to keep up the population and commercial growth of the community. Not only do we demand that this project be funded, it is also mandated by the City Charter that each district have its own garage.

The Bedford-Stuyvesant Gateway Business Improvement District (BID) encompassing Fulton Street from Classon Avenue to Troy Avenue and Nostrand from Halsey Street to Atlantic Avenue is a high traffic, densely populated commercial shopping corridor. The majority of the District is made up of long city blocks; therefore there is a glaring need for garbage receptacles to be placed mid-block to capture the overflow of litter. Given the functions of the BID, the Gateway is equipped to collect and move all garbage from mid-block receptacles to corner receptacles for pick-up by the Department of Sanitation.

We are aware that the signage division is no longer in existence however the need is even greater than before for signage. Is it possible to create a signage division that serves multiple municipal agencies making it more cost efficient? We need to have printed signs about canine waste, littering, and no posting. At this point, residents are putting up their own signs and residents are at risk of running afoul of sanitation codes themselves trying to compensate for the lack of official signage. Community District #3 is asking for without further delay:

- To know if the \$12 million start-up money is still available for the foundation?
- What is the Department of Sanitation doing to accommodate having the money appropriated for the construction start-up?
- How much is the garage cost at this time?

We are still requesting timely printed materials sent out to the community well in advance noting schedule changes prior to the changes taking place.

SENIORS

The senior population of Community Board 3 continues to be a major concern. This is another area where nothing has changed. Our newest issue is the fact that we have even more reason to be concerned because some of the centers have been closed, which is the life-line for some of our elderly have with the world outside of their homes. Seniors are being displaced because they can no longer afford to age in place. We

need to have guaranteed steps to keep the people that helped build this community right here. They are unable to afford the rents or are unable to get into the senior housing in their very own neighborhood. Some of our golden residents cannot procure housing because they have too much income while others do not have enough. Some of our aged neighbors are ill and/or disabled and need some sort of assisted living facility within the confines of Bedford Stuyvesant. It is a travesty to have to move the seniors out of the neighborhood they have lived in their entire adult life, raised their children and grandchildren in. Not only are they struggling with placement, but also with being preyed upon by unscrupulous entities trying to take away their property and holdings.

- We need funding to create a facility sponsored by HUD and DFTA that will allow our seniors to age in place safely. Perhaps an incentive can be put in place for a developer to create the building and then DFTA can be its sponsoring agent.
- Here are an increasing percentage of senior citizens living in poverty and we need to concretize supportive services targeted specifically for them. These would include Medicaid, SSI, Food Stamps, home delivered meals and the ever crucial housing subsidies.
- Information is the key to better informed decisions. Definitive strategic well thought out plans should be instituted to ensure that our older Americans receive pertinent information. This does not have to only fall on the municipalities but with appropriate training the responsibility can be shared with community-based, faith-based, religious institutions, block associations and other community entities to advocate on behalf of the elderly. Keep the advocates abreast of new and beneficial legislation that will impact the quality of life for our seniors.
- The Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Unit must continue to be in place for our older citizens. The price of rent has sky-rocketed and those seniors that do not own their homes are at an impasse as to how to afford to continue living in their rental property. Income eligibility needs to be re-vamped, so more elderly are qualified to age in place without fear of increases that will force them to have to seek shelter elsewhere.
- Protective services need to be provided in order to safeguard senior against crime and abuse. There should be training for all municipalities to recognize when the elderly have been victimized, sometimes even by their families. Assist with fuel and utility costs with programs such as HEAP and Weatherization.
- Another crucial matter when considering the elderly is making sure that our public, private and recreational spaces are senior friendly. They should be able to continue to go out and enjoy this city without worry that they cannot use the stairs, (i.e., subways), getting in public spaces and places like the theatres, restaurants, houses of worship and the like.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Community District #3 has worked diligently over the past year to make sure that the homeless people that are placed in this community are treated fairly in their housing quest. There are many transitional facilities cropping up all over Bedford Stuyvesant in our residential community. Some of them are being placed in unsafe conditions. We have been working with the Commission on Human Rights, the Department of Homeless Services and our elected officials to see that these dangerous practices are curtailed. In April, Council Member Annabel Palma held a hearing and agreed that legislation was needed to ensure appropriate practices are adhered to when referring homeless people to transitional/independent living facilities.

The Department of Homeless Services and the City Council at the urging of the community districts of Brooklyn have taken a closer look at the present practices and deemed that there needed to be change. A pilot program is now in effect that instructs providers to refrain from making referrals to buildings that have registered complaints regarding occupancy violations, but have not been inspected by a City agency because the inspector was unable to access the premises.

At the time of the hearing, it was also decided that the Department of Homeless Services needs to send notification to the community when they are opening a facility in their catchments area. We have additionally asked that strict attention to the concentration of facilities that are placed in one geographic area. Bedford-Stuyvesant is largely a residential community and if we continue to make every vacant house a facility, we will only be known as a blighted ghetto of sheltering systems. Community District #3 is working toward building up this area, not allowing it to fall into a total state of disrepair. Residential facilities for homeless individuals and families must be spread throughout the five boroughs.

Additionally, it would be beneficial if all sheltering programs in the community be listed and given to organizations like the community board so that we may also have appropriate information that will allow us to allay the fears of the surrounding community. If these facilities are known, the community will also be able to be supportive to the residents and make sure that everyone has a suitable quality of life.

TRANSPORTATION

As with DEP, the Nostrand Avenue HWK1129 project, (the reconstruction of Nostrand Avenue from Flushing to Atlantic Avenues) has been in the budget of Community District #3 since 1989. Nostrand Avenue is a major thoroughfare that runs from the northern most end of our district straight through in a southerly direction. At this time, construction is scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2011. Community District #3 is requesting that this schedule be adhered to, the project is overdue and the condition of the roadbed is hazardous at best.

Plans for NYC Select Bus Service along the Nostrand-Bedford corridors should include an impact study measuring effects on the local commercial strips and the identification of areas for dedicated parking along commercial nodes/intersections.

Additionally, we are cognizant of the growing number of bikers within the district. The existing bike lanes do not seem to connect. The lanes should connect allowing safe passage for bikers throughout Brooklyn. That being said, we do not want bike lanes along our major transverses. It slows traffic too much. Everyone is not riding a bike. There are people that still must use their vehicles and between parking, bike lanes, buses and deliveries, the major thoroughfares are being tremendously disadvantaged for motorists. There is a safety issue for bikers on busy streets. The secondary roadways would truly be much safer.

We would like to see bus shelters at all of our bus stops for the elderly and disabled especially. The bus stop areas need to be kept clean and snow-free. Some bus stops have debris lying around and weeks growing up out of the pits that the bus stop sign is in. There must be better maintenance at our bus stops and transportation hubs.

Another continuing problem with our roadways is that there is no consistent enforcement for big rigs that do not respect the truck routes but continually use the residential streets. These streets are not constructed to handle such heavy vehicles and they ruin the roadbed, not to mention the vibrations from these heavy vehicles also compromise the foundation of our historical building stock. Over time, this creates structural damage issues for the property owners.

CONCLUSION

Community District #3 is excited to be the pilot program for the greening of this city. It is our belief that this is falling in line with our vision for the area. We are dedicated to revitalizing our commercial base, as well as promoting our economic and employment opportunities.

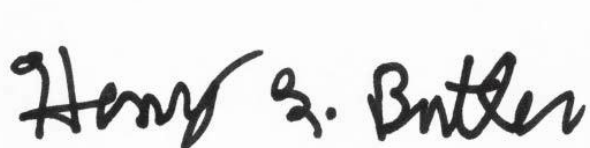
Bedford-Stuyvesant is taking a critical look at the divide in education. It will be on our radar to find strategies within the community to enhance the quality of education for our youth. The low test scores and the high drop-out rates have to be eliminated entirely. Of course, this cannot be fully realized without assistance from our municipal partners.

This District is committing much of our efforts to seeing that the properties left within our boundaries will be something that is going to benefit the residents, the borough, and the city. We must increase our opportunities to have affordable housing, and businesses that will generate jobs to eliminate the high level of unemployment as possible.

Finally, Community District #3 is looking forward to enhancing our recreational facilities and the possibility of creating new ones to assist in combating the health disparities within our borders. The greening will allow for healthier eating, the parks will assist in appropriate exercise and opportunities to work and have business that will boost community pride.

We are an ambitious people who will not quit until Bedford-Stuyvesant has reached her potential. Look out New York, here we come!

Respectfully submitted,



Henry L. Butler
Board Chairperson



Charlene Phillips
District Manager