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BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD No. 10

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STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #10 FISCAL YEAR 2015 AUGUST 1, 2013

Opening Statement

Bronx Community Board #10 is one of the largest Board service areas in the Borough of the Bronx. It is primarily characterized by 1-3 family homes, situated on tree shaded streets. There are a few multiple dwellings concentrated in the Pelham Bay, Zerega and Westchester Square portions of the Board. However, the Board is the host community to Co-op City, one of the largest cooperative housing developments in the United States. One of the most interesting communities within the Board's service area is City Island. This nautically themed community is home to several America's Cup Yacht Race winners, and resembles a quaint New England fishing village. The Board is also home to the City's largest park, Pelham Bay, in which Orchard Beach, the Bartow Pell Mansion and the Thomas Pell Wildlife Preserve are situated.

History

The areas that comprise Bronx Community Board #10 were once part of the Village of Westchester and before that, the private estates of several families, most notably the Bartow and Pell families. Two significant battles were fought during the American Revolution between British and Colonial forces, in the vicinity of Orchard Beach and Westchester Creek. In the Battles of Westchester Creek and Pell's Point the advance of British forces was thwarted, allowing Washington's troops to regroup in White Plains. The Westchester Square area is home to St. Peter's Episcopal Church, one of the oldest churches in New York City, and one that received its charter from George III, the last ruling British monarch over America. Westchester Square is also home to the Ferris Family Cemetery, with graves dating back to the 16th Century, and the historic Collis P. Huntington Free Library.

Boundaries

North-New England Thruway, Eastern Prolongation of Park Drive, Park Drive, Long Island Sound, City Line; East-Western boundary of Pelham Bay Park, Eastchester Bay Long Island Sound (including City and Hart Islands); South-East River; West – Westchester Creek, Northern Prolongation of Westchester Creek to Waterbury Avenue, Waterbury Avenue, Westchester Avenue, Castle Hill Avenue, East Tremont Avenue, Silver Street, Eastchester Road, Blondell Avenue, East Tremont Avenue, Hutchinson River Parkway, New England Thruway.

Public Safety

Bronx Community Board #10 is serviced by the 45th Precinct, which has one of the largest patrol areas in the City. One of the greatest challenges to law enforcement in Community Board #10 is the illicit drug trade. The drug trade in this Precinct is characterized by internet sales, the use of unregistered cell phones, and automobiles. The 45th Precinct at one time had a full drug module assigned to it. However, it has since been split with the 43rd Precinct. Bronx Community Board #10 has long advocated for the permanent re-assignment of this module back to the 45th Precinct. The sophisticated nature of the drug trade in this Board's service area requires the re-assignment of this module to the 45th Precinct. Additionally, the 45th Precinct has historically suffered from understaffing. Its patrol sector is quite large, spanning the distance from Zerega Avenue to Co-op City. Its officers are often pulled for special duties at Orchard Beach, Yankee Stadium, or to other venues throughout the City. It is our Board's sincere hope that the senior management of the New York City Police Department recognizes the staffing disparities at the 45th Precinct and makes the necessary adjustments so that this Precinct is staffed properly and our Board is served well.

Graffiti is still a major problem within the Board's service areas. The Board works with the 45th Precinct's graffiti officer in identifying sites for further investigation and enforcement. In addition, it works with the City and our State Senator, Jeffrey Klein's office on programs designed to remove the offensive scrawling.

The Board will embark upon a new initiative designed to have community observers report graffiti, directly to the Board Office, which will serve as a clearing house. The Board Office will file the requests to clean the sites with the City's program and that of Senator Klein. It is hoped that the graffiti will be removed in a more systematic fashion.

Speeding is a recognized problem within the Board's service areas. With its partners at the Police Department and the Department of Transportation and local elected officials, the Board has advocated for speed bumps, street line paintings, stop signs, and other traffic control measures, especially greater enforcement. While all of the above measures have been effective to a degree, basic acceptance of the traffic laws with respect to speed, must be accepted and honored. Unfortunately, they are not, with many drivers flouting the laws and driving well above the 30 mile per hour limit. The Board is exploring opportunities with its partners in government to develop a series of Public Service Announcements (PSA's) to address the disastrous results of speeding on our City streets.

FDNY

Several years ago, the FDNY removed the ambulance from Orchard Beach. Orchard Beach hosts thousands of people every weekend during the summer. The presence of an ambulance is vital to the health and well being of the beach-going community. Therefore, it is essential that this service be restored.

Transportation

Road construction has not kept pace with the production of new cars and trucks. The number of vehicles using the roads has far outstripped the capacity of those roads to handle the traffic. Transportation planners must develop alternatives to car and truck transport. A readily available alternative exists in the railroad. For over a century,

railroads have served the Bronx, and served it well. With the Oak Point Rail Yard in the southern portion of the Borough serving as through passage from New England to the South, most freight needs and bulk cargo transport should be shifted to trains away from trucks. The trains could deliver the goods to central locations like Oak Point, and smaller trucks could deliver these commodities to retail locations and homes. By shifting the shipment of cargo away from trucks, congestion on the highways would dissipate and the quality of the air would be markedly improved.

Additionally, the Metro-North Railroad has expressed an interest in bringing rail passenger service to the Northeast Bronx by establishing a station at Co-op City, in Section #5. The Board has long advocated for this station and enthusiastically supports this concept. The Board has adopted a Resolution to this affect. It is hoped that passenger train service between Co-op City and Pennsylvania Station and Grand Central Station will soon become a reality. The Board has also advocated for commuter ferry service to serve Co-op City and other areas of the northeast Bronx.

Health and Human Services

Bronx Community Board #10 is serviced by the Jack D. Weiler Hospital of Montefiore Hospital, Jacobi Hospital, and the Emergency Care Unit of Montefiore at Westchester Square. The Board service area is also replete with doctors' offices and medical facilities. Yet, our Board still suffers from high rates of low birth weight babies, obesity, diabetes, alcoholism, and drug abuse. The Board has taken proactive steps to inform the population of these problems. The Board will, in the near future, begin working with health providers and Jacobi Hospital on plans to disseminate information about the hospital and its many fine programs, in an attempt to address these concerns.

Another major health issue facing the Board is the incidence of air and noise pollution posed by trucks and autos on the highways and streets. The Board service area, sits at the junction of the New England Thruway, the Bruckner Expressway and the Cross Bronx Expressway. This road network serves as the principal north-south, east-west route for Interstate trucking and on any given day, these roads are subject to the most horrendous traffic jams. Miles of trucks, buses and cars are stopped on these roads for protracted periods of time, polluting the air. As a result, the ambient air quality of the surrounding community suffers. The incidence of asthma and other respiratory illnesses are on the rise at all of the area hospitals. The perpetual horn blowing and reckless driving habits of motorists also detracts from the quality of life in our community. The Board hopes that transportation planners understand the necessity of developing alternatives to the shipment of goods by truck, and makes mass transit attractive to those who normally drive.

Education

Bronx Community Board #10 is home to fine grammar and intermediate schools. It is also home to three high schools, Herbert H. Lehman, the Renaissance High School and Harry S. Truman. Recently, the City's Department of Education made a decision to close Herbert H. Lehman High School for underperformance. However, through community advocacy this school will remain open. The Board will work with the community and its educators to see that adequate funds from the State budget are dedicated to area schools. The Board strongly believes in internships and encourages the Department of Education

and the leadership of Herbert H. Lehman, Renaissance and Harry S. Truman High Schools to explore to the fullest, internships with local businesses and government to give their students opportunities that will enable them to succeed in the working world.

Parks and Recreation

Bronx Community Board #10 is the host Community Board for Pelham Bay Park, the largest park in the City's system. It is also home to many community parks, which provide a welcome respite from the rigors of urban life. These are resources that must be preserved and enhanced. The Board is grateful to note that progress is being made at the Ferry Point Park East Golf Course.

The Board is also happy to note that the Department of Parks and Recreation's plans to construct a public rest room at Ferry Point Park West have reached fruition. The Board urges the Department to complete its construction with all deliberate speed.

Bronx Community Board #10 is a waterfront community and as such, the Board is interested in providing its residents with as much access to the waterfront as possible. To this end, the Board has made the renovation and dredging of the Hammond Cove and Locust Point Marinas its top priorities. We are hopeful that the Department of Parks and Recreation, along with other colleague agencies will be able to facilitate this needed project.

Again, the Board notes with gratification that Owen Dolen Park has been renovated. The Recreation Center was not part of this renovation, and it is needed. In order to have a viable recreation program for both youth and seniors, the building's environmental systems must be upgraded and it must be made permanently handicapped accessible. Bronx Community Board #10 has experienced unprecedented growth in residential construction. Often this construction was not consistent with the existing housing in the area.

The Board is also interested in having the landmarked elliptical buildings at Orchard Beach turned into a performing arts center.

Housing and Zoning

Community Boards are mandated to provide advisory opinions on land use and zoning matters. It is important that the City's central administration commit to supporting Community Boards, so that they are able to provide quality opinions on the many development projects that come before them.

One of the many difficulties that the Board faces in attempting to facilitate rational development, is a tendency on the part of building owners, developers or attorneys to subvert the Zoning Resolution and Special District status for City Island. Members of the aforementioned groups will avail themselves of the right to appeal the Community Board's opinions to the New York City Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA). Too often, the BSA does not render an opinion that is supportive of the Community Board's views, necessitating repeated hearings and duplicative correspondence on the Board's behalf, defending the City's Zoning Resolution or Special Districts. It is hoped that the

BSA, in the future, will recognize the Community Boards' preeminence in community matters.

Recognizing the importance of preserving the character of the community, a series of zoning resolutions that both downsized new construction and mandated parking was enacted. A major problem for the Board's service areas are the dual challenges of "As of Right" projects and building on zero lot lines. Too many projects are declared to be "As of Right," meaning no governmental input is required to build the project. This type of project allows developers to build buildings that are often inconsistent with the community's needs. Additionally, the current zoning regulations for a portion of our Board's service area, allows developers to build right up to the property line of the next building. This creates a streetscape of one continuous wall of buildings. Our Board believes that this practice runs contrary to the philosophy of the Zoning Resolution of 1916, in that it makes no allowances for access to light and air.

Emergency Management

Much of Bronx Community Board #10 is shoreline property, and as such, is subject to the negative effects of storms. Central to the City's emergency response system in the Community Board are Civilian Emergency Response Teams or (CERTs). Each CERT TEAM is made up of trained community residents, who have agreed to assist the NYPD, FDNY and EMS during emergencies. Currently, the Co-op City community has a CERT TEAM. The Board will work with the community organizations to facilitate the establishment of additional CERT TEAMS in the Board's service area.

Economic Development

The attraction and retention of business in the Board's service areas is of utmost importance. The Board established a specific committee, known as the Economic Development Committee, to assist local businesses with information and ombudsman services. The Westchester Square business community has established a Business Improvement District or BID. The BID consists of property owners and merchants who have made a commitment to the community in transforming an older shopping district, into a revitalized economic entity. The Westchester Square experience should be replicated across the other Board's shopping areas along City Island Avenue, East Tremont Avenue, Crosby Avenue, Westchester Avenue and the Dreiser, Einstein and Bartow Avenue Shopping Centers in Co-op City. The Board believes that the City's economic future lies in the preservation and enhancement of its older shopping areas. To this end, the Board calls upon the City's Small Business Services to assist the older shopping areas of the Board.

The Board's business communities are surrounded by regional malls that provide free parking to its patrons. The Board's older shopping areas do not enjoy such benefits. Patrons using these areas must pay for parking at meters. The Ferry Point Park portion of the Board is scheduled to receive major retail development, which will again offer free parking to its patrons. In addition, the former Whitestone Cinema complex will be redeveloped as a shopping mall, while at Bay Plaza near Co-op City, a new Macy's will be constructed. All of these shopping centers will provide free parking for their customers. The Board would like to see the City's Economic Development Corporation

consider plans for the creation of public parking, so that these older shopping districts can survive.

The development of the aforementioned shopping centers will create considerable traffic problems for the Board's service area, in that they are all located along the New England Thruway, Cross Bronx Expressway, and Bruckner Expressway interchange.

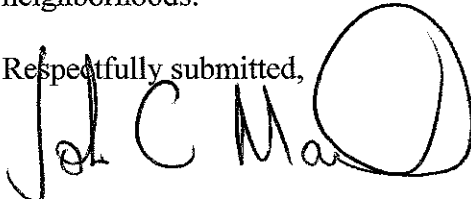
The Board, through the assistance of Bronx Borough President Diaz, the Urban Fellows Program and a Columbia University Graduate student was able to formulate a plan for the rational management of traffic from these malls. The Board recognized that the only plans available came from the developers of these projects. Needless to say, those plans did not reflect the needs of the community, so the Board created its own plan, which it has shared with decision makers. In creating this plan, the Board was fulfilling its Planning Function, an activity which should be supported by the City's central administration.


Quality of Life

The Board receives inquiries from its constituents on a variety of issues. Most often they center on the cleanliness of public spaces, the need for increased parking, concerns over housing that was built but never sold, and many other issues. In response, the Board is working with its partners in government to try and address these matters. Air quality is of great importance to this Board. One way to improve the quality of the air that we breathe is to limit the carbon footprint of the structures in our Board service area. Rampant development should be limited. The City's central government, in making determinations on vacant land that it owns, should consider turning this land into vest pocket parks or green streets. For land that is privately owned, the owner could be encouraged to land bank it for future use, or to create conservation easements which will be designed to facilitate the cleanliness of our air and water supply.

Conclusion

This statement of District Needs has been submitted by Bronx Community Board #10, in an effort to familiarize the appropriate government agencies with the needs of our communities. This Board represents vibrant communities that are the social and economic bedrock of the Bronx. The Board looks forward to working with its partners in government to ensure our quality of life, and the continued viability and growth of our neighborhoods.

Respectfully submitted,

John Marano
Chairman


Kenneth Kearns
District Manager