

CB12M Youth and Education Committee

Meeting Minutes

Meeting #2

Monday, February 8, 2021

LOCATION: VIRTUAL MEETING

Committee Members Present: Fe Florimon, Chair; Waldys Cruz, Assist Chair; Glennis Aquino-Gil; Maria Luna; Jonathan Nunez-Frometa; Paradise Phoenix; Gabriela Estrella.

Board Members: Eleazer Bueno, Chairman of the Board; Domingo Estevez, Chair of the Business. Development committee;

Committee Member(s) Excused: Christina Richiez.

Absent: Miriam James.

Public Member(s) Present: Guillermo Perez

Guests: *Madonna Paras, Youth Strategies Manager of NYC YLC; Kimbely Martinez; Rachel Opatowski, YLC Professional Development; Outreach Specialist; Shawn Jean-Louis, Education Policy Analyst from the MBP Office.*

Public Attendance: Cynthia Carrion, Director, and Kimani Davis, Dean of Culture and Extra Curriculum Affairs of the Square Charter School; Rosendo Mejia, Parent Leader, GWEC; Nadiuska Ramirez, Parent; **STUDENTS:** Estrella Ramirez; Jonathan Peter; Carlos Sanchez; Rafael Santana; Yirely Bencosme; Jessica Castillo; Delving Martinez.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Fe Florimon, at approximately 7:08 pm. Chair welcomed and thanked members and guests and then proceeded by stating that part of the committee's new goals is to give members the opportunity to exercise leadership co-chairing meetings. Today, Ms. Paradise Phoenix, (the younger member of the committee) directed the rest of the agenda's meeting after the chair called the meeting to order.

Discussion that took place as indicated below:

Subject of Presentation: *NYC Youth Leadership Councils: A path for youth to make local change happen.*

1) **Member Ms. Phoenix**, asked committee members to introduce themselves for the attendance of the record, and then proceeded with the introduction of the guests/presenters: Leader's team Ms. Madona Paras, Youth Strategies Manager of NYC YLC- started the presentation along with colleagues- Kimberly Martinez, Outreach Specialist, and Rachel Opatowski, YLC Professional Development as follows:

→ Ms. Paras praised Ms. Paradise for co-chairing the meeting and added that it gives them great pleasure joy to see youth like Paradise taking the lead in a meeting like this is what YLC's all about. They really emphasize your voice and being part of the whole process and part of the change in New York City. She also believes that their presence is important specifically the topics that the committee is trying to cover.

→ Ms. Paras and her team, Ms. Martinez and Ms. Opatowski proceeded with well elaborated information regarding NYC Youth Leadership Councils. A description of the following topics was provided

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→ *NYC Services: Youth Leadership Council, who they are, structure/process, benefits/supports, and YLC impact, etc.*

→ YLC's mission is to: "Build partnership to deepen and expand civic engagement through volunteer and services programs, creating sustainable change for our city's greatest needs. "and as for the vision is to: "United New Yorkers in service to advance lifelong civic engagement for a more equitable and inclusive city."

→ In the area of the values and the beliefs, the presenter discussed participation, diversity and inclusion, community, and collaboration.

→ Ms. Martinez discussed the area of the service partners with City agencies and community-based organizations to host YLCs in communities within NYC. Among the councils' working relationships with different organizations, the council also work closely with high school students and other important entities.

→ Justice and equity; systemic change, asset-based approach, lifelong development, youth-adult partnership are part of the councils' values that were discussed. She discussed current initiatives the councils are working on the present program year e.g. voting environmental sustainability, building safety and urban planning, anti-violence (gang, youth, domestic, dating) along with many other relevant issues. In the following phase, Ms. Martinez handled the presentation of her colleague Rachel Opatowski.

→ Ms. Opatowski, elaborated in the areas policy, practice, and advocacy of the councils' network. She also discussed the importance of professional development provided by the councils for youth and adults. Upcoming workshops include:

→ February's Amplifying Youth Voice in your YLC; March's Planning and taking Action in your YLC; April's Demonstration and reflection in your YLC (all these three provided by adults facilitators).

→ Leadership Development 3 Part training Series for YLC Youth What is Leadership-Applying Leadership-Understanding Impact- available through the month of February, March, and April of this year).

→ Measure the impact of the program regarding collective confidence- "levels increased by 56 % in supporting youth to better understand their strengths and areas of challenge; confidence levels increased by 40% when guiding youth to carrying action plans; confidence levels increased by 23 % in knowing how to use their interests and skills to make a community better and confidence levels increased by 20% in seeing the value and importance of community participation. "

→ Co-chair, Ms. Phoenix opened the floor for questions. Committee and board members were first, second the students, and then the general public. Maria Luna asked questions and provided suggestions for the YLC consideration. Participants were interested to follow up with YLC's representatives for possible partnership and youth involvement and Ms. Florimon promised to connect them with the presenters.

2) Domingo Estevez, highlighted the importance for the committee to address the need for sports in public school (e.g. senior classes, PSAL programs), which the City seems to have not to plan in place yet. According to Mr. Estevez, sport is one of the biggest bases where you forgetting scholarships not just to regular schools but high-quality schools that otherwise they wouldn't have access to and so he thinks it very important to bring up this discussion and the need for the city to open up sports and create a plan similar to what the NCAA is doing in order for the student to have the opportunity to obtain

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scholarships for their year. He also made suggestions for the committee to partners with other organizations to benefit the youth.

3) Guillermo Perez, made comments about missing the opportunity to ask questions due to the lack of not being noticed, but encourage the committee to pay close attention next time. Parent Leader, Rosendo Mejia asked for information about Adult Continuing Education Programs. Student Estrella Ramirez brought up the question about social issues within the community, and youth summer jobs- how these would be addressed?

4) Ms. Florimon acknowledged and thanked Shawn Jean-Lous, Education Policy Analyst from the MBP. Shawn graciously offered his willingness to work with our committee on the needs of youth programs and sport opportunities. Member Glennis Aquino also mentioned that in addition to the important role of sport in the lives of young people (not only in regards to scholarships and the kids' future but also in the area of physical and mental health. She also shared concern about the fact that students have full remote learning locked at home under server weather and for many kids just attached to a screen all day. The combination of these factors basically needs to be considered. She remained that Armory is offering athletic, after-school programming for kids and learning lab with DOE. These programs serve as a balance for the kids and are provided under the social distance of course. Committee agrees to follow up with this conversation with Shawn via email for further advocacy purposes.

5) **Business / New Business:** Community Announcements

Armory has a learning lap program (at West 168th and fort Washington Ave location). They presently serving as a Vaccination Center for the Heights and simultaneously run space for the DOE e.g. learning lab program for kids in either remote or blended learning at home- from kindergartens up to eighth grades. The program is available five days a week and they can choose their schedule. All classrooms have Wi-Fi and instructors available. Please share with anyone to contact the Armory <https://www.armory.nyc>

Shawn stated that since there are students, school representatives, and leaders on this meeting, his office (Borough President Gale Brewer's office) is interested in this featuring the practice of teachers who kind of elevate black stories in their classrooms and given that it's *Black History Month* the office also may suggest featuring black stories embedded in the curriculum throughout the year. BP's office is also open to further suggestion.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02pm. Seconded by Fe Florimon

NOTE: To view this meeting, please access the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFfh0ali31s>