

**GENERAL MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 24, 2001**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Abby Belkin
James Berlin
Ronald J. Botelho
Emilia G. Cardona
Fredericka Cuenca
Sybil R. Dodson
Beatrice Hall
Herbert Harwitt
Joyce F. Holland

Robert C. Liebeskind
Elizabeth Lorris Ritter
Maria Luna
Isidoro Martinez
Miguel Martinez
Victor Morisete-Romero
Norma Nadien
Marcos Navarro
William C. Ortega

Zead Ramadan
Julissa Reynoso
Steven Rizick
Maria Sierra
Barbara Smith Ramos
Juan Villar
Sandra Wachspress
Msgr. Gerald Walsh
Elouise Whitehurst

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Anita Barberis
Rafael Beaumont
Walther G. Delgado (excused)
Leslie Foster (excused)
William A. Garcia (excused)
Soledad Hiciano

Manuel J. Mendez
Luis H. Minier
Helen Morik
Dr. Pamela Palanque North
Julio Peguero
Martha Pepin

Bertie Ray, III
Nelson Rojas
George Sanchez
Cheryl Tidwell
Ricardo Urefia

The general meeting of April 24, 2001 was held at the Columbia University alumni auditorium at 650 West 168th Street. Community Board 12 was called to order and began its regular session at 7:25 PM. Fredericka Cuenca, 1st Vice Chair, chaired the meeting since the CB 12 Chairperson William Garcia was out sick.

The agenda of the meeting was adopted without objections.

District Manager's Report: Gregoria Feliciano

Requested Board Members to identify any problem of sidewalk obstruction in CB 12 on a memo enclosed in members' package for the interagency task force meeting on this issue for April 25, 2001. She proceeded to highlight items included in her written report.

Norma Nadien expressed concerns at various street potholes at W. 181st Street between Ft. Washington Avenue and Broadway, Broadway between W. 182nd and 184th Streets and Isham Street. She has called the District office and they have not been fixed since last summer.

James Berlin stated that this is unacceptable, that these potholes have to be fixed now. Elizabeth Lorris Ritter clarified sites and nature of depressions on the road that are not potholes and requires greater work.

Sybil R. Dodson also clarified the differences between potholes and major depressions which require capital budget construction to be repaired, and suggested that this should be part of the discussion on the budget consultations with the Dept. of Transportation (DOT).

Ms. Feliciano added that this issue could be discussed on the 5/7/01 Transportation and Public Safety Committee meeting where DOT Borough Commissioner Albano will attend.

Elizabeth Lorris Ritter expressed concerns about street trash cans not being emptied by DOS on Seaman Avenue.

Ms. Feliciano will bring this to the attention of Mr. Perotta, new Dept. of Sanitation (DOS) Superintendent.

Norma Nadien stated that some trailers are being illegally parked on Dyckman Street west of Payson Street.

Ms. Feliciano will find out who are the owners of these trailers and follow-up on this.

Chair's Report: Fredericka Cuenca

Announced the formation of the Nominating Committee for the Executive Board election of June 2001. The Nominating Committee is composed of :

1. Robert C. Liebeskind, Chair
2. Beatrice Hall
3. Isidoro Martinez
4. Maria Sierra
5. Emilia Cardona
6. Abby Belkin

The minutes of March 27, 2001 were amended to say that Beatrice Hall not Joyce Holland "supports the resolution because our kids need to be in school not in the streets". Joyce Holland was not at this meeting. The minutes of 3/27/01 were approved with this amendment.

Public Session

Allen Hodge and Community Resident

Reminded the Board that the deadline for summer jobs for youth is 5/4/01 and urged the lobbying of state and local elected officials to have money available for summer jobs. Expressed his support for a high school, junior high school and middle income housing at Sherman Creek. Requested to know from NY Presbyterian Hospital and their level of commitment to contract, subcontract 4 jobs for people of color and women in their construction sites.

Dr. Herbert Hendin – Columbia Tennis Center

Stated his long history of involvement with the tennis center and his interests that this center remain as a recreational option for the community. Expressed his opposition to Columbia University building a new tennis center at Baker's Field which will be exclusive of the community. Requested that CB 12 ask Columbia University to consider alternative sites for this center and to come for review of said plan since they don't totally own the land for this project.

Maria Luna asked about the location of the site and of the alternative site. Dr. Hendin responded that Columbia plans to build at Baker's Field and that the alternative site is across the street on Broadway where they have now a parking lot.

Barbara Smith Ramos asked how many kids participate in the tennis program. Dr. Hendin said that close to 1000 per year.

Norma Nadien asked about the ownership of the land. Dr. Hendin responded that Columbia gave the land to NY Presbyterian Hospital with the understanding that the Tennis Center will be built on top of the parking facility but Columbia did not do it, but that this is only one of the alternative sites.

Steven Rizick asked about the size of the facility and Dr. Hendin stated that under Columbia's plan it will go from 7 tennis courts to 6 and under their plans they will keep the 7 courts and have more hours for youngsters of the community to play.

A member of the public asked via Robert Liebeskind that if with the new tennis facility the program for kids will be terminated. Dr. Hendin answered that no the summer program will continue and that the issue is that this program should benefit the Columbia Varsity team as well as the community at large.

Sybil Dodson asked about which CB 12 committee will discuss this issue and should be discussed next week. She will have a discussion with the committee Chairs to see which committee is appropriate for this discussion.

Maria Luna commented that this is not a new issue in CB 12 and that a major institution such as Columbia University should have a representative on CB 12.

Joyce Holland – Washington Heights West 162nd Street Block Association

Brought to the attention of the Board 2 recent shortcomings of teenagers in the neighborhood and that this is not a new issue and these shootings occurred in broad daylight. She also stated that this issue is one of the reasons she urges the members that didn't vote for Intro 765 at the last general meeting to vote yes for this resolution.

James Berlin clarified that the resolution was tabled, not rejected, and it could be considered again after being refined by the Youth & Education committee.

Maria Sierra asked whether this resolution will resolve this issue and Ms. Holland stated that it will help in making the parents more accountable for their children.

Maria Luna asked if Ms. Holland has brought this issue to the Precinct Council meetings and Ms. Holland stated that she will present it tomorrow, as she has presented in the past to the police Inspectors as well as most, not all, precinct meetings.

Sybil Dodson stated that she prefers a moral statement than to try to legislate parent's concerns.

Ronald Botelho asked for clarification on the rule of addressing tabled resolutions at the meeting.

Elizabeth Lorris Ritter – Cornerstone Chorale

Invited everyone to the concert on 4/29/01 at 3PM at Cornerstone center at W. 189th Street and Bennett Avenue. Admission is \$10.00 and \$6.00 for students and seniors. The program includes the presentation of Mozart C Minus Mars and a large choral and soloist program.

John Reeves – Columbia University

Responded to concerns on the Tennis Center by highlighting some facts. The Columbia Development program for Juniors has gone on for years and it will continue and is supported by the Columbia Community Center, the Medical Center Neighborhood Fund, the Columbia Athletic Department is \$12,000 of a \$17,000 budget. The program serves 325 youngsters each summer and they have a system where they can play tennis at Columbia University's hard courts in Baker's Field, something they could not do a year before. He stated that the internal issue is that Columbia University decided to change their 2 clay tennis courts to hard court like all the other colleges in the United States.

Elizabeth Lorris Ritter asked whether under the existing plan is there a commitment to extend it to other months of the year. Mr. Reeves responded that the program is run in Inwood, Frederick Johnson and Riverside and they will open up the program for the first time to the university and the outlying communities. He doesn't know if the commitment was made in the past, but they will do it within the 6 hard surface courts.

A member of the public asked via Julissa Reynoso about the hours of extension of the program. Mr. Reeves answered that so far they have Saturday evenings.

Barbara Smith Ramos asked about researching for past written commitment of Columbia University to the community. Mr. Reeves answered that it should be answered by the person who made that statement and that he has never seen it in writing.

Emilia Cardona asked whether the community will be allowed to use the facilities on weekends. Mr. Reeves responded that the Columbia University varsity teams use the facility between 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM and the community has to be accommodated around those prime time hours.

Sybil Dodson asked whether they will make available detailed new plans and old plans, before CB 12's Executive Committee meeting to facilitate the discussion.

Mr. Reeves stated that the facility people should answer those questions but he went on to say that the hard courts that are being built in Columbia owned land and are consulting all the pertinent agencies.

Fredericka Cuenca stated that we will figure out the CB 12 committee to discuss this issue.

Committee Reports:

Executive Committee Resolution on the Civilian Complaint Review Board

Fredericka Cuenca presented the resolution to the members and introduced Chris Johnson from the American Civil Liberties Union to speak on the resolution. Mr. Johnson stated that he has come many times with this issue to CB 12 which he considers important for the positive relationship of the community and the police, to highlight the issue of police misconduct practice by a minority of the police, and to improve police training at all levels. He also stated that 25 community boards in NYC have passed similar resolutions.

Fredericka Cuenca stated that this resolution had a lengthy discussion at the Executive Committee meeting and pointed to edits of the original resolution, in the last be it further resolved the whole phrase "including bonuses for police officers who are fluent in foreign languages spoken in minority communities" should be deleted, and omit the 6th be it further resolved about the elected Police Community Advisory Board. Ms. Cuenca also stated that one of the main topics that generated a heated discussion at the Executive Committee meeting was the issue of the special prosecutor for police brutality and corruption.

James Berlin asked why was this issue discussed at the Executive Committee and not the Public Safety Committee. Fredericka Cuenca answered that it was not discussed at the Public Safety Committee due to difficulties with reaching a quorum and busy agendas. Mr. Berlin also objected to Mr. Johnson congratulating us for this resolution since they wrote it, but that the main problem of this resolution is that it could be 5 or more resolutions and urged the members to vote against it and send it back to the appropriate committee for discussion, even though we all are against police brutality and corruption but this is not how we should fight it.

Sybil Dodson pointed out the long history of discussion of this issue at CB 12 and that this resolution should be broken up and discussed in its various parts.

Maria Luna requested copies of the resolutions passed by 25 community boards in NYC. Mr. Johnson stated that he has presented them to CB 12 in various occasions and that he has been coming to this board for 2 years with various information on this issue. Ms. Luna also agreed to send this resolution to committee for discussion.

Zead Ramadan made a motion to table the resolution, seconded by Norma Nadien. A lengthy discussion followed as to which was the appropriate committee to send this resolution to, the Executive Committee and/or the Transportation and Public Safety Committee. Mr. Ramadan withdrew his motion.

Ron Botelho made a motion to table this resolution and send it to the appropriate committee, the Transportation & Public Safety Committee. This motion was seconded by Elizabeth Lorris Ritter and many others.

The motion to table was approved with 16 in favor, 8 opposed, and no abstentions.

Committee for the Aging – Herbert Harwitt, Chair

Presented the resolution against the Medicare Education and Regulatory Fairness Act being considered in the US Congress. He emphasized that this act threatens to further undermine the rules, surveillance and enforcement governing the nursing homes.

James Berlin suggested to vote for this resolution and to send it to other community boards to see if they passed similar resolutions.

Mr. Harwitt added that he will send it to the New York State representatives as well. Ms. Lorris Ritter read the be it resolved of the resolution.

Abby Belkin suggested some punctuation edits to the 5th whereas, instead of "corrections to" it should be "corrections of substantial care...." And a semicolon instead of a comma after violations. These were accepted and Ms. Lorris Ritter added that she would reformat this as bullet messages.

Julissa Reynoso asked when is this bill up for discussion at the US Congress and Ms. Lorris Ritter responded that it is presently being discussed at committee and it has not reached the house or the senate.

The resolution was approved with 24 in favor, no oppositions and no abstentions.

Julissa Reynoso stated she is resigning from CB 12 because she is going into the judiciary which presents a possible conflict of interest. She will remain active in the community and thanked everyone for being good teachers and urged to keep Democracy up.

Representatives of Public Officials

Socrates Solano – City Council representative

Stated that he is the new community Liaison for City Council. Highlighted that we will have summer jobs this year as it is being discussed at the City Council and that the budget is being discussed at the City Council as well. He invited everyone to participate.

Carlos Rodriguez – Manhattan Borough President's Office

Presented written report and highlighted 2 issues, one the recommendations of the Borough President on the lack of taxi service for the population of Northern Manhattan and the lack of Postal Service for the same area.

Jessica Morales – Councilmember Guillermo Linares

Stated that Councilmember Linares introduced a proclamation to Dr. Jose Joaquin Veras, a Dominican American CUNY representative who received a Science Academy Award. Councilman Linares, Assembly Espallat and other elected officials went on an educational trip to the Dominican Republic to sign an agreement with the Dominican Education Department to assist children with their education there and in New York City. Announced that there are 2 bills coming up for discussion at the City Council, one on Campaign Finance and the other on Sweatshop Legislation.

Clark Whitsett – State Senator Schneiderman's Office

Reported on reapportion of the New York State Education Fund based on the NYS Supreme Court decision, where the NYS Assembly proposes 1.7 billion over 2 years, the NYS Senate 382 million and the Governor plans to decrease it. He stated that the MTA transit budget has a higher proportion of funding for upstate than downstate, in spite of the increase in ridership in New York City. Announced that Columbia Presbyterian Hospital has free Breast Cancer Screening. For more information call (212) 305-0163.

Barbara Smith Ramos asked about the ages for men to participate in this screening. Mr. Whitsett said that to his knowledge this screening is not for men but that he will find out and report at the next meeting.

Frank Hess – Assemblyman Farrell's Office

Announce the cancellation of a meeting on parks and the police on May 3, 2001 at Good Shepherd. The meeting will be re-scheduled and he will let us know.

Finally, Fredericka Cuenca urged the CB 12 members to attend the May and June Committee meetings where the representatives from the City Agencies will participate.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM

Respectfully submitted by:
Marcos Navarro, Secretary