

Minutes from 5.18.11 123rd Street Block Association & Community Garden Meeting

BLOCK ASSOCIATION

NEWS/UPDATES

- Took attendance and introduced the Board of Directors. Noted Aaron Albano's acting as President in Jackie Albano's absence and the addition of Kendra Sykes as Secretary.
- The meeting opened at 7pm; below is a list of those in attendance:
 - Aaron Albano
 - Sebastian Morell
 - Paul Ferrara
 - Diane Mellon
 - Eve Byam
 - Melvin Alexander
 - Priya Ganapali
 - Lavater Harvin
 - Elliott Phipps
 - Kendra Sykes
 - Shirley Reid
 - Syderia Chresfield
 - Scott Ahlborn
 - Jim Streacker
 - Lamont Alston
 - Norma Godwin
 - Tracey Stahling
 - Mat Osicki
 - Denise Rivera

Block Association Finances and Other News from the Treasury

- Aaron Albano spoke about the bulletin board that was recently received to embellish the Community Garden. It was initially the wrong size, but he sent it back and received the correct size soon after. Plans to have someone help with the cement part of putting up the board and because this will be a big job, it will be a deduction from the Block Association's bank account.
- As of May 18th, 2011 there are 16 Block Association Members and 29 active members of the Garden.
- Aaron Albano also spoke about working on a Kickstarter campaign for the Community Garden gate. After explaining what makes a Kickstarter campaign successful, he mentioned that we could also get local businesses to match whatever the Block Association fundraises. We will need between \$6,000 and \$8,000 to ensure we can pay for the entire job. Plans to have more information about the gate at the next meeting.

News from the Community

- Recent Events
 - Heritage Rose Garden planting on April 30th
 - Jim Streacker spoke about the event, which started at Marcus Garvey Park and moved to different gardens, -including ours- where about 200 visitors showed up throughout the day. The borough president, as well as other notables, was also present at the event's opening at Marcus Garvey Park. Said it was a wonderful event. Patiently waiting for the roses to grow!
 - Meeting participants inquired about the history about the Heritage Rose, Jim Streacker explained: The Heritage Rose events dated back to the 1800s.
 - Aaron Albano mentioned that our garden could be a stop on a tour of Harlem. Sebastian Morell also commented on a UN tour of Harlem that drew a lot of publicity of certain landmarks of the community.
 - Block Clean Up on May 14th
 - Aaron Albano asked Kendra Sykes to say a few words about the Block Clean Up that she organized. Kendra mentioned that the Block Clean Up was a success and while there were only a small number of us, we got a lot done and just in time for Summer! She also extended the invitation for others to join when the next Block Clean Up comes along. Jim Streacker reminded the meeting participants that we do not need to wait for a Block Clean up to pick of any litter we see on the block and everyone immediately agreed with this statement.
- Upcoming Events
 - There are quite a number of events coming up this Spring! During one of these events, Community Guest Day at Ephesus Church, our very own Ms. Shirley Reid will be honored for her contributions to the Block!
 - May is Bike Month in NYC! Elliot Phipps from Ephesus Church mentioned that there is a bike club at the Church. They meet a couple Sundays a month at 8am.
 - Syderia Chresfield mentioned the Annual Harlem Mike Race around Marcus Garvey Park. It takes place on Father's Day, June 19th, from 9am to 6pm. The race that is televised starts at 4pm.
 - May 21st- My Park Day (please see Parks and Recreation website for all events)
 - June 2nd- Marcus Garvey Amphitheater Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. Syderia Chresfield mentioned that it begins at 11am and the Mayor along with other officials will be out that day.
 - June 12th- 22nd Annual Harlem Historic House Tour. Begins at 11am and ends at 4pm. Starts at the Pelham Fritz Center and tickets are \$20.00 in advance. Stops on this tour include Aaron and Jackie Albano's house, the Garden and Ephesus Church!
- 28th Precinct Community Relations
 - Aaron Albano speaks out the number that the Precinct has released for residents to call if there are any "quality of life" issues, which include loud music, barbequing on the street etc. The number, **212-678-1611**, is reachable 24 hours a day and will connect you directly to the Precinct.

- Mount Morris Park issues- residents are able to call this hotline during the summer months- 646-208-6758
- Community Meetings at 28th Precinct on the 2nd Wednesday of the Month. Additionally, the Precinct is working with the Police Athletic League and the Milbank Center on 14-32 West 118th Street to develop more joint programs for neighbor kids.
- Sebastian Morell talked about the stats from the precinct. He has had spoken dialogue with the youth involved with gangs on the Avenues. Suggests that if we maintain open communications with them, they will most likely be compliant. Mentioned an anti-gang meeting that happened to take place at the same date and time as our monthly meeting; more information about this meeting can be found in Appendix I at the conclusion of these minutes. Sebastian also reminded meeting participants that when you call the police, make sure it is for police business.
- City News
 - Smoking ban in NYC takes effect May 23, 2011. This ban means that there is no smoking within New York City's parks-save a handful of state parks-, beaches and pedestrian plazas. Aaron Albano mentioned that for us, this ban will mean no smoking in the Garden, which will reduce the amount of cigarette bud litter. This is not our rule, this is the City's rule.
 - Requests to the Forestry department for new trees in front of buildings on 123rd street
 - May 31st is the deadline to plant trees since this is usually done during the winter months.
 - Lamont Alston mentioned that he would like trees to be planted in front of 157 W. 123rd.
 - Melvin Alexander suggested that an entire building should be asked if they would like trees because the trees need to be maintained. Also asked that we consider how the overall maintenance is in front of any given building.
 - Syderia Chresfield mentioned that she already put in a petition for trees through Mount Morris.
 - Aaron Albano will look into tree guards.
 - We must consider the standard size of tree pits and if certain fronts of buildings can accommodate this much space.
 - FUTURE EVENT
 - Ephesus Church's Annual Health Fair will be held on September 11th. Will have health screening consulting and education for everyone in the community. Will also have school supplies for the children. Doctors from different clinics have been invited. Will take place on 123rd st, so the streets will be closed off.
- 123st Street Garden
 - Open Hours are now posted. When asked how these hours were decided, Diane Mellon mentioned that we must conform to Greenthumb Rules, one of these rules being that the garden must be open for 20 hours. We wanted to get out of this violation as soon as possible and volunteers have committed to the hours that are posted.
 - Aaron Albano mentioned that anyone who wanted to volunteer for garden hours should contact Diane Mellon. Also mentioned that the garden is open to any group that would

like to utilize the garden and we need to find a good garden watering schedule because the flowers and plants will be needing a lot more watering during the Summer.

- On this note, the Director of the Pathfinders- which has close to 40 members and is similar to the Boy and Girl Scouts- would like to participate in the garden. They meet every Sunday from 10am-1:30pm and are available Wednesdays to water. Director might be able to water on Wednesdays 6-8:30pm.
- Garden History Project
 - On hold for now.
- Other News
 - Sebastian Morell mentioned a Community Board 10 meeting that is coming up on June 1st that will discuss rezoning around Harlem and the construction of a 12 floor building. There will also be a lot of milling and paving that may affect us traffic wise.

Appendix I

New York State Assemblyman

Keith L.T. Wright

In conjunction with the

Office of New York County District Attorney

Cyrus R. Vance, Jr.

Presents

The First Annual Anti-Gang

Violence Education Clinic

Wednesday, May 18th, 2011

6:30 PM-8:30 PM

Adam Clayton Powell Jr. State Office Building, 163 West 125th Street

2nd Floor Art Gallery

Are you equipped with the knowledge to help your child or neighbor?

Come out and learn from the foremost experts in our community about the signs of gang activity and how to keep your child safe and on track for success.

Panel Guests Include:

Tanya Apparicio- New York County District Attorney's Office

Inspector Rodney Harrison- 28th Precinct

Reverend Vernon Williams- Harlem Clergy Community Leaders Coalition

Eiesha Sekou- Street Corner Resources

Special Invited Guests include:

Jackie Roe Adams- Harlem Mothers S.A.V.E.

Kareem Muhammad- Circle of Brothers