

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS  
COUNCIL MEMBER BENJAMIN J. KALLOS, CHAIR

## Policy Report: Improving Community Boards in New York City

*Best Practices in Recruitment and Appointment to New York City's 59 Community Boards*



## Executive Summary

Community boards are the most local form of government for residents of New York City. They serve an essential role in our city's democracy by shaping neighborhood development and advising government on community needs and interests.

Between April 1<sup>st</sup> and May 30<sup>th</sup> of this year, four new borough presidents and twenty one new city council members, along with their previously elected colleagues, will be making 1,475 appointments to 59 community boards spanning all five boroughs. This is a unique opportunity to evaluate and implement improvements to the recruitment and appointment system.

On March 3, 2014, the Committee on Governmental Operations of the New York City Council held a hearing on "Best Practices for Recruitment and Appointments to Community Boards," which included testimony from New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and Staten Island Borough President James Oddo, as well as community board chairs and district managers from all five boroughs, good government groups and youth advocacy organizations.

This report covers three major areas in which community boards require improvement: outreach and recruitment; a standardized and transparent application process; and restoring the public trust by removing the politics from boards.

### **1. Outreach and Recruitment**

A community board is only as strong as its members, and membership can only be as strong as the application pool from which members are selected. Improving outreach and recruitment will ensure that, like New York City's neighborhoods, each community board has a diverse group of members with unique perspectives working together. Borough presidents have begun recruiting widely and inclusively through such methods as online applications and the consideration of their boards' overall diversity. This report recommends increased and more inclusive outreach because these efforts will better equip a community board to effectively serve its community as a whole.

### **2. Standardized Application Process**

Every community board should benefit from the best application process in New York City. Borough presidents have innovated their applications, but there has been limited sharing of best practices across boroughs. This report recommends a standardized and transparent selection process for community boards, with reporting on best practices to the public and between government agencies. Key recommendations include expanded outreach, standardized online applications, ending the culture of "automatic reappointment" in order to encourage strong performance and ensure members do not become entrenched in their board's organizational structure, recruitment of experts and underrepresented communities, and lowering the eligibility age for community boards to 16, so teenagers can have a say in the decisions that affect them.



### **3. Restoring the Public Trust**

Vibrant boards must represent communities instead of political parties, elected officials, or those with financial interests before the board. To that end, members of the executive boards of political parties and the staff of elected officials must not be appointed to serve on the boards, where their influence would distract from the boards' mission. Additionally, applications must seek information on applicants' potential conflicts of interests. This report also recommends term limits for community board members. Two of our newly elected borough presidents have promised to phase in terms and all four newly elected borough presidents have promised to report on their appointments to the City Council in answer to a questionnaire by Citizen's Union during their campaigns.

### **Summary of Best Practices**

The following list of best practices for recruitment and appointment to community boards can guide elected officials in their quest to build boards that reflect New York, in all its diversity, uniqueness, and fortitude.

#### **Outreach and Recruitment: Getting the Word Out**

- In compliance with the Charter, borough presidents and council members should solicit nominations from community boards, civic groups, community groups and neighborhood associations of candidates for appointment to the community board.
- Each board should, on its own or in conjunction with the borough president, conduct a series of public information sessions to inform the neighborhoods they serve about the role of community boards as well as opportunities for participation.
- Utilize press releases, email blasts, fliers, posters, websites, social media, as well as television news and call-in shows to announce vacancies.
- Create an extensive public membership to build a pool of experienced and qualified applicants.
- Request that applications be shared with members of churches, the veteran community, community-based organizations, housing and neighborhood associations, labor unions, the business community, as well as the disabled and LGBTQ communities.
- Build individualized recruitment plans developed among borough presidents, community board chairs and City Council members.

#### **Outreach and Recruitment: Experts**

- Efforts should be made to recruit applicants from professions and backgrounds that are helpful to community boards, including attorneys, urban planners, small business owners, union members, engineers, architects, students, and teachers.
- Outreach to colleges and universities seeking students who, because of their academic studies, would make excellent candidates for the board.
- Recruit individuals with strong interpersonal skills who perform well in group settings as well as those with exceptional writing talents since community boards operate by committee and communicate through resolutions, testimony, and other written documents.



### **Outreach and Recruitment: All Segments of the Community and Geographic Diversity**

- Establish citywide criteria for the recruitment and appointment of community board members which encourages diversity of geography, education level, race, ethnicity, age, gender, time as a member of the community, family status, as well as appropriate representation of members who live in different types of housing (including co-ops, condos, rent-stabilized and controlled stock, Mitchell-Lama buildings, and public housing), as well as those who use different means of transportation and are affiliated with a variety of community institutions and organizations.

### **Outreach and Recruitment: Youth Representation**

- Create youth committees on all community boards with a mandate for appointment of 16- and 17-year-olds as public members, which is currently permitted by law.
- Revitalize community boards by amending the law to allow recruitment and appointment 16- and 17-year-olds to community boards.

### **Outreach and Recruitment: Demographic Data**

- Collect and open application data from applicants in order to measure the success of outreach and recruitment so that future efforts can be improved.

### **Outreach and Recruitment: Websites**

- Create a centralized web infrastructure, offering each community board its own fully functional website for free.

### **Standardized Application Process: Standard Online Applications**

- Establish a uniform, comprehensive application for all five boroughs which includes written questions requiring those seeking appointment and reappointment to explain their motivations for joining or remaining on a community board.
- Digitize the community board application so it is available to be completed and submitted online.

### **Standardized Application Process: Requiring Reappointment Applications**

- End automatic reappointment by requiring written applications from those who have previously served on the board with consideration given to attendance, service, and participation.
- Require written applications of all appointees and re-appointees by the borough presidents.

### **Standardized Application Process: Filling Interim Vacancies**

- Ending the filling of vacancies by borough presidents at politically convenient times by requiring appointments to mid-term vacancies within 30 days of vacancy.

### **Standardized Application Process: Independent Screening Panel**

- Create a formal, standard, and fair application process that includes an independent screening panel that reviews all applications before the borough president for consideration.



**Standardized Application Process: Engaging Those Who Do Not Receive Appointments**

- Avoid the disappointment and missed opportunity inherent in the non-appointment letter by proposing applicants seek appointments to local boards, improvement districts, council as well as Community Board public membership.

**Restoring the Public Trust: Conflicts of Interest**

- Require conflict of interest questions to be included in all applications and re-applications to ensure impartiality and transparency.

**Restoring the Public Trust: Ban on Appointment of Political Leaders**

- Ban appointment to community boards of individuals who serve as executive committee members of political parties or who are on the staffs of elected officials.

**Restoring the Public Trust: Mandatory Reporting**

- Require the borough presidents to issue an annual report detailing their outreach efforts.
- Require borough presidents to report to the City Council on how they advertise and make appointments.

**Restoring the Public Trust: Term Limits**

- Establish term limits of five (5) consecutive two (2) year terms which would be phased in and staggered to prevent a mass exodus of institutional knowledge.
- Establish a uniform term limits for board members serving as chair.

## Introduction

### *History*

New York City's community boards originated in the 1950s, when Manhattan Borough President Robert F. Wagner established twelve "Community Planning Councils," each comprised of 15-20 members. The councils served an advisory role to the Borough President, primarily for planning and budgetary issues.<sup>1</sup> As mayor, Wagner institutionalized the councils as "Community Planning Boards" in the 1963 Charter Revision, extending them to all five boroughs.<sup>2</sup>

Expanded again in 1968 by Mayor John Lindsay through the passage of Local Law 39, community boards acquired their present structure in the Charter Revision of 1975, which established the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) and expanded the number of boards to the present 59. Additionally, the Charter Revision Commission recommendations gave the community boards a formal role in three specific areas: (1) Improving the delivery of city services; (2) Planning and reviewing land use in the community; and (3) Making recommendations on the city's budget.<sup>3</sup>

Currently, each community board consists of up to 50 volunteer members appointed by the borough president, with half nominated by the City Council members representing that district. Board members are charter mandated to reside, work in, or have some other significant interest in the community.

### *Recent Controversy*

While community boards have increased neighborhood voices in local government, high-profile instances have drawn the concern of good government group Common Cause, a nonpartisan citizens' lobby and leading force in the battle for open and accountable government:

In 2007, Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion refused to reappoint the Chair of Bronx Community Board 4 and several other members who voted against the Yankee Stadium redevelopment plan he supported, ominously noting: "I expect that appointees will be bullish about growth and opportunity. When that doesn't happen, we change."<sup>4</sup>

In 2007, Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz removed five longtime members of Community Board 6 who opposed the Atlantic Yards project. According to one allegedly purged member, Celia Cacace, Markowitz threatened her months in advance of the appointment decision

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<sup>1</sup> Forman, Seth. "Community Boards." *Gotham Gazette*. Web. 22 March 2014.  
<http://www.gothamgazette.com/lessons/boards.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> "Community Boards, New York City." *StreetsWiki*. Web. 22 March 2014.  
<http://streetswiki.wikispaces.com/Community+Boards,+New+York+City>

<sup>3</sup> Forman, Seth. "Community Boards." *Ibid*.

<sup>4</sup> Egbert, Bill. "Beep drops another 4 CB4 members." *New York Daily News*. 19 June 2007. Web. 22 March 2014.  
<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/bronx/beep-drops-4-cb4-members-article-1.220892>



that he was going to "get rid of everyone on the board that voted for this...Remember you are my appointee." Such direct political intimidation is anathema to the boards' purpose of providing an authentic local community voice in city government.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, instances of political purges or intimidation in community boards have arisen repeatedly over the years.

### *Opportunity for Reform*

Community boards are the most local form of government for residents of New York City. They serve an essential role in our city's democracy by shaping neighborhood development and advising government on community needs and interests.

With four new borough presidents and twenty one new City Council members, along with thirty previously elected council members making 1,475 appointments to all 59 boards between April 1<sup>st</sup> and May 30<sup>th</sup>, now is a unique opportunity to institute reforms to the appointment and recruitment process.

On March 3, 2014, the Committee on Governmental Operations of the New York City Council held a hearing on "Best Practices for Recruitment and Appointments to Community Boards," which included testimony from New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and Staten Island Borough President James Oddo, as well as community board chairs and district managers from all five boroughs, good government groups and youth advocacy organizations.

## **Outreach and Recruitment: Getting the Word Out**

The first step in revitalizing community boards is to amplify our recruitment efforts, increasing the number of applicants and educating residents about their ability to join their local boards. The strongest community boards will recruit from the widest group of New Yorkers.

### *Findings*

The New York City Charter empowers local organizations with the ability to submit nominations for appointment to the community boards by stating "community boards, civic groups and other community groups and neighborhood associations may submit nominations to the borough president and to council members."

New York City Comptroller and former Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer improved recruitment through four key components: (1) individualized recruitment plans developed with community board chairs and city council members; (2) broad outreach to community organizations; (3) public information sessions; and (4) using all forms of new and established media to reach the public.

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<sup>5</sup> Newman, Andy. "Projects Foes Shown Door in Brooklyn." *The New York Times*. 23 May 2007. Web. 22 March 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/23/nyregion/23yards.html>



Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. is seeking new members through press releases, email blasts, fliers, posters, social media and News 12's monthly "Ask the Borough President" call-in show. He also requests that applications be shared with church members, community based organizations and neighborhood associations.

Staten Island Borough President James Oddo has used social media as an outreach tool to attract new Community Board members, which even worked to find his appointee to the New York City Transit Riders Council. This new focus on ensuring more New Yorkers know about their community boards and the community board application will make them more relevant, and ought to be expanded. Brooklyn Borough President and former State Senator Eric Adams has also placed emphasis on reaching out to more New Yorkers.

Chair of Staten Island Community Board 1 Leticia Remauro has a robust Public Member program with 60 public members, which encourages members of the public to attend and even chair committees of the community board prior to seeking appointment as a full voting member of the board.

#### *Recommendations*

- In compliance with the Charter, borough presidents and council members should solicit nominations from community boards, civic groups, community groups and neighborhood associations of candidates for appointment to the community board.
- Each board should, on its own or in conjunction with the borough president, conduct a series of public information sessions to inform the neighborhoods they serve about the role of community boards as well as opportunities for participation.
- Utilize press releases, email blasts, fliers, posters, websites, social media, as well as television news and call-in shows to announce vacancies.
- Create an extensive public membership to build a pool of experienced and qualified applicants.
- Request that applications be shared with members of churches, the veteran community, community-based organizations, housing and neighborhood associations, labor unions, the business community, as well as the disabled and LGBTQ communities.
- Build individualized recruitment plans developed among borough presidents, community board chairs and City Council members.

### **Outreach and Recruitment: Experts**

Community boards are only as strong as their district office staff and members. Testimony repeatedly revealed a need to target and recruit experts with the skills and expertise community boards need to adequately represent their neighborhood through the land use, budgeting, and city planning processes.

#### *Findings*

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer has created an innovative group-interview process that tests applicants' interpersonal skills in a group setting. Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. recruits professionals and students from local colleges and universities who through their





academic studies and certification would make excellent candidates for the board. Chair of Manhattan’s CB1 Catherine McVay Hughes recommended recruiting from disciplines that can be helpful to community boards such as urban planners and architects. District Manager of Queens Community Board 5 Gary Giordano also shared focus on the importance of recruiting individuals with a wide range of talents, including engineers, teachers, attorneys, utility workers, social service workers, individuals with financial expertise and business owners because of their important insights into matters such as transportation and zoning. Former Council Member Jessica Lappin made building expertise a centerpiece of her recommended community board reforms.

### *Recommendations*

- Efforts should be made to recruit applicants from professions and backgrounds that are helpful to community boards, including attorneys, urban planners, small business owners, union members, engineers, architects, students, and teachers.
- Outreach to colleges and universities seeking students who, because of their academic studies, would make excellent candidates for the board.
- Recruit individuals with strong interpersonal skills who perform well in group settings as well as those with exceptional writing talents since community boards operate by committee and communicate through resolutions, testimony, and other written documents.

## **Outreach and Recruitment: All Segments of the Community and Geographic Diversity**

In order to best represent a neighborhood, community boards must reflect geographic diversity and represent all segments of the community. This responsibility is vested in the borough presidents who have ultimate discretion as to satisfying these two criteria in their appointments.

### *Findings*

The New York City Charter mandates the “borough president shall assure adequate representation from the different geographic sections and neighborhoods within the community district. In making such appointments, the borough president shall consider whether the aggregate of appointments fairly represents all segments of the community.”

Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams hopes to increase representation from young people, members in public housing, and business owners.<sup>6</sup> In her white paper “The Future of New York City’s Community Boards: Recommendations for Retooling and Reform,” Council Member Jessica Lappin noted that while Manhattan Community Boards 3 and 11 have the highest concentration of NYCHA housing in the borough, only a few members live in public housing.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Blau, Reuvan. “Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams seeks to reform Community Boards.” *New York Daily News*. 4 Feb. 2014. Web. 23 March 2014. <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/brooklyn-community-boards-set-sweeping-reforms-article-1.1602282>

<sup>7</sup> Lappin, Jessica. “The Future of New York City’s Community Boards.” *jessicalappin.com*. Web. 22 March 2014 <http://jessicalappin.com/wp-content/uploads/CB-Paper.pdf>.



Staten Island Borough President James Oddo has committed to geographic diversity, recognizing that each of Staten Island's diverse, discrete neighborhoods has its own needs. Chair of Staten Island's CB1, Leticia Remauro, has emphasized the importance of this mission. Chair of Manhattan Community Board 1 Catherine McVay Hughes also emphasized the importance of recruiting from geographically diverse areas as well as recruiting residents that are new to the community in areas of high growth.

Good government group Common Cause New York has also noted that many community boards look like a time capsule of the neighborhood from 20 or 30 years past, as longstanding members, often with connections to long-established civic associations, political clubs, and non-profits, are repeatedly reappointed. Similarly, there can be a lack of diversity in factors such as age, gender, tenants vs. homeowners, car owners vs. public transit commuters, and other key factors.

All districts have willing residents of varying backgrounds and skill sets, and they should be actively sought after by each community board.

#### *Recommendations*

- Establish citywide criteria for the recruitment and appointment of community board members which encourages diversity of geography, education level, race, ethnicity, age, gender, time as a member of the community, family status, as well as appropriate representation of members who live in different types of housing (including co-ops, condos, rent-stabilized and controlled stock, Mitchell-Lama buildings, and public housing), as well as those who use different means of transportation and are affiliated with a variety of community institutions and organizations.

### **Outreach and Recruitment: Youth Representation**

The United States Census estimates that in 2010 New York City had a population of 8,175,136 of which 21.6% are under 18. With one in five New York City residents under the age of 18, and 16- and 17-year-olds being treated as adults in New York State, it is time to provide them with a voice on the community boards.

#### *Findings*

While the Charter is silent as to the age at which someone may serve on the community board and while New York State Public Officers Law specifically permits youth participation on youth boards and commissions, 16- and 17-year-olds are prohibited from serving on community boards. As community boards provide advisory opinions on education, after-school programs, parks and neighborhood activities, the youth whom these decisions affect must have a voice.

Chair of Staten Island Community Board 1 Leticia Remauro testified that her board has a youth committee with a mandate for participation of young people as public members, for which the New York State Public Officers Law provides a specific exemption.

Current New York City Comptroller and former Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer launched his career in public service at age 16 on a community board.



A resolution in support of Assembly Bill A.2448 of 2014 sponsored by Assembly Member Nily Rozic and Senate Bill S.4142 of 2014 sponsored by Senator Andrew Lanza amending the law to permit 16- and 17-year-olds serving on community boards has been introduced at the request of Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer by Governmental Operations Committee Chair Ben Kallos along with fellow committee members Ritchie Torres and Mark Levine.

The resolution has broad support from community groups, including Children’s Aid Society, Generation Citizen, Global Kids, San Francisco Youth Commission, the Police Athletic League, Inc., and Teens on Board, a coalition consisting of Boy Scout Council of NYC, Center for Family Life - Sunset Park, Manhattan Community Boards 3, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 12, Community Education Council District 6, Community League of the Heights, Community Services with Faith, Hope and Charity, Council for Unity, Fresh Youth Initiatives, Girl Scout Council of NYC, Global Kids, Harlem RBI, Island Voices, Inwood Community Services, Queens Community House, Uptown Dreamers, San Francisco Youth Commission, staff and parents of PS 8, The Coalition for Asian Children and Families, The Humanist Party, The Resiliency Project, The Rockaways Youth Task Force, The Youth Development Institute, UFT - Manhattan Parent Training, United Neighborhood Houses, WAHI and Inwood Youth Council, and World Vision.

#### *Recommendations*

- Create youth committees on all community boards with a mandate for appointment of 16- and 17-year-olds as public members, which is currently permitted by law.
- Revitalize community boards by amending the law to allow recruitment and appointment 16- and 17-year-olds to community boards.

### **Outreach and Recruitment: Demographic Data**

Applications can be a treasure trove of information, with details though which borough presidents and council members can learn more about their community and analyze the results of recruitment efforts in order to improve their future efforts.

#### *Findings*

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, who introduced and passed the Open Data Law as a council member in 2012, is continuing her work by releasing application data in the spirit of the law she passed. Borough President Brewer’s office has created a “New Applicant Profile” to serve as a baseline of applicant characteristics, to indicate where recruitment, inclusion, and participation efforts must be expanded next years, and to provide insight into which perspectives, sectors, and interests are present or lacking in community agenda-setting and dialogue. This data also highlights the most common concerns motivating applicants to join their community boards. Employing data to evaluate applicants is vital, particularly in determining areas most in need of recruitment, and will help create a more diverse applicant pool.

#### *Recommendations*

- Collect and open application data from applicants in order to measure the success of outreach and recruitment so that future efforts can be improved.



## Outreach and Recruitment: Websites

Community board websites are an essential tool for opening up the processes of the boards to the public, and keeping interested community members up to date with the latest board business. The websites also provide a first impression for members of the public discovering their boards. Most community boards have websites that provide basic information such as a calendar of meetings, but few of the websites are modern, and some boards lack any website. A modernized and centralized web infrastructure would greatly assist each board in communicating important information to the public.

### *Findings*

According to Common Cause, many community board websites appear to be based on decades-old technology. Common Cause advises that New York City's community board outreach efforts would greatly benefit from a centralized website providing information for all of the boards in one location, as well as offering tools like interactive forums, maps, and webcasting for all the boards to take advantage of. One example is the "Empower LA" website in Los Angeles that acts as the hub for the city's 95 neighborhood councils.<sup>8</sup>

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. is in the process of increasing the use of board websites as one of the recommendations from the Community Board District Managers Task Force report. Providing the technology through a centralized web infrastructure would only assist in this process, making community boards more open and accessible to communities.

### *Recommendations*

- Create a centralized web infrastructure, offering each community board its own fully functional website for free.

## Standardized Application Process: Standard Online Applications

Online applications have become the norm in the academic and business worlds, and there is no reason that local government should lag behind. They are significantly easier and more convenient for many New Yorkers, which is why community board chairs requested this reform. Such an application can and should contain similar standards across the five boroughs, so that one borough does not end up with higher-quality community boards than another. Each borough has its own application process, leading to a lack of core standards for appointments. One easily accessible, online application would ensure rigorous standards for appointment and encourage applications.

### *Findings*

Common Cause New York reviewed the current application forms of Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan and Queens, which revealed wide-ranging discrepancies in the level of detail required on important aspects such as the applicant's race/ethnicity, type of housing, motivation behind

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<sup>8</sup> *Empower LA*. Web. 21 March 2014. <http://empowerla.org/>



seeking board appointment, and potential for conflicts of interest. The current Manhattan application is the most detailed at six pages while the Bronx and Brooklyn are four pages each and Queens' application is only one page with no written questions required.

As emphasized by Common Cause New York, such an application should include, as Scott Stringer's expanded application adopted by Gale Brewer did, written questions explaining one's motivation for joining the board and identifying skills, experience, and relationships. Perhaps more importantly, it contains an optional section for identifying race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and housing status (public housing, Mitchell-Lama, market rental, rent-stabilized, co-op, condo, other) to encourage diversity.

Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams has announced the intention to make the application process more accessible and transparent by making applications available online.

Community Board Chairs Catherine McVay of Manhattan Community Board 1 and Sandro Sherrod of Manhattan Community Board 6 also support an online application.

#### *Recommendations*

- Establish a uniform, comprehensive application for all five boroughs which includes written questions requiring those seeking appointment and reappointment to explain their motivations for joining or remaining on a community board.
- Digitize the community board application so it is available to be completed and submitted online.

### **Standardized Application Process: Requiring Reappointment Applications**

While all members of the community board can be replaced when their term is up, there is not always a rigorous review of performance and attendance. This culture of "automatic reappointment" can entrench members, whether or not they work for the good of the board.

#### *Findings*

In the 2006 reforms to the Community Board appointment system, then-Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer ended automatic reappointment by requiring applications from those who have previously served on the board with consideration of attendance and participation.

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer plans to continue a rigorous re-application process, using meaningful standardized measurements of three qualities embodied by good Community Board members: attendance, service to the board, and performance on the board. She is also interviewing all re-applicants and new applicants through the same open and transparent process.



A 2010 review found that dozens of Queens Community Board members were absent more than half the time, while many more were absent 50% of the time. Former Council Member Dan Halloran drew anger for requesting meetings with current community board members to discuss why they should be reappointed.<sup>9</sup>

When Citizen's Union asked in its candidate questionnaire whether borough presidents would require written applications by all new applicants and re-applicants, all four of the newly elected borough presidents, Eric Adams, Gale Brewer, Melinda Katz and James Oddo, answered yes.

#### *Recommendations*

- End automatic reappointment by requiring written applications from those who have previously served on the board with consideration given to attendance, service, and participation.
- Require written applications of all appointees and re-appointees by the borough presidents.

### **Standardized Application Process: Filling Interim Vacancies**

Vacant spots on community boards not only undermine a board's ability to operate at full capacity, but also place too much power with borough presidents, who can choose to appoint members at opportune times. Vacancies should be filled as rapidly as possible, so boards can continue to serve New Yorkers at their fullest capacity.

#### *Findings*

New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer adopted a policy of filling vacant spots within 30 days because, in his view, "the lack of an automatic system for filling vacancies left the door open for Borough Presidents to appoint members at politically convenient times." Instead of appointing community board members when there was a disagreement or a patronage opportunity, the Manhattan Borough President's office sought to fill spots immediately as they arose. This practice was endorsed by good government group Citizens Union who included it in their candidates questionnaire, with all four newly elected borough presidents, Gale Brewer, James Oddo, Eric Adams, and Melinda Katz, promising their support.

#### *Recommendations*

- Ending the filling of vacancies by borough presidents at politically convenient times by requiring appointments to mid-term vacancies within 30 days of vacancy.

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<sup>9</sup> Colangelo, Lisa. "Community inactivists: Dozens of board members absent more than 50% in '09." *New York daily News*. 19 April 2010. Web. March 24 2014. <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/queens/community-inactivists-dozens-board-members-absent-50-09-article-1.167744>



## Standardized Application Process: Independent Screening Panel

The current system offers complete appointment power to elected officials, a system that, as with any unchecked system, has at times gone abused. Independent screening panels have removed incidences of abuse, while increasing public trust in their local community boards.

### *Findings*

In 2006, then-Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer instituted reforms for the independent screening of applicants. The centerpiece of this effort was the creation of an “Independent Screening Panel” to assure the public of merit-based selections. Leaders from good government groups, civic associations, and community-based organizations such as Citizens Union, NYPIRG, NAACP, Hispanic Federal, and League of Women Voters would review all applications and pass along the most qualified to the Borough President. The result is that Manhattan community boards are more professional and accessible to the communities they serve. This independent screening panel was endorsed by good government groups Common Cause and Citizens Union because it brought oversight and checks into the appointment process. Importantly, Common Cause noted that the establishment of an independent panel for Manhattan Community Boards to review applications acts as a check on the potential for the borough president to coerce, threaten, and “purge” board members strictly for political motives.

### *Recommendations*

- Create a formal, standard, and fair application process that includes an independent screening panel that reviews all applications before the borough president for consideration.

## Standardized Application Process: Engaging Those Who Do Not Receive Appointments

Although it can be disappointing to fail to receive an appointment to a community board, we can still encourage engagement and participation by those who wish to continue to stay involved in local government.

### *Findings*

According to Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, who received 596 applications for only 300 appointments, nearly half of the applicants will come away disappointed. This is particularly true of Community Board 7, which received 24% of all community board applications in Manhattan. However, in Borough President Brewer’s words, “simply sending these applicants a non-appointment letter is a missed opportunity. To remedy this, my office will propose alternative ways to the candidate to contribute their time, skills and talent to the borough, such as through appointments to the Solid Waste Advisory Board, Business Improvement Districts, Community Education Councils (CEC) or community board public membership.” Borough President Brewer also notes that keeping this contingent civically engaged could help address vacancy concerns by creating a larger pool of engaged community members willing to join boards.



### *Recommendations*

- Avoiding the disappointment and missed opportunity inherent in the non-appointment letter by proposing applicants seek appointments to local boards, improvement districts, and councils, as well as Community Board public membership.

## **Restoring the Public Trust: Conflicts of Interest**

Should a community board member have significant interests before the board, it erodes his or her ability to appropriately and impartially represent New Yorkers and calls into question his or her motivations, conflicts and can create an appearance of impropriety.

### *Findings*

In 2004, Bob Rinaolo resigned from his post as Chair of Manhattan Community Board 2's Business Committee after it emerged in the *Villager* that he owned a licensed liquor facility in the community district.<sup>10</sup> Rinaolo ultimately stepped down, but not before angering community members, who felt that the board could not issue impartial recommendations on liquor licenses with a significant business interest chairing the board. Such conflicts of interest are combated in Manhattan by basic questions about conflicts in the application, according to Common Cause, a practice also adopted by Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and which Borough President Eric Adams has expressed commitment to carrying out.

According to Common Cause, conflict of interest is avoidable in the application process. The Manhattan community board poses the question, "Are you employed by or a member of, any entity (e.g. business or non-profit) with proposals, programs, requests, business, applications, licenses, or any other matters which may come before a community board for review, funding, support, or approval during the next two years?" This disclosure is crucial to avoid the potential for self-dealing and has also been adopted by Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

### *Recommendations*

- Require conflict of interest questions to be included in all applications and re-applications to ensure impartiality and transparency.

## **Restoring the Public Trust: Ban on Appointment of Political Leaders**

The motivations for serving on local community boards should be clear and transparent. This is achieved when they do not serve political benefit, but instead, benefit the communities they serve.

### *Findings*

Staten Island Borough President James Oddo will continue the policy enacted by Staten Island Borough President James Molinaro of not appointing to community boards individuals who

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<sup>10</sup> Anderson, Lincoln. "Field's and C.B. 2 chair's stories conflict about conflict of interest." *The Villager*. March 2005: Vol. 74 No. 43. Web. 22 March 2014. [http://thevillager.com/villager\\_96/fieldssandcb2chairstories.html](http://thevillager.com/villager_96/fieldssandcb2chairstories.html)





serve as Executive Committee members on political parties or on the staff of elected officials because the interest of keeping politics out of Community Boards outweighs the concern around eliminating certain community-oriented individuals from consideration.

#### *Recommendations*

- Ban appointment to community boards of individuals who serve as executive committee members of political parties or who are on the staffs of elected officials.

### **Restoring the Public Trust: Mandatory Reporting**

Justice Louis Brandeis once said that sunlight is the “best of disinfectants,” and his words have been borne out time and again. Transparent institutions with heavy reporting and open data thrive, and the application and recruitment process for community boards should be no difference.

#### *Findings*

Citizens Union suggested increasing the amount of information reported to the public, to the City Council and from board members to the borough presidents’ offices by requiring the Borough Presidents to issue an annual report detailing their outreach efforts, including whom they notified of the process, methods used and the demographics of those serving on community boards in comparison to the communities served by the boards. They also suggested reporting on how borough presidents advertise and make community board appointments to the New York City Council, a suggestion supported by Borough Presidents Adams, Brewer and Katz.

#### *Recommendations*

- Require the borough presidents to issue an annual report detailing their outreach efforts.
- Require borough presidents to report to the City Council on how they advertise and make appointments.

### **Restoring the Public Trust: Term Limits**

Most political offices have term limits, be they your local Council Member or the President of the United States, and though community boards represent a hyper-local form of government, their members share similar obligations to communities as other members of government. Term limits have become a proven tool in empowering communities to have a stronger voice through the democratic process and would also be helpful for community boards.



### *Findings*

Citizens Union testified that “term limits would result in a membership that better reflects the ever-changing demography of the city’s neighborhoods, while injecting new thinking and approaches to the manner in which boards address the development of their communities.” And former Council Member Jessica Lappin notes that each community board has a different term limits policy. In fact, Bronx Community Board 11, seeking to give more members the opportunity to contribute to leadership, voted to create term limits on its board.<sup>11</sup>

In fact, according to Citizens Union limiting service to five consecutive two-year terms gained backing from Borough Presidents Eric Adams and Melinda Katz. And, according to Common Cause, term limits for community board members would encourage participation and better ensure diverse representation, while term limits for Chairperson and the committee chairs would prevent small groups from dominating a community board for decades.

### *Recommendations*

- Term limits of five (5) consecutive two (2) year terms, which would be phased in and staggered to prevent a mass exodus of institutional knowledge.
- Establish a uniform term limits for board members serving as chair.

### **Conclusion**

Many of the reforms suggested in this report will require changes to the city charter or to the city law, a path that we plan to pursue as a committee and body. Already, I have introduced a resolution at the request of Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and co-sponsored by Committee on Governmental Operations Members Mark Levine and Ritchie Torres in support of state legislation that would lower the eligible age to join community boards to 16, an initiative which has received considerable support. We will explore other options in the months ahead.

In instances where there is public support and clear pressure from good government and community groups and the media to adopt best practices from recruitment and appointment, a cultural shift can be just as powerful as a legislative one. As with City Council rules reform, dramatic reform can and often does happen voluntarily. Borough presidents are already moving towards their own reforms, sharing best practices from their own offices in this report. It is our sincerest hope that borough presidents and City Council members employ this knowledge-sharing document as a resource to inform their recruitment and appointment process to the boards, and voluntarily adopt some if not all of the recommendations from good government groups, community board chairs and district managers, elected officials and the many others herein.

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<sup>11</sup> Sanchez, Kirsten. “Board 11 votes term limits.” *Bronx Times*. 13 May 2013: Issue 19. Web. 21 March 2014. [http://www.bxtimes.com/stories/2013/19/18\\_bylaws\\_2013\\_05\\_02\\_bx.html](http://www.bxtimes.com/stories/2013/19/18_bylaws_2013_05_02_bx.html)



NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS  
BENJAMIN J. KALLOS, CHAIR

For residents looking to express their concerns, become involved in local government or receive support from their neighbors, community boards can be an ideal space—but only if we ensure that they are safe, open and inclusive. Adopting these needed reforms suggested by community groups and elected officials will ensure our boards serve their function as truly representative of their communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben Kallos".

Council Member Ben Kallos  
Chair, Committee on Governmental Operations



## Summary of Best Practices

### **Outreach and Recruitment: Getting the Word Out**

- In compliance with the Charter, borough presidents and council members should solicit nominations from community boards, civic groups, community groups and neighborhood associations of candidates for appointment to the community board.
- Each board should, on its own or in conjunction with the borough president, conduct a series of public information sessions to inform the neighborhoods they serve about the role of community boards as well as opportunities for participation.
- Utilize press releases, email blasts, fliers, posters, websites, social media, as well as television news and call-in shows to announce vacancies.
- Create an extensive public membership to build a pool of experienced and qualified applicants.
- Request that applications be shared with members of churches, the veteran community, community-based organizations, housing and neighborhood associations, labor unions, the business community, as well as the disabled and LGBTQ communities.
- Build individualized recruitment plans developed among borough presidents, community board chairs and City Council members.

### **Outreach and Recruitment: Experts**

- Efforts should be made to recruit applicants from professions and backgrounds that are helpful to community boards, including attorneys, urban planners, small business owners, union members, engineers, architects, students, and teachers.
- Outreach to colleges and universities seeking students who, because of their academic studies, would make excellent candidates for the board.
- Recruit individuals with strong interpersonal skills who perform well in group settings as well as those with exceptional writing talents since community boards operate by committee and communicate through resolutions, testimony, and other written documents.

### **Outreach and Recruitment: All Segments of the Community and Geographic Diversity**

- Establish citywide criteria for the recruitment and appointment of community board members which encourages diversity of geography, education level, race, ethnicity, age, gender, time as a member of the community, family status, as well as appropriate representation of members who live in different types of housing (including co-ops, condos, rent-stabilized and controlled stock, Mitchell-Lama buildings, and public housing), as well as those who use different means of transportation and are affiliated with a variety of community institutions and organizations.

### **Outreach and Recruitment: Youth Representation**

- Create youth committees on all community boards with a mandate for appointment of 16- and 17-year-olds as public members, which is currently permitted by law.
- Revitalize community boards by amending the law to allow recruitment and appointment 16- and 17-year-olds to community boards.



### **Outreach and Recruitment: Demographic Data**

- Collect and open application data from applicants in order to measure the success of outreach and recruitment so that future efforts can be improved.

### **Outreach and Recruitment: Websites**

- Create a centralized web infrastructure, offering each community board its own fully functional website for free.

### **Standardized Application Process: Standard Online Applications**

- Establish a uniform, comprehensive application for all five boroughs which includes written questions requiring those seeking appointment and reappointment to explain their motivations for joining or remaining on a community board.
- Digitize the community board application so it is available to be completed and submitted online.

### **Standardized Application Process: Requiring Reappointment Applications**

- End automatic reappointment by requiring written applications from those who have previously served on the board with consideration given to attendance, service, and participation.
- Require written applications of all appointees and re-appointees by the borough presidents.

### **Standardized Application Process: Filling Interim Vacancies**

- Ending the filling of vacancies by borough presidents at politically convenient times by requiring appointments to mid-term vacancies within 30 days of vacancy.

### **Standardized Application Process: Independent Screening Panel**

- Create a formal, standard, and fair application process that includes an independent screening panel that reviews all applications before the borough president for consideration.

### **Standardized Application Process: Engaging Those Who Do Not Receive Appointments**

- Avoiding the disappointment and missed opportunity inherent in the non-appointment letter by proposing applicants seek appointments to local boards, improvement districts, council as well as Community Board public membership.

### **Restoring the Public Trust: Conflicts of Interest**

- Require conflict of interest questions to be included in all applications and re-applications to ensure impartiality and transparency.

### **Restoring the Public Trust: Ban on Appointment of Political Leaders**

- Ban appointment to community boards of individuals who serve as executive committee members of political parties or who are on the staffs of elected officials.



**Restoring the Public Trust: Mandatory Reporting**

- Require the borough presidents to issue an annual report detailing their outreach efforts.
- Require borough presidents to report to the City Council on how they advertise and make appointments.

**Restoring the Public Trust: Term Limits**

- Term limits of five (5) consecutive two (2) year terms which would be phased in and staggered to prevent a mass exodus of institutional knowledge.
- Establish a uniform term limits for board members serving as chair.



NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS  
BENJAMIN J. KALLOS, CHAIR

**New York City Council Committee on Governmental Operations**  
**“Best Practices for Recruitment and Appointments to Community Boards”**  
**March 3, 2014 Hearing Testimony**



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER  
SCOTT M. STRINGER

**TESTIMONY OF NYC COMPTROLLER SCOTT M. STRINGER  
BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE  
OVERSIGHT HEARING ON  
BEST PRACTICES FOR RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT TO COMMUNITY BOARDS**

**MARCH 3, 2014**

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Good afternoon, Chairman Kallos and members of the committee. Thank you for convening this hearing on best practices for community board recruitment and appointment. Community boards play a central role in shaping neighborhood development and advising government on the needs and interests of our communities. As the pace of development in New York City continues to expand, our boards' mandate as community planning entities is more important than ever. I commend the Council for examining ways to strengthen and support community boards in fulfilling their mission.

Community board reform and empowerment was a signature effort of my eight years as Manhattan Borough President. This testimony will share some of the ideas we tried, which I hope will be useful as the current Borough Presidents and Council Members consider this process. But make no mistake; many ideas are required to unleash the full potential of community boards. Our current Borough Presidents and Council Members have creative, new ideas and will put their own stamp on the appointment process. Thanks to leadership of Speaker Mark-Viverito, participatory budgeting is taking off citywide, further transforming the way municipal government operates in New York. I am eager to see how community boards will grow and gain strength under this new leadership.

Community boards have always held the potential to be truly influential neighborhood institutions. However, all too often unchecked conflicts of interest, unfilled vacancies, and a lack of training and support undermine their success and reputation. Our vision was to work with Manhattan's City Council delegation to restructure the appointment and training process to ensure that community boards were comprised of well-qualified members who were selected on their merits—not their connections—and to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the complex issues facing their communities.

Many New York neighborhoods are undergoing rapid redevelopment of commercial and residential areas. The City Charter mandates that community boards exercise specific powers and fulfill prescribed responsibilities including long-term community planning (197-A planning) and Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). In order to do this effectively, boards not only need strong, effective members, but the resources that will allow them to meet their planning responsibilities. Yet their current resources are woefully inadequate. Boards should have full-time urban planners on staff, but with paltry budgets that have not been raised in over twenty years, they cannot afford it.

That's why our office created the Community Planning Fellowship program which places graduate urban planning students in community board offices. This program enhances the ability of community boards to undertake research, analysis and mapping, allowing them to better evaluate development proposals and provide sounder recommendations. Over the past few years, planning fellows created a community-based



zoning proposal for the East Village within Community Board 3, analyzed residential conversion of Class B office space in Community Board 5, and helped Community Board 10 in Central Harlem to update their 197-A proposal. We also offered training in land use and zoning, conflicts of interest law, the city budget, and parliamentary procedure to all community board members on a regular basis. This continuing education and support helped appointees build their knowledge base, better preparing them for the work on the boards.

### **Community Board Recruitment**

Recruiting qualified community board members is a challenge for every Borough President. Many New Yorkers are unaware that community boards exist, let alone that they are eligible to serve. As a result, Borough Presidents and City Council Members devote a considerable amount of time to public education and outreach. As Manhattan Borough President, my outreach and recruitment strategy was comprised of four key components: individualized recruitment plans for each community board, broad outreach to community organizations, public information sessions, and using all forms of new and established media—from television and radio to newspapers and social media—to reach the public.

The individualized outreach and recruitment plans were developed through consultation with Community Board Chairs, City Council Members and other elected officials in an effort to ascertain the strengths, needs and priorities of each board. This individualized understanding, along with an examination of the census data for each district, allowed my office to create targeted plans to recruit applicants who represented the diversity of their neighborhoods and possessed the skills and experience that particular boards might be lacking.

For example, the 2000 Census showed that 35.2 percent of Community Board 3 identified as Asian or Pacific Islander. Yet in 2006, only eight percent of the board, or four of the fifty members, were Asian American. This meant that the recruitment strategy for Community Board 3 needed to focus on aggressive outreach within the Asian American community. As a result of this focused outreach, we were able to steadily increase Asian American representation on the board, tripling it to 24 percent, or 12 members, by 2011. While there is more to be done, it was a marked improvement from 2006.

### **Community Board Appointment**

Our office not only focused on transforming the community board recruitment process, but also on reforming the appointment process. When I entered office, Manhattan community boards had dozens of vacancies, were rife with conflicts of interest, and in many cases were governed by the same appointees year after year, allowing limited room for new voices and views.

The centerpiece of these appointment reform efforts was the creation of an “Independent Screening Panel” comprised of leaders from good government groups, civic associations, and community-based organizations. Members included Citizens Union, NAACP, Hispanic Federation, NYPIRG and the League of Women Voters, to name a few.

The panel had two major functions. First, it helped to assure the public that appointments were merit-based. Applicants were screened by the committee using a uniform set of criteria, and only those who received a recommendation from the panel advanced in the selection process and received an interview. Second, panelists actively partnered with my office on recruiting applicants from their organizations, constituencies or communities, essentially serving as ambassadors for community board reform. These efforts broadened the scope of our outreach significantly.

*All* applicants, including those who had previously served on the board, were required to complete an

application and interview with my office, effectively ending automatic re-appointments. Attendance and participation were taken into consideration for all re-appointments, and those with poor attendance were often replaced by new applicants who brought unique perspectives and renewed vigor to their service.

While we endeavored to appoint committed candidates, mid-term vacancies invariably arose. Vacancies hurt the boards by leaving them with fewer members to perform their duties. Equally troubling was that the lack of an automatic system for filling vacancies left the door open for Borough Presidents to appoint members at politically convenient times. That's why our policy was to fill every vacancy within 30 days. By and large we met this goal, and while some vacancies took longer to fill, we were committed to ensuring that vacancies were filled as quickly as possible.

These reforms to the appointment process were only possible due to the support and buy-in of every member of the Manhattan Council delegation. The Council members were true partners in the implementation of these reforms, with many committing staff resources of their own to recruit candidates and conduct interviews, and all members agreeing to appoint only applicants who had passed the independent screening panel.

### **Results, Challenges and Next Steps**

Community board reform in Manhattan yielded meaningful results. Over eight years, 715 new appointments were made to the borough's 12 community boards, giving hundreds of New Yorkers the chance to participate in shaping the future of their neighborhoods. Planning fellows completed a wide range of meaningful projects that boards would never have had the capacity to undertake alone. African American, Latino, Asian American and LGBT representation on community boards increased by over 40 percent. And while some results of community board reform are harder to measure in numbers; my office received consistent positive feedback from community board members concerning the improved quality of appointments and capacity for operations that have been possible as a result.

After seeing these positive effects, I advocated for expanding our best practices citywide. In 2010, I submitted a series of recommendations to the New York City Charter Commission including a section devoted to community boards. Recommendations included: 1) a written application process and interviews for all appointees, 2) substantial public outreach conducted by the Borough Presidents, 3) annual reports on the composition of community board membership, 4) specific timelines for appointments following term expirations and vacancies, and 5) the appointment of a full-time urban planner to every community board. Although these recommendations were ultimately not adopted, I continue to believe they merit further exploration in venues such as today's hearing.

I am proud of our successes, but challenges still remain. The greatest challenges facing community boards today are insufficient budgets and a lack of consistent, dedicated land use expertise. It is essential that community boards are able to hire full time urban planners to further their work. Without this resource, boards will always struggle to keep up with the review and analysis of land use projects that come before them, and will be inhibited from doing the robust, forward-looking planning that our neighborhoods so badly need.

Community boards are one of the most dynamic and vital parts of municipal government. Their value cannot be underestimated, which is why it is so important to attract and retain talented, committed local leaders and provide those members with the necessary training and support to do their jobs well. I commend the current Borough Presidents and City Council for their commitment to elevating the work of community boards and I look forward to seeing the results of your collective efforts in the coming years.



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BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

**BOROUGH PRESIDENT GALE A. BREWER TESTIMONY TO THE NEW  
YORK CITY COUNCIL'S GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE ON  
BEST PRACTICES FOR  
COMMUNITY BOARD RECRUITMENT & APPOINTMENT  
MARCH 3, 2014**

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Thank you, Chair Kallos and Committee Members, for the opportunity to testify today on the new and innovative changes my office is instituting with respect to the Community Board Appointment Process. I am joined today by Deputy Borough President Aldrin Bonilla who is leading the effort to build on work with Community Boards started by Borough President Scott Stringer.

In the first two months as Borough President I have worked closely with Community Boards, especially at our monthly Borough Board and Borough Service Cabinet meetings, to assess needs and concerns dealing with key questions of data accessibility, timeliness, presentation and usability. It is important not to underestimate the significant level of technology and training that Community Boards require to realize such functions as web-casting, mapping, real-time tracking, and constituent case management.

Nonetheless, the implementation of these supports, tools and resources will have a substantial positive impact on land use, zoning and the licensing recommendations Community Boards must make. For example, when reviewing land use applications, having meaningful city data on school usage, transportation, and other metrics will allow Community Boards to better assess the true impact of proposals, rather than simply relying on the developer for this information.



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As we usher in an era of Open Data to inform and improve government operations and services, it is important to value Open Data not merely for its own sake, but rather, as a process to achieve greater transparency, accountability, performance and participation in decision making. There is much work to be done to make Open Data meaningful and relevant to the stakeholders most in need- which includes all of us here today. We are talking about much more than just publicly releasing city agency datasets and wishing for positive outcomes.

The New York City Charter grants me the power to appoint Community Board Members in my borough. It also mandates my office to provide them with “training and technical assistance.” It is critical and vital that Community Board members have the information, knowledge, and tools that they need to make well-informed decisions for their community and I am committed to providing these tools to all members. We also have to be sensitive to what are some of the skill sets the current board might be lacking, such as social media, website development and mapping and should look toward the new applicant pool to help fill that skills gap as well.

My work on data and technology has informed the Community Board appointment process my office began this year. I am happy to share some of the innovations we are instituting to streamline and improve the recruitment, screening and appointment process.

By February 1<sup>st</sup>, my office received 596 Community Board applications for the upcoming 2014-2016 term. 268 of these applications are from current board members and 328 are new applicants.



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For the first time, the Manhattan Delegation, Community Board Chairs and District Managers were provided with the application data in spreadsheets, as well as, a Demographic Profile of all new applicants. In the spirit of Open Data, I wanted to share the New Applicant Profile for several important reasons:

- 1) it serves as a baseline of applicant characteristics
- 2) it indicates where recruitment, inclusion and participation efforts must be expanded next year
- 3) it provides some insight into which perspectives, sectors and interests are present or lacking in community agenda setting and dialogue and
- 4) it highlights the top concerns that motivate an applicant to seek community board participation as a place to make a difference.

For instance, the data indicated that among new applicants 4% reported public housing as their residence type; 6% were between 18-24 years old; 25% have lived in NYC less than 10 years while 26% have lived here more than 41 years; 28% report that they live and work in the CB district; less than 3% report being a person with a disability. And, my personal favorite: 24% of all new applications were for Community Board 7- talk about a model of civic engagement and service.

This data can inform and improve our efforts to help Community Boards fulfill their mission by appointing diverse, committed, skilled and representative members from throughout the borough. If new applicant demographic data is any indication, we have some work to do to increase participation among key demographic groups whose representation on Community Boards does not reflect their prevalence in their communities.



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Once a baseline has been established, my office will be able to target our outreach efforts to address specific instances of under-representation (such as NYCHA residents, young people, persons with disabilities, and so forth.). I am attaching these data charts to my testimony for submission to the committee.

Diversifying our applicant pool is only part the equation. In re-evaluating the Community Board appointment process that my office inherited, we have been guided by one central question: What are the attributes of an ideal board member? This led us to zero in on three qualities that we feel all good Community Board Members embody: attendance, service, and performance.

These are the criteria that my office is using to evaluate the re-appointment applications of current board members. Every re-applicant will be evaluated by his/her attendance, service to the board, and performance on the board, and this information will be provided to the Council Members. Using meaningful, standardized measurements to inform our-decision making in the appointment of Community Board members helps make the procedure more efficient and bolsters the integrity of the process.

Perhaps our biggest departure from previous practice is my decision to invite all applicants to participate in the interview process, which itself is enhanced to include role plays and simulations. Before, all re-applicants were automatically granted interviews. New applicants were only granted interviews if their application was recommended after initial screening by an independent panel of community leaders.



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Now, all applicants will be granted interviews, conducted by a combination of staff and independent community leaders. While it is more labor-intensive to interview almost 600 applicants, I feel that it is beneficial to observe applicants in group simulations and role plays. The enhanced interviews will consist of group activities, role-playing exercises, and simulations to aid us in observing and identifying the less tangible skills that are critically important to a Member's success on a Community Board. The following are good indicators of a person's suitability for Community Board membership: collaboration, interpersonal skills, respect for the opinions of others, collegiality, a keen mind for analysis, thoughtfulness in decision making, potential for leadership, and problem solving skills.

Consultation and communication are also key aspects of the appointment process and toward that end we have provided Council Members, Community Board Chairs and District Managers with email and print copies of a Memo from the Department of City Planning (11/8/13) regarding the proportion of each CB's population represented by each council member; a map showing the overlay of Community Board and Council District boundaries; a list of Borough President and Council Member appointees scheduled to expire in 2014 and 2015 (list subsequently was updated based on Community Board feedback); a table for each Community Board of members due to expire in 2014 with a corresponding column listing the number of appointments for each Council Member; and a MBPO 2014 Community Board Appointment Process & Timeline Document.

However, even with all of this good information, the reality is that because I have only 300 appointments to make half of the applicants will undoubtedly be disappointed. Simply sending these applicants a non-appointment letter is a missed opportunity.



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To remedy this, my office will propose to the candidate alternative ways to contribute their time, skills, and talent to the borough, such as through appointments to the Solid Waste Advisory Board, Business Improvement Districts, Community Education Councils (CEC), or Community Board public membership. Keeping these non-appointed applicants civically engaged would also help this office address another challenge we frequently face and that is finding people to fill midterm vacancies to Community Boards, seats which can sometimes remain vacant for months at a time. By maintaining an engaged pool of individuals, we can create a civic pipeline through which we can fill these vacancies (a training ground for future Community Board members).

Finally, I would encourage this committee to consider my and Chair Kallos' legislation that asks the State to allow 16 and 17 year olds to serve as full voting members of Community Boards (sponsored by Senator Lanza and Assemblymember Rozic). I have worked with hundreds of interns over the years and have seen first-hand the meaningful role that young people can play in shaping policy and enhancing our neighborhoods. Allowing young people to become Community Board members would benefit the Boards by adding a youth perspective, diverse skills sets and by increasing the breadth of community representation. It would also promote civic participation among our youth. Studies have shown that early engagement leads to lifelong patterns of voting and continued civic participation.

In sum, data has the potential to not just transform the way that our Community Boards make local planning decisions, but also the way that Borough Presidents and Council Members appoint Board Members.

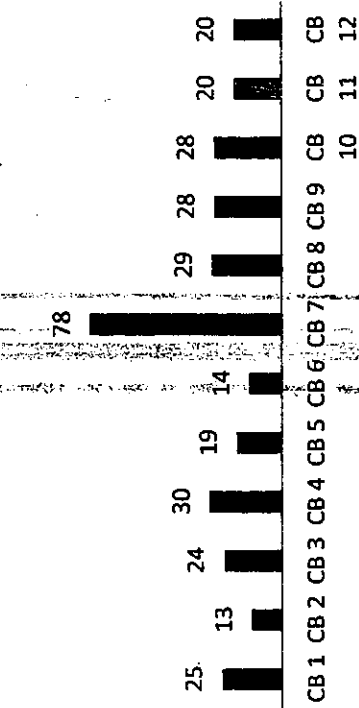
Thank you for your focus on Community Boards and their need for more support so that they can plan for our neighborhoods.



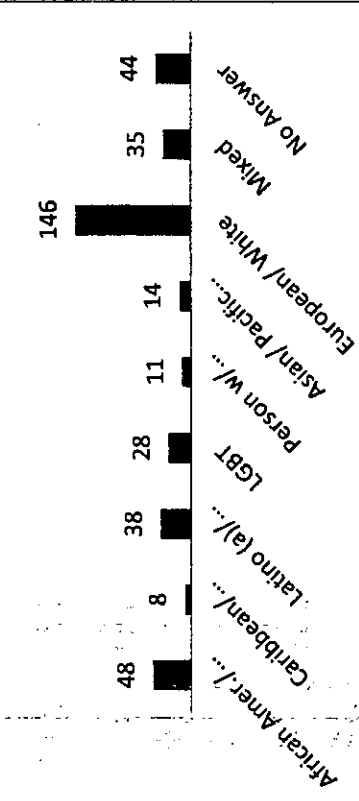


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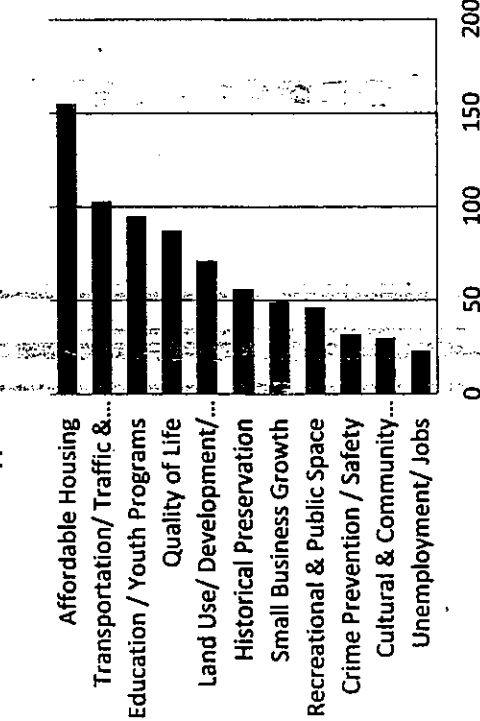
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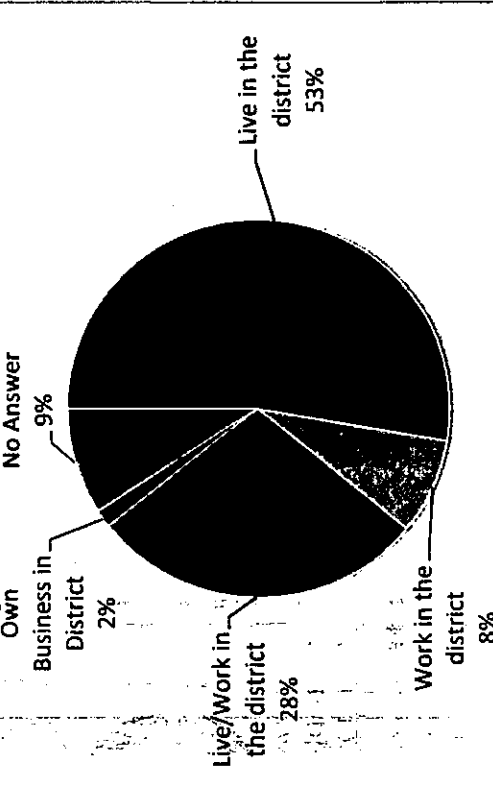
**Self-Identification (Multiple Responses)**



**Top Issues of Concern to New Applicant  
Each Applicant Listed Top 3**



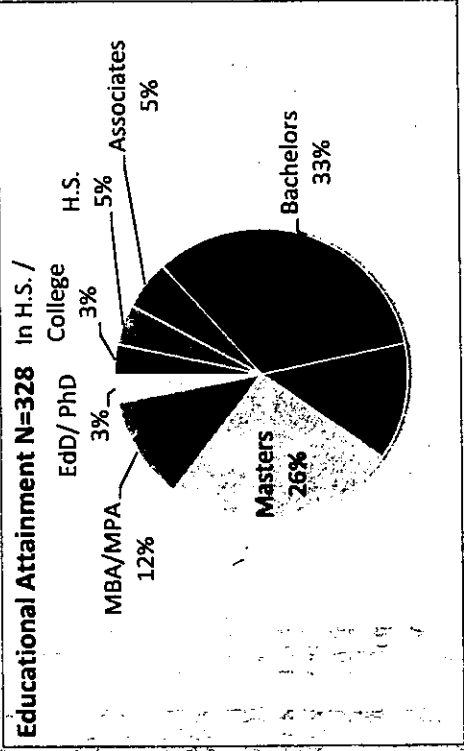
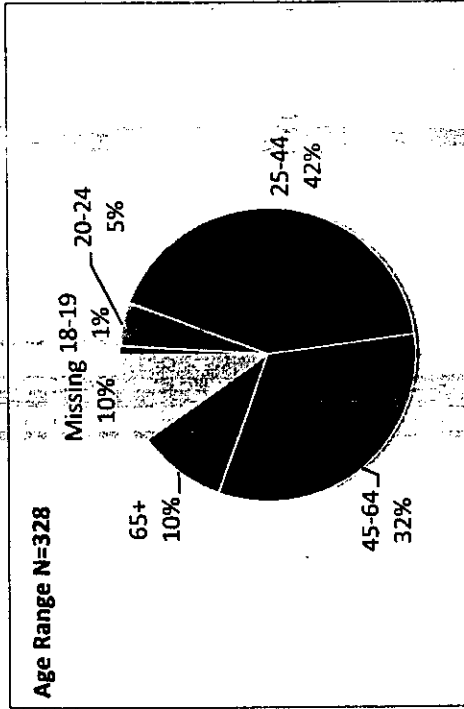
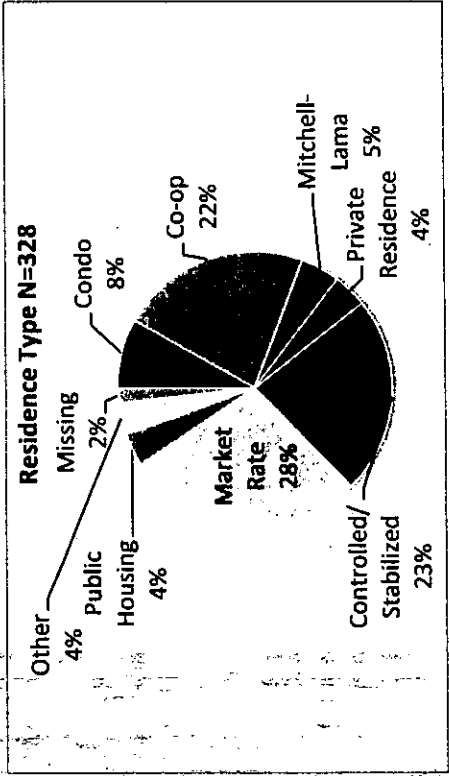
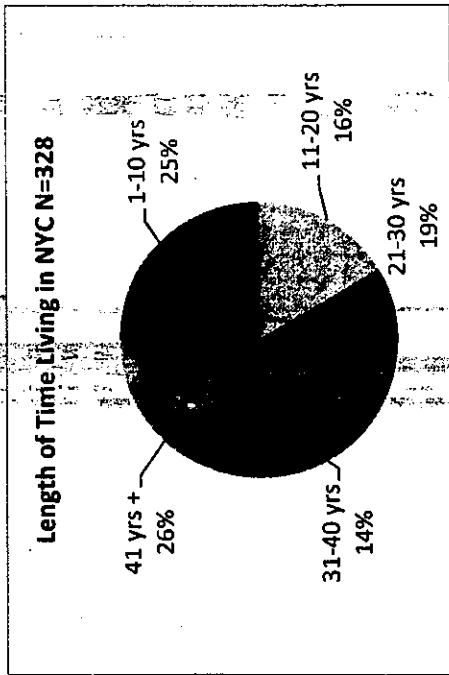
**Significant Interest in CB District N=328**



MUNICIPAL BUILDING · 1 CENTRE STREET, 19<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR · NEW YORK, NY 10007  
PHONE (212) 669-8300 FAX (212) 669-4306  
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MANHATTAN BUILDING 111 CENTRE STREET, 19<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR · NEW YORK, NY 10007  
 PHONE (212) 669-8300 FAX (212) 669-4306  
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CITY OF NEW YORK  
PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
BOROUGH OF STATEN ISLAND



JAMES S. ODDO  
PRESIDENT

BOROUGH HALL, STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. 10301

**Testimony of Staten Island Borough President James S. Oddo  
City Council Committee on Government Operations  
City Council Chambers | March 3, 2014**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Chairman Kallos and the members of the City Council Committee on Government Operations for the opportunity to submit written testimony on the topic of “Best Practices for Recruitment and Appointments to Community Boards.”

As you know, I served in the City Council from February 1999 to the end of 2013. I began a new chapter on January 1, 2014 when I was sworn in as Staten Island’s fifteenth Borough President.

Prior to my election to the City Council, I served as a staff member to a City Council Member and then to the City Council Minority Leader for six years.

As such, I have a wealth of experience working with Community Boards. In fact, I served on Community Board 2 on Staten Island for a period of time in the 1990’s.

I have great respect for those who wish to serve their communities by volunteering on their local community boards. Members sacrifice time with their families in order to serve their neighbors. This is often a thankless task.

I often decry the lack of civic involvement by citizens. I truly believe that the best way to be counted is to get involved with local organizations, including local civic associations and community boards.

During my time in the City Council, I periodically convened what I called “Civic Roundtable” events. These involved inviting the leadership of the local civic associations in my district to a private meeting with me and my staff where we discussed issues of citywide importance, as well as hyper-local concerns. I am happy to know that my successor, Steven Matteo, who happens to be a member of this committee, has indicated that he will continue this fine tradition, one that I inherited from my predecessor, John Fusco.

I got to know civic leaders very well and they became, in effect, my eyes and ears in their neighborhoods. I was alerted very quickly as hyper-local issues arose and I was able to deal with them effectively as a result.

I generally support efforts to encourage greater community involvement, and this includes the necessity of a robust set of Community Boards.

Here are some suggestions for “best practices” as they relate to Community Boards:

- In the past, I have always tried to ensure that the Community Boards under my jurisdiction were geographically diverse. Simply stated, I want each neighborhood to have a voice. Staten Island is a borough of discrete neighborhoods and each has their own needs. Staten Island Community Boards are large geographically and cover many neighborhoods. Thus, it is important to have geographic diversity.
- In a similar vein, I believe it is important to put local civic association leaders on the community boards. These folks have dedicated blood, sweat, and tears to their neighborhoods and their neighbors and have a vested interest in their community. I value the opinions and the judgment of those who have chosen to go above and beyond in service to their community.
- I plan on continuing the policy enacted by my predecessor, James Molinaro, of not appointing to Community Boards individuals who serve as Executive Committee members on political parties or the staff of elected officials. I agree with the former Borough President that the potential for conflicts of interest is too great to appoint such individuals. I do recognize that this ban, particularly the ban on political party Executive Committee members, has the potential of eliminating from consideration some community oriented individuals. But, the interest in keeping politics out of Community Boards outweighs that concern. Unlike every other Borough in this great city, on Staten Island we have a healthy two-party system. This necessitates the greater need to keep politics out of Community Boards.
- I plan on utilizing social media as an outreach tool to attract new Community Board members. Many people do not even know that such a way to serve exists. I, therefore, believe it is important to use social media to help get the word out. I recently did such social media outreach to find my appointee to the New York City Transit Riders Council.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to share some thoughts with you on this important topic and look forward to working with the members of this committee in the future.



BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT RUBEN DIAZ JR.

Testimony of Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. before the  
City Council Committee on Governmental Operations

March 3, 2014

Good Afternoon Chairman Kallos and the members of the Governmental Operations Committee. My name is Thomas Lucania and I am the Director of Community Boards and Legislative Affairs for Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., and I am here to provide his statement on today's hearing topic of community board recruitment and the appointment process.

Community Boards in the Bronx are my partners in city government, and I value their opinions and recommendations. They are often the first line of defense when it comes to our neighborhoods, be it concerns over new development, quality of life and the many other issues that the 1.4 million residents of this borough care about, and are focused on every day.

I take the recruitment of community board members and the appointment process very seriously and spend hours reviewing applications. I review the recommendations of our city council members, who recommend 50 percent of the prospective appointees. In addition, I consult with Community Board Chairpersons and District Managers, as well as my staff, before making final informed decisions on appointments.

My office has worked very hard to recruit new members to our Community Boards. My office sends out press releases, email blasts, fliers and posters; promote it through our website, Facebook page and other social media and during my "Ask the Borough President" News 12 monthly call-in show. We continuously promote it to the public at Community Board meetings and urge our existing members and District Managers to assist us in recruiting residents they come in

contact with as they perform their community board role. We have reached out to our colleges and universities seeking students who through their academic studies would make excellent candidates for the board. We reach out to the borough's churches, veteran community; community based organizations, housing and neighborhood associations, business community, the disabled and LGBTQ community and labor unions to share our application with their members. Our application is available online and is distributed widely throughout the Borough.

Each year, we review the makeup of each board to assure there is a balance of ethnicity, age, gender, neighborhoods, occupations, etc., to assure that all of the various parts of the board are represented. We have added a section to our application where prospective candidates can, if they choose, fill out to self identify themselves by race, gender and identity, which helps us with keeping our boards diverse.

My office has provided training opportunities for community board members on land use, budget, conflict of interest and parliamentary procedures. We plan on continuing these sessions but expanding them to include issue based sessions for members to understand the present issues that are affecting the borough.

I recently released a report from the Community Board District Manager District Office Taskforce which I formed to examine the best practices, policies and procedures on important issues facing all 12 community boards in the Bronx. This report makes a number of recommendations which we are in the process of implementing including the increase use of the community board websites, public access of board meetings through BRONXNET, possible changes to the City Charter, and some modifications to the community board budget consultation process.

Community Boards have long been subject to budget cuts by prior city administrations, and that hindered the effectiveness of boards. I am grateful that this administration has stabilized the community board budgets in the preliminary budget. I hope that the administration would look to provide the community boards with additional funds so that they may expand their outreach to the community. Each community board should have a planner to work with them on development and planning issues in their districts and additional funds would also assist in

achieving this goal. Since this has not been the case, my office has worked with the Fund for the City of New York for the last two years to provide urban planning graduate students to work a semester at three community boards on specific land use projects. These have been successful partnerships and I would like to expand it to all of our Bronx boards.

In closing, my office will continue to work with our community boards to assist them with their charter mandated responsibilities. I will do my part in providing them with responsible and community minded community board members and I will provide them with the tools to do their job well.

Thank you.

**Testimony of Brian Paul  
Research and Policy Manager, Common Cause/New York**

**Before the City Council Committee on Governmental Operations  
Regarding the Subject of Best Practices for Community Board Recruitment and Appointment**

**March 3, 2014.**

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Brian Paul and I'm the Research and Policy Manager for Common Cause/New York, a nonpartisan citizens' lobby and a leading force in the battle for open and accountable government. Common Cause fights to strengthen public participation and faith in our institutions of self-government and to ensure that government and political processes serve the general interest, not simply the special interests.

We'd like to thank the Government Operations Committee and Chairperson Kallos for holding this important oversight hearing on best practices and potential reforms to community board recruitment and appointment. As we testified to the City Charter Commission in 2010 and in times past, Common Cause/New York is a staunch supporter of strengthening community boards and making them more open and accessible to all New Yorkers.

New York's community boards originated in the 1950's as "community planning boards." They were institutionalized in the 1963 charter revision with the intent to increase the role for local communities in the planning process. Their creation was in large part a reaction to the overreaches of urban planning "czar" Robert Moses, who from the 1930's to the 1960's oversaw numerous highway, park, and urban renewal construction plans that often ran roughshod over local neighborhoods. In 1968, Mayor John Lindsay led the passage of Local Law 39 which expanded the function of the community boards<sup>1</sup>. The boards acquired their present structure in the charter revision of 1975, which established the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) and expanded the number of boards to the present 59.

The establishment of the community boards represented a triumph for advocates of local democracy and community planning. In the decades since their creation, however, it has become clear that the community boards have not lived up to their intended goals. Barriers to the community boards' mission of empowering local communities and increasing civic participation include lack of adequate resources, an over-politicized appointment process, and a lack of appropriate representational diversity.

With annual budgets of only \$200,000 to \$300,000 per board, community boards have far fewer staff and resources than other governmental bodies in New York City<sup>2</sup>. The entire budget of all 59 community boards combined amounts to less than 0.02% of the total city budget. Most community boards have no more than two full time staff persons, the District Manager and an administrative assistant, who spend most of their time on administrative tasks and responding to urgent issues. It is abundantly clear that Community Boards have not been provided with the resources needed to adequately fulfill their charter-mandated responsibilities, including

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1 Richard Bass, Cuz Potter; "A Tale of Three Northern Manhattan Communities: Case Studies of Political Empowerment in the Planning and Development Process," *Fordham Urban Law Journal*, Vol. 31, 2004.

2 The City of New York Executive Budget, Fiscal Year 2013. [http://www.nyc.gov/html/omb/downloads/pdf/mm5\\_12.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/omb/downloads/pdf/mm5_12.pdf)



their role in the ULURP and annual statement of community district needs. Many community board members and civic governance experts testified to this fact during the 2010 City Charter Commission hearings<sup>3</sup>.

Beyond the critical underlying issue of inadequate resources, the primary barrier to community boards' success as authentic local democratic bodies is the lack of an objective, transparent, and inclusive system of recruitment and appointment.

Community board members are chosen by the Borough Presidents from a pool of applicants. Half of the applicant pool for each community district is nominated by the local City Council Members, but the Borough President has final discretion over the selection of all members. All members serve staggered two-year terms. According to the City's official explanation, qualified board members are selected "from among active, involved people of each community and must reside, work, or have some other significant interest in the community."

This extremely vague description of a board member's qualifications allows the Borough Presidents nearly complete discretion over community board appointments. Each Borough President is free to establish his or her own procedures, and as a result, each of the five boroughs has a different set of rules and procedures for appointing and reappointing members. Briefly reviewing the current application forms of Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan and Queens reveals wide ranging discrepancies in the level of detail required on important aspects such as the applicant's race/ethnicity, type of housing, motivation behind seeking board appointment, and potential for conflicts of interest. The current Manhattan application is the most detailed at six pages while the Bronx and Brooklyn are four pages each and Queens' application is only one page with no written questions required at all<sup>4</sup>.

Without a standardized citywide process to recruit and appoint a qualified and diverse body of members, New York's community boards can at times degenerate into mere proxies for more powerful governmental actors and special interests, and fail to adequately represent our neighborhoods.

Recent years have seen at least two examples of Borough Presidents overtly playing politics with community boards by conducting high-profile "purges" of members who dared to vote their conscience. In 2006, Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion refused to reappoint the Chair of Bronx Community Board 4 and several other members who voted against the Yankee Stadium redevelopment plan he supported<sup>5</sup>. And in 2007, Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz removed five longtime members of Community Board 6 who opposed the Atlantic Yards project. According to one allegedly purged member, Celia Cacace, Markowitz threatened her months in advance of the appointment decision that he was going to "get rid of everyone on the board that voted for this...Remember you are my appointee."<sup>6</sup> Such direct political intimidation and misuse of the powers of appointment to coerce community board members is anathema to the boards' purpose of providing an authentic local community voice in city government.

Without uniform standards, Borough Presidents and City Council Members can also neglect to conduct the outreach and recruitment of new members that is necessary to keep community boards representative of our ever-changing neighborhoods. As communities change over time, very often newer residents are underrepresented as many members, often with connections to long-established civic associations, political clubs, and non-profits, are repeatedly reappointed. The result is that the makeup of many community boards

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3 Final Report of the 2010 New York City Charter Revision Commission. August 23, 2010.

[http://www.nyc.gov/html/charter/downloads/pdf/final\\_report\\_2010\\_charte\\_revision\\_9-1-10.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/charter/downloads/pdf/final_report_2010_charte_revision_9-1-10.pdf)

4 Staten Island's form could not be located on the Borough President's website

5 Timothy Williams. "Bronx Board is Shuffled After Rejecting New Stadium." *The New York Times*, June 19, 2006.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/19/nyregion/19stadium.html>

6 Andy Newman. "Project's Foes Shown Door in Brooklyn." *The New York Times*, May 23, 2007.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/23/nyregion/23yards.html>

often looks like a time capsule of the neighborhood from 20 or 30 years past. Too often community boards do not reflect the district's ethnic, age, and gender diversity and there is an imbalance in representation between tenants and homeowners, car owners and public transit commuters, and other important diversity factors. Considering the extremely low funding levels of community boards and lack of specialized staff, it is also important to recruit more members with backgrounds in fields such as urban planning, engineering, accounting, and policy analysis that could help the boards more fully understand and respond to the complex issues often presented to them.

As Manhattan Borough President from 2006-2013, Comptroller Scott Stringer took numerous measures to address these problems in the community boards of his borough<sup>7</sup>. In regards to recruitment and appointment, Stringer's reforms included establishing a more detailed application form, a "Community Board Reform Committee" composed of non-profit civic organizations to review applications on a standard set of criteria, and sending "specialized community liaisons" to conduct outreach to recruit a broader diversity of members.

Stringer's expanded application form,<sup>8</sup> now in use by Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, requires prospective members to answer numerous written questions explaining one's motivation for joining the board and identifying the skills, experience, and relationships one would bring. More importantly it contains an optional section for identifying one's race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation and requires the applicant to identify the type of housing one lives in (Public Housing, Mitchell-Lama, Market Rental, Rent-Stabilized, Co-op, Condo, other).

Stringer's application also requires the applicant to identify potential conflicts of interest by posing the question – *"Are you employed by or a member of, any entity (e.g. business or non-profit) with proposals, programs, requests, business, applications, licenses, or any other matters which may come before a community board for review, funding, support, or approval during the next two years?"* This disclosure is crucial to avoid the potentiality for self-dealing and has also been adopted by Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. in recent years.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, Stringer's establishment of an independent panel to review applications acts as a check on the potential for the Borough President to coerce, threaten, and "purge" board members strictly for political motives.

Common Cause/New York recommends that the Borough Presidents and City Council build on Stringer's reforms and establish citywide criteria for the recruitment and appointment of community board members. Criteria should seek to encourage diversity of geography, race/ethnicity, age, gender, and skill-sets, as well as appropriate representation of members who live in different types of housing, use different means of transportation, and are affiliated with a variety of community institutions and organizations. The Borough Presidents should establish a uniform application form for all five boroughs that includes the questions needed to encourage such diversity and requires applicants to identify potential conflicts of interest.

Common Cause/NY also recommends that all five Borough Presidents adopt screening panels for applications order to enhance the independence of community boards and minimize the potential for purely political appointments and/or removals.

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7. "Borough President Scott Stringer's Agenda for Community Board Reform." Available at <http://cb9m.blogspot.com/2007/03/borough-president-scott-stringer.html>

8. Manhattan Borough President's 2014 Community Board application form available at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/mancb9/downloads/pdf/cbnewapp2014.pdf>

9. Bronx Borough President's 2014 Community Board application form available at <http://bronxboropres.nyc.gov/communityboards/cb-2013-application.pdf>

The City should also consider establishing term-limits for community board members, perhaps five terms of two years each, in order to encourage more individuals to participate and better ensure diverse representation. If term-limits for community board members are not feasible, then the City should at the very least consider establishing uniform term-lengths and limits for the position of Chairperson and the committee chairs so that one individual is not in the position of dominating the community board for decades.

Recruitment could also be much improved by providing the boards with up-to-date technology. Most community boards have websites that only provide basic information such as a calendar of meetings, and most appear to be based on decade-old technology. Some boards lack websites entirely. New York City's community board outreach efforts would greatly benefit from a centralized website providing information for all of the boards in one location, as well as offering tools like interactive forums, maps, and webcasting for all the boards to take advantage of. One example is the "Empower LA" website in Los Angeles that acts as the hub for the city's 95 neighborhood councils.<sup>10</sup>

Establishing a centralized internet hub for community boards would require some outlay of resources, but considering the ready availability of many of these tools through open source software and the willingness of New York's technology community to volunteer for such efforts through "hackathons" or provide them at relatively lower cost than the market, the Borough Presidents and City Council should be able to collaborate to create such a hub at a surprisingly low cost.

New York City's community boards have been overlooked, neglected, and misused by the rest of city government for far too long. Re-invigoration of the community boards, and by extension, of neighborhood civic participation, starts with providing greater resources and establishing a unified, transparent, objective, and inclusive system of recruitment and appointment of board members.

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<sup>10</sup> Los Angeles Department of Neighborhood Empowerment. "Empower LA" website. <http://empowerla.org/>



**CITIZENS UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK**  
**Testimony to the Council Governmental Operations Committee**  
**On Best Practices for Recruitment and Appointment of Community Board Members**

**March 3, 2014**

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Good morning Chair Kallos and members of the Governmental Operations committee. My name is Alex Camarda. I am the Director of Public Policy and Advocacy at Citizens Union. Citizens Union is an independent, non-partisan, civic organization of New Yorkers who promote good government and advance political reform in our city and state.

Citizens Union in 2010 as part of our review of the city charter for the City Charter Revision Commission, issued a report with an in-depth examination of numerous issues facing community boards.<sup>1</sup> We took positions in the report supporting fixed budgeting for community boards, believing community boards should receive a budget in the aggregate that is 30 percent of the Council's budget (or about 65 percent of all the borough presidents' total funding), with rent, heat, electricity and other variable expenses part of the regular budget process. We also support providing urban planners to boards independent of the borough presidents' offices to provide assistance on technical land use issues. This will provide community boards with needed resources to ensure they have a distinct voice in the land use approval process.

**Citizens Union's recommendations related to community board recruitment and hiring are:**

- 1. Reform the process for selecting members to community boards. Make boards more professionalized and accessible to the communities they serve by creating a formal standardized and transparent process for filling community board positions. Citizens Union recommends the city charter be amended to:**
  - a. Require written applications and interviews of all appointees or re-appointees by the borough presidents;**
  - b. Establish a deadline of 30 days for filling vacant positions; and**
  - c. Require borough presidents to issue an annual report detailing their outreach efforts, whom they notified of the process, methods used and the demographics of those serving on community boards in comparison to the communities served by the boards.**

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<sup>1</sup> See the full report at:

[http://www.citizensunion.org/www/cu/site/hosting/Reports/0610CU\\_Charter\\_Revision\\_Report&Recommendations.pdf](http://www.citizensunion.org/www/cu/site/hosting/Reports/0610CU_Charter_Revision_Report&Recommendations.pdf), with the community boards chapter on pages 37-41.

- 2. Community board members should be limited to serving five consecutive two-year terms. This limit on terms should be phased in prospectively so terms are staggered to ensure there is not a mass exodus of institutional knowledge from the boards.**

### Process for Recruiting and Appointing Community Board Members

As detailed in the attached chapter from our charter revision report, Citizens Union found in our 2010 evaluation of community boards that the recruitment and appointment processes at each of the 59 boards vary greatly. The City Charter imposes some standardization, requiring each community board have up to 50 voting members, appointed for two-year terms without limits on the number of terms served. Borough presidents appoint the voting community board members, with half of the appointees nominated by council members representing the district.

In practice, however, community boards often have many fewer than 50 active members and vacancies are quite common, as a total of 2,950 people are required to fill all the positions on each of the 59 boards. Nearly 20 percent of the positions on Manhattan boards, for example, were vacant in 2006.<sup>2</sup> While some boards reflect the diversity of the communities they serve, others do not and are largely controlled by members who have served for decades, and even chairpersons that have held the post for similarly long periods. Boards also vary greatly in members' fiscal and urban planning expertise, which affects their ability to evaluate and submit land use proposals, and indicate budget priorities.

### Reforms to the Recruitment and Appointment

To reduce vacancies, make boards more reflective of the community they serve, and diminish patronage, former Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer revamped the process of appointment. He created a standardized formal application process for community board positions with community and civic groups vetting applications. Citizens Union was an active participant in that process and at the invitation of former Borough President Stringer, evaluated resumes to determine if candidates were qualified based on criteria developed by his office in conformance with the law. Stringer and his staff then interviewed candidates from among those applicants deemed qualified by outside groups, and made appointments. Former Borough President Stringer required all sitting community board members to reapply when their two-year terms expired and committed to the civic and community groups that he would only hire from the pool deemed qualified. His office so strongly believed in this process that even when vacancies occurred mid-term, the office sent resumes to participating groups for review, rather than only conducting the civic group review at the end of members' terms. According to Borough President Stringer's office, by 2010 this revamped process resulted in the filling of every vacancy, 1,700 new applications, 1,400 interviews, and the appointment of 500 new members since 2006.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Recommendations to the New York City Charter Revision Commission," Office of the Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer, May 2010, p. 11, Available at: <http://www.mbpo.org/uploads/CharterRevisionReport2.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> "Ensuring Meaningful Community-Based Planning And Community Governance: The Future of Community Boards and the New York City Charter," Office of the Manhattan, Borough President, Scott M. Stringer, April 19, 2010, Available at: <http://mbpo.org/uploads/ensuringreport3.pdf>

**Borough Presidents' Support for Reform**

During Citizens Union's candidate evaluation process this past year, newly elected borough presidents Gale Brewer (Manhattan), Eric Adams (Brooklyn), James Oddo (Staten Island) and Melinda Katz (Queens) all indicated support for at least some of Citizens Union's recruitment and appointment reforms in questionnaires completed by the candidates for Citizens Union, as shown on the chart below. In particular, all borough presidents taking office this year support a more formalized and standardized process for filling appointments.

<b>Borough President</b>	<b>What is your position on designating urban planners for use by community boards and requiring borough presidents to report to the Council the manner in which they advertise and make community board appointments? (Int. No. 913)</b>	<b>What is your position on establishing a formal, standardized and transparent process for community board appointments including written applications, interviews of candidates, and filling vacancies within 30 days?</b>	<b>Do you support standardizing term limits to five consecutive two-year terms for members of all community boards?</b>
<b>Adams<sup>4</sup></b>	Support.	Support	Support
<b>Brewer<sup>5</sup></b>	Support	Support	Oppose
<b>Katz<sup>6</sup></b>	Support	Support	Support
<b>Oddo<sup>7</sup></b>	Oppose	Support	Will Consider

**Citizens Union's Reform Legislation**

Citizens Union during the last Council drafted a bill (see attached) to reform the process of community board recruitment and appointment consistent with our positions on page 1 of this testimony, a derivation of which was introduced by former Councilmember Leroy Comrie (Int. No. 913 of 2012)<sup>8</sup> and co-sponsored by now Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, and current Council leaders Brad Lander, Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer, Debi Rose, and Jumaane Williams.

<sup>4</sup> See Eric Adam's 2013 Borough President questionnaire for Citizens Union at:  
[http://www.citizensunion.org/www/cu/site/hosting/VoterDirectories/2013\\_Questionnaires/Adams-BkBP.pdf](http://www.citizensunion.org/www/cu/site/hosting/VoterDirectories/2013_Questionnaires/Adams-BkBP.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> See Gale Brewer's 2013 Borough President questionnaire for Citizens Union at:  
[http://www.citizensunion.org/www/cu/site/hosting/VoterDirectories/2013\\_Questionnaires/MBP\\_Brewer.pdf](http://www.citizensunion.org/www/cu/site/hosting/VoterDirectories/2013_Questionnaires/MBP_Brewer.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> See Melinda Katz's 2013 Borough President questionnaire for Citizens Union at:  
[http://www.citizensunion.org/www/cu/site/hosting/VoterDirectories/2013\\_Questionnaires/QBP\\_Katz.pdf](http://www.citizensunion.org/www/cu/site/hosting/VoterDirectories/2013_Questionnaires/QBP_Katz.pdf)  
[http://www.citizensunion.org/www/cu/site/hosting/VoterDirectories/2013\\_Questionnaires/Oddo-SIBP.pdf](http://www.citizensunion.org/www/cu/site/hosting/VoterDirectories/2013_Questionnaires/Oddo-SIBP.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> See James Oddo's 2013 Borough President questionnaire for Citizens Union at:  
[http://www.citizensunion.org/www/cu/site/hosting/VoterDirectories/2013\\_Questionnaires/Oddo-SIBP.pdf](http://www.citizensunion.org/www/cu/site/hosting/VoterDirectories/2013_Questionnaires/Oddo-SIBP.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> See: <http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=1189798&GUID=A1C91459-3705-437D-845E-DBEE37919783&Options=Advanced&Search=&FullText=1>

The charter amendments in our draft bill are modeled on the successful practices put in place by Borough President Stringer, although Citizens Union is flexible as to whether borough presidents choose community board appointees without or with outside groups determining whether applicants are qualified. The draft bill requires written applications be submitted for community board positions and a subset of applicants be interviewed. Civic and community groups vet submitted applications, determining whether applicants are qualified according to criteria created by borough presidents. Borough presidents are also required to submit an annual report detailing their procedures for filling community board positions including providing modes of outreach to advertise positions and statistics on diversity of the boards in relation to the communities they represent.

Our draft bill adapted by former Councilmember Comrie does not include our recommendation that community board members be limited to five consecutive two-year terms, with members on the board turning over in different years. We established the term limits position after the bill's drafting, believing – as we did for recruitment and appointment reforms – that term limits would result in a membership that better reflects the ever-changing demography of the city's neighborhoods, while injecting new thinking and approaches to the manner in which boards address the development of their communities.

I thank you for the opportunity to present Citizens Union's views on community board reform. I welcome any questions you have.

The following is excerpted from pages 37- 41 of Citizens Union's 2010 report for the New York City Charter Revision Commission entitled, "2010 City Charter Revision Recommendations: Increasing Avenues for Participating in Governing and Elections in New York City."

The entire report is available at:

[http://www.citizensunion.org/www/cu/site/hosting/Reports/0610CU Charter Revision Report&Recommendations.pdf](http://www.citizensunion.org/www/cu/site/hosting/Reports/0610CU_Charter_Revision_Report&Recommendations.pdf)

#### v. Strengthen Community Boards

New York City is divided into 59 administrative districts, each served by a community board. There are 12 in the Bronx, 12 in Manhattan, 14 in Queens, 18 in Brooklyn, and 3 in Staten Island. Community boards are local representative bodies – though not necessarily reflecting of all aspects of the community – that serve as advocates for New York City residents and communities. They are the grassroots level of government that serves as the eyes, ears, and voices of the communities of New York City.

In 1951, Mayor Robert F. Wagner, Jr. established twelve "community planning councils" consisting of 15 to 20 members each. The councils were charged with advising the borough president on planning and budgetary matters.<sup>i</sup> In 1963, the community planning councils were established as community planning boards (eventually shortened to community boards) throughout the five boroughs. Community boards were intended play an advisory role in neighborhood planning and serve as a primary outlet for constituent complaints, particularly prior to the creation of 311.<sup>ii</sup>

The City Charter was modified in 1975 to give community boards the opportunity to provide feedback on land use and zoning issues through the Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) and other related processes. As a result of the 1989 charter revision, community boards were given the power to draft their own community development plans, called 197-a plans, and submit them to the City Planning Commission and City Council for approval.<sup>iii</sup> 197-a plans are advisory policy statements, but the City Charter obligates city agencies to consider the plan in making future decisions. Prior to this change, community boards were not authorized to submit plans, all of which were prepared by the Department of City Planning and presented to the City Planning Commission for approval. Community boards were also promised professional planning assistance, a charter principle that has yet to be put into practice.<sup>iv</sup>

Each community board has up to 50 voting members, with one-half of the membership appointed for two-year terms without limits on the number of terms served. All City Council members whose council districts cover part of a community district also serve as non-voting, ex-officio community board members. Borough presidents appoint the voting community board members, with half of the appointees nominated by council members representing the district.<sup>v</sup>



In practice, community boards have many fewer than 50 active members and vacancies are quite common, as a total of 2,950 people are required to fill all the positions on each of the 59 boards. Each community board has a district manager, a paid staff member approved by the board who acts to resolve community complaints and serves as a liaison to the board. The district manager's role includes taking complaints, providing information, and providing assistance in accessing city services or navigating agency bureaucracy. Community board members can only be removed for cause since they are public officers under New York State Law by virtue of their Charter-mandated responsibilities. However, borough presidents have, on occasion, been able to circumvent the law, particularly when board members have contradicted borough presidents on development projects.

Community boards meet once monthly. Committees, which meet as needed, are typically organized around functional issues (for example land use, education or public safety), geography, or the relevant city agencies. Their most significant power is their ability to comment on land use issues such as development, zoning, licensing issues (for example, liquor licenses and sidewalk café applications) and placement of all municipal facilities in their communities. Community boards also provide feedback on the allocation of city funds, specifically expense and capital budgets, through the submission of a "District Statement of Needs," which describes the issues and needs of the district.

The community board's comments on development are the first level of community input through the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). ULURP was set up in the mid-1970s to give neighborhoods a voice in decision-making. Prior to its implementation, the City's neighborhoods had no way of systematically taking part in land use decisions that would affect their futures. While community boards do not have the power to make binding recommendations – they are limited to advisory opinions – establishing a baseline opinion is significant enough that lobbyists have spent significant sums lobbying community boards in particular instances.

The average community board budget is around \$200,000, for a total expense to the City for all boards of about \$12 million. About 90 percent of the money is spent on personnel: each community board hires a district manager and, on average, two other staff members who do the administrative work, which leaves just \$10,000 to \$20,000 for everything else.<sup>vi</sup> Some community boards have resorted to creating non-profit organizations to collect private donations to support their work.

**Community Boards' Funding <sup>vii</sup>**

Office	FY '02 Budget	FY '06 Budget	FY '10 Budget
Bronx	\$2,290,872	\$2,596,183	\$2,839,903
Brooklyn	\$3,395,474	\$3,924,320	\$4,362,207
Manhattan	\$2,411,733	\$2,991,441	\$3,437,006
Queens	\$2,720,527	\$3,123,437	\$3,438,491
Staten Island	\$641,135	\$724,285	\$777,320
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11,459,741</b>	<b>\$13,359,666</b>	<b>\$14,854,927</b>

Mayor Bloomberg's preliminary budget for FY 2011 slashed funding of community boards by 30 percent to save a total of \$2 million, with the average board receiving around \$140,000. Many district managers contended that they would be prevented from carrying out their Charter-mandated responsibilities and have called for fixed budgets that are not subject to determination by the mayor and the City Council. Others have argued that inadequately funding community boards is an attempt to undermine community input into governmental decision-making.<sup>viii</sup> Mayor Bloomberg recently restored funding for community boards to an average of \$198,895 in his executive budget.<sup>ix</sup>

While section 2800(f) of the City Charter already enables community boards to hire "professional staff and consultants, including planning and other experts," few have had the resources to do so, even without taking into account the Mayor's recent round of cuts. Consequently, community boards are prevented from adequately fulfilling their Charter-mandated responsibilities. For example, only seven community-based 197-a plans have been adopted by the City in the last 16 years. According to Thomas Angotti, chair of the Pratt Institute's Planning Department, the primary factor in why so few of the 59 community boards have prepared plans is that few have any knowledge of planning, and the Department of City Planning (DCP) does not actively promote the 197-a process.<sup>x</sup> In addition, many communities recognize from the outset that master plans are limited in what they can achieve, since they are only advisory. Section 191(b)(5) of the City Charter requires that the DCP shall "provide community boards with such staff and assistance and other professional and technical assistance as may be necessary to permit such boards to perform their planning duties and responsibilities." However, DCP has not had adequate resources to fulfill this obligation and assist community boards. Lastly, many 197-a plans require an environmental impact statement (EIS), which community boards do not have sufficient funds to pay for.

The City Planning Commission (CPC) is required through rules for the processing of plans pursuant to City Charter section 197-a to comment on plans proposed by community boards. Section 3.010 of the Rules specifies that after a sponsor proposes a plan, DCP

staff must, within 90 days, “inform the sponsors of all deficiencies with respect to form and content and any changes, additions or deletions which, in the opinion of staff, may correct such deficiencies. The sponsor may, thereupon, indicate its willingness to make such changes, additions or deletions in which case the Department will defer its report to the Commission until the changes have been made.”

In addition to providing development input through 197-a plans, the responsibility of providing feedback on the city budget through the District Statement of Needs also requires skills beyond those possessed by many community board members. Nevertheless, John Mudd, in his study *Neighborhood Services*, estimated that just 30 to 50 percent of district budget requests are approved, with capital budget requests faring better than expense budget requests.<sup>xi</sup>

Community boards have also had their function of assisting with constituent services diluted by the creation of the 311 phone system, and the number of calls to community boards has decreased dramatically. Data obtained from 311 calls by community boards does not provide names or origination of complaints meaning that community boards are unable to provide personalized follow-through or ensure that complaints are properly addressed by the appropriate agencies.

Due to the lack of expertise caused by insufficient resources, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer has developed innovative ways to give community boards the tools they need. He started a program to provide graduate urban planning students the opportunity to work as planning consultants in Manhattan community board offices in 2006. The City Charter currently authorizes community boards to hire a planner but does not mandate it, and few boards hire planners due to lack of resources. The Community Planning Fellowship Program has placed second-year graduate school students in every board in Manhattan to aid boards in addressing planning and land use issues. The mayor’s office and CUNY have supported the Fellowship Program and are working to expand it citywide. Stringer has also run training sessions on land use, ethics, and even how to run a meeting – something borough presidents are required to do for community boards under the City Charter.<sup>xii</sup>

Beyond deficient resources and expertise, community boards are also plagued by vacancies and, in some instances, an insular culture or lack of diversity. Few community boards even come close to approaching 50 active members. For example, in 2006, nearly 20 percent of the positions on Manhattan Boards were vacant.<sup>xiii</sup> To address both these issues, Borough President Stringer revamped the process of appointment. He started a standardized application process for potential community board members, who would then be reviewed by a coalition of nonprofit and planning groups. According to Borough President Stringer’s office, this revamped process resulted in the filling of every vacancy, 1700 new applications, 1400 interviews, and the appointment of 500 new members since 2006.<sup>xiv</sup>

Though no longer as integral to the handling and disposition of constituent services, community boards play an important role in being the voice of local communities in articulating their budget and service needs as well as views on local development and land use issues. Again, in a city as large, diverse and complex as New York, it is important that there be locally recognized governmental bodies organized to perform such functions, but they need to be properly funded and supported and their membership selection process improved.

**Recommendations:**

- Community boards should receive an independent budget allocation that is not at the discretion of the mayor or council, which potentially can be reduced to diminish community input under a very centralized system of governance. This is essential for community boards to carry out their Charter-mandated responsibilities as an advisor on land use, planning, and budgeting. Community boards should be provided enough funding to be able to hire a land use and/or budgetary expert.

The budget for community boards should be linked to that of borough presidents' offices, which in turn, should be linked to the city council's budget. Community boards in total should receive 65% of the borough presidents' allocation, with each board receiving an equal amount, in addition to revenues for offices, electricity and heat, which would still be determined through the regular budget process. Sixty-five percent of the FY2010 Borough President's allocation would have provided the boards in total with \$874,000 more than in FY2010, or \$14,813 more per board in addition to revenues for offices, electricity and heat (which are not included in this formula for an operating budget). The additional revenue from the operating formula coupled with a separate allocation for offices, electricity and heat should provide for the hiring of staff with expertise on land use.

$(0.65) \times (\text{total budget for all Borough Presidents}) / \text{number of Community Boards citywide} = \text{individual Community Board budget}$

Using this formula for FY2010, each community board would have received \$266,592 not including costs for offices, electricity and heat.

$(0.65 \times \$24,198,371) / 59 = \$266,592$

Community boards are slated to receive, on average, \$198,895 in FY2011, according to the Mayor's Executive budget. This will not create budget inflexibility for the mayor and council, as the total expenditure on all Community boards was a miniscule \$14.8 million in FY2010.

- A mechanism should be created that provides an available pool of urban planners outside of the borough presidents' offices that can be accessed by community boards. This is critical to provide meaningful and informed input on land use and to develop 197-a plans. These urban planners should be connected to one or more boards, thereby establishing relationships with those boards and the larger communities they serve. While housing urban planners with the borough presidents is aligned with their current responsibilities to "establish and maintain a planning office...for the use, development or improvement of land located in the borough" under section 82 of chapter 4 of the City Charter and to "provide training and technical assistance to the members of the community boards" it becomes problematic when the borough president may disagree with a community board on a land development issue. Given their distinct roles in ULURP and instances in which borough presidents have sought to remove community board members who have not aligned their votes with the sentiments of the borough presidents on land use proposals, it is essential that the independence of the community boards, and the urban planners that serve them, be maintained.
  
- Reform the process for selecting members to community boards. Community boards are too often plagued by vacancies and an insular culture. To professionalize and open the boards to the communities they serve, a formal standardized and transparent process should be created for filling community board positions, as has been done by Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer. Language should be added to the City Charter that:
  - Requires written applications and interviews of all appointees or reappointees by the borough presidents;
  - Establishes a deadline of 30 days for filling vacant positions; and
  - Requires borough presidents to issue an annual report detailing their outreach efforts, whom they notified of the process, methods used and the demographics of those serving on community boards in comparison to the communities served by the boards.

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- <sup>i</sup> Seth Forman, "Community Boards," *Gotham Gazette*, Sept. 20, 2000, Available at: <http://www.gothamgazette.com/article//20000920/202/150>
- <sup>ii</sup> "About Community Boards," *Transportation Alternatives*, Available at: <http://www.transalt.org/takeaction/cb/about>
- <sup>iii</sup> Mark Berkey-Gerard, "Community Board Reform," *Gotham Gazette*, March 06, 2006, Available at: <http://www.gothamgazette.com/article/iotw/20060306/200/1779>
- <sup>iv</sup> Tom Angotti, "New York City's Big Planning Projects: Avoiding the Public?" *Gotham Gazette*, March 2003, Available at: <http://www.gothamgazette.com/article//20030319/12/317>
- <sup>v</sup> "Community Boards," *Mayor's Community Affairs Unit*, Available at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/cau/html/cb/main.shtml>
- <sup>vi</sup> Berkey-Gerard. Refer to the earlier footnote where his article is cited.
- <sup>vii</sup> "Departement Estimates, Fiscal Year 2011," *Office of Management and Budget*, Available at: [http://www.nyc.gov/html/omb/downloads/pdf/de1\\_10.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/omb/downloads/pdf/de1_10.pdf)
- <sup>viii</sup> Patrick Rocchio, "Community Boards Fight Cuts," April 25, 2010, Available at: [http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/bronx/community\\_boards\\_fight\\_cuts\\_SXptH46cRoG1dAMafTeCM](http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/bronx/community_boards_fight_cuts_SXptH46cRoG1dAMafTeCM)
- <sup>ix</sup> "Community Board Budgets to be Restored," *City Pragmatist*, Available at: <http://citypragmatist.com/2010/05/06/community-board-budgets-to-be-restored/>
- <sup>x</sup> Forman.
- <sup>xi</sup> Forman.
- <sup>xii</sup> "New York City Charter," Chapter 4, Section 82, p. 34
- <sup>xiii</sup> "Recommendations to the New York City Charter Revision Commission," *Office of the Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer*, May 2010, p. 11, Available at: <http://www.mbp.org/uploads/CharterRevisionReport2.pdf>
- <sup>xiv</sup> "Ensuring Meaningful Community-Based Planning And Community Governance: The Future of Community Boards and the New York City Charter," *Office of the Manhattan, Borough President, Scott M. Stringer*, April 19, 2010, Available at: <http://mbpo.org/uploads/ensuringreport3.pdf>

**Draft Bill on Community Board Reform**  
**Written by Citizens Union**  
**2011**

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

**Section 1. Legislative Findings.**

New York City is divided into 59 administrative districts, each served by a community board. Community boards are local representative bodies that serve as advocates for New York City residents and communities. Boards provide input on budget and service needs and on local development and land use issues. In recognition of these important roles, this bill seeks to strengthen community boards by establishing a more structured and formal process for filling positions, a fixed formula for their funding, and a pool of urban planners which boards can access for technical expertise.

Current law requires that each community board have up to 50 voting members, appointed for two-year terms without limits on the number of terms served. Borough presidents appoint the voting community board members, with half of the appointees nominated by council members representing the district. In practice, community boards often have many fewer than 50 active members and vacancies are quite common, as a total of 2,950 people are required to fill all the positions on each of the 59 boards. Nearly 20 percent of the positions on Manhattan boards, for example, were vacant in 2006. To reduce vacancies, make boards more reflective of the community they serve, and diminish patronage, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer has revamped the process of appointment. He created a standardized formal application process for community board positions with community and civic groups vetting applications. According to Borough President Stringer's office, this revamped process resulted in the filling of every vacancy, 1,700 new applications, 1,400 interviews, and the appointment of 500 new members since 2006. The amendments to the appointment process in this bill are modeled on the successful practices put in place by Borough President Stringer. The bill requires written applications be submitted for community board positions and a subset of applicants be interviewed. Civic and community groups vet submitted applications, determining whether applicants are qualified according to criteria created by borough presidents. Borough presidents are also required to submit an annual report detailing their procedures for filling community board positions including providing modes of outreach to advertise positions and statistics on diversity of the boards in relation to the communities they represent.

The bill also changes the budgeting process for community boards so the total allocation for all boards is made through a fixed formula linked to thirty percent of funding of the Council. This formula for FY2011 would have provided boards with an average of \$268,896, about \$11,000 more than what boards were forecasted to receive. Boards would receive the same amount of funding with the exception of financing related to other than personal services like electricity, rent, and office equipment and materials. Funding by formula will give community boards greater independence in advocating for community positions and remove the perception if not the reality that boards' funding is allocated based on their views on development and land use.

The bill also requires that technical services related to land use independent from those under the department of city planning and borough

presidents be made available to boards. This will enable boards to better fulfill their charter-mandated responsibilities, such as providing advice during the Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) and in submitting 197-a plans. Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer has had much success with a similar approach providing graduate urban planning students the opportunity to work as planning consultants in Manhattan community board offices.

Section 2. section 2800 of Chapter 70 of the New York City Charter is amended to read as follows:

§ 2800. Community boards. a. For each community district created pursuant to chapter sixty-nine there shall be a community board which shall consist of (1) not more than fifty persons appointed by the borough president for staggered terms of two years, at least one-half of whom shall be appointed from nominees of the council members elected from council districts which include any part of the community district, and (2) all such council members as non-voting members. The number of members appointed on the nomination of each such council member shall be proportional to the share of the district population represented by such council member. The city planning commission, after each council redistricting pursuant to chapter two-A, and after each community redistricting pursuant to section twenty-seven hundred two, shall determine the proportion of the community district's population represented by each council member. Copies of such determinations shall be filed with the appropriate borough president, community board, and council member. One-half of the members appointed to any community board shall serve for a term of two years beginning on the first day of April in each odd-numbered year in which they take office and one half of the members appointed to any community board shall serve for a term of two years beginning on the first day of April in each even-numbered year in which they take office. Members shall serve until their successors are appointed but no member may serve for more than sixty days after the expiration of his or her original term unless reappointed by the borough president. Not more than twenty-five percent of the appointed members shall be city employees. No person shall be appointed to or remain as a member of the board who does not have a residence, business, professional or other significant interest in the district. The borough president shall assure adequate representation from the different geographic sections and neighborhoods within the community district. In making such appointments, the borough president shall consider whether the aggregate of appointments fairly represents all segments of the community. Borough presidents shall develop a mandatory standardized application to be completed by applicants for appointments or reappointments to community boards, or for filling a vacancy. Borough presidents shall establish a process in which community and civic groups selected on a rotating biennial basis review such completed applications for community board positions. Community and civic groups vetting such applications shall determine if candidates are qualified to serve as community board members based on criteria established by the borough president consistent with this section. The borough president shall interview candidates deemed to be qualified for appointment, reappointment or in filling a vacancy. Borough presidents shall submit to the council a biennial report describing the process used for filling community board positions. Such report shall include outreach efforts to advertise community board openings including sources notified, details related to the process of receiving and vetting



applications and conducting interviews of applicants, and demographic information of appointed community board members as compared to demographic information of the community district members serve including but not limited to race, gender, age, and geographic diversity as well as professional background. ~~Community boards, civic groups and other community groups and neighborhood associations may submit nominations to the borough president and to council members.~~

b. An appointed member may be removed from a community board for cause, which shall include substantial nonattendance at board or committee meetings over a period of six months, by the borough president or by a majority vote of the community board. Vacancies among the appointed members shall be filled within 30 days promptly upon the occurrence of the vacancy by the borough president for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as regular appointments.

c. Members of community boards shall serve as such without compensation but shall be reimbursed for actual and necessary out-of-pocket expenses in connection with attendance at regularly scheduled meetings of the community board.

d. Each community board shall:

- (1) Consider the needs of the district which it serves;
- (2) Cooperate with, consult, assist and advise any public officer, agency, local administrators of agencies, legislative body, or the borough president with respect to any matter relating to the welfare of the district and its residents;
- (3) At its discretion hold public or private hearings or investigations with respect to any matter relating to the welfare of the district and its residents, but the board shall take action only at a meeting open to the public;
- (4) Assist city departments and agencies in communicating with and transmitting information to the people of the district;
- (5) Cooperate with the boards of other districts with respect to matters of common concern;
- (6) Render an annual report to the mayor, the council and the borough board within three months of the end of each year and such other reports to the mayor or the borough board as they shall require (such reports or summaries thereof to be published in the City Record);
- (7) Elect its own officers; adopt, and make available for reasonable public inspection, by-laws and statements of the duties assigned by the board to its district manager and other professional staff appointed pursuant to subdivision f of this section; and keep a public record of its activities and transactions, including minutes of its meetings, majority and minority reports, and all documents the board is required by law to review, which shall be made available, in accordance with law, to elected officials upon request and for reasonable public inspection;
- (8) Request the attendance of agency representatives at meetings of the community board;
- (9) Prepare comprehensive and special purpose plans for the growth, improvement and development of the community district;
- (10) Prepare and submit to the mayor, on or before a date established by the mayor, an annual statement of community district needs, including a brief description of the district, the board's assessment of its current and probable future needs, and its recommendations for programs, projects, or activities to meet those needs;
- (11) Consult with agencies on the capital needs of the district, review departmental estimates, hold public hearings on such needs and estimates and prepare and submit to the mayor capital budget priorities for the next fiscal year and the three succeeding fiscal years;

(12) Conduct public hearings and submit recommendations and priorities to the mayor, the council and the city planning commission on the allocation and use within the district of funds earmarked for community development activities under city, state or federal programs;

(13) Consult with agencies on the program needs of the community district to be funded from the expense budget, review departmental estimates, hold public hearings on such needs and estimates, and prepare and submit to the mayor expense budget priorities for the next fiscal year;

(14) Assist in the planning of individual capital projects funded in the capital budget to be located in the community district and review scopes of projects and designs for each capital project provided, however, that such review shall be completed within thirty days after receipt of such scopes or designs;

(15) Evaluate the progress of capital projects within the community district based on status reports to be furnished to the board;

(16) Be authorized to assign a representative to attend any meeting held by a city agency to determine, in advance of drafting, the form and content of any environmental impact statement required by law for a proposal or application for a project in such board's district;

(17) Exercise the initial review of applications and proposals of public agencies and private entities for the use, development or improvement of land located in the community district, including the conduct of a public hearing and the preparation and submission to the city planning commission of a written recommendation;

(18) Assist agencies in the preparation of service statements of agency objectives, priorities, programs and projected activities within the community district and review such statements;

(19) Evaluate the quality and quantity of services provided by agencies within the community district;

(20) Within budgetary appropriations for such purposes, disseminate information about city services and programs, process complaints, requests, and inquiries of residents of the community district; and

(21) Conduct substantial public outreach, including identifying the organizations active in the community district, maintaining a list of the names and mailing addresses of such community organizations, and making such names and, with the consent of the organization, mailing addresses available to the public upon request.

e. Each agency shall furnish promptly to each community board on request any information or assistance necessary for the board's work. Each agency shall also report periodically to each board on its service activities programs and operations within the community district.

f. The appropriations available to pay for the expenses of all of the community boards during each fiscal year shall not be less than thirty percent of the appropriations available to pay for the expenses of the city council during such fiscal year. Such appropriations shall be divided equally among community boards, with the exception of funding for other than personal services which may differ from board to board.

g. Each community board, within the budgetary appropriations therefor, shall appoint a district manager and shall be authorized to utilize the services of such other professional staff and consultants, including planners and other experts, as it may deem appropriate, all of whom shall serve at the pleasure of the community board and shall provide the board with the staff support and technical assistance it requires to fulfill the duties assigned to it by this charter or other law. The district manager shall (1) have responsibility for processing service complaints, (2) preside at meetings of the district service cabinet and

(3) perform such other duties as are assigned by the community board in accordance with the statement of duties required by paragraph seven of subdivision d of this section. One of the board members shall be elected by the other members to serve as chairperson. The chairperson shall use no title other than chair or chairperson of the community board and the other members shall use no title other than member of the community board or community board member, except that any member who is elected or appointed to an official position on the board, including but not limited to, vice-chairperson, secretary, treasurer, or chair of a committee or subcommittee of the board shall be allowed to use such title when acting in such capacity. The department of investigation shall investigate any allegations concerning the misuse of a community board title and shall report its findings to the mayor, the council and the borough president in whose borough the community board is located. The knowing and intentional use of an improper title by any member of a community board shall be punishable by a civil penalty of not less than one hundred dollars nor more than two hundred and fifty dollars for every infraction thereof. The chairperson of the community board or his or her representative shall be a member of the district service cabinet. A member of a community board shall be eligible for appointment to the position of district manager provided that such member does not participate in any manner in the selection of the district manager by the board and resigns as a member of any board prior to or upon assuming the duties of district manager.

h. Each community board may employ such other assistants as it may require within budgeted appropriations for such purposes or funds contributed for such purpose. Any funds appropriated by the city to enable the community boards to conduct their duties and responsibilities pursuant to this chapter shall be allocated directly to each board subject to the terms and conditions of such appropriations. The basic budget appropriation for the personal service and other than personal service needs of each community board shall not include rent. Within reasonable limits appropriate to each board's location, rent shall be separately appropriated for the board.

i. Except during the months of July and August, each community board shall meet at least once each month within the community district and conduct at least one public hearing each month. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a community board shall be required to meet for purposes of reviewing the scope or design of a capital project located within such community board's district when such scope or design is presented to the community board. Such review shall be completed within thirty days after receipt of such scope or design. Each board shall give adequate public notice of its meetings and hearings and shall make such meetings and hearings available for broadcasting and cablecasting. At each public meeting, the board shall set aside time to hear from the public. The borough president shall provide each board with a meeting place if requested by the board.

j. Each community board may create committees on matters relating to its duties and responsibilities. It may include on such committees persons with a residence or significant interest in the community who are not members of the board, but each such committee shall have a member of the board as its chairperson. Except as otherwise provided by law, meetings of such committees shall be open to the public.

Section 3. The New York City Charter is amended by adding a new section 2802 of Chapter 70 to read as follows:

§ 2802. Regional planning services. There shall be established regional planning services for community boards to jointly access urban planners and or other technical experts to assist in planning for the growth, improvement and development of community districts; reviewing and making recommendations regarding applications and proposals for the use, development or improvement of land located within community districts; preparing environmental analyses required by law; and performing such other planning functions as are assigned to the community boards by this charter or other law. Such services provided by planners and or other technical experts to the community boards shall be distinct and separate from those offered by planning offices under the authority of the borough presidents or the department of city planning.

Section 4. Amendments to section 2800 of this local law shall take effect immediately following enactment, with the exception of subsection f which shall take effect during the next fiscal year. The newly created section 2802 shall take effect during the next fiscal year.



The City of New York

# Manhattan Community Board 1

Catherine McVay Hughes CHAIRPERSON | Noah Pfefferblit DISTRICT MANAGER

## New York City Council Committee on Government Operations

### Hearing on Best Practices for Recruitment and Appointments to Community Boards

#### Testimony by Catherine McVay Hughes, Chair Manhattan Community Board 1

Monday, March 3, 2014  
City Hall, 1:00 P.M.

Good afternoon, Chairman Kallos and members of the Government Operations Committee. Thank you for convening this hearing. This is an excellent time to consider best practices for recruitment and appointments to community boards. As you pointed out in your invitation, we have four new Borough Presidents and 21 new City Council Members, who will be making appointments to community boards along with their previously elected colleagues during their first months in office.

The previous Manhattan Borough President, Scott Stringer, who is now the New York City Comptroller, made important reforms to the community board appointment process, including the formation of an independent screening committee to oversee the process. There have been improvements to the process made by Borough Presidents in other boroughs as well.

Our new Manhattan Borough President, Gale Brewer, has announced the formation of a screening committee that will evaluate applicants as well as current board members. Borough President Brewer has also made available useful demographic information about board members and applicants, which will surely help guide this year's appointment process in a constructive way. We appreciate that Borough President Brewer's office has made this data available to community boards in a clear visual format, something that has not been done before.

We welcome this hearing as an opportunity to share information about the various improvements in the community board appointment process that have been made throughout the city and look at what other potential improvements and reforms are possible. At our Executive Committee meeting on February 19, 2014, CB1, held a discussion on this topic and decided to submit recommendations for your consideration.

We support efforts to analyze the composition of community boards and try to make them as representative as possible and at least as diverse as the districts served by them. Specifically our members recommended that special attention be paid to the following:

- Diversity of Background – Diversity should include key demographic characteristics such as age, gender, type of housing and significant demographic groups such as parents of young children. The composition of the board should be representative of the geographic

area of the district so that all neighborhoods are represented. This is especially important on a community board such as ours where we have committees covering neighborhoods including Battery Park City, the Financial District, the Seaport/Civic Center and Tribeca.

- **Background and Expertise** - There are numerous professions and backgrounds that are helpful to community boards including attorneys, urban planners, small business owners, architects, teachers and educators and numerous others. An effort should be made to recruit people from as many of these and others as possible.
- **Interpersonal Skills** – Interviews should be designed to identify applicants who perform well in a group setting since community boards operate by committee. People who write well are also of great value since community boards communicate by resolutions, testimony and other written documents.
- **Online applications** – Many people with the backgrounds that are most needed by community boards are very busy. Enabling people to apply online would make it less time-consuming for them to apply
- **New Residents** – The residential population of Community Board 1 has experienced very rapid growth in recent years, making it the fastest growing community board in the city. We have many new residents and it is important that their needs and concerns be reflected in our decision-making process. A special effort should be made to reach them.
- **Merit** – While diversity is an essential goal, it is also important that community board members are conscientious about attending meetings and contributing to the board in significant ways. No matter what their backgrounds are, people are only valuable to the extent that they actually participate. Everyone appointed to a community board must fully understand the time and other commitments and be willing and able to meet them. In this regard, it is important that attendance of reapplying members at both full board and committee meetings be carefully assessed.
- **Term Limits** – Consideration should be given to whether term limits should be established after a certain number of years of service on the board and whether the potential gain in new energy would outweigh the loss of valuable expertise.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify this afternoon. We appreciate your interest in identifying and sharing information about best practices for recruitment and appointments to community boards. We hope this discussion will continue and produce reforms and improvements that will lead to stronger and more effective community boards.

**Testimony of Leticia Remauro, Chairman of Community Board 1 – Staten Island  
Before the Committee on Governmental Operations Hearing on Community Boards  
Monday, March 3, 2014 1pm  
New York City Council Chambers**

Good afternoon Chairman Kallos and esteemed members of the Governmental Operations Committee. My name is Leticia Remauro and I am the Chair of Community Board 1 in Staten Island.

Community Boards are the first level of government for the people of New York. Their powers are derived from the New York City Charter. While Community Boards can act on a variety of issues relating to the community, their main responsibilities are to advise city agencies on matters of the budget and land use.

The members of the Community Board are government officers, sworn to represent the people of their district in these and other matters.

Of late, there has been much focus on Community Boards. There have been some elected officials who would like to see Community Boards disappear and others who would like to see their powers grown. Like them or not, Community Boards are mandated by the charter so the best way to deal with them is to simply let them do their job.

As a Chairman of a Community Board I can tell you that our greatest frustration comes when having to deal with our sister agencies regarding budget matters.

Each year we hold public hearings to better understand the needs of our community. We then take that information back and assess the cost for each project request. The requests are sent to each agency with justification about why the project is important. We then anxiously await a response from our sister agencies, hoping that they will understand our request and support it.

Unfortunately, most years we receive one of several drop down answers: Sponsor group should apply to agency through its funding process; or Further study by the agency of this request is needed or Agency funds are insufficient for this project or We recommend this project be brought to

the attention of your elected officials, i.e. Borough President and/or City Council member.

The process is terribly frustrating in that it seems as though we are on a hamster wheel, spinning around and around without getting anywhere.

I understand that the question on the table is how to make participation in Community Board better – so in a nutshell here is my simple advice:

- Borough Presidents should make sure that all Community Board positions remain filled;
- Appointments should be made based on location within the community as well as desire to participate in the process – that will ensure that a wide range of neighborhoods are represented on the board;
- City Council members should work with Community Boards on Budget and Land Use items;
- City Agencies should listen to the requests made by Community Boards on budget items before they create their own budgets;
- District Service Cabinet meetings should be held regularly;
- Community Board members should be treated with the same respect and dignity as any other city official;

Though we are volunteers, we work very hard on behalf of our community. Each of us serves because we truly believe that we can make a difference. Working together with our City Council members, our Borough Presidents, Our Mayor, Public Advocate, Comptroller and sister agencies, we can ensure that the voice of the citizens in every neighborhood of New York City is heard loud and clear in City Hall.

Respectfully submitted by: Leticia Remauro, Chairman of CB1 Staten Island  
1 Edgewater Plaza, Room 217, Staten Island, New York 10305  
718-981-6900 C 718 354-6032 sicb1chair@aol.com





CITY OF NEW YORK  
**Community Board No. 2**

350 JAY STREET - 8TH FL.  
BROOKLYN, N.Y. 11201

(718) 596-5410 FAX (718) 852-1461  
cb2k@nyc.rr.com

ERIC ADAMS  
*Borough President*

SHIRLEY A. M<sup>o</sup>RAE  
*Chairperson*

ROBERT PERRIS  
*District Manager*

**Testimony to the New York City Council  
Committee on Government Operations  
March 3, 2014**

Council Member Kallos, members of the committee and guests, good afternoon.

My name is Robert Perris and I am the district manager for Brooklyn Community Board 2 (CB2). I am here today to testify on behalf of CB2 Chairperson Shirley A. M<sup>o</sup>Rae and myself with regard to the selection of effective community board members.

I have a long association with community boards, going back over 20 years. Before becoming a district manager, I worked for the two previous Brooklyn borough presidents, Marty Markowitz and Howard Golden, in part as a liaison to Community Board 2. Prior to that, I served on Brooklyn Community Board 1 and chaired the Waterfront Committee there, which I originally joined as a member of the public.

Similarly, Ms. M<sup>o</sup>Rae joined a committee of Community Board 2 as a public member before being appointed to the board and eventually elected chairperson. Based on our personal experiences, and on our observations as community board chair and district manager, we believe committee membership prior to full board appointment is an excellent means for identifying applicants with high potential.

Community members who participate on committees have the opportunity to demonstrate that they have the discipline to make it to meetings and can contribute to discussion in a meaningful way. Their committee membership also gives them a chance to gauge the strength of their interest, expand their knowledge of issues in the district, and develop an understanding of how

community boards operate, from parliamentary procedure to the City budget process and beyond.

As Borough Hall staff, I had the opportunity to read applications from, and speak with, prospective community board members. It is difficult to assess intangible qualities like the ability to think critically and objectively from questionnaires and interviews. Even applicants with a strong academic or professional background, or a history of other prominent civic engagement, can turn out to be ineffective members of a community board. Prior participation on a committee gives the borough presidents and their staff valuable insight into how a potential member might perform. Perhaps it should be a requirement.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I have provided copies of my testimony.



**Ruben Diaz, Jr.**  
*Borough President*

## **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD No. 10**

*3165 East Tremont Avenue • Bronx, New York 10461*

*Tel: (718) 892-1161 • Fax: (718) 863-6860*

*E-mail: [bx10@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:bx10@cb.nyc.gov) • [www.bronxmall.com](http://www.bronxmall.com)*

*Website: [www.nyc.gov/bronxcb10](http://www.nyc.gov/bronxcb10)*



**John Marano**  
*Chairperson*

**Kenneth Kearns**  
*District Manager*

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #10  
STATEMENT BEFORE THE  
CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
MARCH 3, 2014

Hon. Chairman Kallos and members of the City Council Committee on Government Operations, allow me to introduce myself, my name is Kenneth Kearns and I am the District Manager of Bronx Community Board #10. I would like to confine my remarks to a few discreet points, regarding Community Boards:

### 1. Budgets

The Boards have not received a real increase in their budgets for over twenty years. Under the previous two City administrations, our operating budgets saw no meaningful increase at all. The only reason we are here today, is through the input of the City Council. We are grateful to the Council for its support over the years.

Our budgets have not increased with the rate of inflation or the cost of supplies/services. Our budgets, certainly did not increase as compared to the line item agencies, who had received increases in good fiscal times, while we saw nothing. We have a little over \$200,000.00 to efficiently operate a small City Hall to serve a constituency of over 120,000 people.

All of our work is done by dedicated volunteers, who give of their time and talents for free. We are assisted by a small professional staff of City employees. In addition to receiving barely adequate funding in the first place, we actually lost funding for two key positions: a Planner and Youth Services Coordinator.

We are the smallest unit of City government, which performs an incredible amount of work on a very small budget. If we are expected to function at a high level, we need to be funded properly.

### 2. Community Board Functions

According to the City Charter, the Community Boards are responsible for providing constituent services; advisory opinions on the provision of the City's capital and expense budgets, and on land use matters.

- a. With respect to constituent services, our very small staff, assisted by our volunteer Board members, resolve hundreds of complaints for people by interacting with the senior

staff at the line agencies to ensure that people within the Board areas receive their proper share of services. To further this end, we operate the monthly District Service meetings, a forum where agencies meet once a month to resolve issues.

- b. Through our advisory function on land use matters, we are frequently asked to decide on complicated variance and other zoning issues, which takes hundreds of staff and Board member hours to review and to reach determinations, that are consistent with the City's Zoning Resolution and the goal of building sustainable communities.
- c. The Boards' are also responsible for proving advisory opinions on how the City's capital and expense budgets are to be developed and spent. Here again, our hard working staff and Board members meet with the nongovernmental organizations and civic groups at two public hearings and throughout the year, to discuss these budget priorities.

In closing, the Community Board structure has more up to date, real time knowledge about community characteristics and conditions, than the line agencies, and we should be given the resources, so that we can identify the existence of conditions and be proactive in drafting responses to problems. This will allow for a speedier resolution to any concern. It is our hope that the Mayor and his administration recognize the importance of the Boards and engage us for the betterment of our City.

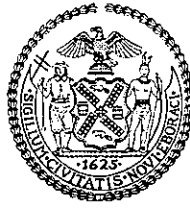
Thank you for your interest.



Kenneth Kearns  
District Manager  
Bronx Community Board #10

SANDRO SHERROD  
CHAIR

VICE-CHAIRS  
RICHARD EGGERS, 1<sup>ST</sup>  
CLAUDE WINFIELD, 2<sup>ND</sup>  
CHARLES BUCHWALD  
ELLEN IMBIMBO  
LETTY SIMON



DAN MINER  
DISTRICT MANAGER

BEATRICE DISMAN  
TREASURER

AARON HUMPHREY  
SECRETARY

THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD SIX  
866 UNITED NATIONS PLAZA, SUITE 308  
NEW YORK, NY 10017

**TESTIMONY BY SANDRO SHERROD, CHAIR  
OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD SIX BEFORE THE  
CITY COUNCIL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE  
MARCH 3, 2014**

Good afternoon Chair Kallos and members of the council. My name is Sandro Sherrod and I have the privilege of being chair of Manhattan Community Board Six. I am here today to convey my opinions, based on my years of service as a board member, and chairperson.

As I am sure you are aware the appointment process to community boards is in the midst of a renaissance that began a few years ago. I believe today many more people across the city have an idea of how this local charter mandated part of our city government, can improve the quality of life and provide expert local guidance on land use matters.

Independently the Borough Presidents have allowed for more modern methods of application to their individual boards and transparency of the business of our boards. Community Boards function best, like most democratic bodies, when they accurately represent the breadth of the district composition. I believe it is crucial for such bodies to adapt, when needed, to societal changes in methods of communication and dissemination of information.

I applaud the existing efforts to bring the application process into the modern age with expanded outreach, online application submittals, presentation of geographic and demographic data of the board districts and its members however this should be something that our city government should better support.

Because of advances in technology, today many people have become accustomed to instantaneous and easy access to information. While our city government has made significant advances in how we access our city services over the last few years, with tools like 311; these tools are not enough.

This is not the fault of any single unit, but of the system as a whole. We under fund and under support our community boards and their respective support structures. As such the experience one has- interacting with the community board whose district one lives in- can be entirely different from where one works. This disjointed approach ultimately under serves all.

A more consistent support mechanism for members to apply and for others to keep aware of local issues in their districts would better support the mission of the community boards and allow for them to be better represent their communities.

I would recommend that you consider creating a portal that would serve as a single point where an engaged citizen would be able to follow the ongoing issues of interest to her across multiple districts and provide a single entry point for her when she wishes to apply to a community board. This approach would allow for individual borough presidents and boards to continue to innovate individually on their own yet still allow for a more consistent platform for interaction.

I thank the committee for the opportunity to speak before you today.



# Community Board No. 5

Borough of Queens  
Ridgewood, Maspeth, Middle Village and Glendale  
61-23 Myrtle Avenue • Glendale, NY 11385  
(718) 366-1834  
Fax (718) 417-5799  
E-mail: qnscb5@nyc.rr.com



Vincent Arcuri, Jr.  
Chairperson

**FOR THE RECORD**

Gary Giordano  
District Manager

March 3, 2014

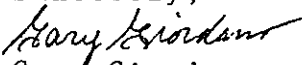
Dear Hon. Benjamin J. Kallos and Members of the Government  
Operations Committee of the N.Y. City Council:

During the more than 20 years I have worked as District Manager, the overwhelming number of newly appointed Community Board members have had some experience in positive civic or community work prior to their appointment by the Borough President. Since a community board is supposed to be non-political, members having a track record in volunteering for the public good is vital for an effective and objective community board.

At their most effective, community board members serve as the eyes and ears of their communities, and use their valuable time and talents to stabilize and improve the neighborhoods which comprise the community district for the greater good. Therefore, it is very important that prospective board members have had a good history of volunteer efforts.

Community Board 5, Queens has among our members exemplary residents who have a wide range of talents and valuable life experiences, including engineers, teachers, attorneys, utility workers, social service workers, individuals with financial expertise and a few business owners who live in the community. This type of employment and life experience diversity has been of great benefit in planning and in formulating thoughtful recommendations related to zoning, transportation and other important matters.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding community board membership.

Sincerely,  
  
Gary Giordano  
District Manager

## ON BOARD

Boy Scout Council of NYC  
Center for Family Life – Sunset Park  
Children’s Aid Society  
Community Boards 3, 6, 7, 9, 10 and  
12M  
Community Education Council Dist. 6  
Community League of the Heights  
Community Services with-  
Faith, Hope & Charity  
Council for Unity  
Fresh Youth Initiatives  
Generation Citizen  
Girl Scout Council of NYC  
Global Kids  
Harlem RBI  
Island Voices  
Inwood Community Services  
Police Athletic League, Inc.  
Queens Community House  
Uptown Dreamers  
San Francisco Youth Commission  
Staff and Parents of PS 8  
The Coalition for Asian  
Children and Families  
The Humanist Party  
The Resiliency Project  
The Rockaways Youth Task Force  
The Youth Development Institute  
UFT – Manhattan (Parent Training)  
United Neighborhood Houses  
WAHI and Inwood Youth Council  
World Vision

Thank You

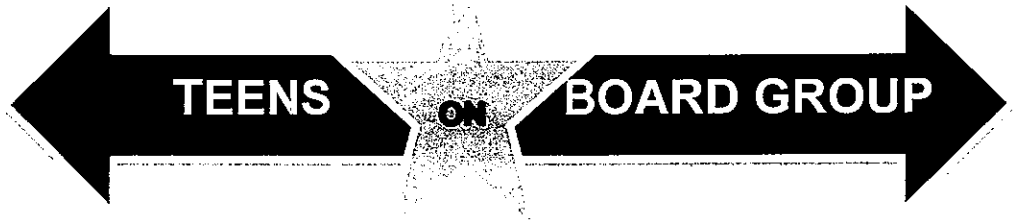
*Expedido Por:*

Sarah Andes

sandes@generationcitizen.org

Fe Florimón fe.florimon@jjay.cuny.edu

Al Kurland alkurland@palnyc.org



February 28, 2014

Hon. Ben Kallos, Government Operations Chair

250 Broadway, Suite 1762

New York, New York 10007

RE: Request to Testify at Hearing

March 3, 2014 at 1pm

Hon. Kallos:

On behalf of the Teens on Board Group, we request an opportunity to testify at the Government Operations hearing on Monday, March 3rd at 1pm. We are an informal coalition of youth agency and civic agency directors ( see list on left of page) who have been volunteering on a campaign to Amend NY State Public Officers Law, which if passed would reduce the age of eligibility for appointment to New York City Community Board to age 16. This bill has been introduced to both chambers, and is currently co sponsored by 24 members of the State Assembly.

Attached is a packet which summarizes our campaign to date, and includes a few letters of support.

Please feel free to contact Al Kurland at  
[alkurland@palnyc.org](mailto:alkurland@palnyc.org) or at (646) 577-6534

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Al Kurland'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

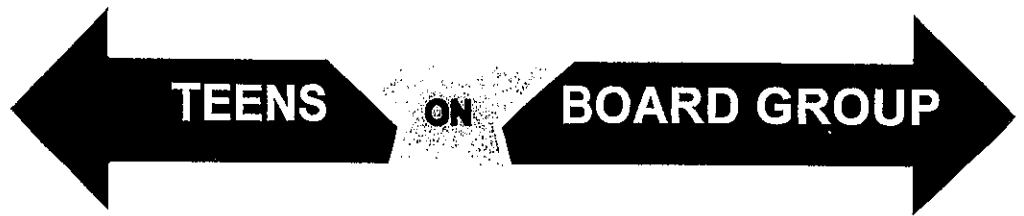


## SUPPORTERS

Boy Scout Council of NYC  
Center for Family Life – Sunset Park  
Children’s Aid Society  
Community Boards 3, 6, 7,9 10 and  
12M  
Community Education Council Dist. 6  
Community League of the Heights  
Community Services with FHC, Inc  
Council for Unity  
Fresh Youth Initiatives  
Generation Citizen  
Girl Scout Council of NYC  
Global Kids  
Harlem RBI  
Inwood Community Services  
Island Voices  
Police Athletic League, Inc.  
Queens Community House  
San Francisco Youth Commission  
Staff and Parents of PS 8  
The Coalition for Asian  
Children&Families  
The Humanist Party  
The Resiliency Project  
The Rockaways Youth Task Force  
The Youth Development Institute  
UFT – Manhattan (Parent Training)  
United Neighborhood Houses  
Uptown Dreamers  
WAHI and Inwood Youth Council  
World Vision

Thank You

*Issue By:*  
Sarah Andes  
sandes@generationcitizen.org  
Fe Florimón fe.florimon@jjay.cuny.edu  
Al Kurland alkurland@palnyc.org



TO OUR ESTEEMED PUBLIC OFFICIALS IN THE  
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY AND STATE SENATE:

**WE NEED YOU**

**TO AMEND THE PUBLIC OFFICERS LAW !**  
**( A02448 /Rozic and S04142/Lanza)**

This would allow ( but not mandate) the appointment of fully vetted 16 and 17 years olds to NYC Community Boards.

This would promote an inter-generational partnership between seasoned community board members and the brightest and most committed amongst young civic stakeholders.

This would bring NYC on board with best civic practices for youth as demonstrated in Philadelphia, San Francisco and scores of other cities for almost two decades.

On behalf of the thousands who provided signatures on petitions, and the leaders of civic and youth agencies who have joined us. Let's Get Teens on Board!!!!

**GET ON BOARD!!! -- Provide a Memo of Support**

**Ask your State Representative to sign on the bill.**



The Children's Aid Society

[www.childrensaidsociety.org](http://www.childrensaidsociety.org)

## Memorandum of Support

September 4, 2013

**TO: All members of the NY State Assembly and All members of the NY State Senate**  
**RE: Amend the NY State Public Officers Law (A 02448-Rozic; S04142-Lanza) which allows the appointment of eligible 16 and 17 year olds to New York City Community Boards**

The Children's Aid Society is proud to join in partnership with 40 New York City youth services agencies and youth professionals by offering our enthusiastic support for A2448/S4142 which amends the Public Officers Law, to allow for the appointment of eligible 16 and 17 year olds to NYC Community Boards. Community boards are one of the various entry points for New Yorkers to become active civic participants. The Children's Aid Society believes that passage of this amendment will provide an opportunity for youth to be engaged in critical community issues that affect them as well as help youth to build long lasting and positive connections to their communities.

The Children's Aid Society, founded in 1853, helps children in poverty to succeed and thrive. As one of the nation's largest and oldest anti-poverty organizations, we provide comprehensive supports to 70,000 children and their families in targeted high-needs New York City neighborhoods each year. Citywide we offer more than 100 programs in 45 sites with services that span cradle through college graduation.

At The Children's Aid Society, we have long believed and put into practice programs that build ladders to adulthood for youth, providing them with a graduated series of experiences that encourage them to take initiative and make healthy choices. Our developmental model promotes their successes and acknowledges their achievements and positive actions. Through our training and mentoring programs, we have provided a roadmap for our youth to become strong advocates for themselves, their communities and for our agency.

As has been shown in other cities across the United States, including the Philadelphia and San Francisco Youth Commissions, when given the chance, youth will provide unique perspectives and innovative proposals leading to a stronger and more inclusive civic engagement process. Our hope is that youth in New York City will be afforded the same opportunity.

For these reasons, we urge you to support such an important piece of legislation for the future of New York City and its young people.

Sincerely,

Richard R. Buery, Jr.  
President & CEO



Watch Live

Bill No.: A02448

Search

[Summary](#)[Actions](#)[Votes](#)[Memo](#)[Text \(Printer friendly text\)](#)**A02448 Summary:**

BILL NO A02448

SAME AS SAME AS S04142

SPONSOR Rozic (MS)

COSPNSR Kavanagh, Wright, Camara, Benedetto, Rodriguez, Rosenthal, Ortiz, Quart, Mosley, Rosa, Crespo, Pichardo, Titus, Goldfeder, Hevesi, Davila, Simanowitz, Sepulveda, Brook-Krasny, Titone, Aubry, Brennan, Abbate, Cusick

MLTSPNSR Gottfried, Heastie

Amd S3, Pub Off L; amd S2800, NYC Chart

Provides that members of community boards in NYC need only be 16 years of age to be appointed to such board.

[Go to top](#)[Back](#)[Bill Search & Legislative Information Home](#)[Assembly Home](#)[Bill / Floor Vote Search](#)[New York State Laws](#)[Legislative Calendar](#)[Public Hearing Schedules](#)[Assembly Calendars](#)[Assembly Committee](#)[Agenda](#)

Page display time = 0.0792 sec

**Bill S4142-2013**

**Provides that members of N.Y. city community boards need only be 16 years of age to be appointed to such board**

Provides that members of community boards in NYC need only be 16 years of age to be appointed to such board.

**Details**

- Same as: A2448-2013
- Versions S4142-2013
- Sponsor:LANZA
- Multi-sponsor(s): None
- Co-sponsor(s): ESPAILLAT, PERKINS, SANDERS
- Committee: INVESTIGATIONS AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
- Law Section: Public Officers Law
- Law: Amd §3, Pub Off L; amd §2800, NYC Chart

PROPOSED CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR PASSAGE OF  
THE AMENDMENT TO NEW YORK STATE PUBLIC OFFICER LAW

WHEREAS, many 16 and 17 year olds contribute to the NYC Treasury with the payment of income and/or sales taxes, but have little civic voice on how these revenues are spent, and

WHEREAS, 16 and 17 years olds can be arrested, tried, and locked up as adults, therefore legally accountable as adults for breaking the law, but with no legal venue for advisement on making the law, and

WHEREAS, 16 and 17 year olds, through service and internships make valuable civic contributions to community based agencies, not for profit agencies and municipal bodies such as serving on advisory boards to Borough Presidents, and

WHEREAS, 16 AND 17 year olds make further civic contributions to the well being of our communities and our city by serving as counselors in day camps and after school programs, jurists on peer courts and youth courts, and peacemakers in conflict resolution and mediation programs, and

WHEREAS, the proposed model of having 16 and 17 year olds serve as fully vetted advisors to municipal government has been demonstrated in consistent and powerful ways since the 1990's, such as seen in the the Philadelphia and San Francisco Youth Commissions, and

WHEREAS, New York City Community Boards are blessed with dedicated and able volunteers who would serve as role models and mentors to emerging young civic actors, helping to foster and inter-generational partnership for best practices in local advisement and creation of sound municipal polices, ...

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the NYC Council endorses, via a Resolution of Support, passage of said Amendment to the NY State Public Officer Law.

## What executives in Youth Services agencies and civic agencies have to say.....

" We believe in a team approach to advising city governments and that members of our community boards should accurately represent all citizens in our city on an equal and fair basis." –

Richard A. Berlin, Executive Director: HARLEM RBI

" Allowing high school-age young people to serve on NYC Community Boards would allow youth the opportunity to actively participate in debates which unavoidably affect them, their classmates, and their communities." – Sarah Andes, NYC Program Manager: GENERATION CITIZEN

"This bill will foster youth leadership, encourage youth engagement, and provide community boards with valuable new perspectives and a larger pool of dedicated volunteers." –

Brooke Richie-Babbage: RESILIENCY ADVOCACY PROJECT

" We believe that the amendment would positively impact the NYC Community by providing much needed leadership opportunities for young people to participate in the democratic process, and , in turn, help our community boards generated new ideas and perspectives."

Evie Hantzopoulos, Executive Director: GLOBAL KIDS

" The San Francisco Youth Commission ([www.sfgov.org/yc](http://www.sfgov.org/yc)) enthusiastically supports amending the NY State Public Officer Law to allow 16 and 17 year olds to serve on community boards and commissions. Our 17 person body, made up of youth ages 12-23, is living proof of the efficacy of youth empowerment and engagement." – Mia Shackelford, Chairwoman: SAN FRANCISCO YOUTH COMMISSION

" incorporation of teen leadership and voice has long been one of the threads that have enriched both our organization and community. Opening doors to their commitment and talent for participation in city government at a local level validates this tradition, and makes possible an inter-generational partnership which will move our programs and our dreams forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." –

Yvonne Stennett, Executive Director: COMMUNITY LEAGUE OF THE HEIGHTS

" By allowing for the appointment of the most dedicated and able from amongst these civic volunteers, we would be following in the footsteps of other cities, such as Philadelphia and San Francisco, which have supported similar models for almost two decades." –

Estaban "Steve" Ramos, Executive Director: FRESH YOUTH INITIATIVES

" Inclusion of civic stakeholders, specifically at Community Boards , would enable teens to adopt mentors, guiding them in the process of collaborative decision making, assessment of community needs, and as advocates for policies beneficial to youth and community."

Robert J. DeSena, Founder and President: COUNCIL FOR UNITY

More voices from executives.....

“ Adding 16 and 17 year olds to Community Boards will bring new ideas, added energy, and a new perspective to public policy making. This is also a great opportunity for a young man or woman interested in a public sector career to learn how city government works.” -

Ethan Draddy, Scout Executive & CEO: BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA, NYC COUNCIL

“We appreciate Senator Lanza and Assemblymember Rozic’s efforts in proposing this amendment on behalf of today’s youth and tomorrow’s leaders. We endorse this amendment, and if adopted, we will encourage and support young women who serve on their community boards.” -

Barbara Murphy-Warrington, CEO: GIRL SCOUTS OF GREATER NEW YORK

“ The Children’s Aid Society believes that the passage of this amendment will provide an opportunity to be engaged in critical community issues that affect them as well as help youth to build long lasting and positive connections to their communities.” -

Richard R. Buery, Jr. , President & CEO: CHILDREN’S AID SOCIETY

“ At a time of high apathy among the general population, exposing the next generation of leaders to community boards will promote their understanding of the intersection between government and and the lives of themselves, their families and their communities.”

Annetta Seecharran, Director of Policy: UNITED NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSES

“ In a society that values democratic citizenship, it is critical that communities provide spaces and opportunities for future leaders to practice citizenship.”

Sarah Zeller-Berkman, PhD. Director: YOUTH DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Memorandum of Support

Sarah Andes  
Generation Citizen  
175 Varick Street  
New York, NY 10014

July 1, 2013

To: Members of New York State Senate, Members of New York State Assembly

Re: Amend the New York State Public Officers Law (A02448 - Rozic, S04.142 - Lanza) to allow appointment of 16 and 17 year olds to NYC Community Boards

Generation Citizen believes that our democracy operates at its best when a diverse group of people participates. Governments are necessarily responsible for ensuring the welfare of all of their citizens. But in order to be truly responsive and relevant to citizens' needs, governments must know what those constituents' needs are.

People have myriad opportunities to interact with their government and to share their opinions on important issues. Unfortunately, young peoples' voices are often discounted. Youth cannot vote, rarely have funds to contribute to campaigns, and hold different perspectives and priorities than those often receiving the most attention from the media and other vocal adult advocates.

Allowing high school-age young people to serve on New York City community boards would allow youth the opportunity to actively participate in the debates which unavoidably affect them, their classmates, and their communities. I believe that young people are up to the task and would contribute valuable ideas and insights to their community boards.

Generation Citizen works with middle and high school students in Boston, Providence, San Francisco, and New York. Our students are charged with identifying and then creating plans to affect local community problems. I've heard students raise profound concerns, unintentionally ignored by their elders: safety issues around popular bus stops, drug abuse in individual campuses and neighborhoods, lack of job training or college preparation support. Time and again, these students go beyond complaining about these problems to advocate for meaningful solutions. They have initiated collaborations with police precincts, developed curricular materials for educational workshops, proposed and effectively lobbied for the creation of community centers and changes to current legislative policies. But they need the opportunity, and support, to offer these ideas.

Right now, we are preventing ourselves from hearing and learning from this unique demographic. Furthermore, we are squandering the opportunity to involve young people in participating more fully in civic life, thus wasting the chance to engage and train future leaders. Amending the Public Officers Law would strengthen our democracy in the present and for the future.

Best,



Sarah Andes  
New York City Program Manager, Generation Citizen  
sandes@generationcitizen.org • (936) 419-9036



June 19, 2013

To: Members of the New York State Assembly,  
Members of the New York State Senate

Re: Amendment to New York State Public Officers Law  
(A02448 – Rozic; S04142 – Lanza)  
Appointment of 16 and 17 year olds to NYC Community Boards

Global Kids, Inc. (GK) supports amending New York State's Public Officer's Law to allow 16 and 17 year olds to serve on community boards and commissions. As the premier nonprofit educational organization for global learning and youth development, our mission is to inspire underserved youth to achieve academic excellence, self-actualization and global competency, and empower them to take action on critical issues facing their communities and our world.

Our youth participants, also known as Global Kids Leaders, are the guiding force behind the organization's mission and management. GK Leaders were among our founding Board members and continue to play a key role on the Board, with two students and at least one alumna serving each year. This policy has been in place for over 21 years and student participation remains crucial to our organizational strategy and programming, helping us to understand the needs of the youth we serve.

GK Leaders assume leadership roles in programmatic activities as well: they co-facilitate trainings for peers and educators; develop and lead our Annual Youth Conference; create and disseminate substantive media that reach thousands of others online; and present at conferences and meetings with policymakers. Through these programs, we have observed that youth develop leadership skills that positively impact their community—95% of GK alumni agreed to have increased their civic and community engagement involvement through their participation in Global Kids, and 91% agreed that they could make change in their community. We believe that the amendment will positively impact the NYC community by providing much-needed leadership opportunities for young people to participate in the democratic process and, in turn, help our community boards generate new ideas and perspectives.

We applaud Senator Lanza and Assembly Member Rozic's efforts in proposing this amendment. Global Kids supports this amendment and, if it is passed, we will encourage Global Kids student leaders to serve on their community boards.

Sincerely,

Evie Hantzopoulos  
Executive Director  
Global Kids





## 2012-2013 YOUTH COMMISSION

COMMISSIONER MIA SHACKELFORD  
CHAIR

Appointed by Mayor Edwin M. Lee

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### STAFF

ALLEN LU, Coordinator of Community Outreach  
and Civic Engagement

ADELE CARPENTER, Coordinator of Youth  
Development and Administration

PHIMY TRUONG, Director

City Hall  
1 Dr. Carlton B Goodlett Place, Rm. 345  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
415/554-6446 (phone)  
415/554-6140 (fax)  
[www.sfgov.org/youth\\_commission](http://www.sfgov.org/youth_commission)

## Memorandum of Support

May 20, 2013

To: Members of the New York State Senate,  
Members of the New York State Assembly

Re: Amend the New York State Public Officers Law  
(A02448- Rozic;S04142-Lanza) Would allow for  
appointment of 16 and 17 year olds to New York City  
Community Boards.

The San Francisco Youth Commission ([www.sfgov.org/vc](http://www.sfgov.org/vc)) enthusiastically supports amending New York State's Public Officer's Law to allow 16 and 17 year olds to serve on community boards and commissions. Our 17 person body, made up of youth ages 12-23, is living proof of the efficacy of youth empowerment and engagement. Since the Youth Commission was created as a chartered city commission in 1995, we have been instrumental in advising the local government on how to best serve young people.

Some of our policy accomplishments:

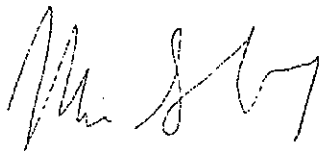
- Focusing the city's attention on the needs of underserved transitionally aged youth (16-24), leading to the creation of TAY SF
- Successfully advocating for a pilot program providing free transit passes for low and moderate income youth
- Bringing significant press and community attention to an unused recreation yard in Juvenile Hall, as well as the general need to provide outdoor exercise to youth detained there
- Working with community members to successfully urge the San Francisco Police Dept. not to use tasers

Not all youth will feel inspired to serve their community on a board or commission, but those who would like to dedicate their time should be allowed to apply. From our personal experience, we have seen the positive impact youth empowerment creates both within the government and within the youth themselves. Young people offer a valuable perspective and new energy to policymakers. They also benefit from learning about how civic processes work, how to present their opinions persuasively, and how to work with their peers and community members of diverse perspectives.

Policymakers benefit from advisory bodies that truly reflect the constituency which they are serving. Although youth may be under voting age, their insight is a valuable resource for legislators and government officials. The purpose of an advisory body or commission is to represent the larger community, which may not have the access or capacity to voice their needs. If there are youth attempting to bridge that gap, they should be considered. The diversity of perspectives and experiences reflected in government can only serve to increase the responsiveness of the policies created.

The work of the San Francisco Youth Commission provides over 15 years of evidence of the importance of youth voice in government, and we strongly urge you to take proven examples such as our organization into consideration when making your decision on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mia Shackelford', written in a cursive style.

Mia Shackelford, Chairwoman, San Francisco Youth Commission  
& the 2012-2013 San Francisco Youth Commission



**POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE, Inc.**

34 1/2 East 12th Street New York, N.Y. 10003

**AL KURLAND**  
CONTRACTS & COMPLIANCE MANAGER

(212) 477-9450 EXT. 360 (P)  
[ALKURLAND@PALNYC.ORG](mailto:ALKURLAND@PALNYC.ORG)

(212) 254-1857 (F)  
[WWW.PALNYC.ORG](http://WWW.PALNYC.ORG)

March 3, 2014

TO: All members of NYC Council  
Government Operations Committee

RE: Request for City Council Resolution in Support of  
Amendment to NY State Public Officer Law

To Our Honored City Council Members:

This testimony is being given in support of a youth initiated campaign to extend access to city Government on a community level - specifically the right of fully vetted 16 and 17 year olds to be appointed to NYC Community Boards. As per requirements in NY State, this would require State level legislative action - amending the NY State Public Officer Law. Passage of this amendment would allow, but not mandate, the appointment of up to two 16 or 17 year olds at each Community Board.

We request that the Government Operations Committee for the NYC Council consider drafting a Memo Of Support for passage of this legislation, and recommend passage by the full Council. Since the launch of this campaign, ( passed at a High School Congress, sponsored jointly by the PAL and the Future Voters of America), the campaign has brought on support of almost 40 youth and civic action organizations, and has recently garnered the support of 24 co-sponsors in the NY State Assembly. ( A02448-Rozic). It is also supported by lead sponsor Andrew Lanza in the State Senate ( S04142).

I have attached a campaign packet which summarizes many points in support of this initiative for your review. I would just add that I have been honored and inspired for 30 years through my work with youth organizations, and especially through the support and leadership offered by teen civic actors. Beginning in 1984, this included a community campaign to improve a park besieged by the drug trade ( Edgecombe Park in Washington Heights) in which teens not only cleaned up the park, but advocated and worked alongside of their local Board, community organizations, and the NYPD. This effort won recognition from the Boy Scout Council, winning first place in their Manhattan Top Job Contest. This includes my time with the Ivy League/Uptown WINS, for which a teen advisory board, Female Finesse, helped this sports and education group organize workshops with the Girls Scouts, and assisted with testimony at National Conferences sponsored by the Women's Sports Foundation. More recently, with the Police Athletic League's In School Training and Employment Program (IN STEP), which incorporated a leadership council called the Teen Advisory Board, I was dazzled by the research and powerpoint presentation skills developed in reference to community issues - violence, teen pregnancy, gentrification and homelessness. Each of 15 teen centers across the 5 boroughs had teams of teen civic actors driving these programs.

Please feel free to contact me at [AlKurland@palnyc.org](mailto:AlKurland@palnyc.org) or (212) 477-9450

Al Kurland, Compliance Manager for the PAL

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Brian Paul (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Common Cause NY

Address: 80 Broad St 2703

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: DAVID GRUBER (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: CHAIR CB 2

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Elizabeth Caputo (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: E

I represent: CHAIRMAN, Manhattan CB 7

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sandro Sherrod

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Chair - CB6 - Man

Address: 866 UN Plaza

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 28 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kenneth Kearns

Address: 3165 E Tremont Ave

I represent: Bx Community Board #10

Address: 3165 E Tremont Ave Bx NY 10116/1

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/3/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jessica Silver

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer

Address: 1 Centre Street, 5th FL New York, NY

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: *(PLEASE PRINT)* Michael Novay Hughes

Address: No. CBI

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: 49-51 Chambers St.

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/3/2014

Name: *(PLEASE PRINT)* GARY GIORDANO

Address: 61-23 Myrtle Av. Glendale, NY 11385

I represent: Community Board 5, Queens

Address: Same as above

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: *(PLEASE PRINT)* Joanne PUGH

Address: 1240 Park Ave

I represent: NYC League of Women Voters

Address: W 43 St, NY 100

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/3/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Bettie M. Koflock-Wallace

Address: #17 Am Boy St Bk

I represent: DB16

Address: 444 Thomas Boydland

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sarah Andes

Address: ~~1219 Union St~~ 1219 Union St.

I represent: Generation Citizen

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3-3-14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alex Camardis

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Citizens Union President

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LETICIA REMAYRO  
Address: 1 EDgewater PLAZA 217  
I represent: CBI STATEN ISLAND  
Address: STNY 10305

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/3/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Al Kurland  
Address: c/o P.A.C. 34 1/2 E 125th NY 10002  
I represent: Teen 2501 Board Group / PAC  
Address: 34 1/2 E 125th NY 10002

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3-8-14

Name: Thomas Lucania (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 851 Grand Concourse

I represent: Bronx Borough President

Address: Ruben Diaz Jr.

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: ROBERT FERRIS (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 350 JAY ST. 8FL.

I represent: BROOKLYN CB2

Address: SAME

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms