

Education Committee Minutes
Cedric McClester – Chair

Tuesday May 16, 2017

I am pleased to announce that we finally had a quorum. The meeting was officially called to order at 6:20 pm, with the following members in attendance: Altagracia Cruz, Mildred Colon, Jesse Harris, Rev. Moses Oladosu and Richard Sherman. Dr. Ian Amritt and Liana Acevedo were absent. The meeting began with a discussion on what the Education Committee lacked, namely direction according to Ms Cruz. Committee Chair McClester after politely listening to the criticism, suggested that the meeting would be better served if those gathered would render their suggestions as to what direction they envisioned the committee embarking upon.

Mr. McClester reminded one and all that when he was convinced to take the position of committee chair, he said, “he was a fish out of water.” In other words he would have to learn what the education chairmanship entailed. Towards that end, former chairperson, Richard Sherman volunteered to assist Mr. McClester in the role he was assuming. Unfortunately, some members were unclear on who was the Education Chair. Perhaps this was as a consequence of Mr. Sherman graciously agreeing to assume the position of Recording Secretary and recording and reading the minutes. Mr. McClester stated he was not caught up on titles and if folks misconstrued who occupied what role, that was on them.

From there a lively discussion ensued, with various members sharing their thoughts on what the Education Committee should be doing. Some thought the committee chair’s time would be best utilized by spending time in the schools, meeting the principals and PTA heads. Mr.

McClester explained that while he was open to committee members suggestions, he couldn’t do it alone, as he has a paid position for which he is responsible and a limited amount of time to spend in the schools. He offered that he has no problem in dividing that responsibility. New committee member Jill Roche who heads an organization that is in the Hunts Point area and is dedicated to improving education for the community’s youth, said she has established relationships with many of the people it was suggested that Mr. McClester reach out to and would be more than happy to assist him in making those connections. At that point Mr. Acevedo presented Committee members with Board 2’s Mission Statement for the Education Committee. The Mission Statement reads as follows: “To consider all matters related to the educational advancement and enrichment of the community at large, paying special attention to the educational needs of youth and maintaining a liaison with the community’s educational and cultural institutions.”

Mr. McClester made mention of a evidence based program called Talk They Hear You which is an evidenced based program, geared toward helping parents and guardians talk to their youth about underage drinking, which research suggests is the number one substance uses issue affecting youth between the ages of 7 and 20 that he attempted to introduce to a grandparent’s group at PS 335 to no avail. Board District Manager Acevedo, interjected that was an initiative of Mr.

McClester’s program, Forward South Bronx Coalition, but what did it have to do with the Education committee? Mr. McClester explained that he wears two hats so to speak, that of Education Committee Chair and Project Manager for Forward South Bronx Coalition. He doesn’t view the two as mutually exclusive, but rather in some instances, mutually inclusive. Such an instance would be the Talk They Hear You program that would give parents and guardians the tools to talk effectively to their youngsters about underage drinking. In attempting to further his point, Mr. Acevedo mentioned the principal from PS 333 which will be taking over PS 335 next semester called him and voiced his confusion over where the Education Committee meeting was being held. Mr. McClester explained that the principals confusion was of his own making. Mr. McClester had informed the principal that he wore two distinct hats. That of Education Committee Chair for Community Board 2 and that as Project Manager of Forward South Bronx Coalition. He extended two distinct invitations to

the principal. One to attend Forward South Bronx Coalition and the other to attend the Education Committee meeting. In both instances it was to explain the impending changes taking place at his school and to explain how the community would benefit from those changes. For a consistent variety of reasons, he hasn't made either meeting.

Ms. Colon mentioned she was part of the grandparent's group at PS 335 and has been for quite a while. Mr. McClester suggested they connect at some later date with regards to the Talk They Hear You program. He even offered that he was prepared to offer a modest stipend to the leader of this initiative. After much discussion, Mr. McClester said he had clarity as to what direction the Education Committee should be headed.