

**BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARD 6**  
**PARKS/RECREATION/CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**OCTOBER 15, 2014**

**ATTENDANCE;**

**PRESENT:**

K. DEGEER	J. FRANCIS	H. HUGHES
G. KELLY	S. MATHEWS-NOVELLI	T. TAYLOR

**ABSENT:**

S. ADELS	J. HEYER	A. MCKNIGHT
C. PIGOTT	L. PINN	M. RUIZ
J. SMITH	B. BASILE	

**GUESTS:**

J. VOGEL – REP. FOR HON. VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY, STATE SENATOR  
P. NAPOLEON - REP. FOR HON. FELIX ORTIZ, STATE ASSEMBLY MEMBER  
M. FIENI, BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

J. SOSA	M. WHITE	E. PILANEL
P. HAGAN	N.HUROWITZ	L. KOTEEN

**\*\*\* MINUTES \*\*\***

**Presentation by representatives for the Brooklyn Public Library on the upcoming expansion of library services days + hours at branches throughout the borough, and general updates on branches throughout the district including Carroll Gardens, Pacific, Park Slope and Red Hook.**

Michael Fieni, manager of Community from the Brooklyn Public Library came to discuss developments at the library.

1. Hours expanded – Mr. Fieni handed out flyers with the new expanded hours for each branch. 200 extra hours per week. Red Hook now 6 hours a week but still 1/3 of the branches are at 5 days a week. (Increased allocations after 7 years of cuts of \$14.6 million; got \$2.8 million in new funding from City Council and the Mayor this year.)
2. Installed self-checkout machines which was a cost saving measure.

Q. What about Brooklyn Heights Library branch?

A. No, they have not increased hours. Also, hours were cut during the summer due to environmental (AC) issues.

3. New Programs and Events introduced this year – performing arts classes, painting classes for seniors - very popular. All branches have these programs. Send a library of books to local nursing homes.

Q. Is it at CB6's Cobble Hill Nursing Home?

A. Not sure, he will check.

Q. Three schools in the immediate area of Pacific Street don't have a library – is there any way to stay open later on Saturday?

A. Not sure – requires more funding.

Q. Update on saving the Pacific Street library?

A. Need to first fight to restore the building and bring up to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. \$40 million will come from the sale of the Brooklyn Heights library branch, which can be used for other libraries.

While there is no assurance the Pacific Street library will be saved, there is a Memorandum of Understanding.

Introduction of “Friends” groups – To encourage volunteerism, to provide a sounding board and raise funds for small projects, to help with programming, refreshments and some minor capital projects like shelving.

Michael asked the committee for their suggestions. These suggestions include:

1. Takes a week to get a book from the floating library. That is a problem – a faster system needs to be established or more books purchased.
2. Reach out to the Community Justice Center and Good Shepherd's in Red Hook for their organizing support.
3. Charity and assurance – Friends groups funding are to go to a general fund, not for one specific library (suggestion by Jim Vogel). But Michael said the money will stay within that branch.

Discussion ensued about concerns over:

- Shrinking of the Heights Branch. What is happening? (*not in the CB6 district*)
- Lack of transparency – suggestion made: the BPL should tell the community what the current square footage is and what will be gained in actual numbers with sell-off of Brooklyn Heights building? (*not in the CB6 district*)
- What is the money to be gotten from the “sell-off” of almost 40% of the Red Hook branch to SpaceWorks and where are those funds going?
- To expand hours at night – one branch in each neighborhood.

Jim Vogel, representative for State Senator Velmanette Montgomery, pointed out that there is a very large group of library board members but he specifically pointed out conflicts of interest in this board – for example: Kyle Kimball who is head of EDC and others who are given patronage jobs.

- Recommend that BPL follow Senator Montgomery's letter of recommendations regarding Board appointments.
- Instead of selling off library space, why not offer dance and painting organizations after library hours access to the space and not take away books or space or library time for the community. (Author's talks are happening at Park Slope due to Friends group activity.)

- Landmarking is important and building should be protected and recommend supporting community's desire to landmark Pacific and Carroll Gardens buildings.
- Library should come to community first before alternate uses for the library are considered.
- That Brooklyn Public Library engage more in the capital budget process
- Provide clarity and openness for Sunset Park library plans and a community meeting be scheduled to CB7. *(not in the CB6 district)*

Q. What is happening to the Sunset Park library?

A. There are discussions with council member but they are just looking at it. If there is anything that happens, the BPL will come out to the community.

A motion was made by Judi Francis and seconded by Scott Novelli. We ask the Brooklyn Public Library to act on these suggestions with full transparency and return to this committee and one full Board meeting on their progress on each of these suggestions.

**MOTION APPROVED: UNANIMOUSLY**

Peterson Napoleon, the representative for State Assembly member, Felix Ortiz's office reported on Red Hook library protest this summer and that they await response from Brooklyn Public Library.

Ted Taylor moved to accept the minutes of the meeting held on September 17, 2014 seconded by Glenn Kelly.

**MOTION APPROVED: UNANIMOUSLY**

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05pm.

The minutes were submitted by Judi Francis.