Dear Community Partner,

The Mayor's Community Affairs Unit (CAU) is the direct link between the Mayor and New York's communities. CAU plays a pivotal role in improving the quality of life for all New Yorkers by working with neighborhood organizations and city agencies to tackle large-scale issues, making city government accessible, transparent, and accountable. The city's fifty-nine Community Boards are essential to this mission.

Community Boards provide New Yorkers with a voice and the ability to be increasingly helpful and productive in their neighborhoods. Through our partnerships with Community Boards, CAU is able to facilitate a relationship between City Hall and the city’s many diverse neighborhoods. Whether advising on unprecedented land use reforms or fighting for crucial social services, Community Board members work to strengthen and celebrate this great city.

New York has a vibrant civic life and this administration has long recognized the value of community boards as local experts within the larger structure of city government. Everyday, community boards offer their time, talent and energy to make life better for residents. We are grateful for this collaborative partnership and look forward to working more closely with active community members who are committed to enhancing their communities and helping others.

On behalf of Mayor Bloomberg and the Community Affairs Unit staff, thank you for your contributions to ensuring the best quality of life for all New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

Nazli Parvizi
Commissioner
YOUR COMMUNITY BOARD

Community Boards can play an important role in improving the quality of life for all New Yorkers. We urge you to take a moment and learn how your Community Board can assist you, and how you can help your Community Board.

THE COMMUNITY BOARDS

Membership– Each of the 59 Community Boards, comprised of 50 unsalaried members appointed by Borough Presidents in consultation with the Council Members of the Board district, serves as a local representative body of City government. Board members must reside, work or possess a specific interest in the community they represent.

Meetings– Monthly Board meetings provide a public forum for members to address items of concern to the community and give residents the opportunity to express their opinions. Boards also regularly conduct public hearings on the City’s budget, land use matters and other items of concern.

Committees– Committees within Community Boards are charged with following up on the issues raised at Board meetings. Each board establishes its own structures and procedures for committees; non–Board members may apply to join them.

THE BOARD’S RESPONSIBILITIES

Boards play an important advisory role in dealing with land use and zoning matters, the City budget, municipal service delivery and many other matters relating to their community’s welfare.

Land Use and Zoning Matters– Community Boards are consulted regarding placement of most municipal facilities in communities and may initiate their own plans for growth and improvement. The board reviews any application for a change in, or variance from zoning regulations; their position is considered in the final determinations on these applications.

City Budget– Community Boards assess the budgetary needs of their own neighborhoods and meet with City agencies to make recommendations in the City’s budget process.

Other Community Concerns– Any problem affecting all or part of a community, from traffic to deteriorating housing, falls within the purview of the Community Board.

Limitations– While the Community Board, its District Manager and its office staff serve as advocates and service coordinators for a community of residents, they lack authority over City agencies and officials. Nevertheless, Boards are usually successful in achieving resolution through dialogue with other government entities.

THE DISTRICT MANAGER AND DISTRICT OFFICE

The District Manager and Board staff are chosen by the Community Board and serve at the Board’s discretion. District Manager is a salaried position overseeing an office and a staff. The District Manager is responsible for implementing procedures to improve the delivery of City services to the district. Additional functions include taking complaints and serving as a municipal manager, information source, community organizer, mediator and advocate. The District office receives and resolves complaints from community residents and may also provide services such as assistance with Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) Forms, Housing Assistance Applications and Half-Fare applications. Additionally, they may process permits for block parties and street fairs. Some District Managers also handle special projects such as organizing tenants and merchants associations, coordinating neighborhood cleanup programs and publicizing special events – the role of the office is dependent on community needs.

To find out which Community Board district you live in, get a membership application, or learn more about community boards, call your Borough President’s office:

BRONX.....................(718) 590-6001/5
BROOKLYN.................(718) 802-4032
MANHATTAN.............(212) 669-8151
QUEENS.................... (718) 286-2900
STATEN ISLAND..........(718) 816-2232

or contact the Mayor’s Community Affairs Unit at 311.