

Downtown Residents Call for Barriers, Buses and Housing

By Craig McGuire

Residents in Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill and the Columbia Street district told Community Board 6 leaders how they want their future tax dollars spent at a recent forum.

Under the New York City Charter, each community board in the city is required to submit a "Statement of Needs" to the city each year, identifying capital and expense budget priorities.

The meeting in early May at Sacred Hearts/St. Stephen's Church, located on the corner of Summit and Hicks streets, was one of four meetings held by CB 6 to invite community input from the six neighborhoods that comprise the community district.

"In holding these forums we can listen to you and act as advocates on behalf of you for the budget," said CB 6 Chairwoman Stephanie Twin. "We also will make sure that your wants are communicated to your elected officials."

The community board asked residents for guidance in requesting funding for CB 6's capital budget, which includes construction projects, and expense budget, which encompasses community programs funded within the board area.

Several residents voiced concerns over sorely needed improvements in the area.

CB 6 member Eddie DeMaio said, "I can safely speak for everybody when I present you with a list of problems that affect the entire community."

DeMaio's list of priorities included the pruning of area trees, the painting of local mail boxes and lamp-posts, replacing missing and vandalized parking signs, removing graffiti, and repairing potholes.

"Many of the items that you have listed we don't necessarily have to include in the statement of needs," said CB 6 executive board member Irene Lo Re. "We can contact the proper agency or department to handle many of these problems."

Carroll Gardens resident Joe Biasci informed the board that due to the heavy snowfall, and poor maintenance, something had to be done about the filthy and pungent condition of the catch-basins in the area.

Jerry Armer, a CB 6 member and Cobble Hill activist, asked Biasci and residents with similar complaints to submit a list to the community board, which will be turned over to the Department of Envi-

ronmental Protection.

Armer also addressed another concern voiced by Carroll Street resident Augie Lucci.

"Many drivers come off the BQE at Hicks Street and then get back on. Someday this short-cut is going to cause a terrible accident," said Lucci. "Signs just don't do it. The only solution is to put up a permanent barrier."

"The city is already looking to install barriers as a result of a request nine months ago," informed Armer. "We are going to get the barriers. It's just a matter of time."

Residents and community leaders offered their own requests.

Representing Neighbors United for the Columbia Street District, David Mackenzie said, "We would like to see an express bus along Henry Street into Manhattan."

Bette Stoltz, executive director of the South Brooklyn Local Development Corporation, said, "We hope you can continue funding to assist residents

in getting through the Smith Street reconstruction. A project like this two-year, \$8 million project can be extremely hard on the businesses and residents, so please try to keep us in

mind when drafting the expense budget."

Housing was another topic of concern, raised by CB 6 member Celia Cacace.

"We need senior housing with a better community organization. It is getting harder and harder for many seniors to live in the neighborhood that they want," said Cacace.

"We also need affordable income housing. Not everybody in the \$13,000 to \$15,000 income bracket are bad neighbors."

Twin told residents, "If anyone wants to keep informed on this topic, and other community board business, contact the district office and get placed on the mailing list."

The CB 6 district office can be reached at 613-3027.

Residents interested in what requests have been previously granted to CB 6 can receive a copy of the "Agency Responses to Community Board Six Fiscal Year 1995 Capital Budget Requests," also at the district office.

The document lists the programs approved by the city, those tabled for further consideration, and those requests denied.

Items approved include funding for the construction or reconstruction projects



Members of the Community Board 6 Executive Board asked residents what their budget priorities are. Photo by Craig McGuire

for the Coffey Park park-house, the P.S. 282 playground, Columbia Street, 9th Street, the Coffey Street Pier, the Under-the-Tracks Park, up-grading of the CB 6 DOS garage, the Red Hook Library, the Pacific Library, the 78th Precinct, the holding cells in both the 78th and 76th precincts, Prospect Park improvements, Red Hook track/stadium, Smith Street, J.J. By-

me Park, and the Smith/9th Street subway station.

Projects not approved included requests for Lower Van Voorhees Park, Thomas Greene Playground, Red Hook East/West Houses, Gowanus Houses, Wyckoff Gardens Houses, Gowanus Community Center, the Warren Street reconstruction, and the Park Slope Neighborhood Family Center.