

Red-Hook Based Court Program

By Craig McGuire

Targeting crime in public housing, Kings County District Attorney Charles Hynes last week introduced an innovative community court program to be based in the Red Hook Houses.

Representatives from the D.A.'s office met with Red Hook community leaders last week to discuss the project. The community court, established in conjunction with the New York State Unified Court System, will deal with misdemeanor and minor violations of non-jailbound defendants following arraignment.

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and fare evasion are some of the lower level crimes the court will handle.

In a written report from the D.A., these cases, presently adjudicated to the Criminal Court in Brooklyn, "make it difficult for the court to focus on individual cases, to provide many trials and impose effective sanctions."

Gene Lopez, representing the D.A., said the community court will be effective in imposing penalties that benefit the community that was harmed.

According to Lopez, this meeting was the first of a series of meetings designed to infuse the community's

voice into the planning process.

Craig Hammerman, District Manager of Community Board 6, said a positive tone "echoed" throughout the Board after the meeting.

Carl Thomas, spokesman for the D.A., added, "what we are trying to do is get in touch with these grass roots organizations and hear what they have to say."

Beatrice Byrd, Vice President of the Red Hook Tenants Association West, said she was encouraged by the efforts to solicit community input. "Bring it to