

# **Law, Rules and Ethics Committee**

**December 9, 2024**

## **Minutes**

1. Meeting called to order 7:34 pm
2. Welcome & Introduction of Committee Members and Guests  
Attendance:  
Present (5) Martin Wolpoff (Chair), Steve Froot (Vice-Chair), Sylvia Alexander (Via Zoom), Kelli Buford, Rosemary Ginty  
Absent (1): Charles Moerdler  
  
Guests (2): Julie Reyes, Board Chair, Mary Ellen Gibbs
3. Approval of Minutes: October 29, 2024  
Approved unanimously
4. Chair's Report
  - A. Postmortem of Community Board Award Criteria Resolution
    1. Full Board Vote: 15 in Favor, 8 Opposed, 10 Abstentions
    2. Committee members expressed concern when abstentions determine the outcome
    3. Committee members hypothesized why some members may have abstained
  - B. Executive sessions
    - A. Chair advised that he had been contacted with reference to a committee making the decision to go into executive session. Chair does not know the details but advised Exec Committee members on the restrictions established under the Open Meetings Law (§105. Conduct of executive sessions.) which defines how and under what circumstances a committee can note the intent on its agenda, the need to announce the specific reason why such an Exec session is necessary and the need for a public vote to exclude the public. He plans to further expand on this subject at the full Board meeting.
  - C. Subcommittees v. Working Groups  
LRE Reviewed the issue of the full Board, under the bylaws, establishing subcommittees and/or special committees. While we agreed that an additional clarifying sentence that separates how the full Board establishes a standing committee versus how a standing committee established such a subcommittee, we felt that the extreme step of amending our bylaws did not outweigh the immediate common-sense approach to this issue. It was pointed out that only once in our Board's remembered history was there an attempt to create a subcommittee within an existent standing committee. Such attempt was rejected. Committee members did not know when any precedent was established to limit standing committees to appoint only working groups rather than subcommittees, however, semantics aside, we should seek to be consistent and henceforth request that standing committees use the verbiage "working groups." Existent subcommittees should continue until they have completed their purpose.
5. History of CB 8 awards was reviewed.
  - A. Original intent was to honor and encourage volunteer service to improve and enhance the quality of life in the Community Board 8 community.
  - B. Chair reported on his presentation to the Exec Committee. He used the Veteran's Award as an example of why the board needs to establish criteria. He questioned how the committee or the Board could select any one veteran for his/her service if we have no basis on which to compare anyone's military service.

- C. It was noted that the chairs of the various committees seeking to present an award on behalf of the Community Board are planning to reintroduce the item at their next meetings.
  - D. It was decided that the resolution should not be reintroduced at this time
6. Discussion on Abstention Votes - Chair reiterated why he had a 1/2016 memo to Board chairs distributed to all Board members. He wanted to highlight that abstentions that determine resolution vote outcome have been an LRE concern for many years and he hoped that Board members would research issues, ask questions and vote rather than abstain. He also reminded everyone of how abstentions mean different things under the City Charter and under Robert's Rules.
7. Steve Froot suggested amending the blurb on CB 8 public meeting notices to better explain the intent of allowing those with medical issues to be counted in the quorum, participate and vote at Board and committee meetings. He recommended the following:

"All committee members must attend in person except members with disabilities as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act **who may request an accommodation from the chairperson of the board, permitting them to** attend via video slash teleconferencing and be counted in the quorum."

Resolution to accept the new wording and recommend the Board chairperson and Board office adopt the new wording was passed unanimously.

8. Communication from COIB – Committee reviewed the latest determinations from the NYC Conflict of Interest Board.
9. NYC Council Spreadsheet –
- Chair noted that the item on City of Yes – Housing opportunities was passed by a 31- 20 vote.
10. Old Business - None
11. New Business - None
12. Meeting adjourned 8:55 pm

Next Meetings:

Monday, January 13, 2025,  
Monday, February 10, 2025,  
Monday, March 10, 2025,  
Monday, April 14, 2025,  
Monday, May 12, 2025,  
Monday, June 9, 2025.  
**Meetings begin at 7:30 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Martin Wolpoff, Chair  
Law, Rules and Ethics Committee