

CB8 Aging Committee Meeting

March 19, 2019

Location: Riverdale Senior Services

Committee Members Present

Eric Dinowitz, Chair

Lisa Daub

Marvin Goodman

Dan Padernacht

Rita Pochter Lowe

Committee Members Absent

Karen Pesce

Georgia Santiago

Guests

Orlando Torres, NYC Commission on Human Rights

Julie Dalton, RSS

David Teitelbaum, Community Member

Sharon Asherman, Riverdale Y

Selina Ng, RSS

Richard Ovalle, Kittay Sr. Apartments

June Eisland, Community Member

Judith Green, Community Member

Miryan Rabner, MJHS

Robert Acherson, Community Member

David Gellman, CB8 Member

Chair Eric Dinowitz called meeting to order at 4:10

1. Meeting opened with Orlando Torres from NYC commission on Human Rights who spoke about Project Equal Access:

The Commission on Human Rights is the city agency that enforces human rights law of city. They protect against discrimination in housing, public accommodations, various areas.

Project equal access is a division geared toward people with disabilities and enforces human rights laws to prevent discrimination in housing and public accommodations. The city defines a disability as anyone with physical, medical, mental, or psychological impairment, or history of impairment. They should receive a "reasonable accommodation" that allows an individual with a disability to have equal access."

Commission on Human Rights can help ensure reasonable accommodations are made. Accommodations include ramps, handrails, etc.

Reasonable accommodations are accommodations that allow an individual with a disability to have access to housing. This can be structural, or a policy or rule change. "Reasonable" accommodations cannot cause undue hardship to housing provider or business. This includes financial hardship or physical limitations of the space.

The housing provider or business has the burden of proof to show that an accommodation will cause an undue hardship. The city will look at financial resources, tax records, financial records, depreciation of value of property, or anything that involves finances.

The city also looks at safety. For example, some buildings are closer to the street. If there is not enough space in front of the building, they cannot build the ramp. They cannot force the landlord to make the accommodation because it would not be safe for an individual with a walker or wheelchair.

A conversation with the landlord or business owner must be initiated by the person requesting the accommodation. When an individual calls the NYC Commission on Human Rights, the first thing asked of the person requesting assistance is “have you asked the landlord or storeowner?”

Examples of common barriers include steps at the primary entrance, absence of handrails or handrails on only one side, narrow or heavy doors, lack of handrails in one’s own bathroom, and stairs that lead to other parts of the building that should be accessible to all, for example a mail room or garbage room.

When a landlord is unresponsive, the NYC Commission on Human Rights visits and investigates the accessibility issues.

Both public and private institutions are covered under the law, which includes anything outside of the home that provides a service or good that should be accessible to all.

When an elevator breaks down in the building, a common remedy is for a tenant to temporarily move to the first floor or to another building in the complex with a working elevator.

The commission provides legal services for free.

Some buildings have a strict no pet policy which must be waived for service animals and emotional support animals.

2. January minutes passed unanimously.
3. Eric updated committee on intergenerational event. Rita volunteered to reach out to local teen groups. Dan and Marvin volunteered to assist the day of the event.
4. Budget items were amended by community members and committee members. They passed unanimously.

Minutes prepared and submitted by Eric Dinowitz, Chair