

Minutes of Health, Hospitals & Social Services Committee
Meeting held on May 21, 2007
At the Community Board Office

PRESENT

Martin Katzenstein
Philip Friedman
Beverly Fettman
James T. Higgins
Joyce Pilsner
Martin Wolpoff
Captain Stuart Belsky
Louis J. Vorhaus

AFFILIATION

Committee Chair CB #8
Committee Vice Chair CB #8
CB #8
CB #8
CB #8
CB #8
FDNY

Introductions:

Guest Speaker: Captain Stuart Belsky of EMS Division 2

Chairperson's Report:

No Report

Agenda Items:**EMS Station** (*Guest: Captain Stuart Belsky of FDNY EMS Division 2*)

- Chairperson welcomes Captain Belsky.
- Chairperson expresses concern over not having an EMS station within Community Board 8 (CB8). Chairperson explains that the community has been advocating for an EMS station within the CB8 for many years with the hopes of reducing area EMS response and restocking time; one of the original sites being adjacent to P.S. 37 on West 230th Street (prior to construction of P.S. 37.) Many years after the project for an EMS station adjacent to P.S. 37 was terminated, the Broadway development site was deemed appropriate by FDNY. After 5,000 square feet were reserved for the EMS station, FDNY/EMS issued a letter stating that the site/space was inadequate.
- The question of why the West 230th Street proposed development site not being acceptable is posed to FDNY Captain Belsky.
- It is explained that the 5,000 square feet allocated was not enough space and that FDNY was not interested in leasing back a location which had been previously owned by The City of New York.
- It is further explained that in addition to provisions for active ambulances, the station would require space for spare vehicles, decontamination areas, training areas, hardware/software storage, etc. Station would require a location where the station could be expanded.
- For Fiscal Year 2008 it appears that the city budget (*budget ratified apx. three weeks earlier*) funded only one new EMS station within the Bronx; a location on Zerega Avenue.
- Chairperson finds the finality of the letter recently forwarded to CB8 by FDNY disconcerting. Letter described disinterest in the 5,000 square foot space at the Broadway development site; the site was coordinated with the community board and set aside within development plans for the West 230th Street site.
- Captain Belsky confirms some of the CB8 ambulances restock at 'Station 19' located near White Plains Road and East 220th Street and perhaps 'Station 18' located on Jerome Avenue.
- Chairperson requests that EMS reexamine requirements (*square footage requirements, appropriate locations, etc.*) for a CB8 EMS station and forward information to community board for continued efforts.
- Captain Belsky recommends that the community board lobby local elected officials to assist with establishment of an EMS station within CB8. A board member states that elected officials have been approached but have not offered significant help.
- Chairperson asks if EMS would reconsider the West 230th Street site. Captain Belsky indicated again that the site was not favorable.
- A board member indicates that since FDNY/EMS originally provided the approximate square footage for the station that CB8 has been working to

obtain, that they should forward space and location/access requirements for such a station for CB8 to advocate further. Board member further stated that CB8 has been lobbying for a significant time for the 5,000 square foot space at the W 230th Street development site and that FDNY/EMS never indicated during that time that the 5,000 square feet was not enough.

- A board member asks Captain Belsky if the W 230th Street & Tibbett Avenue site (*a city owned property originally proposed for the EMS station in the 1990's – adjacent to P.S. 37*) would be a viable site for an EMS station. Captain Belsky indicates that the site would need to be re-investigated based on station requirements.
- Captain Belsky is posed the question of whether FDNY/EMS thinks an EMS station is needed in CB8. Captain Belsky states that the question would be referred to his Division. Captain Belsky indicates that it would be an FDNY/EMS decision to place a station with CB8.
- Reference is made to the April 2004 joint committee meeting (*Public Safety, Education, Aging & Health and Hospitals committees*) where a guest speaker, an FDNY/EMS Captain, indicated that CB8 needed an EMS station to reduce response time. At the time of the April 2004 meeting, it had been reported that of all boroughs, the Bronx had the longest EMS response time. Captain Belsky indicates that an EMS station within CB8 would likely decrease local EMS response time.
- At the time of the April 2004 joint meeting, the EMS representatives indicated that there were approximately (4) city ambulances assigned to the CB8 area. Of the (4) ambulances, (2) were stationed and 're-stocked' at the 50th Precinct; the other (2) were stationed/'re-stocked' at a location in the area of White Plains Road and E 220th Street. Captain Belsky states that currently there are likely 6-8 city ambulances assigned to the CB8 area.
- Chairperson asks Captain Belsky if EMS statistics for CB8 (response time, number of ambulance calls, etc.) could be provided to the committee. Captain Belsky states that EMS compiled data is not broken down by community board districts and that it may be difficult to obtain (*data broken down by borough.*) A special request for EMS data specifically for CB8 would likely be required (*special data compilation based on cross streets and/or zip codes for CB8.*)
- A Physician in attendance states to Captain Belsky that the city EMS technicians are very well trained. Captain Belsky acknowledges the compliment.
- A question is posed to Captain Belsky regarding training/response of EMS in relation to a future terrorist attack. Captain Belsky states that the FDNY and EMS has been provided with training relevant to terrorist attacks since the September 11, 2001 attack. He further states that though no one can predict future events, he believes FDNY and EMS is as prepared for a future event as they can be.

In Summary of the EMS Discussion for Captain Belsky to Relay to EMS Command:

- The Health, Hospitals and Social Services Committee is dissatisfied with FDNY/EMS recently stated position regarding the 5,000 square foot allocated space within the proposed West 230th Street development. CB8 had coordinated with the city and developers to secure the 5,000 square feet EMS had previously indicated was required to establish an EMS station. At the time that EMS indicated its requirement of 5,000 square feet for a station, they also indicated that the West 230th Street development site would be an appropriate location.
- Captain Belsky recommends that the committee contact Mr. Montesano of EMS to request EMS statistics specific to Community Board 8 (*data would also assist with determining how the new station at Zerega Avenue was justified to assist with justifying a station within CB8.*) He further recommends that the committee write a letter to FDNY to clarify potential requirements for an EMS station within CB8.

Atria

- Chairperson believes Atria has fulfilled all promises to committee.
- Chairperson has examined building occupancy and Atria's covenant with the Community Board. Chairperson has also indication from the NYC Department of Buildings that Atria is operating with all required permits and has received a Building Department waver for the Hospice operation.
- Atria provided a letter to the Community Board stating that its emergency generator should be installed and operational by August 1, 2007.
- Atria has provided copies of its emergency planning to the Committee Chairperson.
- Chairperson received a phone call from the Riverdale Atria Director; David Pomerantz. Mr. Pomerantz reiterated that Atria was not required to install generator.
- Chairperson expresses concern that there are still members of the Community Board who continue to make negative statements regarding Atria. A board member reminds that events during the Atria blackout were witnessed by other Board member(s). It is further reminded that the statements made by Atria representatives at the March 19, 2007 Committee meeting differed from that of the Board member(s) who observed the events. Chairperson states that, Board members should consider statements prior to making statements regarding Atria with regard to its status. A discussion occurs on this topic.
- It is stated that the Riverdale Atria is not currently an 'Assisted Living' facility but is looking to become an 'Assisted Living' facility.
- Chairperson states that Atria obtained a wavier from New York State to house the Hospice.
- Chairperson states that the Atria covenant drafted with the Community Board does not exclude the housing of a Hospice within the Atria building (A covenant was drafted with Community Board's assistance in conjunction with lowering the height of the Atria building during the initial planning for the Atria building construction.) The covenant does discuss "certain use restrictions," but does not seem to exclude a Hospice within the building. It is suggested by another Board member that Mr. Charles Moerdler (Land Use Chairperson) be requested to interpret the covenant with respect to allowing a Hospice occupancy within the Atria building.
- Chairperson states that he believes Hospices are good programs, that there should be more Hospice programs and that they be supported by the community.
- A board member states that the covenant is an important document and that Atria likely should have approached the Community Board prior to housing the Hospice.
- The Chairperson reads excerpts from a letter issued by Atria to the Community Board.
- Chairperson states that there are not enough Hospice beds within Community Board 8.
- It is stated that the Community Board 8 area is one of the densest cluster of Nursing Home beds per capita nationwide.
- It is stated that Medicare is the primary payer for Hospice care.
- Chairperson will write a letter to Atria stating that they should notify the Community Board in the future with regard to major planning or inclusion of any entity within the Atria building.

Rabid Raccoons

- Chairperson recounts incident of rabid raccoon found on Independence Avenue and taken to animal hospital.
- With regard to the Rabies concern, Chairperson called Councilman Koppell's office and did not receive a call-back. Chairperson also called State Assemblyman Dinowitz and did receive a call-back from his office.
- Chairperson discusses immunization/vaccination program initiated in Queens for raccoons. Food for animals was baited with vaccine for raccoons to eat. There is no recollection of recent cases of rabies in Queens.
- Chairperson surmises that raccoon problem emanates from Westchester.
- Statistics read from Kingsbridge and Riverdale Community Health Profile obtained from the Department of Health website: in 2005 there were (28) rabid animals in New York City. Of the (28) recorded animals, (26) were in the Bronx and of the (26), (20) were in Kingsbridge/Riverdale.

- Chairperson to contact local newspapers (*i.e. Riverdale Press, etc.*) to write article regarding raccoons, signs of rabies and advice to avoid animals.

Committee Budget Priorities:

Capital:

1. To provide funding for an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Station within the boundaries of Community Board 8 (CB8) to accommodate the emergency vehicles, equipment, personnel and infrastructure required for servicing the population of Community Board 8 and reducing the 'out-of-service' time of local city ambulances required to 're-stock' in locations distant and outside Bronx CB 8 borders.

Expense:

1. Request for funding for an immunization/vaccination program (*similar to that initiated in Queens in FY 2006 by the Department of Health*) for the CB8 raccoon population against rabies.
2. Request to provide increased funding to the Riverdale Mental Health Association to augment support to programs addressing mental health issue within the geriatric community
3. Request to provide funding to the formed but currently unfunded Bronx District 8 Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) to support training of existing and new membership and allow for purchase of team emergency equipment.
4. Request to provide funding to the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services for computer equipment to assist with administrative operations.

Old Business: No old business

New Business: No new business

Misc: No miscellaneous items

Meeting Adjourns 8:45PM

Submitted by,

Philip Friedman
Vice Chairperson
Health, Hospitals and Social Services
Committee

PF:db