

PENDING COMMITTEE APPROVAL

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO.8

**MINUTES OF THE HOUSING COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, APRIL 24, 2017 AT 7:30 P.M.
AT THE COMMUNITY BOARD CONFERENCE ROOM**

Board/Community Members Present:

Paul Ellis

Amy Joy Robateau

David Gellman

David Kornbulh

Julie Reyes

Georgia Santiago

Daniel Padernacht

Affiliation:

CB8 Housing Committee,
Chairman

CB8 Housing Committee,
Vice Chair

CB8 Housing Committee

CB8 Housing Committee

CB8 Housing Committee

CB8 Housing Committee

CB8 Board Chairman

Guests/Community Members:

Ted Weinstein

Director of Bronx Planning,
NYC Housing Preservation
Development (HPD)

Chris Benedict

Chris Benedict R.A.

Lee Chong

Community Resident

Absent:

Anthony Creaney

CB8 Housing Committee

Sergio Marquez

CB8 Housing Committee

Omar Murray

CB8 Housing Committee

James Santiago

CB8 Housing Committee

John Sims

Community Committee Member

The meeting was called to order at 7:45 PM.

Paul Ellis, Chair of the Housing Committee, welcomed the attendees and introduced himself. Mr. Ellis then went on to review the Agenda for the evening.

1. Approval of Minutes

This agenda item was tabled.

2. Discussion Concerning Current Bronx Activities and Initiatives and FY 2019 Budget Priorities for the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)

Ellis introduced Mr. Ted Weinstein, Director of Bronx Planning, HPD. Mr. Weinstein explained the budget process for the benefit of the attendees. The process starts in the spring. HPD capital budget funds are via individual programs, while the expense budget follows closer to the budget priorities system. Most of HPD's funding from the Federal government goes to code enforcement. The funds are through the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). However, under the current administration, there is a proposal for the total elimination of this funding path. HPD used to get its funding 50/50 from the State and the Federal governments, but the State eliminated funding many years back.

Currently one of the programs Mr. Weinstein feels we should request priority funding for is the SARA Program (Senior Affordable Rental Apartments). This program replaced the Federal Section 202 program, which HUD eliminated.

The SARA Program deals with both new construction and rehabilitation of older buildings and is available for both for-profit and non-profit developers. It is overseen by the Office of Development, Division of Special Needs Housing at HPD. It has a 30% set-aside for homeless seniors. Most new construction is done on privately-owned land.

He noted that there are currently no SARA projects being built in CB8. There are currently two rezoning areas that will allow for SARA projects. They are the Southern Boulevard and Jerome Avenue corridors in the Bronx. CB8's land is considered more expensive than land in the South Bronx, and, as a result, little affordable housing is developed in CB8.

The program also has a LIHTC (Low Income Housing Tax Credit) component. The current economic climate has, however, reduced the value of the tax credit and has created a need for developers to find additional types of funding for their projects.

There were also discussions of the issues of homelessness and the 420-c/Article XI program (which are tax exemption programs and geared to non-profit entities) and its potential impact because of possible the federal cuts.

Mr. Ellis asked about the potential impact of the elimination of the CDBG program. Mr. Weinstein responded that it would have an adverse impact on code enforcement inspectors and litigation attorneys. HPD would have no alternative but to seek an increase of tax levy funding from the City Council to cover the Federal dollars lost.

3. Follow-up Presentation on Approaches to Energy Efficient “Green” Housing in the Bronx

Chris Benedict, Owner, Chris Benedict, R.A. continued and concluded the presentation she started at the November 28, 2016 Housing Committee meeting. She explained that the crux of her presentation could be summed up in the following words: AIR-WATER VAPOR-HEAT-LIGHT. These five premises are the basis of Ms. Benedict's designs for energy efficient green buildings, both new construction and renovated buildings.

Ms. Benedict explained that a completely green building is called a “passive house.” This term is derived from design principles originally established in Germany that contain all the established goals with respect to air, water vapor, heat and light.

Ms. Benedict went on with her slide presentation to show projects completed and projects in the works both in Brooklyn (with a non-profit, Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Citizens Council), in Manhattan (LES Peoples Housing) and in the Bronx (424 Melrose Avenue). She explained that 424 Melrose Avenue is a special needs housing project completely insulated on the outside. Passive housing uses 25% of the energy consumed by an average building not designed with passive house principles.

4. Old Business

Mr. Ellis noted that he, along with Amy Robateau, Julie Reyes and Rosemary Ginty, are finalizing the Housing Resources Guide with a goal to have it ready by the end of June in both English and Spanish.

5. New Business

Mr. Ellis noted that the next meeting is scheduled for May 22 with the following potential topics: NYC Department of Buildings budget priorities and NYC Housing Authority budget priorities. He added that Mr. Kornbluh was working on possible attendance by City Planning on the topic of the impact of the recently-passed state budget on housing issues.

Mr. Ellis announced that he is not seeking reappointment as Housing Committee Chair and that he hoped current committee members would continue to serve for the coming year to assist the next chair in continuity on the issues that have been addressed over recent years.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Minutes recorded by,

Lee Chong
Community Resident
Bronx Community Board 8

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Ellis
Chairperson
Housing Committee
Bronx Community Board 8