

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
HOUSING COMMITTEE**

HELD ON MONDAY, JUNE 23, 2014

**AT ST. STEPHEN'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
146 W. 228th ST., BRONX, NY 10463**

Board Members Present:

Steve Balicer
Paul Ellis
Bob Fanuzzi
Maria Khury
Julie Reyes
Georgia Santiago
Anthony Creaney
David Kornbluh
David Gellman
Daniel Padernacht
Sergio Marquez
Arlene Feldmeier

Affiliation:

CB8 Housing Committee, Chair
CB8 Housing Committee, Vice Chair
CB8, Board Chair
CB8, Vice Chair
CB8 Housing Committee
CB8 Housing Committee
CB8 Housing Committee
CB8 Housing Committee
CB8 Housing Committee
Community Board 8
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Guests:

Reverend Nathaniel Dixon	St. Stephens United Methodist Church
Dorothy Shepherd	St. Stephens United Methodist Church
Sydney Argit	St. Stephens United Methodist Church
Ben O'Connor	St. Stephens United Methodist Church
Tony Edwards	Councilman Y. Rodriguez's Office
Deputy Inspector Rasa	NYC Police Department – 50th Pct.
Police Officer Ramos	NYC Police Department – 50th Pct.
Iggy Terranova	NYC Department of Sanitation
Rodney Armanie	NYC Housing Authority/Mixed Finance
Anthony Dingle	NYC Housing Authority/Mixed Finance
Kim Theodore	NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA)
Carmen Diaz	NYCHA
Felicita Molina	NYCHA
Joycelyn Washington	NYCHA
Flauren Ray	NYCHA
Brian Honn	NYCHA
George Morales	NYCHA - Marble Hill Superintendent
Lucy Mercado	Community resident – Marble Hill
Paulette Shomo	Marble Hill Tenants Association, President
Yvette Hoover	Community resident
Michael Greene	Community resident

Maria Rivera, I. Bull, C. Wright, Rubylee Palma, Maryanne Santana, Diana Castillo, Anita Grelbaum, Gardenia Slade, Elizabeth Thompson, Jacki Piacher, Mana Cousins, and Maria.

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM.

Paul Ellis, Vice Chair of the Committee, introduced himself and welcomed the attendees and explained that he would be chairing the meeting. Mr. Ellis then went on to review the agenda for the evening. At Mr. Ellis' request, CB8 members and representatives of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), the 50th Precinct of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and the Department of Sanitation (DSNY) proceeded to introduce themselves.

David Kornbluh made a motion to approve the April 28, 2014 Housing Committee minutes in the form previously circulated. After being seconded and followed by discussion, the minutes were unanimously approved.

1) Discussion on Issues at Marble Hill Houses

Mr. Ellis detailed the recent activities of the Housing Committee regarding its work with the residents of Marble Hill Houses (Marble Hill), various agencies and elected officials to address the concerns of the residents at Marble Hill. Mr. Ellis explained that he, along with various committee members, had met with the President of the Marble Hill New Tenant's Association, Paulette Shomo, along with several members of the association, as well as representatives of NYCHA to discuss Marble Hill. A walk-through of Marble Hill was also conducted in order to observe and make note of current conditions.

Mr. Ellis explained that based upon the discussion with tenants, the three most important areas of concern for the residents at Marble Hill appear to be (1) security, (2) maintenance and (3) janitorial services.

Committee Chair Steve Balicer noted that he was pleased to see such a good turnout of the community residents and thanked all for attending. He also gave a special word of thanks to Reverend Dixon for allowing the meeting to be held at St. Stephens United Methodist Church.

Following the introductory remarks, the meeting moved into the substantive issues to be addressed as follows.

Security Cameras

NYCHA representatives reported that currently there are 53 closed circuit cameras in the Marble Hill complex, which are located in lobbies and on some roofs and some elevators. Videos can be monitored by the manager, as well as by the superintendent, who also has access. Once a day, the video system is checked by the manager or

superintendent to determine that it is operational. Cameras are fixed and can zoom in, but do not pan.

Deputy Inspector Paul Rasa advised that there have been a few instances where video was utilized to make "wanted" photos. D.I. Rasa also believes that a live feed to the precinct would be a deterrent to criminal activity.

NYCHA representatives noted that more funding would be needed to add additional cameras at Marble Hill. Brian Honan advised that additional cameras in the elevators will be forthcoming by December 2014, at which time all elevators will be equipped with cameras.

There was a discussion concerning the Viper System, which provides for real-time monitoring of the video feed generated by surveillance cameras. Mr. Honan advised that representatives from NYCHA would have to meet with the PSA, elected officials, and the tenants association to discuss the implementation of such a system.

Other Security/NYPD Issues

Mr. Honan said that NYCHA encourages tenants to organize neighborhood watch programs in its developments and advised that funding is in place to encourage such groups. There is a unit in place at NYCHA that assists such groups and also has equipment available. There was further discussion on the pros and cons of watch groups.

Committee members asked about the current NYPD personnel assigned to Marble Hill. D.I. Rasa advised that there are two uniformed police officers assigned to Marble Hill with a police vehicle, Police Officers Riley and McGuire. The officers normally work from 3 pm until 11:30 pm, during which time they will drive around the area as well as canvass the buildings by foot. The assigned officers do not work Sundays and Mondays at which time other officers may replace them. Plainclothes officers do frequent Marble Hill, and once a month there is a surge of 20 officers at Marble Hill.

Several comments were made regarding the keypad access system and the concern that over time the access codes become known to people who are not authorized to have them. Rodney Armanie advised he will check on the issue and also will see which buildings have codes.

Reverend Dixon advised of the consistent noise which occurs every Friday evening between 10:00 p.m. and 3:00 a.m. at the corner where St. Steven's Church is located, on Marble Hill Avenue. D.I. Rasa committed to look into issue and advised attendees to contact 311 for any noise complaints.

Kim Theodore explained that she did not receive reports from NYPD regarding incidents that occur at Marble Hill, which he explained would be useful to NYCHA in managing the property and in identifying problem tenants. It was agreed that Brian Honan and

Kim Theodore would meet with D.I. Rasa to discuss what information/documents may be shared on incidents occurring involving Marble Hill residents and/or in Marble Hill.

Paulette Shomo advised that the tenant's association meets on the third Thursday of the month.

Maintenance

NYCHA representatives explain the current system for logging and assigning of maintenance requests, including the manner in which requests are prioritized. There is one call system into a central location. They explained that when a complaint is logged, a maintenance worker then verifies that work is needed and then the office schedules the work to be performed.

There were numerous complaints raised by Marble Hill residents in attendance concerning the length of time it takes to resolve issues and issues that recur on a frequent basis. Based on a discussion, it appeared that the backlog is worse with respect to skilled trade work, which requires workers from offsite, than with maintenance issues that can be resolved by the staff in place at Marble Hill.

One Marble Hill resident complained of a two-year ongoing issue with backflow of sewage water into a sink in her apartment. NYCHA representatives committed to follow up on the issue.

Another resident complained of having to wait for five years for her apartment to be painted. Mr. Dingle explained that recently NYCHA had been able to allocate additional funds to paint apartments. On that basis, he explained that the pace of painting apartments at Marble Hill would increase significantly.

Reverend Dixon strongly urged NYCHA to resolve the long response time for the residents.

CB 8 member Dan Padernacht advised that a follow-up procedure needs to be instituted.

Janitorial and Sanitation

Several attendees observed that there was a pressing need for more garbage cans in and around Marble Hill. Iggy Terranova of the Department of Sanitation advised that his office does not place garbage cans on residential streets. NYCHA representatives explained that they were looking into the placement of additional garbage cans within the Marble Hill grounds, but they noted the problem that garbage cans are often stolen. They said that NYCHA is currently evaluating an appropriate type of garbage can to be used on the grounds.

The discussion resulted in a working group to look into where garbage cans are needed and possibly contact a sponsor to place garbage cans in and around Marble Hill.

A request was also made for more recycling bins. Community resident Michael Greene inquired as to the possibility of establishing an educational program for area residents and business establishments on recycling and sanitation issues.

Mr. Greene noted that Bailey Houses is facing issues similar to those discussed with respect to Marble Hill. He also noted that there is a rodent problem which is prevalent at Bailey Houses. Mr. Ellis advised that the committee will be addressing issues at Bailey Houses in a future meeting.

A resident advised that in Building 10, the staircase lights between Floors 7 and 8 have not been operable for the past six months.

Mr. Armanie advised he had been able to arrange for additional personnel to supplement the janitorial staff at Marble Hill. He explained that currently Marble Hill has a deficit of six positions which have been authorized but are vacant, out of a total of 15. He has arranged for a short-term "surge" followed by a sustained period during which additional personnel would be made available to address issues at Marble Hill several days a week. Committee members thanked him for his efforts to address these issues and requested that his office keep the committee updated as to long-term plans to fill these positions on a permanent basis.

There were several comments/complaints by residents about other residents who throw garbage outside their windows or who bring large garbage bags out of their apartments that will not fit down the garbage chutes and simply leave them around the complex. There were also concerns raised about individuals who are not Marble Hill residents who bring garbage down from other buildings or in their cars and then leave it on the surrounding streets. Mr. Terranova advised that DSNY only gives tickets regarding incidents occurring on city streets. Again the request was made by residents for educational literature for the community on sanitation issues.

Mr. Ellis thanked the audience and participants for attending, and he promised to maintain an ongoing dialogue among the community, agencies, elected officials and the Housing Committee and Board 8.

2) FY 2016 Budget Requests

The following proposed budget requests were presented by Mr. Ellis:

- Installation of sufficient security cameras at Marble Hill Houses, Bailey Avenue Houses and Fort Independence Houses to provide full surveillance coverage of all interior and exterior public spaces
- Hiring of sufficient personnel to staff all open caretaker positions at Marble Hill Houses, Bailey Avenue Houses and Fort Independence Houses
- Hiring of additional skilled trade workers to service Marble Hill Houses, Bailey Avenue Houses and Fort Independence Houses

- Placement of additional garbage cans and scheduling of additional pickup in the Marble Hill area

Upon a motion by Mr. Ellis which was duly seconded, the foregoing budget requests were unanimously approved.

3) New Business

None.

4) Old Business

None.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Julie Reyes,
CB 8 – Bronx
Housing Committee Member