

**BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8
MINUTES OF THE HOUSING COMMITTEE MEETING**

**HELD ON SEPTEMBER 22, 2014
RIVERDALE MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
5676 RIVERDALE AVENUE, 2ND FLOOR, BRONX NY 10471**

Board Members Present:

Paul Ellis
Steve Balicer
Sergio Marquez
Maria Khury
Julie Reyes
Georgia Santiago
David Toledo
David Kornbluh
Manuel Felix
Leonel Baez

Affiliation:

CB8 Housing Committee, Chair
CB8 Housing Committee, Vice Chair
CB8 Housing Committee
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Guests:

Ted Weinstein	HPD Director of Bronx Planning (Guest Speaker)
Andrew Sandler	Councilman Andrew Cohen's Office
Elizabeth Thompson	VP, KHNIA
G. Slade	KHNIA
Ruby Lee Palma	Marble Hill – Community Resident
Lucy Mercado	Marble Hill – Community Resident
David Gellman	

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 PM.

Mr. Paul Ellis, Chair of the Committee, introduced himself, and welcomed the attendees. Mr. Ellis reviewed the agenda for the evening.

Mr. Ted Weinstein, Director of Bronx Planning for the New York City Housing Preservation Department was present, and was introduced by Mr. Ellis as the guest speaker for the evening.

1) Discussion of current status and latest developments regarding the Mayor's affordable housing plan – Guest Speaker – Mr. Ted Weinstein, HPD Director of Bronx Planning

Mr. Weinstein discussed the duties, responsibilities and structure of the New York City Housing Preservation Department. He discussed the different types of land/property acquisition structures previously used by the city, such as the Urban Renewal Plan – eminent domain and in-rem foreclosures. He explained that the city no longer takes possession of properties; they rather have developers or third party entities acquire the properties via tax lien sales or third party transfers.

Mr. Weinstein discussed Mayor Bill de Blasio's plan for 200,000 units in 10 years. The mayor intends to reach that goal by preserving 120,000 existing units, and by facilitating the construction of 80,000 new units. Mr. Weinstein said that creativity would be required to reach the mayor's goal; creativity with zoning, identifying existing underused or unused city land, financing, and development.

Mr. Weinstein answered questions regarding plans in the Bronx, and within Board 8. He stated that fewer opportunities existed within the district, largely because the city does not own any significant tracts of land in the district which could be transferred to developers for development.

Mr. Weinstein explained that the manner in which the plan is more likely to impact Board 8 is through financial assistance to landlords to perform necessary maintenance on existing buildings, thereby preserving existing affordable housing stock.

In response to a question on mandatory inclusionary housing, Mr. Weinstein explained that this too is an area that could have an effect within Board 8.

There were several comments about the imperative to address affordable housing needs at all levels, so that there was assistance not simply to low income households but to middle-income households, such as a teacher married to a police officer. Mr. Balicer noted the interest we have as a city that the individuals who provide essential services be able to afford to live in the city rather than having to move to the outlying suburbs.

Mr. Weinstein defined market rate and affordable housing. He also stated that the city preferred the construction of mixed income properties, such as low-income units mixed with middle-income units. He noted that there was certainly an intention for the implementation of the plan to provide relief at lower as well as middle income levels.

Mr. Ellis inquired about the announced audit of potential city-owned sites and whether the audit had been completed and whether any sites had been identified in Board 8. Mr. Weinstein stated that the audit had not yet been completed.

In response to a question as to any proposals for Marble Hill Houses, given that this development has a "tower-in-the-park" configuration, Mr. Weinstein said he was unaware of any current plans concerning Marble Hill.

2) Report on follow-up with agencies from the June meeting on Marble Hill Houses

Mr. Ellis discussed the follow-up letter and the phone message left for Mr. Brian Honan, Director of State and City Legislative Affairs for the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), regarding the June 23rd committee meeting on Marble Hill Houses (Marble Hill). Mr. Honan replied via email earlier in the day on Monday, September 22, addressing some of the concerns brought up on June 23rd. Mr. Ellis distributed his response to those in attendance. Mr. Ellis reminded the committee members that there were plans for a public forum in the autumn to address the outstanding issues at Marble Hill. The forum may be organized in conjunction with City Councilmember Ydanis Rodriguez' office. Mr. Andrew Sandler inquired regarding the number of cameras installed per building. Ms. G. Slade stated that she had been advised that 53 cameras were installed.

Mr. Ellis suggested that a small working group be established to better deal with all the Marble Hill issues. Mr. David Toledo stated his view that NYCHA bears significant responsibility for the various problems facing Marble Hill. Several committee members and community residents expressed their interest in participating in this working group, which Mr. Ellis explained would be an informal group, open to any committee members and community residents that wished to participate.

Ms. Elizabeth Thompson inquired regarding one particular issue of a tenant's malfunctioning stove that had previously been identified to NYCHA as an example of the systemic problem NYCHA has with handling maintenance issues on a timely basis. Mr. Sergio Marquez advised that the stove was still malfunctioning. Marble Hill's management advised Mr. Marquez that they were looking to rectify the issue.

Mr. Ellis stated that the working group would be charged with following up on open issues from the June 23rd forum, developing proposals for strategies moving forward to improve conditions at Marble Hill and planning for the public forum.

3) Discussion and planning regarding committee agenda for the coming year

October 2014

Mr. Ellis suggested that we get a speaker to discuss the Senior Citizens Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) and Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) programs for the upcoming October Housing Committee meeting.

As of July 2014, income eligibility for individuals to qualify for SCRIE and DRIE programs has been increased to \$50,000 per year.

Mr. Marquez volunteered to organize the information session. Mr. Toledo and Ms. Thompson volunteered to assist Mr. Marquez. Mr. Marquez advised the committee of an upcoming SCRIE and DRIE information session hosted by the Bronx Borough President:

Wednesday, September 24, 2014
11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
New York Public Library
310 East Kingsbridge Road, Bronx, NY 10458

November 2014

Mr. Ellis noted the plan for a public forum concerning Marble Hill.

December 2014

Mr. Ellis suggested that this meeting address issues concerning Mitchell Lama developments in Board 8 and pending new legislation. Mr. Balicer and Mr. Toledo volunteered to take responsibility for the arrangements for this meeting.

4) Old Business

Mr. Ellis inquired regarding any improvements to the Marble Hill grounds. Ms. Lucy Mercado stated that she has noticed some improvements to the grounds, along with an improvement to the cleanliness of Marble Hill, but that additional improvement was required.

5) New Business

None.

The meeting adjourned at 9:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Leonel Baez,
CB 8 – Bronx
Housing Committee Member