

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

**MINUTES OF THE HOUSING COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON OCTOBER 26, 2009
AT THE BOARD OFFICE, 5676 RIVERDALE AVENUE**

PRESENT

Thomas Durham
Philip Friedman
Daniel Padernacht
E. Gau
Candice M. Giove
Colleen Hanley
Donald Ranshte
Lynn Schwarz

AFFILIATION

Committee Chair, CB 8
CB 8
CB 8
Amalgamated Houses
Riverdale Review
Amalgamated Houses
Department of Buildings
F.I.P.N.A

1. Introductions

- A. Introduce new committee members and guests.
- B. Meeting started on time at 7:30 PM.
- C. Approve September's Minutes.

2. Brief Chair report:

- A. Assemblyman Adriano Espaillat had a Town Hall Meeting at Marble Hill Houses on Wednesday, October 21, 2009.
 - a. Complaints residents had with NYCHA
 - b. Marble Hill Houses will only be accepting Section 8 residents.
 - c. Networked with many Housing officials.
- B. Department of Homeless Services (DHS) major issue.
 - a. DHS is housing the homeless in Bronx neighborhoods without notification to community leaders.
A resolution was introduced at Land Use and will be voted upon at the November general meeting by the entire board.
 - b. Councilman Koppell will introduce a similar resolution to the City Council.
- C. Follow up visit to Promenade Apartments at 150 West 225 Street will be planned.
 - a. The Promenade is a NYS funded Mitchell – Lama
 - b. New issues regarding building security came up at the Marble Hill Town Hall Meeting.
 - c. An old issue in regards to the fire sprinkler system surfaced.
- D. The Distribution of Special Needs Housing Throughout the Bronx.
 - a. Pictorial map report of the disbursement of Special Housing in each of the twelve Community Boards.
 - b. The Borough Presidents office produced this report.
 - c. The report, from my knowledge of the Bronx, has many errors.

- E. Colear Ave/College students vs. Residents
 - a. This item will stay in the Public Safety Committee.
- F. Hebrew Home looking for a letter of support in regards to Senior Supportive Housing.
 - a. This request will be tabled at the executive committee before being submitted to any committee.

3. Agenda

- A. Will discuss Mayor Bloomberg/City Council President Quinn 20 million dollar plan to take over failed development property and construction sites through out the city. Most importantly, what would be the impact on our community.
We invited DOB Community Affairs Exe. Mr. Donald Ranshte to find out where we are along in this program.
 - a. Mr. Ranshte first stated that there is an error in the information that was received by the Housing Committee and CB8. DOB Program will be submitted to the City Council as a new law 10-15 and hope to be approved and signed into law by November 15, 2009.
 - b. Mr. Ranshte explained that there is no funding involved in the DOB program but incentives to avoid new filing fees for permits that would expire and the financing involved to secure building permits.
 - c. Developers and property owners that enroll in the DOB program are to make their buildings and sites safe to standards imposed by the DOB.
 - d. Developers would need to remove such items as dangerous equipment, hazardous products and debris, secure fencing, back fill excavations and foundations. They would need to maintain the exterior sidewalks, such as clean and snow free.
 - e. Permits would be extended an additional two years from the date of enrollment. This will help developers ride out the hard economic times. DOB police a large numbers of buildings and sites with limited resources and insure safe sites while idle in the communities.
 - f. Mr. Ranshte had a short list of buildings and sites targeted for this program in our community. Committee members, Mr. Phil Friedman and Mrs. Lynn Schwarz will see that the DOB receives all the trouble sites identified by CB8.
 - g. Mr. Ranshte believes that the financial program is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Housing Development and Preservation (HPD).
 - h. We will have an HPD spoke person scheduled at our next meeting.
- B. Old Business: Update on properties from previous meeting. DOB's Mr. Donald Ranshte gave status of requested properties.
 - a. Mr. Ranshte brought the committee up to status on the list of buildings and sites. Most of the properties such as 3882 Cannon

Place have not changed from over the summer. Other new properties such as 3469 Cannon Place were scheduled to make presentations before the Land Use Committee.

- b. One property the committee found very troubling was 3404 Giles Place. 3404 Giles Place is zoned an R4 (two family house) yet it is being sold and advertised as a four family house.

This office has fielded many complaints by first time buyers. Some of their complaints were that the house they had purchased had illegal apartments, served with violation and large expenses to bring the house to code, not to mention the investment income they thought they were legally going to achieve.

- c. Mr. Ranshte said that their problem was with the realtor and that the DOB has no jurisdiction in cases like these. He simply explained that "its buyer beware!" The buyer should hire competent lawyers and bank appraisers. The DOB can force the zoning code but it cannot inspect the house for rooms unless invited in. The other option is to notify the FDNY to inspect for fire violation and who are granted access being in uniform. If their inspections find illegal dwellings and partitions the FDNY will notify the DOB. Both departments can issue evacuation orders of the premises.

- C. To hear grievances from Amalgamated Co-op Residents vs. Department of Housing & Community Renewal (DHCR)/ Board of Directors/Management.
 - a. Mr. Michael Gary who addressed CB8 at the October General Meeting during the public gallery was to be the guest speaker at the meeting but could not attend. In his place, Mrs. Colleen Hanley spoke on behalf of the residents of the Amalgamated Co-op.
 - b. The primary issue brought before the committee was the high cost of living to the five to six thousand estimated residents. The Amalgamated Co-op is chartered to be NYS funded affordable housing, yet the residents are constantly being hit with surcharges and fees. When they ask to have access to all the financial records, the Board of Directors and Management has not granted full disclosure. Due to the fact that DHCR oversees the property and it is a NYS agency, (brought DHCR report to committee as proof to claim) the residents feel the access of this information is theirs As of Right. The residents are asking CB8 to be the mediator that helps resolve this issue.
 - c. Mrs. Hanley brought other issues to the committee but the committee felt that the personal complaint should be resolved within the guide lines of any signed contracts, such as a proprietary lease and house rules. The committee also asked the residents if it was possible to supply CB8 with these type of documents.
 - d. I informed Mrs. Hanley that we will have a representative from DHCR to our next meeting to fully understand the oversight NYS has with the Amalgamated Co-op in all phases of the buildings operations. Mrs. Hanley was told she can attend this meeting but the focus will be Information gathering for the Housing Committee.

4. Adjourn

- A. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.
 - a. Next Housing meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 23, 2009.

Submitted by,

Thomas C. Durham
Chairman
Housing Committee