

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

MINUTES OF THE HOUSING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MARCH 22, 2010, AT RIVERDALE MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION 5676 RIVERDALE AVENUE

PRESENT

Thomas C. Durham
Steven Balicer
Anthony P. Creaney
Dan Padernacht
Lynn Schwarz
Kristin Hart
Laura Appelbaum

AFFILIATION

Committee Chair
CB 8
CB 8
CB 8
Community Committee Member
Ft. Independence Park Neighborhood Association
Riverdale Press

Meeting started at 7:30 PM.

Introduction of those in attendance.

Chairman's Report

Due to the fact that the Housing Committee did not meet in February, the chairman updated the committee to the current events and items and issues that took place in their absence.

1. There was an illegal conversion at 2807 Webb Avenue that was shutdown by HPD.
2. Mr. Paul D'Alessio head of the DOB's Demolition & Trouble Sites Unit contacted CB8 after reading the Riverdale Press follow up story on the many troubled construction projects in our community. Mr. D'Alessio said that he would gladly work with our community. We exchanged contact information and Mr. D' Alessio did send inspectors out to the sites he was not personally aware of in CB8.
3. Bronx Leadership Committee meeting with DHS Commissioner Robert V. Hess - Borough President Mr. Ruben Diaz Jr. invited the twelve Bronx Community Boards to a meeting with Commissioner Hess, Department of Homeless Services. CB8 District Manager Ms. Nicole Stent, the Housing Committee Chairman, on behalf of Board Chairman Mr. Damian McShane, attended. The meeting focused on the many housing problems for the homeless in Bronx County. This meeting covered subjects ranging from supportive, satellite and emergency housing to the economic cost and impact to our neighborhoods and the city. The agenda and concerns were so plentiful that Mr. Hess agreed to meet again with the Bronx Leadership Committee in the near future. A lot of the information from this meeting segways into tonight's Housing Meeting agenda.

Agenda

1. A Federal judge ruled that NYS is illegally housing its mentally ill population in institutional settings. The court found that this population should assimilate back into the communities and neighborhoods with supportive and independent housing - for those who can maintain themselves on their own. The ruling would require New York State to provide 1500 units of

supportive housing a year for three years to an estimated 4,300 residents. This ruling received a negative reaction from the state. The state sought to reduce and cap the number of housing units to 1000 over five years noting the current economic climate and expensive mandate. With the large number of appeals that have been filed by many jurisdictions, this ruling will be in the court system for a few years before we feel its full affect. The Riverdale Manor at West 254 Street and Broadway that houses 250 residents is one of the institutions in CB8 that would be most affected by this ruling.

2. "Housing First" is a new DHS approach to housing the homeless population. The DHS position is clearly explained by Commissioner Hess. Mr. Hess stated, "under the NYC Charter, I am mandated by law to house the city homeless population and failing to do so will lead to my arrest and incarceration." The housing committee had many questions about this program and its strategy. It was agreed to request a speaker from DHS to explain this approach in full detail for the April committee meeting.

3. The Housing Committee also discussed the NYCHA plan of federalizing city public housing. This program is designed to leave the actual property under the ownership of NYC but to force the federal government to pay its share of the subsidized housing cost. This program also incorporates partnerships with privately owned companies (Citibank) to sell and distribute bonds to fund this new program. The Housing Committee plans to have a NYCHA speaker to address the committees many questions on this issue either at the April or May meeting.

4. FY 2012 Budget Priorities: Due to the March 13 – 15 violent storms, both DOB & HPD were in emergency sessions dealing with all the structural storm damage. We are hoping all the city housing agencies will forward their budget priorities for the April, 2010 meeting.

Thomas Durham
Chairman
Housing Committee

TD:db (April 6, 2010)