

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

**HELD ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2014
AT THE FORT INDEPENDENCE COMMUNITY CENTER
3340 BAILEY AVENUE, BRONX, NY 10463**

Board/Committee Members

Paul Ellis
Steve Balicer
Anthony Creaney
David Gellman
David Kornbluh
Sergio Marquez
Lucy Mercado
Ruby Palma
Julie Reyes
Georgia Santiago

Affiliation

Committee Chair, CB 8
Committee Vice-Chair, CB 8
CB 8
Housing Committee Member
CB 8
CB 8
Housing Committee Member
Housing Committee Member
CB 8
CB 8

Guests

Hon. Fernando Cabrera
Karen Cooper
Tricia Mullen
Rodney Davis
Marie Hazel-Waldron
Barbara Lauray
N. Acevedo
M. Brown
A. Cooperman
R. Duran
M. Gasper
L. Gill
T. Gray
A. Grant
C. Graves
L. Jackson
P. Johnson
N. Martinez
M. Medina
C. Mercado
E. Mozie
T. Mullen
L. Rosario
K. Walker
E. Wardell

Councilmember – District #14
Councilmember Cabrera's Office
Riverdale Neighborhood House
NYCHA, Bronx Borough Administrator
Manager, Fort Independence/Bailey
President, Fort Independence Tenants Assoc.

The meeting was called to order at 7:15PM. The Chairperson, Paul Ellis, thanked the audience for attending. The Chair introduced the Community Board 8 Housing Committee members and the guest panel members: Rodney Davis, NYCHA – Bronx Borough Administrator;

Marie Hazel-Waldron, NYCHA, Manager, Fort Independence/Bailey Houses; and Ms. Barbara Lauray, President, Fort Independence Houses Tenant Association.

Due to not having a quorum at the start of the meeting, the approval of past minutes was deferred until the next committee meeting.

The Chair gave a background of Community Board 8 and its functions. The Chair welcomed all to attend future Committee and Board meetings.

The Chair then guided a discussion among tenants, panel and committee members and others in attendance on issues of concern at Fort Independence and Bailey Houses. At the request of several attendees, Sergio Marquez translated the proceedings to and from Spanish. Topics of discussion included the following matters:

- A question was raised regarding the status of funding for stoves and refrigerators. It was explained that Councilmember Cabrera had allocated funds for this purpose, but funding requirements were such that his funds might need to be applied to capital efforts, possibly upgrading gas lines. Mr. Davis promised to look into this matter and follow-up with the Committee.
- Numerous tenants complained of flooding in their apartments during rainstorms. Mr. Davis and Ms. Waldron were not able to fully speak to this issue, but the discussion suggested that the flooding was related to the exterior brick work and the need for pointing. When queried as to the status of pointing work, Mr. Davis did not know the schedule but promised to respond to the committee on this issue. In response to a request regarding Local Law 11, Mr. Davis did note that inspections are conducted annually. A request was made to make available the most recent report of inspection. Mr. Davis explained that the Board would have to make a formal request for the report, and that he, on his own, was unable to retrieve it for distribution.
- Several tenants spoke of a persistent problem of trash being left out in hallways, in front of trash chutes, or downstairs, without proper disposal. Ms. Lauray explained her view that tenants need to take individual responsibility for proper disposal. Ms. Waldron noted that there were limits to the capacity of her staff to maintain cleanliness in the building if tenants continued to dump trash improperly. She explained that she and her staff did make an effort to identify the tenants engaged in the improper dumping and to hold them accountable by fining them. But the general consensus of those in attendance was that the efforts being taken were not making a difference in changing people's incorrect behavior.
- There were mixed views as to the responsiveness of staff and the handling of maintenance issues. Many attendees expressed that the building staff is not responsive and maintenance is not handled timely. Others seemed basically satisfied.
- One tenant noted a particular problem with people loitering, drinking, and smoking in front of her apartment door that made her very concerned for her own safety. Ms. Waldron promised to speak with her after the meeting about this issue.

- Ms. Waldron expressed a willingness to speak with, and assist tenants in order to get their issues resolved. In addition, she advised that tenants should call the Police Department (NYPD) for urgent assistance after office hours.
- There were several complaints by audience members that the police were not responding in a timely matter. There were also complaints that there was a lack of police presence. When the subject was raised of the two officers who are dedicated to patrolling Marble Hill Houses and Fort Independence/Bailey Houses, everyone in attendance noted that they very rarely saw these officers around their buildings.
- The subject of loitering and homeless people sleeping in and around the buildings was raised by several tenants. It was agreed that this was an issue that needed to be raised with the 50th Precinct.
- With respect to noise complaints, there was a great deal of frustration with the way in which they get handled. Ms. Waldron explained that noise complaints need to be directed to 311 rather than NYPD. It may then apparently take a number of days before any action will be taken. Committee members noted that a process that did not provide a way for a police officer to respond to the complaint in real time was of little value.
- Tenants further explained that one difficulty that they have is that whenever a complaint is made that requires a response from the 50th Precinct, the first thing the police officers do upon arrival is to knock on the door of the person who lodged the complaint, making it clear to everyone else who had called the police. The tenants explained that under those circumstances, they were often unwilling to call the police, for fear of their own safety.
- Ms. Waldron explained that general complaints should be made to the housing assistant in the management office, as well as to 311.

Councilmember Cabrera thanked all for attending the meeting. He addressed the audience, and spoke of the funds that had been allocated to Fort Independence Houses.

The Chair concluded the meeting, advising that the Housing Committee and Community Board 8 look forward to ongoing collaboration with the community of the Fort Independence and Bailey Houses.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Minutes recorded by,
David Gellman
Housing Committee Member

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Ellis
Chairperson
Housing Committee, CB-8