

**PENDING COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

**BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8**

**MINUTES OF THE HOUSING COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON MONDAY, MAY 22, 2017  
AT THE RIVERDALE YM/YWHA – YOUTH LOUNGE  
5625 ARLINGTON AVENUE, BRONX NY 10471**

**Board Members Present:**

Paul Ellis  
David Gellman  
Julie Reyes  
Georgia Santiago

**Affiliation:**

CB8 Housing Committee, Chairman  
CB8 Housing Committee  
CB8 Housing Committee  
CB8 Housing Committee

**Guests:**

Matthew Cruz  
Werner de Foe  
Diane Sargent

NYC Department of Buildings (DOB)  
NYC Department of Buildings (DOB)  
Community Resident

**Absent:**

Amy Joy Robateau  
Omar Murray  
James Santiago  
John Sims

CB8 Housing Committee, Vice Chair  
CB8 Housing Committee  
CB8 Housing Committee  
Community Committee Member

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 P.M.

Paul Ellis, Chair of the Committee, welcomed the attendees and introduced himself. Mr. Ellis then went on to review the agenda for the evening.

**1. Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made to approve the March 27, 2017 and April 24, 2017 Housing Committee minutes. After being seconded and followed by discussion, the minutes were unanimously approved.

**2. Discussion Concerning Current Bronx Activities and Initiatives and FY 2019 Budget Priorities for the NYC Department of Buildings**

Mr. Ellis introduced the following individuals: Werner de Foe, Bronx Borough Commissioner, NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) and Matthew Cruz, Bronx External Affairs, DOB.

Mr. Ellis opened the discussion by noting some of the issues that have been of concern in the past that the Committee would like to address this evening. Among the issues noted by Mr. Ellis were DOB budgetary needs, especially given the new administration in Washington DC, current staffing levels, current complaint backlog and average response time, based on different types of complaints, and status of efforts to address ongoing problem with illegal conversions in CB8.

Mr. de Foe advised that DOB is currently self-sufficient and should not be impacted by federal budget cuts. In response to a question, he noted that fees obtained by the DOB go into the General budget.

A question was posed regarding whether there were any anticipated budgetary shortfalls for DOB. Mr. de Foe indicated that he believed that the current budget provided sufficient resources for the activities of Bronx office of DOB. He noted that staffing is currently handled centrally for the borough. Current staff consists of 12 plan examiners, five enforcement officers, four construction inspectors and three development inspectors.

He explained the three categories of complaints, A, B, and C:

- Category A - Response is to be conducted within 24 hours
- Category B – Response is to take place within one month
- Category C – Response is to take place within three months

Mr. de Foe noted that there are no significant backlogs at this time.

There was a brief discussion concerning the Cannon Place retaining wall.

Mr. Ellis noted that in the past there had been insufficient vehicles to allow inspectors to move efficiently among different locations. Mr. de Foe explained that currently there are enough vehicles in the office, which allows for faster response times.

A question was posed as to the process for correcting an improper curb cut. Mr. de Foe advised that once a new building is completed, NYC Department of Traffic has jurisdiction over curb cuts, not DOB.

Mr. Ellis raised the long-standing concern regarding illegal conversions, especially in the Manhattan College area. Mr. de Foe advised that the agency has difficulty in obtaining access unless there is either (1) an open permit, or (2) a life and safety issue. Otherwise, if someone does not voluntarily let in the DOB inspector, a search warrant must be obtained.

In the instances where the fire department is at a location and contacts DOB to respond, they may then gain access. The fire department usually will contact DOB when they see evidence of a single room occupancy facility.

In response to a request by Mr. Ellis, Mr. Cruz committed to follow up with the committee to provide statistics on the number of illegal conversions and the number and type of violations and related statistics within CB8.

Mr. de Foe noted that the office has been improving efficiency, and that most processes are now computerized which contributes to better tracking of complaints.

A brief discussion followed regarding 3469 Cannon Place. Mr. de Foe noted that while DOB inspectors are able to verify compliance regarding issues such as work hours and variances, they are not able to do measurements concerning issues such as noise and dust.

David Gellman raised a question regarding sidewalk sheds and the length of time which they stay in place. He noted that co-ops incur significant expenses for sheds that remain up longer than necessary. De Foe advised that most sheds are required in connection with Local Law 11. Prior to a shed being removed, the building needs to file a permit to do the necessary work. If the issue is not resolved, then the shed has to stay up. Once the job is signed off, the shed may then be removed. Mr. Cruz committed provide the Committee Chair with a copy of the rules on this topic.

Discussion continued on the topic of enclosed terraces. Mr. de Foe explained that the Zoning Resolution states that if the enclosure covers more than 75% of the terrace, the enclosed terrace is then considered floor area and increases the floor area ratio (FAR). This may then turn into an enforcement issue.

### **3. Discussion Concerning FY 2019 Budget Priorities for the NYC Housing Authority**

This agenda item was tabled for the Committee's June meeting.

### **4. Old Business**

Mr. Ellis noted that the Committee's Housing Resource Guide is almost completed. It will be going to press shortly in English and Spanish.

### **5. New Business**

Past Community Board member Diane Sargent was welcomed to the meeting.

The next committee meeting will be held on a date to be determined.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Minutes recorded by,

Julie Reyes  
Housing Committee Member  
Bronx Community Board 8

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Ellis  
Chairperson  
Housing Committee  
Bronx Community Board 8