

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8
Minutes of the Housing Committee Meeting
Held on September 26, 2011

PRESENT

Thomas C. Durham
Steven Balicer
Anthony Creaney
Philip Friedman
Julie Reyes
Georgia Santiago
David Lehman
Brendan McHugh
Hema Parmar
Donald Ranschte
Andrew Sandler
Josiris Urena
Lamont K. Williams

AFFILIATION

Cmte Chair, CB8
CB8
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CB8
Health Solutions
Riverdale Review
NYC in Focus
DOB
rep. City Councilmember G. Oliver Koppell
rep. NYS Senator Gustavo Rivera
Rapid Realty

Meeting started at 7:35 PM.

1. Introductions

Introduced Ms. Josiris (Josie) Urena from NYS Senator Gustavo Rivera's office.

2. Approved the minutes of the last Housing Committee Meeting, May 23, 2011

3. Brief chairs report

A. Housing Committee Chairman Thomas C. Durham announced that most of his report is the agenda which will be following the guest presenter Mr. David Lehmann from Health Solutions Organization and Mr. Donald Ranschte from Department of Buildings (DOB).

4. Agenda

A. BRONX SMOKE-FREE PARTNERSHIP

- a. Mr. David Lehmann from Health Solutions Organization, organization is working with city elected officials and agencies to create smoke free apartments buildings through out the city.
- b. Mr. Lehmann pointed out through many stats that Bronx County has the highest concentration of smokers to its population but the good news that the 16% number from the 2000 census is now down to 14% from the 2010 census. The largest number of smokers are still found in the inner city and by males between ages 16 to 40.

- c. However their goal is to stop all residents from second hand smoke and especially those who live in multi- dwellings where second hand smoke can follow plumbing, wiring, heat and air ducts that are shared by the apartments in a common building.
 - d. Enforcement of this type of plan will be strictly volunteered. Hoping that building owners, board of directors and building management companies will incorporate smoke free apartments in their least agreements and buildings' bylaws.
 - e. Mr. Lehman stated that we all know the health benefits of living in a smoke free environment but Mr. Lehmann also produced stats that show maintenance cost to maintain smoke free apartments are less.
 - f. At this time, there are no smoke free apartment buildings in Bronx Community Board 8 (CB8). But with the success of organization like Smoke-Free Partnerships to give us smoke free parks and beaches this past summer, smoke free apartment buildings will be soon the norm in NYC than something on someone's wish list.
 - g. The Bronx Smoke-Free Partnership's mission statement and contact information will be attached to these minutes.
- B. Follow ups and updates of last semester's Housing Committee issues:
- a. Mr. Donald Ranshte from the DOB opened this segment of the agenda by updating the Housing Committee on the status of two properties that came before this committee. 3333 Giles Avenue and 3882 Cannon Place.
 - b. 3333 Giles Place, a vacant lot where a partially constructed foundation was in place for an R6 apartment building. The construction job was stopped when the neighboring residents sued the developers on two grounds, the first was that the building was out character with the existing homes on the street and the second issue, was that the foundation exceeded the property lines. Part of the foundation extended into the bed of a mapped street. After many court battles, the Appeals Court ruled in favor of the developer and 3333 Giles Pace will be the address of a new multi-dwelling R6 apartment building.
 - c. 3882 Cannon Place: This is a privately funded ten SRO supportive home that is sitting vacated. Mr. Ranshte stated that the developer, Mr. Fernandez never came to the DOB to file for a Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) naming a Not-for-Profit (the only qualified occupant). The developer has never filed for any of the required final inspections necessary to qualify for a C of O. The Housing Committee will address this building at a future date

- in the Van Cortlandt Village (VCV) neighborhood where this building sits.
- d. NYCHA Properties (New York City Housing Authority): CB8 has two NYCHA complexes within its district. Ft Independence/Bailey Houses and Marble Hill Houses. The two main follow-up issues are the status of the resolutions regarding removing seniors to other neighborhoods when down sizing them to smaller apartments. The results of this policy causes hardships for these seniors alienating them from family, friends and support systems such as medical, dental and quality of life programs. The second issue is to follow up on the security cameras in Marble Hill Houses or more importantly, the lack of the promised security cameras.
 - e. Green Fuel Conversion: Although the Mayor is outlawing the two most pollutant home heating fuels #6 (by year 2015) and #4 (by year 2030) was an environmental and health initiative, a huge quality of life issue, for those who would have to comply to the new regulations, the changes threaten sustaining affordable housing for all. Over ten thousand apartment buildings across NYC will be affected. The Housing Committee will be collaborating with the Environment/Sanitation and Health and Hospital committees to gather all the information available for a possible forum to educate all of our residents in the near future. Many residential buildings will need financial assistance to comply with the new heat law. The Chairman's residence building just completed the fuel heat conversion and invited all present to join the Environment/Sanitation Chairman on Wednesday, September 28, 2011 to tour 3875 Waldo Avenue. This tour will point out the many hidden expensive costs in complying to this new law.
 - f. Storm damage: 2721 Palisades Avenue in Spuyten Duyvil had part of its foundation wash down the hill. The building had to be stabilized, no injuries were reported. Board member Ms. Julie Reyes asked all if they new of any buildings that were damaged after our recent earthquake. She reported 4705 Henry Hudson PKWY reported swaying and fellow board member Ms. Georgia Santiago reported building in #8 (address to be investigated) in Marble Hill Houses NYCHA reported the same. The Housing Committee will ask DOB to take a look at these buildings. Ms. Reyes asked if NYC building codes accounted for earthquakes. The Chairman directed the question to the committee's NYS license structural engineer, board member Mr. Phil Friedman. Mr. Friedman said that since NYC is not in a cymic region, buildings do not have to comply to same requirements as those buildings built in designated earthquake zones.

- g. Noteworthy mentioning: Mr. Friedman has a blog on Facebook “Engineering Consulting for Everyone” this service is free to all and is a great service for first time home buyers, home owners, multi dwellers, realtors and many other housing question seekers. The Blog connect you to links of the many city agencies and organization dealing with housing issues.
- h. Before Mr. Ranshte departed, I thanked him for participating in the new policy that allows access to illegal conversion. Along with Department of Housing Preservation & Developments’ (HPD) Mike Lugo, NYC Fire Department’s (FDNY) Mike Maristo, CB8 Public Safety Committee and former and present member of the Housing Committee who April 2010 joint meeting laid the ground work and policy pushed by our Councilman, Oliver Koppell. Quoting myself “Who doesn’t open the door for the fire department?” The policy to access problem housing put a collaborating of DOB, HPD inspectors accompanied by a uniformed FDNY fire fighter to gain access to illegally converted homes and apartments. These types of conversions are death traps to those who occupy them and for the agencies personnel that has to enter them. We saw this policy in action at 3835 Bailey Avenue when this unit closed down a one family home that housed over 21 individuals.
We can make a difference!

5. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:55PM

Next Housing meeting is scheduled Monday, October 24, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas C. Durham
Chair