

## BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

### MINUTES OF THE HOUSING COMMITTEE MAY 29, 2012 AT THE RIVERDALE MENTAL HEALTH

#### PRESENT

Thomas C. Durham, Committee Chair  
Steven Balicer  
Tony Creaney  
Robert Fanuzzi  
Georgia Santiago  
Oda Friedheim  
Justin Haines  
Lindsay Haddix  
Matthew Hassett  
Ted Weinstein

#### AFFILIATION

CB8  
CB8  
CB8  
CB8 Board Chair  
CB8  
Legal Aid  
Bronx Legal Services  
Housing Preservation Development (HPD)  
Center for NYC Neighborhoods  
HPD

#### I. Budget Priorities

Chair Durham invited representatives from HPD to contribute budget priorities for Housing committee. Mr. Ted Weinstein, Bronx Director of HPD, requested more money for code enforcement and staff to assist agency mission of neighborhood preservation in CB 8. In response to question from R. Fanuzzi regarding Article 11 funding for use in Mitchell-Lama conversions, HPD clarified that the program, which gives shareholders greater equity in city-subsidized co-operatives, is financed through the tax code.

In response to question from Chair Durham, Lindsay Haddix also discussed the Pro-Active Preservation Initiative, a program which intervenes in financially troubled publicly supported buildings and developments before the problems become irrevocable or spur further action. Chair noted that three such buildings in area code 10463 reached this tipping point and that HDP launched initiative in were assisted by the HPD initiative.

#### II. Foreclosure Prevention

Chair Durham gave the floor to representatives of three organizations currently involved in the fight to prevent foreclosures in the Bronx.

- A. Oda Friedham is an attorney with the Legal Aid Society who operates the organization's Foreclosure Prevention Program. She brings special expertise to assisting owners of condos and co-ops in seeking modification of the terms of the mortgage or forbearance from lenders. The services of Legal Aid are free.
- B. Justin Hayes from Bronx Legal Services NYC discussed the operation of the Foreclosure Prevention Unit. The unit has an office in the Bronx County Courthouse and meets with applicants seeking modification in the terms of their mortgage and co-op owners who have trouble meeting maintenance bills. Co-operators are entitled to 90 days notice of foreclosure actions.
- C. Matthew Hassett from the Center for NYC Neighborhoods described the work of his organization. CNYCN was created to address the local repercussions of the national foreclosure crisis. Through comprehensive citywide programming that includes legal services, housing counseling, and consumer education, CNYCN pursues multiple strategies to assist those at risk of losing their homes to

foreclosure - both homeowners and renters alike. CNYCN seeks to support distressed homeowners retain their equity, and preserve New York City neighborhoods by limiting the negative impacts of foreclosure, property flipping, and abandonment. CNYCN is funded through grants from government agencies, foundations, and financial institutions.

CNYCN works with clients who are serviced by Legal Aid and Bronx Legal Services NYC, employing 26 housing counselors. An important source for one of their programs—the Mortgage Assistance Program—comes from HPD. This program provides financial assistance for qualified homeowners who cannot meet their mortgage terms. Housing committee members expressed interest in expanding MAP beyond its present scope, as it serves homeowners of median income.

CNYCN also uses graphic information systems to map and predict foreclosure. The “lis pendens” or “suit pending” designation for identifying concentrations of financially distressed households and tracking ongoing foreclosure and eviction actions.

Chair Durham thanked all participants in his foreclosure prevention program and invited them back to future meetings of the Housing Committee.

### III. New Business

- A. In response to question from R. Fanuzzi, Mr. Weinstein of HPD described policies for subsidizing affordable housing development. He stressed that decisions are made on a case by case basis and enforce income restrictions that are targeted for individual communities. Housing committee members noted that affordable housing subsidies have produced proposed developments that are frequently opposed by community members of CB8 for being out of scale or overbuilt for their location. Mr. Weinstein offered to return to the Housing Committee to talk further about HPD’s support of affordable housing.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair, Thomas Durham

Committee Member, Robert Fanuzzi