

Community Board 12, Manhattan

Minutes of the October 6, 2016 Meeting of the Housing and Human Services Committee

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 530 West 166<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10032

Members Present: Felipe Wityk-Sanche (FWS); Barbara Frazier (BF); Fern Hertzberg (FH); Estevan Nembhard (EN); Carlos Suero (CS)

Members Excused: Ayisha Ogilvie

Members Absent: Katherine Diaz; Jay Mazur

Other Board Members: Jennifer Chung; Maria Luna

7:02pm: Call to order & introductory remarks by the Assistant Chair, quorum having been achieved.

7:08pm: **2018 FY HHS Budget Priorities**

- Capital Budget priority requested by public for the Renovation of Buildings at 21 Arden Street and 2110 Amsterdam Avenue
- Same request had been made in October 29, 2014 Letter to Commissioner Been:
  - *WHEREAS: 21 Arden Street and 2110 Amsterdam Avenue are vacant properties owned and boarded-up by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation & Development that provide excellent opportunities for the development of affordable housing in Washington Heights-Inwood . . . RESOLVED: Community Board 12, Manhattan recommends the New York City Department of Housing Preservation & Development renovate, at the earliest possible opportunity, 21 Arden Street and 2110 Amsterdam Avenue under programs that will facilitate their redevelopment as 100% affordable housing that is income-targeted to the median income so as to be affordable to of [sic] existing residents of Washington Heights and Inwood.*
  - BF noted that this project was made a priority in 2014, but not yet acted upon. BF further noted that tenants of these properties have been displaced to other HDFC properties since as early as 2014, and social/moral considerations require making this project a priority again to ensure these tenants can return home. Finally, BF noted we should focus on the restoration of these properties as historical properties.
  - It was noted that a local City council member had committed \$0.5M of his own capital towards this project at 21 Arden Street, and despite funds already raised for this project, another \$1.5M is still needed.
  - It was further noted that no permits have been filed with the city for any renovations at these properties in over 10 years, signaling this is not yet a priority with the City.
  - BF and FWS proposed ranking this project as number 1 this year.
  - Poll taken to determine whether this project should be presented at the next Board meeting; approved with no objection. EN will present this project to the Board at the next Board meeting.

7:17pm: **HDFC Proposed Regulatory Agreement**

- It was noted by a member of the public that the HDFC is unfairly imposing the proposed REGULATORY AGREEMENT across all HDFC cooperatives (co-op), regardless of management or ownership structure of the individual HDFC co-op buildings. The goal of this agreement is to

abate taxes in order to maintain the affordable housing status of these buildings. However, the current nature of these buildings, considerations of re-sale values, median income in NYC, and history of these buildings suggests that the HDFC is being unreasonable in imposing such an agreement.

- BF noted that the Committee is fully aware of the issues, notably that the city expects these buildings to be responsible for the costs to renovate and repair the buildings, but does not provide an adequate mechanism for raising or holding funds to make such renovations or repairs.
- It was noted that a resolution about this specific issue is currently before CB9, and once that resolution is presented and discussed, CB12 will have an opportunity to consider and review a similar proposal for resolution.
- The public and Committee members extensively discussed the underlying rationale capping re-sale value of HDFC co-op properties, including a discussion of the underlying history leading to the current ownership and management structures. It should be noted that the Committee and public also had a robust discussion about the meaning of “affordable housing” as it relates to the Washington Heights/Inwood community and local median incomes.
- It was noted that officials from the City and HDFC may not have adequately consulted with property owners and/or management or other stakeholders before drafting the proposed REGULATORY AGREEMENT.
- FWS proposed inviting officials from the City and/or HDFC to present and discuss this issue at a future Committee meeting to better understand the rationale and expectations from the REGULATORY AGREEMENT.

8:00pm: **2018 FY HHS Budget Priorities (continued)**

- Committee extended discussion to the 2018 Expense Budget and Operating Budget Rankings
- Capital Expenses: Committee agreed to maintain the same rankings as last year, with the addition of the following to the following (addition is **bolded**): (Committee Ranking #3) Funding for more “Peace Officers” from DHS as they have the legal authority to make arrests and maintain order both inside and outside the Fort Washington Men’s Shelter; **and funding for information/referrals and coordination of services for existing tenants to remain in their communities to prevent eviction and/or displacement.**
  - It was noted that homelessness was not explicitly discussed in last year’s rankings and that funding is needed to ensure that available services are made known to the people who need them most, as well as supportive counseling to help people remain in existing housing.
  - It was noted that the Right To Counsel program (Ranked #1 by the Committee) is not yet a law with the city yet, and therefore not yet funded. EN noted that there are, however, legal services offered through existing organizations (i.e. Legal Aid) to provide free legal services in specific housing-related situations (i.e. evictions).
  - BF raised concerns about policing at homeless shelters and ways to ensure that residents of homeless shelters are provided a safe environment through increased peace officers, social workers and rehab services. BF suggested inviting representatives from local shelters to speak with the Committee about current issues impacting shelters and residents for added context and background.
- Capital Budget: Committee agreed to prioritize the Renovation of Buildings at 21 Arden Street and 2110 Amsterdam Avenue.
  - The Committee agreed to the following proposal as a priority:

- *Permanent Long Term Affordable Housing (Construction) – Build a high number of these apartments/housing units with immediate priority given to CB12M and is targeted towards residents with the median income of existing residents so as to be affordable to existing residents of Washington Heights and Inwood, as no new affordable housing has been constructed in this district since 2001.*
- With respect to last year’s consideration of the Mayor’s Ten Year Plan for building new affordable housing, there is concern about whether this project would substantively impact the proposal. The Committee instead proposed replacing this term with something to denote the concept of “affordable housing”.
- EN was concerned that the use of the term “affordable housing” might be controversial and raise additional questions about the meaning of this term in the context of this proposal.
- The Committee maintains the general order for subsequent rankings. Therefore, the proposals identified previously as Rankings 2, 3, 4, and 5 remain the same this year.

8:35pm: **New Business**

- Dyckman Houses Resident’s Council and privatization of housing: explained as the privatization of open spaces through cost-sharing development rights. Committee suggests inviting NYCHA officials and members of the Resident’s Council to discuss the project and impact on community. By a majority, the Committee voted to invite Resident’s Counsel to December meeting, and NYCHA to January meeting (in order to focus on HDFC co-op issue in November). EN to coordinate invitation to Resident’s Council members and NYCHA representatives/City Council Members.
- Updates on ARC lease: FH updated the Committee on the ARC lease. Landlord is permitting month-to-month until June. Local officials assisting in efforts to re-negotiate lease.
  - It was noted that a new hotel/community space is planned for 181<sup>st</sup> Street and Amsterdam that could provide some assistance to local community.
  - Committee members will consider a joint resolution with the Aging Committee, along with assistance from local government officials, to seek out a solution.
- CS has volunteered to take minutes at the next Committee meeting.

9:15pm: Meeting Adjourned.