

Community Board 12, Manhattan
Minutes for the Housing and Human Services Committee Meeting
June 4th 2015 – Office Meeting Space
530 West 166th Street – 6th Floor
New York, NY 10032

Committee Members Present (6): Richard Lewis (Chair), Katherine Diaz, Barbara Frazier, Jay Mazur, Esetvan Nemhard and Felipe Wityk Sanchez.

Committee Members Absent (2): David Mattera and Ayisha Ogilvie.

Board Members (2): Steve Simon and Domingo Estevez.

Public Member (1): Christina Burgess.

Public Speakers List (1): John Waldman (NYC Department of Buildings).

Public (6): Joel Yoffie, Cheryl Miller, Sarah Fisher, Maureen Murphy, Adina Garcia, and Janet Badia.

Staff: Paola Garcia.

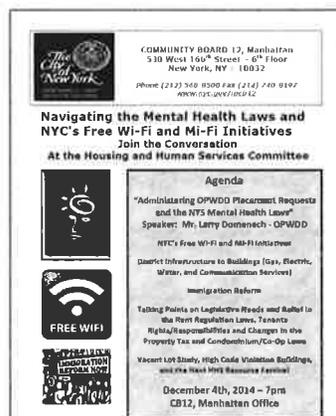
Welcome, Opening Remarks, and the Agenda. Richard Lewis, HHS Committee Chair called the meeting to order at 7:10pm. Meeting was set to record to a digital audio file on an OLYMPUS @device. Board members introduced themselves with a brief biography and expressed their areas of interest as did members of the public present. A quorum was present during the entire meeting. Topics for tonight's agenda were outlined and with committee agreement the order was changed to allow for our guest John Waldman (NYC Department of Buildings) to leave the meeting early due to a long trip home.

The chair informed the body that four newly appointed members had been added to the committee (Katherine Diaz, David Mattera, Barbara Frazier, and Estevan Nembhard) as replacements. The committee's former Assistant Chair, Yahaira Alonzo is now chair of Traffic and Transportation Committee, Alyce Smith is now Assistant Chair of the Youth and Education Committee and Lorena Castro did not re-apply to the board.

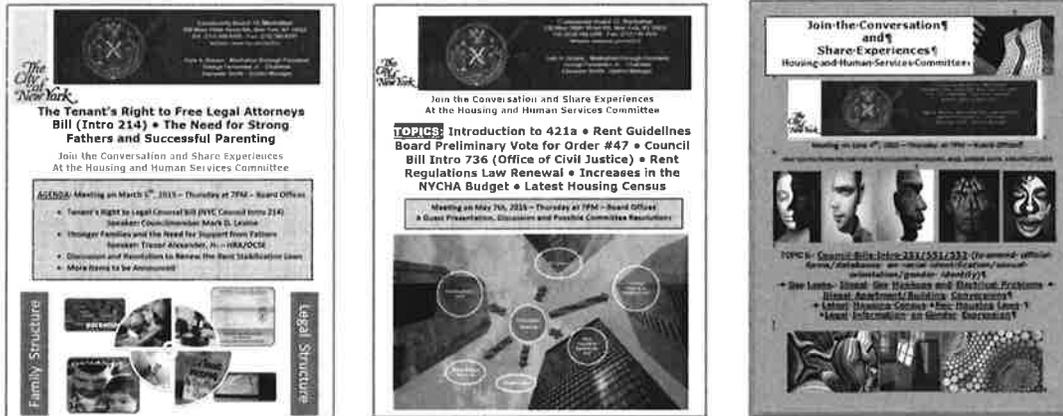
HHS Committee Chair's Report

There was a general discussion of the committee's goals and how we arrived at consensus and that ideology could not trump factual data when we make findings and the determinations in our resolutions. A goal of producing at least ten resolutions per year has now become a standard of this committee. And with the help of the full board we have passed a record thirteen (13) resolutions this season so far. We have moved at more promotional materials to the public for our meetings

Shown below are selections of the HHS Committee flyers produced for our meetings during this season.



These flyers are an attempt to liven up the board's heavy text driven agendum with graphics.



There was a general discussion on the fate of the rent regulation and 421a tax exemption laws during this year's state legislative session. There have been an ever increasing number of local tenant rent protests, campaigns by tenant advocates and their organizations, city council and mayoralty actions, support and meetings and supportive newspaper editorials since our last meeting on May 7th. These activities are a consequence to the gridlock in Albany with the Assembly, Senate and the Governor's different and conflicting plans, changing leadership, and pressure by the tenant and real estate special interest groups.

Committee members have participated in several demonstrations and marches locally and in Albany. One committee member was arrested for peaceful civil disobedience at the Governor's office in Albany. The chair has attended several meetings and events.

- On Saturday May 9th, you committee chair attended a meeting in Harlem with Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, Assembly member Denny Farrell, Assembly member Keith Wright, Assembly member Guillermo Linares, and Senator Adriano Espaillat. The meeting was co-hosted by Jeannie Dubanau (President- RENA) and Ava Farkas (New Executive Director – Met Council on Housing).
- On May 11th the chair attended a large meeting with the NYC Economic Development Commission that included council member Ydannis Rodriquez, the Board's Chair George Fernandez, the Department of City Planning and Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President (MBP) and her staff at the Mannhatts Bible Church regarding the Inwood Rezoning Initiative. There will be other meetings on this matter soon.
- On May 18th the chair attended the opening of the MBP storefront Office at 431 West 125th Street.
- On May 20th the chair attended a meeting with the NYC Alliance to Preserve Public Housing, where the board is a member. NYCHA's NextGeneration Plan was announced by the Mayor the day before. See <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/nextgen-nycha-web.pdf> At that meeting it was revealed that Governor Andrew Cuomo reneged on the \$100 Million offer for NYCHA and instead gave several Assembly members \$2 Million each for incidental NYCHA repairs that they had a week to request from DASNY and DHR. Prior to this offer NYCHA had responsibly submitted a detailed plan that prioritized in a one to five (best to worst) ranking system roof and plumbing repairs for all its property's. Without roof repairs, leaks occurs on the upper floors and eventually to lower floors, and cost increase daily from mold abatements, pipes gets corroded in sewage and other areas, etc. NYCHA member s of the Alliance felt the governor's actions amounted to just pork barrow politics and that idea gained support from several newspapers and the media.

- On May 27th the chair attended with George Fernandez, CB12, M Chair at a City Council General and Stated meeting where Intro 736 (the creation of the Office of Civil Justice) was passed by the full council and now awaits the signature of Mayor Bill de Blasio.
- On May 28th an oversight hearing at the City Council's Committee on Public Housing Committee the NYCHA Next Generation Plan was reviewed as well as the Governor's rejection of \$100 Million matching funds. Council member Mark Levine spoke out in opposition to the governor's new plan as did every council member present at the hearing.
- On June 1st, the chair attended a rally at the NYS Housing Court Building on Centre Street for Intro 214 (Right to Council Bill) that the CB12, M supported with a resolution in April.
- On June 13th the chair will participate in a panel with Gale Brewer (MBP), Kristin Clarke (NYS Department of Human Rights, Elsie Vasquez (Moderator – President of Palante Harlem), and John Gorman (Attorney) at the De-mystifying Housing Conference. The chair will also serve as a facilitator for other Community Board housing chairs in a special workshop on "The role of Community Boards and Affordable Housing" and district wide issues. Keith Wright will be featured speaker in that workshop. The two day will take place at the State office building in Harlem and videos will be published. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amBza4xTLgQ>

Source Documents Released at the Meeting.

The following source documents (29) were distributed or made available at the meeting:

- Point Maps Based on 311 Complaints About Illegal Conversions
<https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Housing-Development/311-Complaints-About-Illegal-Conversions-Point-Map/vvfi-e62b>
- Con Edison Reveals Locations of Active Gas Leaks Months After I-Team Reported Utility's Refusal to Do So <http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/Utilities-Gas-Leaks-Location-Con-Edison-Secret-Map-286139371.html>
- Gas leaks information from Con Edison <http://www.coned.com/customercentral/gas-leak-infographic.jpg> and <http://www.coned.com/customercentral/gasleakmap.asp> and <http://www.coned.com/customercentral/gasleakmap.asp> and http://www.coned.com/customercentral/gasleak_faqs.asp and http://apps.coned.com/stormcenter_external/default.html
- Con Ed Found 150 Illegal Gas Hookups in 2014, And Some Say That's Low
<http://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20150511/east-village/con-ed-found-150-illegal-gas-hookups-2014-some-say-thats-low>
- Illegal Conversions
http://www.nyc.gov/html/dob/downloads/pdf/illegal_conversion_factsheet.pdf
- THE NYC COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS DIVISION May 11, 2015 on Intro 251,551 and 552 .Local Laws to amend the New York city charter, in relation to the collection of demographic data and sub-demographic groups. in relation to requiring city agencies to amend their official forms and databases to accommodate multiracial identification where racial identification is required.
<http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=1709693&GUID=DF6A0998-A600-43B1-96FD-8C3F91F3A7B5&Options=&Search=>
- Gender Identify and Gender Expression <http://www.nyc.gov/html/cchr/html/publications/gender-identity-infocard.shtml> and http://www.nyc.gov/html/cchr/downloads/pdf/publications/GenderID_Card2015.pdf
- Fair Housing NYC <http://www.nyc.gov/html/cchr/html/coverage/source-of-income.shtml>

- New York City Housing By the Numbers Part 1: PowerPoint presentation (copies upon request available from the community board office with due notice).

Discussion on Building/Apartments Gas Leaks, Illegal Hookups and Electrical Problems in our District - John Waldman NYC Department of Buildings.

There was a discussion on an illegal gas hookup at 600 West 161st Street and seven other buildings owned by Alma Realty. The seven other buildings found to have unauthorized and uncertified DOB Con Edison gas lines were 701 W. 175th St, 534 W. 178th St., 566 W. 190th St., 4455 Broadway, 9-23 Thayer St., in CB12, M and 14-15 Bristow St. and 853 Elsmere St in the Bronx. Officials said the gas had been turned off at those properties. These illegal gas connections were primarily done in the laundry room and the super's apartment. It did not affect other resident's legal gas connections or interruptions to their gas service.

Tom Butler, a spokesman for Alma Realty, said the landlord was working with Con Ed and the city to make the proper repairs. See <http://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20150515/washington-heights/illegal-gas-hookups-uptown-buildings-were-time-bomb-councilman-says>

This information was first reported by WABC News  See the video and read the news articles at <http://7online.com/news/exclusive-illegal-gas-lines-found-in-manhattan-and-bronx-apartments/700788/>

Mr. Waldman stated that it was very difficult to determine illegal hookups by the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) unless a complaint is filed or there is a gas leak associated with this installation a permit is requested for repairs, or some catastrophic public event occurs. When Con Edison detects a gas leak they shut the service to that unit or area down. Mr. Waldman stated that the problem with that issue is that Con Edison does not immediately report a gas leak or illegal hookup to DOB.

He described how service is eventually restored. Con Edison must certify a gas line repair and their inspectors are required by the Public Service Commission (PSC) to have specialized training. However, the initial actions must come from the owner who hires hopefully a licensed contractor who then must file for a permit at DOB. This action is usually the first point of contact where DOB is informed about the problem. When the contractor's gas line repair is completed Con Edison must certify the fitness or integrity of the repair or installation. When they have certified the fitness or integrity of the gas line repair DOB is informed and sends its own inspectors. This process may take a long time since the safety of residents is their primary concern. Only when DOB signs off may gas then be restored to the affected unit(s).

Some owners avoid this process and install illegal gas hookups that may in time lead to problems such as building explosions and loss of life. Greater monitoring, outside inspections, and control is essential for this process and there are consultants available who can determine such things as spikes in gas usage at the point of individual building meters.

At one time Consolidated Edison stated that improper gas hookups are "fairly uncommon," but others in the business maintained that it's a more frequent occurrence. "It's a regular, regular problem," said expert Mark McDonald, of NatGas Consulting. "Just as you can imagine theft in a Wal-Mart, no different — but it's much more dangerous." <http://rt.com/usa/245713-manhattan-gas-explosion-illegal/> and <http://www.411experts.com/> and <http://www.411experts.com/#!/projects/ctzx>

Recently, the utility said they are finding about 150 cases like this a year, the danger of these kinds of illegal gas hook-ups made all too clear to city with the East Village gas explosion several weeks ago that level three residential multifamily buildings and caused large fires.

Con Edison now publishes an interactive map on its website that shows the status of various gas leaks. This map lists work orders, initial response dates and follow-ups. Drill downs however do not list the cumulative gas leak histories or repairs or the exact address in the district.

Con Edison characterizes gas leaks as three types:

Type 1 leaks are often caused when a contractor damages a pipe. These require continuous attention until the leak is made safe, and daily inspection until a permanent repair is completed.

Type 2 leaks pose no immediate threat to people or property. How often these leaks are inspected depends on where the leak is located, and how much gas is present. Inspection frequency ranges from daily to every two months, and repairs must be made between six months and a year.

Type 3 leaks pose no hazard to people or property. They must be inspected annually to make sure they remain safe, but no repairs are required

In the current map shown there were 452 leaks reported in Manhattan (151 types 1 and 2 and 301 types 3).

Con Edison says not only are illegal gas connections potentially dangerous but they also involved some degree of theft of gas or service.

The committee examined not only building gas leaks, but also leaks in streets that affect residential service interruptions as well as electrical problems and the timeliness of repairs. Our foremost concern was the delay in reporting gas shut offs to DOB and the general public and the need for better transparency. That laxity by Con Edison prompted a resolution recommending this delay be fixed.

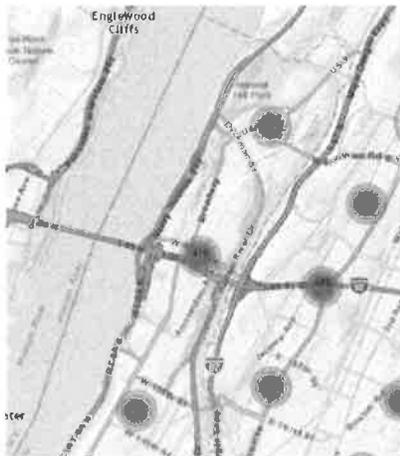
A resolution on this matter passed the HHS Committee with a vote of 6-0-0 (Y-N-A); Board Members 1-0-0 (Y-N-A) and the members of the Public: 5-0-0-1 (Y-N-A-P).

Discussions on Illegal Conversions (John Waldman NYC Department of Buildings).

An illegal conversion is an alteration or modification of an existing building to create an additional housing unit(s) without first obtaining approval from the NYC Department of Buildings or a new certificate of occupancy (CFO) for its modifications. There are several types of illegal conversion related to residential buildings. The most common types are a conversion that results from the creation of a rooming house (single room occupancy) or dividing an apartment into single room occupancies.

Why are illegal conversions harmful? Illegal conversions pose serious safety risks to residents and to the city's first responders (FDNY, NYPD or EMT, etc.) as they create unsafe living conditions and not comply with building and fire coders.

There are some 600 Complaints to 311 mapped in the past year in our district on illegal conversions.



Presentation by the HHS Committee Chair on New York City by the Numbers – Release of the Latest Housing and Eviction Data).

The chair presented a short PowerPoint© presentation on the latest housing numbers for NYC. Some of this information is summarized in the following tables

NYC CITY HOUSING UNITS – 2014 (Table 1)

UNIT TYPES	NUMBER	PERCENT
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS	3,400,093	100.0%
TOTAL RENTAL UNITS	2,184,927	64.2%
<i>Occupied</i>	<i>2,108,838</i>	<i>62.0%</i>
<i>Vacant, available for rent</i>	<i>75,458</i>	<i>2.2%</i>
TOTAL OWNER UNITS	1,033,226	30.4%
<i>Occupied</i>	<i>1,015,299</i>	<i>29.9%</i>
<i>Vacant, available for sale</i>	<i>17,926</i>	<i>0.5%</i>
VACANT UNITS , NOT AVAILABLE FOR SALE	182,571	5.4%

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census – 2014 New York City Housing Vacancy Surveys
Numbers in this table may not add due to rounding.

NYC RENTAL HOUSING INVENTORY BY RENT REGULATION TYPES – 2014 (Table 3)

RENTAL TYPES	NUMBER	PERCENT
ALL RENTAL UNITS (<i>Occupied and Vacant available</i>)	2,184,207	100.0%
RENT CONTROLLED	27, 979 ^(c)	1.2%
RENT STABILIZED	1,029,918	47.2%
Pre -1947 stabilized	766,296	35.1%
Post -1947 stabilized	263,621	12.1%
PRIVATE NON-REGULATED UNITS ^(a)	848,721	38.9%
ALL OTHER RENTAL UNITS ^(b)	278,618	12.8%

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census – 2014 New York City Housing Vacancy Surveys
Numbers in this table may not add due to rounding.

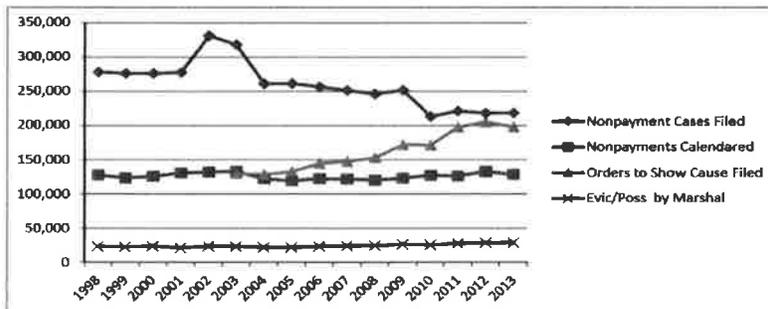
Notes:

- (a) "Private non-regulated" consists of units that were never rent controlled or rent stabilized, units that were decontrolled (including those in buildings with five or fewer units), and unregulated rental units in cooperative or condominium buildings.
- (b) "All other rental units" includes Public Housing, Mitchell-Lama, *In Rem*, HUD-regulated, Article 4, Municipal Loan and Loft Board units.
- (c) Occupied Only
 - Revised: For the 2014 HVS the rent regulation coding sequence was adjusted to give higher priority to DHCR's reported rent regulation status than in the past. If applied to 2011 HVS data, about 34,000 more rent stabilized units than previously reported would result, largely consisting of higher rent units that previously would have been coded as deregulated by virtue of high rent vacancy deregulation, but in fact were still listed by DHCR as stabilized. To enable comparison with 2014 data, the revised 2011 data are presented here.

EVICTIIONS 1998 TO 2013 – (Table 3)

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1998	23,454
1999	22,676
2000	23,830
2001	21,369
2002	23,697
2003	23,236
2004	22,010
2005	21,945
2006	23,491
2007	24,171
2008	24,600
2009	26,449
2010	25,655
2011	27,636
2012	28,743
2013	28,849



Discussion on Fair Housing Laws and Discrimination, Legal Information on Gender Identity and Expression.
 Since one of our presenters on this matter was unable to attend it was decided to postpone this presentation and discussion until the Fall.

Discussion on the NYC City Council bills Intro 251, 551 and 552.

It was felt that changing the current demographic classifications to include sub classifications for agencies required more extensive discussion, a presenter and should also be postponed until the Fall.

New Business.

With the potential changes in the rent regulation laws and other real property issues before the NY State legislature, impending adjustment in the rents for rent-stabilized apartments, our vacant lot study, and other matters the committee decided to meet during the board’s recess in the summer. July 9th Thursday at 7pm was decided as the next meeting opportunity.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55pm.

Respectfully Submitted by
Richard Lewis – Chair
June 4th, 2015