

**CB9M**16-18 Old Broadway
New York, New York 10027
(212) 864-6200/Fax # 662-7396**COMMUNITY BOARD #9, MANHATTAN****SENIOR ISSUES COMMITTEE
MINUTES
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2010**Scott Stringer
President, Borough of Manhattan
Larry English, Esq.
ChairCarolyn R. Thompson
First Vice-ChairCharles Cooper, Jr.
Second Vice-ChairAnthony Fletcher
TreasurerDiane Wilson
Assistant TreasurerTheodore Kovaleff
SecretaryJane Arrendell
Assistant SecretaryEutha Prince
District Manager**COMMITTEE MEMBERS:****Ernestine Welch, Chair, Present****Cora Gilmore, Present****Georgiette Morgan-Thomas, Present****Anthony Fletcher, Present****OTHER ATTENDEES PRESENT****Miranda Murray, George Bruce Library****Gwendolyn Nichelson****Anne Pelites****Zonia Bucknoz, Hamilton Grange Senior Center****Florence M. Rice, Tenant's & Landlord****PUBLIC MEMBERS:****G. Marilyn Alexander, Excused****Wanda Capan, Excused****Laenoria Conyers, Present****Bessie Davis, Present****Ruther Miller, Present****Virginia Lee, Present****Inez Woodhouse, Present****Vanisha Taylor, Excused****Nazarene Robinson, Excused****Dothe Rudolph, Present****Ruth Lewis, Dir. of Amsterdam****Adult Day Care, Excused**

The meeting was held on Tuesday, October 5, 2010 at the George Bruce Library, 518 West 125th Street, New York, NY 10027

Ernestine Welch, Chair called the meeting to order at 11:00 A.M.

The agenda was adopted and minutes accepted with any necessary corrections or additions and be submitted to the CB9M district office at a later date.

Commentary/Suggestions:

- CB9 has a change of administration; Mr. Larry English is the new Chairman.
- We are awaiting a new policy regarding the assignment of Committee Public Members. However, public members on our list will continue until further notice.
- Due to limited tickets issued by the Upper Manhattan Chamber of Commerce for the Annual Harlem Week Celebrations, only one Committee member, Ruther Miller could attend the Senior Jubilee Luncheon.
- Anthony Fletcher, CB9 Treasurer, welcomed as a new Board Member assigned to serve on this Senior Issues Committee.

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Update/Report:

Department of Buildings:

Leah Donaldson, Community Liaison, City Dept. of Buildings presented functions of NYC Dept. of Buildings safety cautions for seniors to observe regarding illegal apartments.

- Reports received of an increase in illegal occupation of basement in buildings, especially in Queens.

The difference between a basement and a cellar described as:

- Basement** - a story partly below curb level but having at least on-half of its height above the curb level.
- Cellar** - an enclosed space having more than one-half of its height below curb level.
- Electrical wires dangling or transferring from one apartment to another is cause for suspicion that the apartment is illegal.
- Certification of Occupancy issued by Department Of Buildings will state what the space should be used for.
- See attached ten tips for renters on how to recognize signs of an illegal conversion.

Consumer Survey:

Reverend Morgan-Thomas reported:

- Need a list of supermarkets that need to be targeted for over pricing of goods.
- She can be reached at (212) 694-7240 or (212) 926-7688.

Old Business: Senior Garden

- Sarah Martin, President of Grant Tenants Association submitted an application with NYCHA to establish a basic green garden at the site next to the George Bruce Library; still awaiting approval from Robert Benetton.
- Dr. Gholson, founder of Designed Environment for Experiential Learning (DEEL) stated that her organization will provide technical assistance to NYCHA residents regarding the proposed Senior Garden.

Suggestions:

- Follow-up on plans for a Health Workshop sponsored by CB9 Committees (Health and Senior Issues) and Amsterdam Nursing Home to address health and senior issues.
- Contact legislators to make changes on Medicaid and Medicare programs re: benefit entitlement
- Reverend Morgan-Thomas to draft a resolution re: home health aide entitlement for homebound seniors.
- Send a letter to all Church Ministers in the district to become involved with the Board to improve senior services; especially use of their vans for better senior transportation services (group and individual trips to important meetings and recreational strips)
- Question raised for exploration of CB#9 funds being available for committee projects (i.e Senior Garden Committee, refreshments, transportation)

Invitees for the next coming meeting:

- Access-A-Ride re: double fare.

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- Verna Arthur, Department For The Aging – Budget Consultations.
- Personal Touch and Isabella - Home Health Aide/Home Health Attendants

Action Taken:

- Invite Elected Officials to address Health Aide/Home Health Attendants for homebound seniors.

Adjournment: 12:30 P.M.

The next meeting will be held on November 9, 2010, George Bruce Library at 11:00 A.M.

Prepared by: Hleziphi Zita, Community Associate

**10 TIPS FOR RENTERS ON HOW TO RECOGNIZE
SIGNS OF AN ILLEGAL CONVERSION**

- 1) **Know the market.** Be wary of units that advertise significantly lower price points for comparable apartments in the area.
- 2) **Beware of the words “basement” or “attic.”** Advertisements that use these words are often for apartments that typically lack adequate exits.
- 3) **Avoid apartments that have rooms without windows or very small windows.** These are the ones with very small windows as “sunny” to entice renters.
- 4) **Beware of the word “flex.”** “Flex” implies that the apartment can be converted into a multi-bedroom unit using pressurized walls. The installation and/or construction of a wall without the proper permits from the Department are illegal.
- 5) **“Utilities included” is a red flag.** A landlord may not want utilities under another name connected to the property because those residents would violate the legal occupancy of the building.
- 6) **Avoid apartments with odd layouts.** They are often described as “unique” or “interesting” and are oddly situated (i.e. a shower installed in the kitchen).
- 7) **Be cautious when a landlord refuses to disclose the exact address.** Landlords advertising illegal apartments may ask to meet a potential renter before exposing the address to possible regulation or penalty.
- 8) **Beware of apartments where you can’t have mail delivered.** Landlords advertising illegal apartments will often request that tenants obtain a separate P.O. Box.
- 9) **Beware of no-lease apartments.** Be suspicious of a landlord who declines to draw up a lease, requests a month-to-month agreement or requires cash payments.
- 10) **Check for adequate means of egress and look out for locked doors in the unit.** A tenant should be able to access all available exits either directly from the unit or a public hallway.