



The City of New York
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #1

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Serving and Representing: Port Morris, Mott Haven and Melrose



VANESSA L. GIBSON
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

ANTHONY R. JORDAN
DISTRICT MANAGER

LARISA M. ALAYETO
CHAIRPERSON

Public & Supportive Housing Committee Minutes

January 27th, 2025

Daniel Barber, Committee Chairperson

DRAFT

Opening Remarks and Introduction of the Issue

- Committee Chairperson Daniel Barber calls the meeting to order and emphasizes the need for respectful behavior despite community frustrations.
- Committee Chairperson Daniel Barber introduces the main agenda: a plan to house migrant men in a 2200-bed facility and invites feedback from the community.
- Member Dalourny Nemorin, committee chair for bylaws, policy, and legislation, expresses community frustration with the influx of shelters and the lack of resources for the South Bronx.
- Member Dalourny Nemorin highlights the neglected state of the South Bronx and the negative impact of shelters on the community's quality of life.

Borough President's Statement and Alternative Proposal

- Vanessa Gibson, Borough President, apologizes for her absence and emphasizes the importance of community meetings before major decisions.
- Vanessa Gibson proposes repurposing the site for 2200 manufacturing jobs instead of a migrant shelter, aiming to lift families out of poverty and stabilize the community.
- She criticizes the administration for not involving the community in decision-making and calls for better communication and respect for the community's efforts.
- Vanessa Gibson stresses the need for logical decision-making and demands answers from the administration regarding the shelter proposal.

Council Members' Opposition and Community Concerns

- Rafael Salamanca Jr., Council Member for the South Bronx, opposes the 2200-bed men's shelter and highlights the community's overburdened status with transitional housing facilities.
- He questions the fairness of the city's decision to place shelters in the South Bronx and emphasizes the community's existing crises related to crime, opioid use, and health disparities.

- Rafael Salamanca Jr. provides statistics on the increased 911 and 311 calls from existing shelters, illustrating the strain on local resources.
- He calls for a fair distribution of shelters across the city and emphasizes the need for investment in the community rather than additional burdens.

Presentation by City Officials and Response to Community Concerns

- Camille Joseph Varlach, Chief of Staff at the City of New York, apologizes for the lack of communication and emphasizes the goal of presenting information and opening ongoing dialogue.
- Molly Schaefer, Director of the Mayor's Office of Asylum Seeker Operations, provides an overview of the asylum seeker crisis and the city's efforts to manage it.
- Rudy Giuliani, Executive Director of New York City Housing Recovery Operations, outlines the operational details of the proposed shelter, including security measures and community engagement.
- The city officials address community concerns about the shelter's impact on safety, job opportunities, and the need for federal support, emphasizing their efforts to balance the needs of the community and the asylum seekers.

Community Reactions and Further Questions

- Community members express their frustration with the lack of communication and the impact of shelters on their safety and quality of life.
- Questions are raised about the adequacy of security measures, the need for job opportunities for both residents and asylum seekers, and the fairness of placing shelters in the South Bronx.
- The community emphasizes the need for proactive engagement and support from the city and calls for a more equitable distribution of resources across the city.
- The meeting concludes with a commitment to continue the dialogue and address the community's concerns, with a focus on finding solutions that benefit both the asylum seekers and the local residents.

Immigration and Federal Responsibility

- Camille Joseph Varlach emphasizes that immigration is a federal issue and not the responsibility of New York City or the state.
- The city will disseminate information about funding opportunities for Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to participate in subcontracts.
- Camille Joseph Varlach clarifies that the city is not responsible for immigration and that the federal government handles it.
- The conversation aims to ensure the community is informed about potential opportunities for participation.

Community Concerns and Mayor's Absence

- Committee Chairperson Daniel Barber expresses concern about the community's opposition to housing 2200 migrants in the area.
- Committee Chair Daniel Barber highlights the recent fire incident and the impact on local residents and businesses.
- Committee Chair Daniel Barber mentions the need for the city to be more mindful and respectful of taxpayers' concerns.
- Committee Chair Daniel Barber acknowledges the frustration of a young lady named Taylor, who had strong questions and statements during the meeting.

Impact on Local Businesses and Resources

- Pedro Suarez, represents over 300 businesses and residents on Third Avenue and expresses concerns about the potential impact of the migrant shelter.
- Pedro Suarez emphasizes the need for commitments from the city to support the community, including additional resources for the police department and local city agencies.
- Pedro Suarez highlights the fear among residents due to open-air drug markets and encampments in the area.
- Pedro Suarez calls for commitments from the city to ensure the shelter's smooth operation and address community concerns.

Commitment to Community Engagement

- Camille Joseph Varlach responds to Suárez, emphasizing the city's commitment to regular conversations with the community to address issues and make necessary adjustments.
- Camille Joseph Varlach invites the community to suggest who they want to meet with and the cadence of these meetings.
- Camille Joseph Varlach reassures the community that the city is committed to having difficult conversations and making adjustments as needed.
- Camille Joseph Varlach reiterates the city's responsibility to engage with the community and ensure the shelter's smooth operation.

Financial Support and Community Commitments

- Justin Sanchez, questions the city's financial support and commitments to the Bronx, especially in light of the existing over-saturation of shelters.
- Camille Joseph Varlach acknowledges the city's investments in the Bronx and offers to provide a list of these investments.
- Camille Joseph Varlach emphasizes that the city does not drop buildings into communities without engaging in difficult conversations and making necessary adjustments.
- Camille Joseph Varlach reassures the community that the city is committed to having regular conversations and making adjustments as needed.

Bronx Borough President's Statement

- Ciara Gannon, Director of Community Boards, representing the Bronx Borough President, expresses strong opposition to the proposed 2200-bed migrant facility.
- The statement highlights the lack of preliminary discussions with the community and elected officials before the proposal was made public.
- The statement raises concerns about the impact on public safety, quality of life, and the risk of increased enforcement targeting the area.
- The statement calls for a comprehensive strategy to address the root causes of the challenges in the South Bronx, including long-term housing solutions and job creation.

Community Engagement and Resource Allocation

- Deputy Speaker Diana Ayala shares personal experiences and questions about the percentage of migrants and the city council's involvement in site selection.
- Deputy Speaker Diana Ayala clarifies that the 6% refers to migrants and that the city reached out to various groups, including council members and landlords, for space.
- Deputy Speaker Diana Ayala explains the challenges in finding suitable spaces and the importance of ensuring safety for those in the city's care.
- Deputy Speaker Diana Ayala emphasizes the city's commitment to providing necessary resources and support for the community.

Concerns About Migrant Shelters and Community Services

- Member Dalourny Nemorin expresses concerns about the neglect of the South Bronx and the impact of migrant shelters under the new administration.
- Member Dalourny Nemorin highlights the lack of clear programs for migrants and the potential risks to undocumented individuals in shelters.
- Member Dalourny Nemorin questions the city's efforts to protect shelters from ICE raids and the transparency of the addresses of these facilities.
- Camille Joseph Varlach responds by emphasizing the city's commitment to providing necessary resources and support for undocumented New Yorkers, including asylum help clinics and work authorization.

Logistical Questions and Service Provision

- Committee Chairperson Evelyn Alvarez raises logistical questions about the vetting process for CBOs and the timeline for service provision in the shelter.
- Rudy Giuliani explains the process for selecting vendors and the importance of having services in place on day one.
- Molly Schaefer mentions the city's efforts to conduct resource fairs and engage with nonprofits to provide necessary support for migrants.

- Molly Schaefer emphasizes the importance of having weekly resource fairs and engaging with local CBOs to provide necessary support.

Closing Remarks and Community Mobilization

- Committee Chairperson Daniel Barber closes the meeting, emphasizing the need for transparency and community engagement in future decisions.
- Committee Chair Daniel Barber calls for the community to come together and mobilize against being used as a "dumping ground" for city issues.
- Committee Chair Daniel Barber encourages the community to reach out to local organizations and continue advocating for their concerns.
- The meeting concludes with a call for unity and action to ensure the community's voice is heard and respected.

Action Items

Provide the community with the contact information for the site manager and other key personnel to facilitate regular communication.

Identify opportunities for local Bronx-based businesses and organizations to participate in providing services and staffing at the shelter facility.

Share details on the city's past and planned investments in the South Bronx community.

Provide specifics on the security and safety measures that will be implemented at the shelter facility.

Clarify the timeline for the shelter opening, expected to be in the last week of February 2023.