



Donovan Richards  
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# Community Board No. 2

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Morry Galonoy  
Chairperson

Debra Markell Kleinert  
District Manager

March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022

## Health and Human Services and Education Committee Meeting Minutes

*This meeting was teleconferenced using Zoom*

### **Attendees:**

Lauren Springer, Chair  
Amparo Abel-Bey  
Warren Davis  
Morry Galonoy  
Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos  
Thomas Mituzas  
Clara Oza

### **Absentees:**

Sandra Bigitschke (Excused)  
Mohammed Z. Choudhury Jewel  
Selena Romero  
Regina Shanley  
Mary Torres

### **Community Board 2 Staff**

Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager, Community Board 2

Lauren Springer, Chair of the Health and Human Services and Education Committee welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Chair Springer invited Thomas Mituzas and Warren Davis to discuss the Homeless Shelters:

- Thomas Mituzas led the discussion and spoke about the condition of the shelter system.
- City Council Speaker Adams in an interview stated that the shelter system requires attention to the extent that it may require oversight hearings.
- Department of Homeless Services informed Thomas Mituzas that City View Hotel on Greenpoint Avenue is no longer a shelter dating back to October 2021.
- Two weeks ago a fire occurred at City View Hotel.
- They since have learned that City View is still operating as a shelter and the fire was started by one of homeless residents.
- North Star Shelter (Blissville Shelter) – is a permanent shelter dating back to 2018 and was the first state of the arts shelter established.
- In the last five years the provider of the North Star Shelter has degraded tremendously.
- At the last Community Advisory meeting the providers attended this meeting while driving their cars, therefore, how could serious notes be taken.
- Since 2018 there have been 4 shelters in this area, however, Home Suites has closed.

*“Serving the Communities of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Maspeth”*

- In 2018 NYC made promises to the community and to the residents of these shelters, that they would have access to public transportation, green infrastructure, parks, playgrounds. The City stated that they would bring money to the community and improve the area.
- Borden Avenue Shelter has existed in the community for over 25 years.
- In January 2022, Thomas Mituzas visited the Borden Avenue Shelter and spoke to the residents.
  - Prolifigate intravenous drug use.
  - Physical violence
  - The residents do not feel good there.
  - Joe Bello, Chair of the CAB at this shelter, has been trying to speak to the provider of this shelter since the residents have returned but the provider has been silent.
- Due to all of the above Thomas Mituzas feels we have an obligation to the community to raise our concerns and conditions of the shelters. We are also raising the issue of why people who are homeless do not want to go into shelters.
- Thomas Mituzas drafted a letter for the committee to review that should go to all of the elected officials concerning these issues and why the homeless do not want to enter the shelter system.
- Thomas Mituzas shared the draft motion letter with the Committee.
- He went on to point out that Council Speaker Adams feels the same way, that these shelters are not keeping up with the level that they should and that the oversight hearings are necessary.
- This letter will focus on the shelters within the CB2 area.
- A plea to not cut \$615 million from the budget for the shelters.
- Thomas Mituzas made a motion to address the Elected Officials in Community Board 2 that need attention to the above items and why the homeless do not want to enter the shelter system and calling upon the elected officials to act on this.
- Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos seconded the motion. None opposed and no abstentions. It was unanimously approved. Original letter should be addressed to the Mayor.
- Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos mentioned once the letter is approved, it should be sent to the newspapers for the community to see.
- Debra Markell Kleinert mentioned that CB2 works with Street to Home, PD and DHS regarding the homeless issues to help the unhouse get placed and services.

Morry Galonoy talked about expanding the scope of the Homeless Task Force Committee. Rather than just being focused on shelters, homelessness and shelters. Chairman Galonoy noted this is a Task Force Committee and will hold meetings quarterly not monthly. People who are unhoused are members of this community. A name has to be decided upon to reflect this.

The Health & Human Services and Education Committee had a discussion of what the new committee name should be.

A question was raised about follow up of the letter to the elected officials regarding the homeless shelters. It was suggested to have the Mayor attend one of our community board meetings or to invite the commissioner of DHS. It was further mentioned to include in the letter to the Mayor to send the commissioner of DHS to one of the CB2 meetings to address the concerns of the shelters.

Debra Markell Kleinert will include the Mayor's Office of Community Affairs to this letter.

Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos mentioned a field trip to a shelter to better understand what is going on there. Warren Davis went on to explain that before COVID there were CAB meetings. They were face to face meetings where you were able to get the appropriate answers to your questions. Thomas Mituzas shared that it is better to just show up at a shelter and speak to the unhoused outside.

Lauren Springer discussed the following:

#### Mission Statement and Goals

- A spreadsheet was prepared with stakeholders.
- Lauren Springer will follow up with Andrea Thomas from Sunnyside Community Services.
- Human Services covers a broad scope of issues.
- Aging will fall under this committee.
- The mission statement will get reviewed.

#### Future Meeting Suggestions

- It is very difficult to get principals and teachers to attend this meeting.
- A committee member will look into parent teacher organizers.
- A committee member will look into contact tracing NYC DOH and how it will be working, and also talking about chronic diseases.
- Safety and teaching children to swim.
- Medical Reserve Corp.
- CERT

Lauren Springer mentioned that she feels things work better and get more accomplished when everyone works as a team.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Kim Waber