



The City of New York
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #1

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Serving and Representing: Port Morris, Mott Haven and Melrose



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ANTHONY R. JORDAN

DISTRICT MANAGER

Health & Human Services/Public & Supportive Housing Committee Minutes

April 16th, 2024

Marilyn Peña/Daniel Barber, Chairperson

DRAFT

Emergency and transitional housing for released inmates.

- Chairperson Clarisa Alayeto introduces committee members and begins new business.
- Mayor's Office contracts with Fortune Society for emergency and transitional housing in Bronx.

Fortune Society's mission to provide support and resources for individuals with justice histories.

- Founder David Rothenberg started Fortune Society in 1967 after a play about an incarcerated person's real story sparked a conversation about prison conditions.
- Fortune Society provides comprehensive services including mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, employment training, and lifetime aftercare.
- The organization has built a food and nutrition program to address food deserts in under-resourced communities, providing 3 meals/day at service centers and housing locations.
- The organization has expanded its housing portfolio with a new building in the Bronx, bringing the total number of beds to 385, providing safe, stable, and affordable housing.

Affordable housing for formerly incarcerated individuals.

- Community Board 9 endorses Castle Gardens' emergency and transitional housing.
- Castle Gardens provides stable housing for formerly incarcerated individuals.
- The organization is developing two new buildings for formerly incarcerated individuals and the community, with 59 units for formerly incarcerated people and 24 units for the community.
- The organization is working with the community to address concerns about saturation of shelters and supportive housing, and to provide permanent supportive housing for those impacted by the justice system.

- The organization they lead, Fortune Society, provides holistic support to 11,000 people, including counseling, education, and job training, with a focus on seeing the best in people.

Providing housing and support services for formerly incarcerated individuals.

- Mr. Rob DeLeon, formerly incarcerated, emphasizes the importance of providing housing and job opportunities to help individuals rebuild their lives after serving their debt to society.
- Mr. Rob DeLeon highlights the need to challenge the narrative of good guys and bad guys, and instead recognize that people who have made mistakes deserve support and rehabilitation.
- Mr. Rob DeLeon explains how their organization provides transitional housing and wraparound services to help individuals reintegrate into society after criminal legal involvement.
- Mr. Rob DeLeon highlights the programming and activities residents engage in while living in Wales Avenue, including employment workshops, Freedom arts, and volunteering at a food pantry.

Housing support for formerly incarcerated individuals in NYC.

- Residents and community members can access services like job training and mental health support through the organization.
- Ms. Randi Rothschild explains the screening process for potential residents, including housing stability and programming participation.
- Eligibility criteria include being homeless or housing unstable and being a New York City resident.

Housing issues and police harassment in East Harlem.

- Mr. Dixon's apartment complex experiences violence and threats, leading to discharge of residents.
- They mention the project space he's been in and the possibility of him getting portable housing.

Transitional housing for formerly incarcerated individuals, including drug treatment and support services.

- The program prioritizes trust and vulnerability, encouraging participants to let go of coping mechanisms and rely on the program for support.
- Drug screening and residential aids are crucial in identifying and addressing any substance use issues, with a commitment to providing a safe and supportive environment for recovery.
- Peer support is a key component of the program, with individuals with lived experience of the criminal legal system and substance use serving as case managers and RAs.

- The program prioritizes serving the local community, with a focus on ensuring that participants are from the community and that the location is accessible and convenient for them.

Housing for ex-offenders, community safety, and school concerns.

- Rehabilitation center assesses and screens individuals based on charges and potential risk to community.
- Randi Rothschild mentions 536 Wales Avenue is not SAR compliant, meaning individuals with certain level sex offender restrictions cannot live there.
- Concerns about lack of consultation with schools in the area, leading to potential safety risks for children.

Criminal justice reform and community involvement in the Bronx.

- Chairperson Clarisa Alayeto emphasizes the importance of collaboration and communication with local schools and community organizations to address social issues.
- Herman Francis Jr. raises concerns about the proximity of 27 methadone clinics within a five-block radius of a potential new school.

Investing in education and community programs to address criminal justice issues.

- Herman Francis Jr. discusses criminal justice reform, highlighting racial disparities and advocating for community-based solutions.

Parole system challenges and advocacy for reentry support.

- Mr. Stanley Richards explains how their organization fundraises and relies on government dollars to provide services.
- Member Claudia Rahman highlights the need for a food pantry to address clients' lack of food outside of the organization's meal program.
- Member Michael Pimentel asks questions about the building's history and future funding, while Rob DeLeon provides insights on the project's City Council support and potential risks.
- Member Michael Pimentel shares research on the parole system's challenges, including false reports by parole officers, highlighting the complexities of the criminal justice system.
- Parole officers play a crucial role in facilitating communication with clients on parole.
- Advocating for "blesses more" to reduce technical violations and prevent people from returning to the system.

Criminal justice reform and community safety in New York City.

- The community is concerned about balancing community need and safety, especially with shelters and supportive housing in the area.

- The organization has not received direct information on complaints but attends precinct council meetings to stay informed.
- Mr. Stanley Richards discusses the Fortune Society's role in the borough-based jail system, emphasizing the importance of community space and city resources for families of incarcerated individuals.
- Mr. Stanley Richards and others call for more resources in the borough-based jails, including access to benefits and city services, to support the well-being of both incarcerated individuals and their families.

Supporting individuals with housing and resources.

- The organization helps individuals with mental health and substance use issues find and maintain permanent housing.
- The organization provides support services such as job training, budgeting, and family reunification to help individuals achieve independence.
- Elevating community voices through liberation libraries and educational services.

Closing Rikers Island jail, investing in communities, and providing healthcare services.

- Mr. Stanley Richards is advocating for citywide advocacy on closing Rikers Island, investing in communities bearing brunt of mass incarceration.
- District manager Anthony Jordan has suggested site visits to provide wraparound services.

Supportive housing program for individuals struggling with addiction.

- Mr. Stanley Richards mentions the project was funded in 2020, and they didn't know when the community board would be notified.
- District Manager Anthony Jordan asks when the society started working with agencies to ensure standards are set for security cameras
- Mr. Stanley Richards explains the program's response to relapse, referring individuals for higher level of care.
- Community meetings and peer support are emphasized as crucial elements of the program.

Affordable housing project in Harlem, NYC.

- District Manager Anthony Jordan mentions that the program will select individuals for a tour of the facility and advisory council membership based on their level of involvement in the community.
- Councilmember Alayla supports the work of the organization and is adamant about ensuring that the community has a fair share of resources.