



Chairman Nicholas Himidian & District Manager William Rivera
Land & Zoning Committee Meeting **Minutes**
February 5th, 2018

Meeting Location: BRONX CB9 OFFICE

Meeting Start Time: 7:00 PM

Board Members Present: Nicholas Himidian Jr., Mohammed N. Mujumder, Benny Cuevas, William Rivera (DM)

Board Members Absent: Sarwar Jahan

Introduction

- A. Committee Chair, Board Members & Guest
- B. The Land, Zoning, Planning Committee represents the community's interests with regard to the use of land, zoning, landmark, building, etc. and acts as a liaison between community members and Department of City Planning, Department of Buildings & the New York City Economic Development Corporation.

Notices

- A. Notices were discussed with participants present.

Speakers

- A. Walter Nestler read a description regarding Hope House to participants and inquired if there were any disagreements with the description being read aloud. As per Mr. Nestler, "people are not understanding the concerns of the residents or not vocalizing them clearly." Homeowners are preoccupied with the safety of children, seniors, neighboring owners and tenants, security of homes and property, quality of life issues, decline in property values, etc. All houses were built the same way and at the same time in this community. As a result, homeowners are as close as they are because they all moved in at the same time. There has been very little turnover in the community.
As per Mr. Nestler, the make-up of the houses does not allow for the number of people that will be living in Hope House. There will be 7 people living in that house as per a newspaper article and testimony given at the sub-committee meeting.
As per a resident's inquiry, is it zoned that someone can flip a house like this?
As per Chairman Himidian, we are still waiting on feedback regarding this zoning issue.
As per a St. Andrew's Village resident, St. Andrew's Village would like to request another letter of support from CB9 where CB9 states that they are against Hope House. The letter that CB9 wrote and shared previously, as per resident, was too vague.
As per another resident, St. Andrew's Village is composed of community homeowners whereas Hope House participants are all from outside the community. Homeowners all agree that the behavior of Hope House representatives at the previous CB9 General Board meeting was unbecoming. They insisted that CB9 take the side of the community members and homeowners in this debate.

As per Chairman Himidian, he was unaware that any threats had been made. In regards to a video that residents claimed was posted by Hope House following the meeting, Chairman Himidian clarified that he only became aware of this video the Friday evening before this committee meeting. Chairman Himidian also stated that although he supports the concept of the program as St. Andrew's Village Homeowners questioned, he never agreed the program should be in their neighborhood. He explained that he as well lives next to people that have been formerly incarcerated but homeowners insisted that this is different being that Chairman Himidian rents and does not own property therefore he has the liberty to move at any time if desired.

As per St. Andrew's Village homeowners association, they have not yet received what they requested from CB9. This includes a letter from CB9 to the Dept. of Probation and the Dept. of Buildings, as well as a letter to the Elected Officials.

As per residents they do not want any promotion stating that they want to come to an agreement regarding this matter as they are strongly opposed.

As per District Manager Rivera, CB9 is hoping to finalize a date with local elected officials for the town hall where CB9 will discuss their findings from Dept. of Probations and Dept. of Buildings on Certificate of Occupancy. Senator Klein's Office is investigating with state and federal agencies regarding this matter, especially state parole and state attorney general.

As per DM Rivera, NYPD will be invited to town hall but NYPD does not oversee, authorize or conduct any business with formerly incarcerated unless there is an ongoing investigation. As per DM Rivera, CB9 is pushing for the town hall on February 13th.

As per Walter Nestler, the longer this matter is postponed the more people that may move into the home in question. St. Andrew's Village residents stated their distrust with Chairman Himidian based on the previous meeting that was held with Hope House. St. Andrew's Village also stated that CB9 should remain neutral. Resident also stated that the vetting process for Hope House participants is very poor.

As per a statement from the Director of Hope House at a public event, she claimed that they don't look at the crimes participants committed although they had assured residents that they would be considerate of which participants were brought into the house.

As per resident, Doni Walker Santiago, she would like CB9 to draft a letter in support of St. Andrew's Village Homeowners Association and asked that this letter be put to a vote as well as investigate who allowed Topeka Sam authority to record inside Kips Bay when her organization does nothing to benefit the children or parents of the children of this program. Additionally, her Certificate of Incorporation is to solicit donations and to open a shelter and Ms. Walker Santiago would like CB9 to look into this. Homeowners do not care about Topeka Sam renting the house but they do care about the house being used for a business. They are also concerned that Hope House is collecting funds as donations without being a registered organization. Homeowners are also concerned about the declining value of their properties. As per Chairman Himidian, DM Rivera will follow-up and contact Dept. of Buildings and ask them for clarification on what a two family, residential R5 is allowed to do legally and for the definition of what constitutes a family. As per residents, Hope House filed officially as being opened for use as a shelter.

As per Chairman Himidian, DM Rivera will follow-up with Dept. of Corrections, City of Probation, and Dept. of Buildings to assure that they will be in attendance at the town hall. As per St. Andrew's Village residents, Bronx Borough President should be invited to the town hall meeting, as well as City Councilman Salamanca, Assemblyman Crespo, Councilmember Gjonaj, and Senator Rivera.

As per Chairman Himidian, DM Rivera will draft a letter to all elected officials involved with all the concerns from this meeting and inquire regarding when the town hall meeting will take place. Residents requested that elected officials involve an attorney to look into the matter of hosting a business in this home being that formerly incarcerated individuals that will be living in home are not related and are transient. CB9

can copy Ray at the BP's Office when emailing DOB because they can offer legal assistance. Residents requested that CB9 enforce sited state rule 7, which Topeka Sam is trying to appeal. Residents would also like CB9 to investigate what the 5th bedroom will be used for and request that CB9 draft a letter of support that is unconditional and that it be brought to the board as a resolution to be voted on. The letter should state that it would be inappropriate to have this program in an R5 zone like St. Andrew's Village.

As per St. Andrew's Village Homeowners Association, when Topeka Sam was questioned as to why the program didn't come to the community board first her response was that she didn't do so because she didn't want anyone to have any regulations over how she wanted to get things done.

As per DM Rivera, before a motion for a resolution is done by committee, feedback from DOB should be given to see if the project is even allowed so that the resolution can be informed and if so, it then should be presented to committee for discussion after the town hall when more facts are brought to light.

St. Andrew's Village requested CB9 draft a letter stating that given the new information that has come to light CB9 is in complete support of the community in not wanting Hope House in St. Andrew's Village.

St. Andrew's Village opposes and rejects the previous letter that was drafted by CB9 because despite the letter containing the request for a meeting with the elected officials (completed) and a town hall meeting (date TBD); the letter did not contain language pertaining to their concerns. The homeowners will not tolerate another outburst from a member of the Hope House. Homeowners would like police presence at the town hall meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

Minutes created by CB9 Office Staff