



Chairman Nicholas Himidian & District Manager William Rivera
Land & Zoning Committee Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2017

Meeting Location: BRONX CB9 OFFICE

Meeting Start Time: 7:13 PM

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

Board Members Absent:

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. DOB Notices
 - DOB current notices were included in agenda. As per DM Rivera, these are notices that our office gets from DOB on a weekly basis. DM Rivera read aloud these projects and informed the meeting participants that these are all as of right projects.
 - Chairman Himidian: do we know why projects labeled “disapproved” were disapproved?
 - DM Rivera: No details are shared but we can look these up. These is just notification which allows CB9 to do its due diligence within the time period.
 - Chairman Himidan: In the years that I have been on the board, we have gotten a lot more response from other agencies than in the past. The reality is that due to the prior administration, we have a lack of past information. These notices are a big start. We are at least getting notified now.
 - DM Rivera: On the subject of information, it is important for residents to sign up to nextdoor, it is like fb for neighborhoods. We started with 200 nextdoor residents and now we have 1000.
 - Chairman Himidian: We are the largest community board, we have over 200,000 residents and it is impossible to reach everyone but our outreach has expanded exponentially.

Speakers/Presentation

- A. Residents of St. Andrew’s Village
 - Louie Schraud from St. Andrew’s Village, resident of St Andrew’s Village for 30 years is concerned that nothing positive will come from Hope House in his neighborhood. There is a concern about home values and is wondering if St. Andrew’s Village is zoned for a business?

- Sharon Vega from St. Andrew's Village said the participants present are here to speak on behalf of the community. They are concerned with the occupancy of the home. What is the status with the certificate of occupancy? As per CO this will violate square footage. The CO also mentions that business should not affect quality of the neighborhood as per Section 12-10 of the Zoning resolution (a copy of this handout was provided). Resident has been here for more than 30 years. The idea is to create a stable neighborhood but these residents will be coming in and out so this goes against the idea of St. Andrew's Village.
- As per DM, some group homes are able to operate based on the interpretation of what is written in CO.
- As per Ms. Barnes, the stipulations of purchasing the home was that you need to live in it for at least 15 years or give back the subsidy. This was through NYC partnership.
- As per Mr. Nestler, this is the third meeting that has taken place regarding this matter, what has CB9 done since?
- As per Chair Himidian, he was first informed of this issue in the last Land & Zoning Meeting and forwarded this request to the Social Service Committee as well. Since then, a meeting has been held with Hope House to gain more information on this program.
- As per resident, our main concern is that the people who will be supervising these participants are ex-felons. Even the NYPD was uninformed of this program coming into the neighborhood.
- As per Mr. Nestler, has anything been produced since the 3 weeks that this issue was brought to the board?
- As per Chairman Himidian a meeting has been held with Hope House to gather more information on this program.
- As per Mr. Nestler, I understand that CB9 is just an investigative and recommendation board.
- As per DM Rivera, we are attempting to set a meeting with elected officials this week regarding this program. Regardless, if you support it or not, the program must follow all the guidelines.
- DM Rivera also mentioned that homeowners were talking about legal representation and hosting a town hall.
- As per Mr. Nestler, why hasn't a public hearing been set yet?
- As per DM Rivera, there's no reason to host a town hall if we have no information to share with the public. We are working on hosting a meeting with all electeds involved so that we can determine answers on all the questions posed.
- Chairman Himidian agreed with DM Rivera that a meeting with electeds is necessary before hosting a townhall.
- As per resident Dennis Ramos, I was under the impression that CB approved new developments in the district
- As per DM Rivera, this is only if the development steps outside of the zoning law. We are just getting notifications from DOB but we have no power if this is within the law.
- As per another resident, this will be a rotational halfway house 6 months to a year and this is a big concern for the children and elderly in the district. Residents and homeowners have saved all their lives for these homes and now they are worried about the value of their homes and their safety. What are the legalities of what's going on and how was it that this came to pass considering that the organization leader didn't come to the community board, the city, or the state?
- As per Dennis Ramos there is a lot of money to be made with non-profits so don't be under the impression that this is not a business. Do not destabilize the neighborhood because you are trying to make money.
- Children are petrified and that is not something they should have to live with.
- As per resident, will there be an opportunity to present them with an alternate site? Could this be considered something to be put on the agenda?
- As per resident, Senator Klein could not see the purpose for this program to come into this community.

- As per DM Rivera, CB9 is not allowed to have any involvement in real estate negotiations. A townhall would be ideal if all parties were present and came to a consensus.
- As per resident, both her children found out inappropriately that this program was coming into the neighborhood by being invited to the program's open house.
- As per the resident, the night of the open house one of the neighbors that lives a few houses down asked the program participants, "are you having a party?" and according to this resident the reply from participants was, "just keep it moving, it is none of your business."
- Is it true that Hope House pushed back the meeting with the elected officials until after the holidays? DM Rivera: yes. Resident: Why? To wait until they're already moved in? Why will they not meet with the committee at least?
- As per Committee Chair Mujumder: I strongly recommend that the board sends a letter to the elected officials saying that we do not support the program. I promise that I will visit and speak loud and clear that the community is very outraged about this.
- As per Mr. Nestler, are you going to send this for a resolution vote to the board?
- As per Committee Chair Mujumder, I recommend the letter gets send out tomorrow. I promise that a letter will be sent and that calls are made from my office incessantly about this issue.
- As per Mr. Nestler, It is important that we are on record with this request
- As per resident, the program contact told us that she had a relationship with the 43rd precinct and the parole board and when the residents spoke to the 43rd precinct about this matter, they had no knowledge of this program.
- As per Mr. Nestler, Dennis submitted the copy of the official report of convicted felons to be added to GB minutes as part of the official record.
- As per resident, we believe in second chances but there is a place for everything and the way in which it was done, it was done covertly.
- As per conversation with homeowner, the homeowner reassured residents that the home would be rented to a family. When residents finally found out about the program, the question was posed to homeowner about what was going on and how this came to pass and Hope House rep admitted that she was specifically asked by the homeowner not to share with residents.
- Residents were informed that 6 convicted felons would be in this program run by Ms. Sam, another convicted felon.
- As per Justin Westbrook: Isn't it the homeowners fault that she did not share this information with the community, not the program rep?
- Residents: Yes, We are putting a lot of the responsibility on the homeowner, but also the program because they chose to keep this a secret.
- Justin: When was the open house?
- Resident: October 28th, but homeowner was knowledgable of her new tenants since early September 8th when LLC was done for 2023 Caesar Place. If this was something that was so great for the community, she wouldn't be worried about getting sued.
- Residents: the open house was for sponsors, community residents were not invited.
- Chairman Himidian: the next meeting we should have is with the electeds, once we find out the legalities around this we can put the package together and try to help you guys out.
- Mr. Nestler: Will Senator Diaz be invited to attend as new city council member?
- DM: We are waiting on him to move forward with the meeting.

DM Update

A. 2125 Watson Ave Development Proposal

- As per DM Rivera, this is an as of right project. The pastor of the church asked CB9 for support and sent a letter of support from CM Palma and Senator Diaz as a sample. They will be coming to present next month to the committee and they would like a letter of recommendation from CB9. At the next meeting they may have letter of support from BP and Senator Klein's office as well.

Old Business

A. Ferry Service

- Mr. Nestler: As of right now, there has been no new work on the ferry service as of yet even though the ferry is scheduled to come next year.
- Mr. Nestler has requested twice FOIL to see records of minutes of past ferry information however, nothing has been produced as of yet.
- Chairman Himidian: On behalf of the board, we will go through it again.
- Mr. Nestler: What happened to records that "disappeared" with the previous administration?
- Chairman Himidian: We don't know
- Mr. Nestler: Some records seemed to have disappeared prior to previous District Manager having been gone, during the time he was out sick.
- Chairman Himidian: I do know there are committee meeting minutes that we can put together for you but from the time since the new administration.
- In regards to the school built on Bruckner Blvd, as per resident, there was someone who came by to present regarding the school on Bruckner Blvd some years ago when I was on the board and there was documentation of that meeting but if that information disappeared that is a different story.
- MTA and new bus stops are a work in progress. We do understand they are coming in the first Thursday of January (next public safety committee meeting) and we will rehash everything to make sure we get an update. CB9 understands everyone's frustration with BX5.
- Chairman Himidian: We are really looking for our community to be involved, we can find our calendar on our social media and through e-mail blasts.
- In regards to last general board meeting, Chairman Himidian explained, there is a process that we have at the board, the process is a 2 min limit for speakers. I overrided that process because of the circumstances last time, but after the 25 minutes that was allotted was done, we needed to be able to move the agenda because we will get kicked out of Kips Bay. Let's try not to yell and scream at each other because we don't get anywhere that way.
- Resident: I would just like to reiterate in defense of homeowners, that there were a lot of emotions going on. The reason a lot of people lashed out was due to a condensing speech that a board member gave to a room of 50-60 homeowners who came to the board with their concerns. Had it not been for that outburst, we would have not responded in the same manner.

Meeting adjourned at 8:33 P.M.

Minutes created by CB9 Office Staff

OFFICE INFO

District Manager William Rivera - wrivera@cb.nyc.gov
Phone (718) 823-3034 - Fax (718) 823-6461 - Office Email bx09@cb.nyc.gov - Website nyc.gov/bxcb9
Office Hours - Monday thru Friday 9AM to 5PM