



## **General Board Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, May 16, 2019**

**Present:** Abunoman Rahman, Benigno Cuevas, Brandon Ganaishlal, Cesar Pagan, Daniel Porro III, Doralina Colon, Felipa Manaiza, Henry Pelayo Jr., Isabelo Adames, James Tynan, Juan Torres, Kwabena Gabay, Linda Brown, Lisa Diaz, Mitchell Halpern, Nellie Santiago-Rivera, Nicholas Himidian Jr., Rosemary Ordonez Jenkins, Sharan Fernandez, Steven Ochoa, William Rivera (DM)

**Not Present:** Angel Martinez, Cruz Garcia, Kevin Kiernan, Mohammad Mujumder, Sarwar Jahan

**Meeting Start Time:** 7:00pm

**Note:** The Chairperson announced that the Elected Official reports will be tabled unless an elected official was present to speak. In addition, he advised that the public session will have a strict 2 minute maximum for speakers due to the presentation on 2008 Westchester Ave.

**Note:** The Chairperson asked the audience to stand and pledge allegiance to the flag, followed by a moment of silence. The Chairperson entered into the Public Session and reminded everyone to please sign up to speak no later than 5pm the day of the General Board Meeting.

### **Public Session**

1. First Vice Chair Mohammad Mujumder welcomed DHS, Senator Sepulveda and former CM Palma. BM Mujumder expressed that he overacted and over expressed himself at the previous meeting regarding 2008 Westchester Ave. As per Mr. Mujumder, he claimed he was upset that people at the meeting had accused the Board of secretly allowing the shelter to come into the district, he was also upset that he was not allowed to speak at the meeting. Mr. Mujumder is against the shelter and was upset that there was a claim made by participants and by media that CB9 was not present when Mr. Mujumder, BM Daniel Porro and BM Rosemary Ordonez-Jenkins were sitting in the front row.

2. Nazrul Haque spoke about being a resident in Parkchester for 30 years and said that he was opposed to the shelter at 2008 Westchester Avenue and wanted to question the contradicting information that the community has received. As per Mr. Haque, he has a lot of sympathy for homeless people and has done several projects at home for the homeless, however, the site selected for this shelter in Parkchester is not appropriate. On behalf of the Bengali community, this individual requested that the community board and local electeds clarify their position on the proposed shelter.

As per Chairman Himidian, all these questions will be answered in the meeting today.

3. Rogier van Vlissingen addressed the public on behalf of Plant Powered Metro New York, Da Bronx. Mr. van Vlissingen spoke about the Plant Based Health Fair at St. Helena's, it is the second year this will be hosted. As per Mr. van Vlissingen, plant based diet is spreading rapidly because it is the best thing anyone can do for their health. Flyers were distributed to the community. In addition, Mr. van Vlissingen advertised a cooking class at St. Helena's that takes place once a month, date TBD, this month's cooking class will be replaced by the Health Fair.
4. Last speaker was Board Member Linda Brown, Chair of Seniors Connected. As per Ms. Brown, tomorrow is Seniors Connected at 10am. As per Ms. Brown, as of June 30<sup>th</sup> she will be resigning from the board. She is leaving New York, otherwise, she would probably still be onboard. It is with a heavy heart that she leaves the seniors that she has been working with, she will be in New York until September. As per Ms. Brown DM Rivera has made the seniors in this area important and thanked DM Rivera, from the bottom of her heart.

As per Chairman Himidian, where are you moving to? As per Ms. Brown, Maryland.

### **Business Session**

**Note:** The Chairperson put a motion on the floor to go into the Business Session. The motion was seconded by Mohammad Mujumder. The vote was unanimous. The motion was passed.

Note: Chairman Nicholas Himidian put a motion to submit meeting minutes as in lieu of DHS/Samaritan Village presentation. The motion was seconded by Rosemary Ordonez-Jenkins. The vote was unanimous. The motion was passed.

1. Senator Sepulveda was present at the meeting and stated he was happy to see that Samaritan Village was present at the meeting. As per Senator Sepulveda, passions were high at the meeting he hosted recently regarding the proposed shelter which was understandable. Senator Sepulveda addressee Samaritan Village and DHS and told them that it is there job to make sure the community feels safe because people have investments in the community, they have schools, jobs, etc. and it is a beautiful community. Senator Sepulveda offered his assistance if there was any way he could assist the community, DHS, or Samaritan Village. He thanked everyone for their attendance and had to leave to attend an Iftar.
2. Assembly Member Karines Reyes apologized to the board for her sharp choice of words at the Informational Town Hall meeting she hosted. As per AM Reyes, it was never her intention to put the blame on the Community Board. It was difficult to make any points at the meeting because a lot of tempers were flaring. AM Reyes stated that she has never taken the position that she supports this shelter. She has very serious concerns about this proposal and she shares

the very same concerns that most people in the community have. She has been circulating a petition to prevent any sex offenders at this site. As per AM Reyes, this is not a SARA Complaint site. This is a minimal ask since she understands that the community does not want this shelter here at all. As per AM Reyes, she has been in communication with DM Rivera because she is working on making this something that the Community is okay with. AM Reyes continues to support the Community Board's position on this.

### **Chairperson's Report**

- As per Chairman Nicholas Himidian, DM Report will contain all necessary information, if anything is left out Chairman will intercede.
- As per Chairman Himidian, elections will take place next month. Executive Committee is going to gather the names of BMs who are eligible to run for the position of chair and Second Vice Chair. The nominations will take place in June in lieu of today's presentation.
- NYCHA Committee Meeting is taking place tomorrow at the office at 1967 Turnbull Avenue at 7pm for those available to attend. BM Kwabena was able to record the meeting minutes and will deliver these to office for transcribing.

### **District Manager's Report**

- As per DM Rivera, May 9<sup>th</sup> there was a ribbon cutting for BlackRock Playground. Some Board Members were present. This event took place during the day. Community Board 9 hand delivered a letter to Commissioner Silver respectfully requesting that the park be named after EMT Yadira Arroyo who was tragically killed on this block. Letters of support are being gathered from elected officials, PS 119 Principal, Fire Dept, and other entities for this request. The goal is to have the park renamed by March 2020.
- There are 2 lotteries on Housing Connect for this district, one is for Thieriot and Beach Ave. In addition, our office has the information if anyone is having trouble accessing these online.
- Office relocation is still taking place, we are in our swing space until our previous office is finished. DM Rivera will keep everyone informed via email of any updates.
- The MTA Town Hall went well, DM Rivera and Chairman Himidian were present. There was a significant number of people present but there could have been more. There were a lot of concerns, MTA promised to start some of the changes and host a meeting in the next couple of week with Assemblyman Crespo.
- Seniors Connected is taking place tomorrow at 10am.

### **Proposed 2008 Westchester Avenue Shelter**

- As per DM Rivera Feb 22, 2019, CB9 was notified by DHS of the shelter at 2008 Westchester Avenue.
- March 15, 2019 DM Rivera had a meeting with Samaritan Village, Elected Official Offices, CB9 staff, and DHS to receive information on the proposed site. Following this meeting on March 18<sup>th</sup> additional information was received.
- On April 12, 2019, CB9 organized a Notification Meeting to notify the public of shelter details. A packet was distributed to the public with information.

- On April 18, 2019 District Manager Rivera updated the Board on the proposed shelter and there was a rally opposing the shelter that DM Rivera attended and an Information Town Hall that Senator Sepulveda and AM Karines hosted that DM Rivera was unable to attend. At this meeting Assembly Member Karines Reyes stated something that was false. As per DM Rivera, a meeting was held with AM Reyes regarding this matter and she apologized to DM Rivera and Chairman Himidian. AM Reyes will be in attendance today. In addition, there was a story that was released due to the inaccurate comments from AM Reyes. As a result, CB9 wrote a letter to PIX 11 News, a copy of the letter was distributed to BMs for their perusal. The producer of News 11 is offering an opportunity for an interview after our GB Meeting and the Chairperson wants to wait until there is a redaction, however, they did acknowledge our letter.
- On May 7, 2019, DHS & Samaritan Village attended our Social Services Committee meeting to report to the board. This was the first time ever Samaritan Village came to the board in reference to this project. This was a very productive meeting and a lot of questions arose that will hopefully be addressed by DHS and Samaritan tonight.
- As per DM Rivera, it is impossible that CB9 was aware of this site selection 2 years ago since this project was not even on the radar at this time. Based on the process, that is done internally, there is no way the community would have been notified before the RFP process, even then, this is an As of Right project, which means the community has no jurisdiction over it. There was a bulletin sent out 2 years ago to community boards and elected officials explaining Turning the Tide, the Mayor's Initiative, it is possible that this is what people are referring to since the notice requested that sites be recommended for shelters. In addition, a separate letter was sent out to Community Board requesting that Community Boards recommend shelter sites in their district. CB9 did not recommend any sites because they felt that the Bronx is already inundated with shelters.
- DM Rivera is very proud of the board and staff for the way they have conducted themselves being very transparent and clear, informing people and keeping everyone in the loop of what has been taking place.
- DM Rivera thanked Asst. Commissioner Palma and Samaritan Village for attention the Social Service Committee and the General Board Meeting tonight. Board members will have an opportunity to address questions to them at the end of the presentation.
- As per DM Rivera, this is an As of Right Project, however, the board will make a determination on a position based on this conversation and keeping in mind the position of the community.
- As per Chairman Himidian, was DHS able to get the information that was requested at Social Service Committee?
- As per Asst. Commissioner Palma, most of the questions were clarified, the site will be for 165 single adult men, and the site is going to house men who are employed or employable.
- Regarding 2017 individuals breakdown, because the numbers within DHS census changes on a daily basis, it is hard to dig down into how many males, women come into our shelters and which of those are specifically from Community Board 9, however, DHS does know that there currently are 2017 individuals from this community board/with an associated address to this district in the DHS system. Currently 837 individuals are sheltered in CD9.

- Once the site is open, individuals with addresses associated to CD9 will be housed at the new site. It is impossible to determine the breakdown of individuals by gender based on addresses because individuals are consistently coming in and out of the system.
- There is a vetting process, an intake center, so when the question of Class 1 or 2 sex offenders is posed, this is not a SARA complaint site, which means that anyone who has a residency restrictions will not be allowed to reside here, however Level 1 and 2 sex offenders have the right to live anywhere they'd like as per Dept. of Corrections. There may be Level 1 or 2 Sex Offenders or there may be none.
- DHS attempts their best to ensure that individuals are housed in places that will allow them to integrate into the community in an independent manner.
- Individuals must meet criteria of being employed or employable, and if they are not, then they cannot be placed into this site.
- As per DHS, there are no clients identified for this site because they must wait until they are closer to the opening of the facility to identify these because this is moving system and there is no way of knowing which individuals will still be in the system in December.
- As per DM Rivera, it is very important to know out of the 2017 individuals in our community to know which ones are males, females, singles or families in order to ascertain the need in the district.
- As per DHS about 70% of individuals in shelters are families, this has been decreasing and there has been an increase of about 1000 single adult males per year.
- As per DM Rivera, the board's concern is that this site is being placed in the district because it is difficult to place a single male shelter and so CB9 is getting the site.
- As per DHS, following the Turning the Tide, DHS is looking to house individuals closer to their community where their children are going to school, etc.
- As per Chairman Himidian, he stated that he failed to understand why DHS would not come to the community board where CB9 could host town halls and ask for the input of the community. As per Chairman Himidian, it seems disingenuous when people who do not live in the community board or in our neighborhoods put things in our neighborhood without considering the people who live there. Now CB9 is stuck with something they don't understand why they are stuck with. The community are the stakeholders, they should have had a say in this site selection. The community is displeased with this site or the process and they should have been given more respect to have a conversation to do what is in the best interest of the community.
- Anabel Palma states that she appreciates the concerns of the community because she has been a part of this community for a long time. Ms. Palma states that they have gone throughout the city and are opening shelters, even in the community boards that have zero. As Per Ms. Palma, unfortunately people don't recommend sites to open up shelters. Board Member Juan Torres asked Ms. Palma if other areas such as Riverdale and Throgs Neck were considered before choosing CB9, Ms. Palma answered that a shelter was opened in Riverdale. Board Member Kwabena Gabay states that everyone is there because of the community and essentially DHS/ Samaritan Village didn't come to the Community Board, Mr. Gabay states that this is a red check. Board Member Linda Brown states that the

community is upset because there was no notice given, she understands this is an “as of right” but the community should be taken into consideration.

- The intake process for the shelter residence will consist of psychiatric evaluation, medical screening, behavioral health screenings, etc. There are multiple layers of the assessment process. Before intake, the status of a sex offender is checked. Sex offender’s level 1 and 2 may be present at this facility if they are employed/employable and from this District. Level 3 individuals are not accepted.
- Board Member Rosemary Jenkins asked that if a client was arrested can they return to shelter. And the answer is “yes” decisions will be made depending on the type of incident
- The staffing pattern for the shelter will be as follows:
  - \*Staff will be trained on site
  - There will be 4 security per shift around the clock, 1 Program Director, 1 assistant Director, 6 case managers, 2 Clinical Supervisors, 2 employments specialists, 2 job developers, 3 kitchen staff, 5 housing managers, and 4 residential aides
- DM Rivera read the Mayors Initiative “Borough Based Approach”. DM Rivera states that there are more families with children that need a shelter in this community than men and the numbers are showing that. DM Rivera asked if it is a possibility to move the shelter to a different location, DHS/Samaritan Village responded saying that if they don’t meet the state mandate “their boss goes to jail”. DM Rivera states that the fact that we can’t get numbers from DHS is a smack in the face, CB9 has 8 shelters and we feel that other communities should get one before CB9 gets number shelter number 9. As per DM Rivera a letter will be written to the Commissioner and Mayor.
- Chairman Nicholas Himidian thanked Senator Sepulveda, Assembly Woman Karines Reyes, Anabel Palma, DHS, Samaritan Village and the community.

\*Next General Board meeting June 20th, 2019

**Meeting adjourned: 8:46 PM**

**OFFICE INFO**

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