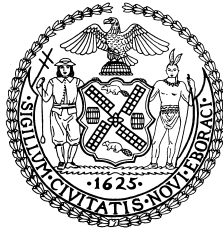


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**The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 8**

**ZONING & DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE**

Lenox Hill Hospital
130 East 77th Street (Lexington-Park)
Robert Camel Conference Room
February 26, 2014
6:30PM

MINUTES

Present: Barbara Chocky, Ed Hartzog, Larry Parnes, Rebecca Seawright,
Marco Tamayo, Teri Slater (Co-Chair), Elaine Walsh (Co-Chair)

1. POPS continued discussion: Discussion of report *Rescuing and Revitalizing Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS): A Strategic Plan for Manhattan Community Board 8*” Privately owned Public Plazas

The study was conducted by Hunter College, Department of Urban Affairs & Planning graduate students for a course in Non-Profit Strategic Planning. The report was finalized in Spring 2014. The committee members were provided with a copy of the report prior to the meeting. This expedited a discussion of the purpose, process and findings of the study. There are 76 POPS located in Community Board 8. The committee and public were positive about the study and how it can play a role in open space utilization and also to inform the public of the existence of POPS. A map and information regarding each POPS will be put on the CB8 web page, Nick Viest, Chair of CB 8 will send a letter to all of the owners of the POPS encouraging them to contact the Board with questions, concerns. This will be an opportunity for the community board to liaison with the community and City Planning on next steps. It is important that the study be an action tool and the community be informed using a range of media formats including local papers. The report will be shared with the elected officials who hopefully will include information in their electronic newsletters and other forums. The graduate students were thanked for their extensive work on the project. With the completion and submission of the POPS report, the committee members also copied and submitted the entire individual POPS records for CB8 from DCP to the district manager to establish a resource/archive open to the public. This resource is available in hard copy in the board office and on our web site.

2. Fall Zoning Workshop Discussion: The idea of a fall workshop was well received by committee members and the public. The workshop will be co-sponsored by other civic groups and City Planning will be invited to participate. The format and identification of speakers will be done by the committee and the civic groups. It was suggested that the meeting be held on the night of a Land Use Meeting so Community Board members might participate. DATE/PLACE TBD

3. Illegal Signage and Enforcement: Donald Ranshte, Director of Community Affairs for the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) provided a current picture of the process in the DOB regarding signage and enforcement. The department has a staff (8) who are assigned to the issue of illegal signage. The DOB has two sections for enforcement: 1) development inspections that have a time period to be completed and 2) enforcement inspections including signage. In the pecking order of the inspections and enforcements to be done, signage violations within a matrix of A, B, C or a **C**. **Neither Sign Hangers, property owners, or architects** are held accountable for signage that is in violation of the Zoning regulations. When hearings are held before the ALJ in the Environmental Control Board – many tickets are dismissed. The DOB then questions staff as to the quality of the ticket writing rather than ALJ decisions. There was extensive discussion of the impact of illegal signage on the quality of life in the residential context of the community board. The lack of enforcement sends the message that commercial establishments are free to have any type of signage regardless of the regulations. Residents have voiced their concerns about the lack of any attention to what is appropriate and what should be a peaceful and pleasant event when walking on the street. Concerns were raised regarding sign hangers and store owner responsibility for the proliferation of the illegal signage.

It was noted that Carnegie Hill Neighbors and the East 86 street M/R Association produced a signage brochure: *A Guide to Sign And Awning Regulations for the east 86th street Corridor/Environs and the Carnegie Hill Area*. (a copy of the brochure can be downloaded from www.e86th.org – then go to For Neighborhood Businesses)

The brochure was done to provide residents and property owners with information to help them understand what was legal. Residents have been guided by the brochure and have called in complaints to 311 but are frustrated by a lack of response from the City—the Buildings Department.

Given the limitations within the department of buildings discussion ensued as to what other mechanisms are available.

The range includes legislative initiatives, shifting inspections to Department of Transportation for sidewalk items such as canopy violations, discussion with the Environmental Control Board, increasing fines or creating an agency that can enforce all of the violations that impact quality of Life in communities. The Mayor's Management Report includes figures on number of fines for violation and it was suggested that the Board office monitor the work of the Dept. of Building through their web site. Discussion and monitoring will continue for this problem.

5. As there was no Old or New Business meeting was adjointed.

Teri Slater and Elaine Walsh
Zoning and Development Committee Co-Chairs