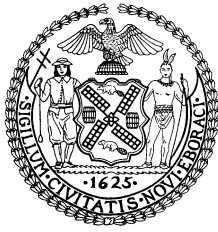


James G. Clynes
Chairman

Latha Thompson
District Manager



505 Park Avenue
Suite 620

New York, N.Y. 10022
(212) 758-4340
(212) 758-4616 (Fax)

www.cb8m.com Website
info@cb8m.com - E-Mail

The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 8

Housing Committee
Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center
415 East 93rd Street
Dining Room 1 & 2
Tuesday, January 31, 2017, 6:30 PM

Minutes

CB8 members present: Ed Hartzog*, Loraine Brown*, Matt Bondy*, Rita Popper*, Marco Tamayo*

Members of the Public: Diego Barberena, Claire Bierhorst, Jonathan Brady, MyPhuong Chung (CB 3), Christopher Deluzio (CB 3), Bob Pollack, Jeannette Rausch (CB 7), Timothy Roeper

*Committee member

The Meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m.

1. Invitation to all of the Manhattan Community Boards Housing and Land Use Committees to convene and discuss the Affordable Housing Program in the Borough of Manhattan.

The meeting was as an opportunity to bring together the Housing and Land Use Committee chairs from all the community boards in Manhattan and, to begin a broader discussion of housing issues across the borough. Invitations were extended to each community board and many representatives were due to attend but, due to inclement weather that day there were several last minute “no-shows” by members of several community boards. Nevertheless, MyPhuong Chung and Christopher Deluzio from Community Board 3 and, Jeannette Rausch from Community Board 7 did attend and they shared their experiences and concerns. Also in attendance – from the Borough President’s office – was Ahmed Tigani, Assistant Director for Land Use, Planning & Development.

At the outset, the floor was opened for general discussion about personal, local and/or borough wide housing issues and concerns. Bob Pollack from Community Board 4 spoke out about a personal issue regarding the loss of affordable units in his building; however, when pressed to provide more details he indicated that he thought the forum was not the right place to discuss his problem. Co-chair Loraine Brown offered to assist Mr. Pollack with respect to addressing and possibly correcting his situation – after the meeting was concluded.

MyPhuong Chung from Community Board 3 indicated that major changes were happening in their district including, the proliferation of super tall towers and increasing pressure on low-income and moderate income families with respect to affordability. She indicated that CB 3 has a large percentage of seniors on fixed incomes and the number of affordable units are important to the residents of her community. Folks from Community Board 7 noted that one of their issues is preserving the current affordable units they already have – not necessarily creating more, although that would not be unwelcome. The issue of “no net loss” was discussed at greater length late in the meeting. The meeting began to move from issues and concerns to solutions and remedies.

2. Discuss the commitment from the developers, define the “ask,” increase the number of affordable housing units in new construction and the number of permanent units.

As the discussion moved to solutions and remedies the agenda moved to the issue of “the ask.” Specifically, what can and should a community board ask from developers who are building new apartments. MyPhuong Chung from CB 3 stated that their community board was not well versed with many of the housing programs available to developers – e.g., MIH and 421-a to name two. With so many questions about inclusionary housing – she said that they reached out to HPD and arranged for an inclusionary housing training for their members and the community. One of the things they discussed was the role of the community board in the process.

She noted that 421-a applications were routinely rejected by the board and it was acknowledged that community board 8 regularly rejected such applications as well. It was observed that continued rejections became a de facto self-fulfilling prophecy. That is, the developers had learned which community boards were likely to reject their applications and, as such, they were less likely to engage in a dialogue, which only brought about more reasons to reject the application.

It was acknowledged that progress would not be made with the current dysfunction. Indeed, most agreed that it would be better if 421-a voucher applications were implemented in such a way that a certain percentage of affordable housing would be in both the sponsoring and market rate communities. Contrasted with the recent 421-a voucher application in CB 8 at 74th and York Avenue. That application placed all the affordable units in the Bronx, while a 6-story tenement was demolished and replaced with 84 market rate units in our community district.

Most agreed that this was not the kind of result they wanted – instead, they expressed a desire to see enforcement of MIH for all community boards – an “equality of distribution” throughout the borough. Rita Popper noted that one of the issues that needed to be addressed was the shifting age of the population – i.e., we are all living longer. That needed to be included in our calculus as we thought about what would be an appropriate and useful “ask” of developers as they built.

Of course, the “ask” would be more important and useful if it was done at the beginning rather than the end of the process. For instance, the Housing Committee will review a 421-a application for 200 East 95th Street at its March meeting. The problem is, the building at 200 East 95th Street recently “topped out” as reported by YIMBY – a real estate industry newsletter. The incongruity of timing – vis-à-vis community input in an on-going project only highlighted the need for greater information and sharing of information amongst community boards.

At this point the discussion and agenda moved to item 3 – developing uniform guidelines for developers.

3. Develop uniform guidelines for developers who want to build affordable housing units in the Borough of Manhattan.

One idea that was discussed was the creation of a common form for developers. That is, a document the community boards would develop that would help them assess future housing projects in their districts. It was noted that Community Board 11 has developed a checklist for developers in their district. It was suggested that this could form the basis for a borough wide form.

At this point Ahmed Tigani actively engaged with those present and suggested that a future meeting could help create and shape an “indicator list” for the borough president’s office. Specifically, the Borough President’s office has a lot of valuable information and stats that would help determine just where each community district stood with respect to existing affordable housing in their neighborhoods.

By pulling together relevant stats and information – into an “indicator list” – each community board would be better equipped to begin the process of engaging with developers and shaping future developments. In other words, by knowing where they stood, the community board would know where they wanted to go and how to get there.

Among the stats and information discussed for the indicator list were; housing starts, registration documents, affordable units confirmed, regulatory agreements (i.e., which ones were being approved), how many units are we losing? – which is just a borough-wide metric at this point, this is where the issue of no net loss was brought up and discussed again, property tax bills, rent regulation fees (i.e., \$10 per each unit) – by looking at the fees one could determine how many units are within each district.

Ahmed Tigani noted that Joe Salvo was the head of demographics in the BP’s office and, that he could be of great assistance to us (collectively) in this process. In terms of moving forward, it was suggested that another meeting of Housing Committee and Land Use Committee chairs was in order – perhaps at an upcoming borough board meeting.

In the interim the Committee will continue to explore this important initiative and report on any progress and/or upcoming meetings. Any suggestions or information relevant to strengthening our collective voices are most welcome.

At this point the discussion of the agenda was concluded and the meeting moved on to Old Business.

Old Business.

There was no old business.

New Business.

There was no new business and the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ed Hartzog and Loraine Brown, Co-Chairs

NEXT MEETING – MONDAY, MARCH 20th – 421-a Application for 200 East 95th Street – Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 East 88th Street (b/w 1st & 2nd Avenues), Draesal Hall.

APRIL MEETING – MONDAY, APRIL 10th – impact of the 2nd Ave. subway on low and middle income housing opportunities.

Loraine Brown and Edward Hartzog, Co-Chairs