

Russell Squire
Chair

Will Brightbill
District Manager



505 Park Avenue, Suite 620
New York, N.Y. 10022-1106
(212) 758-4340
(212) 758-4616 (Fax)
www.cb8m.com – Website
info@cb8m.com – E-Mail

**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Housing Committee
Tuesday, November 23, 2021
This meeting was conducted via Zoom**

Minutes

Board Members Present: Gayle P. Baron, Saundra I. Coleman, Billy Freeland, Ed Hartzog, Greg Morris, Rita Popper, Margaret Price, Elaine Walsh

Item 1: The Affordable and Equal Housing Battle – A View From the Front Lines. Guest Speakers: Yolande I. Nicholson, Esq., Philip Simpson, Esq., Matt Berman Esq., and Sandy Reiburn, Esq.

Co-chairs Hartzog and Morris introduced everyone to the meeting. Mr. Hartzog welcomed the guest speakers Yolande I. Nicholson, Esq., Philip Simpson, Esq., Matt Berman Esq., and Sandy Reiburn, Esq.

Ms. Nicholson shared her thoughts on the past ten years of real estate in our city - *whether it's single-family homes or big developments or existing multifamily homes, they are being handed over to equity rich investors, hedge fund investors.* She noted the impact of the third-party transfer program and its impact on affordable housing development. She identified the beginning of the housing crisis as 2011-2013 when these homes were being foreclosed on. She highlighted the failure of the state to renew 421-A.

Ms. Reiburn provided what she described as a post-mortem on today's zoning vote (related to the Blood Center) and pointed to the limitations in power that community boards have. She provided a critique of the rezoning efforts initiated by the City.

A member of the public asked about the accessibility of apartments for those with disabilities.

Ms. Reiburn noted the absence of attention paid to ADA standards in buildings.

Mr. Berman provided some clarity as to what aspects of affordability issues can be handled through litigation.

Mr. Freeland asked about the type of comprehensive planning that could be used to empower communities to propose their own rezoning to achieve affordable housing. He also asked how the Upper East Side could secure additional affordable housing.

A member of the public commented on exclusionary zoning.

Mr. Morris expressed the desire of the co-chairs to maintain a healthy and respectful dialogue.

Ms. Walsh asked how it is possible for the community to organize effectively.

Ms. Nicholson shared her thoughts on the value and impact of zoning.

Ms. Popper wondered what would make it possible for us to have influence in the development of affordable housing.

Mr. Berman encouraged each of think about the communities we want to live in – it’s a question of what's the trade off? What kind of character in your community are you willing to trade away for that increased housing? And who's going to have access to it?

Ms. Coleman reiterated a comment that Ms. Nicholson made about housing being a civil right. She asked how it would be possible to get our community more informed and our elected officials to truly engage and respect the will of the people.

Ms. Reiburn offered a suggestion: Our housing committee should organize/coordinate our efforts with the other 50 community board housing committees.

Ms. Nicholson reinforced that we are talking about issues of race and economics- and the displacement of Black and Brown people.

Mr. Morris reminded attendees that this is a public forum.

Ms. Price asked us to find opportunity to gain viability on the issues discussed tonight.

A member of the public shared the data specific to the environmental impact of development.

A member of the public expressed her concerns about privatization.

Ms. Nicholson provided a summary of the benefits that developers receive.

Mr. Morris reiterated a desire for the committee meetings to remain open and respectful even when we disagree.

Ms. Walsh reiterated a point Ms. Nicholson made about tax abatement.

As there were no more reflections or questions, Mr. Hartzog thanked the speakers and expressed his gratitude for the participation of CB members and non-CB members on today’s call.

With a motion made and seconded, the meeting was called to close.

Ed Hartzog and Gregory Morris, Co-Chairs