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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Housing Committee
Thursday, February 3, 2022 – 6:30PM
Conducted Remotely on Zoom

Minutes

Present: Anthony Cohn, Saundra I. Coleman, Billy Freeland, Ed Hartzog, Gregory Morris, Rita Popper, and Marco Tamayo.

Item 1: Presentation: Victor Bach, Senior Housing Policy Analyst, and Samuel Stein, Housing Policy Analyst, from the Community Service Society to speak about the housing aspects of the State of the State and Executive Budget proposal, as well as, approaches to support increased access and availability of affordable housing.

Mr. Morris and Mr. Hartzog welcomed the Committee Members and members of the public to the meeting. Mr. Morris introduced Victor Bach, Senior Housing Policy Analyst, and Samuel Stein, Housing Policy Analyst, from the Community Service Society to speak about the housing aspects of the State of the State and Executive Budget.

Mr. Stein spoke about 421-A which is a major tax abatement for new residential developments in New York City. The program was last renewed in 2017 and expires this coming June. *It is the single highest housing expenditure for New York City.* Mr. Stein noted that it is a very expensive program which has produced mostly not that affordable housing- *most of the housing that's being produced is market rate.* There is a proposal that would formally do away with 421-A and replace it with a system that has lower levels of AMI.

Mr. Stein spoke briefly about hotel to housing conversions and accessory dwelling units.

He also noted language in the budget around improving access to housing for people with prior criminal convictions, which is a very important housing justice issue for people who are excluded from certain forms of housing, though it contains a very large loophole that might make it less than effective.

He noted the concern about eviction prevention.

Mr. Bach spoke about the Build Back Better bill now being “dead.”

Ms. Popper shared her thoughts about the ripple effect of not having affordable housing.

Mr. Stein noted the interconnectivity between housing and workforce and transit and everything else – *“We don't have a comprehensive plan. We don't have a long term plan. We have short term actions and short term electoral cycles.”*

Mr. Bach highlighted the deterioration of NYCHA and the impact of the presence of the federal monitor.

He offered some strategies and approaches to support Mitchell-Lama.

He suggested that our committee partner with other Community Board committees in New York.

Mr. Freeland asked about the measurement of AMI and targeting of AMI.

Mr. Bach provided a brief summary of the dilemmas associated with the development of affordable housing. Mr. Stein referenced the involvement of non-profits in the effort.

There were brief reflections on FAR and densification.

Mr. Tamayo expressed his appreciation for the presenters and complexities associated with the topic of affordable housing.

Mr. Cohn shared his thoughts on density. Mr. Stein suggested that if we taxed vacant property differently, it might make less sense for people to buy homes that they have no intention of living in, but just to make a profit from and for developers to build housing that is clearly for that purpose.

Ms. Polivy asked a specific question about affordable housing options.

Mr. Hartzog asked about gentrification and vacancies.

Ms. Machaver highlighted the height cap and the impact of an increased FAR. She suggested reducing/ending demolition.

Mr. Stein encouraged NYCHA to turnover decision-making about development to NYCHA residents.

Ms. Popper asked who it was that the Committee should target to increase access to affordable housing.

Mr. Morris and Mr. Hartzog thanked our speakers. They acknowledged the presence of a new co-chair, Rebecca Lamorte. In regards to old business, Mr. Morris and Mr. Hartzog committed to re-engaging on the topic of drafting a letter to the Governor.

There was no new business.

As there were no more reflections or questions, Mr. Morris and Mr. Hartzog thanked the speakers once again and expressed their 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.

Edward Hartzog, Gregory Morris, and Rebecca Lamorte, Co-Chairs