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**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Sanitation and Environment Committee
Joint meeting with Health, Seniors, and Social Services Committee
Thursday, March 20, 2025 – 6:30 pm
This meeting was conducted via Zoom**

Please note: The resolution contained in the committee minutes is a recommendation submitted by the committee co-chairs to the Community Board. At the monthly full board meeting, the resolution is discussed and voted upon by all members of Community Board 8 Manhattan.

Resolution for Approval:

Item 1: Calling on City, Borough, and Elected Officials for more financial resources for rat mitigation in the annual budget for integrative work between city agencies.

Minutes

CB8 Attendance: Bill Angelos, Bradley Hershenson, Sahar Husain, Sharon Pope-Marshall, Barbara Rudder, Sacha Sellam, Judy Schneider

Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 21

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

- 1. Discussion on “Rat Mitigation,” in terms of the operation of agencies involved in its alleviation, their enforcement, and waste handling. In addition, details of resources and solutions will be provided to address this issue by various agencies and Council Member Julie Menin's office.**

Rat mitigation was discussed in detail by Kathleen Corradi, Director of Rodent Mitigation at the NYC Mayor's Office, Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) representative Martha Vernazza, and Harry Gale, Director of Constituent Services from Council Member Julie Menin's office, where they shared resources for alleviation of this issue and the processes for enforcement and waste handling.

The presenters mentioned the following:

(1:54) It was noted that this is a public health issue as rats carry Hantavirus (HFRS) and many other diseases. Integrated approaches by different agencies and elected officials are important to solve this issue. There are rat mitigation policies and administrative codes that are effective in guiding the process for rat mitigation in New York City.

(8:14) Health codes guide that the property owner must keep the location pest-free. This means that a publicly owned park is the Department of Parks and Recreation's (DPR) responsibility, for instance, and a residential building's management agency will have to take the steps to keep the property clean and pest-free. The City offers educational and inspection services, but they are conducted in conjunction with property owners.

(9:20) In this reference, the Housing Maintenance Code talks about cleanliness and pest-free spaces inside the building that a property owner is required to maintain accordingly.

(10:06) The Department of Sanitation (DSNY) has Administrative Codes 16-118 and 16-123 regarding litter and cleanliness.

(10:18) The Department of Transportation (DOT) has Codes 19-152 for sidewalks.

(10:20) The Department of Buildings (DOB) has Local Law 109 of 2022 and Building Code: Section F101 applying to new construction projects and for buildings to maintain pest-free spaces.

(11:46) Local Law 37 states that when any pesticides are used, the Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) must be notified. This ensures that the department can monitor and resolve the issue.

(13:26) Better enforcement is only possible with a focus on building structures, infrastructure, and waste management in conjunction with the Rat Task Force, composed of 40 agencies like the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), New York City Department of Education (DOE), New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, New York City Department of Sanitation, New York City Department of Small Business Service (SBS), and New York City Department of Transportation. Different departments and property owners have to work together in order to eradicate these pests from our streets.

(14:44) The City is finding solutions and integrating them for effectiveness, like containerization of our waste and changing its set out time. Also, changing the structure of the permanent dining out program in order to reduce the rat population without impacting businesses.

(15:42) Containerization makes it harder for rats to source food and breed. So, enterprises need to keep their waste in containers. Since November 2024, all residential buildings under nine units are required to set out waste in lidded bins. City-owned properties must follow the same.

(18:00) Composting will start from April 1st, and the DSNY is providing flyers and posters for this purpose. Property owners are required to keep 18 inches around their property clean and free of pests. Street sweeping and litter pickup are the responsibility of the city to reduce waste and food.

(20:28) The Integrated Pest Portal is available to city residents to identify the most pest-populated areas. Agencies focus on these areas extensively. For example, wire lath under the soil is layered to stop these animals from burrowing in that area. This was done by some NYCHA buildings. This portal focuses on 311 complaints to identify the densest pest population areas and complaints for unhygienic conditions, since they both go hand in hand.

(22:10) The City also offers Rat Academy and a rat walk-through to become part of the NYC Rat Pack.

(28:25) The Office of Pest Control in the DOHMH responds to complaints from the public, conducts rat inspections, educates New York City residents about this problem, organizes pest management by professionals, and updates the NYC Rat Information Portal for the public. They work closely with other agencies to reduce rodent populations.

(32:00) The DOHMH representative shared details of the Community Board Rat Reservoir for the Upper East Side, listing contact details as well. She mentioned that the DOHMH inspection can be initiated by either a 311 complaint or if the property lies within the Rat Reservoir. They will check for rat burrows, cracks, droppings, and live or dead rats. In the case of a failed inspection of public or private property, the relevant agency or private property owner will receive a referral report. They will receive a summons to attend hearings at the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH). They could receive a fine if they don't comply. All property owners should have clean, tight-lid garbage cans. Neighbors must check the area around their buildings for rodent activity and report rodent sightings around public properties, like tree pits and parks.

(41:00) What can we do? Host a Rat Academy, organize clean-up events and rat-walkthroughs, post posters about the Rat Information Portal, and complain at 311 about specific addresses where rats have been observed. If a rat sighting is on park premises, then one can request that Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) officers come and stop

people from feeding pigeons, as that becomes food for rats. If it's on the street, then the community affairs team of police can help. (41:16) On the other hand, if a building is rat-infested, then please reach out to 311 so that a rat inspector can visit the building, and flag it to the Council Member's office. (41:20) To ensure that there is no increase in rats once the outside dining option starts in spring, flooring must be removable for cleaning and inspection, barriers have to be water-filled and not soil-filled, the structures cannot be year around, and 18 inches around the restaurant have to be maintained for cleanliness by the owner. To complain about a restaurant, call 311 for the DOT and the DOHMH. It was noted that there should be equity in providing resources to all neighborhoods, whether residents are vocal or not. (41:40) In case of tree pruning and big bulky items, it's important to connect with the Department of Sanitation and put them out on the day of recycling. The law requires that when the buildings are razed, it is mandatory that a fumigator must be present for rat mitigation.

(48:35) Harry Gale listed rat mitigation steps by Council Member Julie Menin's office. He mentioned that tree pits were fumigated with carbon monoxide to reduce the rat population in many locations in the district. The resources used were covered by Council Member Menin's office. They followed the complaints that were received from the district and got it fumigated. In addition, they are buying 30 better waste disposal bins for the district from their own resources. Also, they are ensuring that there are four garbage pickups. Her office is also paying ACE for cleaning the streets and especially tree pits, however, they don't work inside the parks. Parks and Recreation has the jurisdiction and is responsible for sanitation and fumigation. The Council Member is also trying to get a bill passed to have poop bags attached to the bins to keep our streets clean, as dog feces can be food for the rats.

Combined efforts can alleviate this problem.

WHEREAS the rat problem continues to be a major, persisting issue in Manhattan's Community District 8 and;

WHEREAS rat mitigation is an issue that requires collaboration across city agencies to solve effectively and;

WHEREAS City Council Member Julie Menin utilized her resources to help mitigate the problem, however, the need continues to be tremendous and;

WHEREAS increased rat mitigation requires more funding from all offices;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that CB8 requests more financial resources for rat mitigation from City, Borough, and Elected Officials in the annual budget for integrative work between city agencies.

Approved: 6-0-0

For: Bradley Hershenson, Sahar Husain, Sharon Pope-Marshall, Barbara Rudder, Sacha Sellam, Judy Schneider

2. **Old Business** - None discussed.
3. **New Business** - None discussed.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45 pm.

Sahar Husain, Addeson Lehv, and Barbara Rudder, Co-Chairs
Wilma Johnson and Barbara Rudder, Co-Chairs