



Matthew S. Washington
Chair

George Sarkissian
District Manager

COMMUNITY BOARD ELEVEN

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Cultural Affairs Committee Minutes
Wednesday, October 6, 2010
Bonifacio
7 East 116th Street (bet. Madison/Fifth Avenue)

Present: D. Quinones, J.Lawson, C.Rameriez. A.Flores, and R. Ayala
Excused A. Vasarilo

Invited Guests: Fernando Salicrup, Taller Boricua

Chairperson Report

The chair welcomed Fernando Salicrup from Taller Boricua and members of the public, and explained the format and purpose of the meeting. The committee has had a long history of assessing cultural institutions in El Barrio and this year will continue the practice to ensure that they promote collaborations with local artist and strengthen the cultural and tourism infrastructure.

The Taller Boricua was invited to give a presentation and engage in a dialogue to address issues regarding the lack of access to the Julia de Burgos Cultural Center and standardize information to the community. The committee was also going to address the release of an RFEI for the management of the Julia de Burgos Cultural Center multipurpose space and theater by EDC, currently under the management of the Taller Boricua.

Mr. Salicrup informed the Community Board about EDC's intent to release the RFEI on Sept 30, 2010 without proper notice or discussion. The Community Board was not informed and was concerned about EDC's continued practice of non inclusion for another major project.

A letter was sent by the Community Board requesting a halt to the release of the RFEI . Since then EDC moved ahead with the release and has stated that the CB will be consulted and provided with updates.

The chairperson informed the committee that recent committee member statements in the press were done without her knowledge and all future statements must be cleared with the Chairperson Mathew Washington. Committee member A. Flores responded that a letter of her concerns was circulated to CB members and was leaked to Taller Boricua. The goal of the meeting will be to promote clarity, collaborations, and to provide input and recommendations. The Community Board is very concerned about the EDC process, the state of cultural arts in El Barrio, participation in planning initiatives and how to preserve

existing cultural programs. They realize that there is been a lot of misinformation about the issue.

Ms. Quinones stated the following facts regarding the Julia de Burgos Cultural Center:

- EDC manages the Julia de Burgos Cultural Center, not Taller Boricua
- Taller Boricua will not be kicked out of all the space they currently occupy, only the multi-purpose space
- Taller Boricua can apply for the RFEI
- Statements made to the press do not reflect the CB position
- A tenant has not been selected

Presentation/ General Discussion

When questions were presented to Mr. Salicrup his lawyer was concerned about the lack of notification to Taller Boricua. It was agreed that the questions would be sent to them and that they would work to respond to them at a later date. The questions about the board, programs, budget and community collaborations have been presented to other cultural institutions and that the committees' intent was to have the same information for all groups on file and posted on our website.

Mr. Salicrup stated that the current Board of Directors are:

- Cecilio Diaz
- Dam Palmont
- Fernando Salicrup
- Marcos Dimas
- Nitza Tufino

Ms. Nitza Tufino read the following statement for the record:

“For 40 years, Taller Boricua continues to be an active cultural organization in El Barrio. Ms. Flores claims that “there has been nothing cultural going on consistently in the building for more than three years now.” This statement is groundless and disrespectful to the numerous events and cultural programs that are ongoing at the Julia de Burgos, hosted by Taller Boricua and the other tenants in the building. Taller Boricua holds six exhibitions 33 artists, focusing on emerging, mid-career and underrepresented Latino and other minority artists. In our gallery we held artists' talks and exhibition-specific events (panels, lecture series, community cultural programs). We offered docent-led educational tours to over 200 students and adults. In our multi-cultural space, we produced a series of open poetry mic nights, film night events as well as writing workshops. We continue weekly Salsa Wednesdays bringing together local seniors and young adults. In addition to Taller Boricua's cultural events, we host many other non-profits or community organizations' events for free or at cost such as 100 Hispanic Women and Cemi-Underground. We continue to create our archive with the help of professional archivist as a living record of the history and cultural growth of East Harlem and Nuyorican arts. The Taller pays \$50,000 rent and \$20,000 in insurance.”

Public Concerns and general Discussion

The chair entertained comments from the public and other CB members. The following issues were raised for the committee to consider:

- DCA should have oversight of the Julia de Burgos Cultural Center, not EDC
- A replacement for Taller Boricua has already been chosen
- The release of the RFEI is part of a larger gentrification plan
- Taller Boricua will be kicked out
- The deal has been finalized
- The larger issue is artist space and funding
- The RFEI should be rescinded
- Conflict of interests of committee members
- Lack of communication with elected officials
- Opportunity for maximum utilization of the space
- Taller Boricua can entertain new collaborations and corrective actions

Action Items

The Chair explained that before moving into the business session and voting that committee members with intent to apply must be “present not voting”

The committee could not make a determination and the issue was referred to the CB11 Executive Committee.