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Youth & Education Committee
Tuesday, December 8, 2015, 6:00pm
Board Office
1664 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10035

***** Minutes *****

- Present: David L Giordano (Chair), Carlos Diaz, Danielle Sullivan, Neil Flynn, John Green, Mahfuzur Rahman, Eudora Ortiz, Nilsa Orama
- Absent: Emily Grajales, Laurence Vargas, Joshua Watkins, Jemar Ward
- Excused: Peggy Morales, Wendy Hewlett
- Guest(s): Gustavo Solis, Marie Winfield (CB 11), Narissa Williams, Abigail Savitch-Law, Pablo Torres, Frances Mastrota (CB11), George Sarkissian, Adam Lubinsky, Eve Colavito, Rich Berlin, Reyvon Escalante, Wagner Matarrito, Syrvella Hall, Diane Collier (Chair, CB11), Emily Parkey

Meeting called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Committee Chair David Giordano.

1. Call to Order- Adoption of the Agenda
2. Discussions/Presentations
 - a. Informational presentation on the Afterschool, Pre-K, Daycare, Schools and Education recommendations of the Steering Committee of the East Harlem Neighborhood Plan

George Sarkissian of the City Council explained about the composition of the Steering Committee and reviewed the rezoning idea. Mr. Sarkissian went over the goals of the East Harlem Neighborhood Plan and the set of recommendations developed through the community visioning workshops and its subgroups and how feedback is currently requested from Community Board 11 and the general public on them.

The presentation then transitioned to Pablo Torres from Innovation High School, Mr. Torres stated that the Schools and Education workshop reviewed the strengths and challenges regarding schools, education and statistics. Mr. Torres discussed the objectives and goals outlined in the presentation. David Giordano agreed with the importance of addressing capital and capacity needs. Danielle Sullivan asked if the funding for professional development would encompass emotional and social development (not only academic). Marie Winfield questioned the outreach for this subgroup and what happened to the youth portion that was originally mentioned in the original flyer. She hoped that youth will be involved and represented as part of the target

audience and that their recommendations should be included and that these are not final recommendations. Pablo Torres agreed with Marie and that stated that youth viewpoints would be included before final recommendations. Mahfuzur Rahman suggested that a comprehensive simplified survey for youth is needed. Pablo Torres said that Principals were the only ones initially surveyed. He also stated that the survey that has been used can be used for high school students and maybe youth can be sent the survey. Neil Flynn felt that there were at least two issues important to East Harlem-English as a second language at home but this does not translate to reading and writing improvement and how to mitigate gangs and get youth to work together in a productive way. He felt that the recommendations did not take into account these factors. Danielle felt that gangs were more considered based on the age of the student and Neil felt that this was needed to be addressed on the school level. Nilsa Orama asked questions regarding the programs under the objectives. Frances Mastrotta underscored the lack of reading skills for young people and the importance of being able to read. Diane Collier emphasized that this presentation was a starting point and for the committee to consider if the recommendations mentioned had captured the needs thus far.

Questions arose about rezoning and how rezoning will address the concerns mentioned. George Sarkissian explained about the broader planning process and Pablo Torres also explained how schools added their input. Marie asked if rezoning was mentioned so that the community understood the tradeoffs to the neighborhood with the current housing proposals that are potentially coming (or if the question had been framed differently) did the Steering Committee feel that they would have received different recommendations. George Sarkissian answered that he thought that the city process will be able to answer the questions that Marie has brought up. The first part of the presentation was then ended.

The second part of the presentation was presented by Emily Parkey and covered Pre-K, Afterschool and Day Care. Ms. Parkey discussed the strengths in East Harlem regarding Early Childhood education and stated that there are many different afterschool programs which have many different services as well as great cultural institutions. She also mentioned however that East Harlem is missing center based programs for children aged 0-3 years. She also mentioned that there are programs housed in buildings that are often in disrepair. Ms. Parkey mentioned salary and calendar year differences based on funding sources (D.O.E. and A.C.S.) She mentioned the need for extending program hours for the convenience of working families. Ms. Parkey reviewed the stated objectives in the presentation. Frances Mastrotta opined about the importance of teaching the young about gardening and nutrition. Neil questioned which agency should be in charge of education (DOE or ACS). Danielle commented that due to the difference in salaries, good staff is leaving programs run by Community based organizations to work for city agencies. Nilsa questioned funding and how programs are marketed to fill seats. David Giordano mentioned that certain areas might be inundated with CBO's and the same types of contracts.

The need for upgrading programs located in NYCHA buildings was discussed as well as having a central location to disseminate information regarding programs- Cb11 was mentioned as a possibility. Discretionary funding was mentioned and both David and Neil expressed how hard it was to carry out programs with this type of funding. Questions were raised about the importance of youth and community participation so that there would be no complaining about final recommendations and going in a different direction. Marie mentioned the schools planning process and their mentality. Nilsa

Orama asked about the mechanism of commenting on all that was presented; David Giordano asked that all questions and comments be sent to the CB 11 board with the committee chair cc'd. Presentation was then ended.

- b. Request for a letter of support for DREAM Charter School's application to extend their charter to include additional elementary and middle school seats for students in District 4, and potentially a high school to serve students in 9-12th grades

Emily Parkey, Director of Family and Community Engagement & Government Affairs and Eva Colavito conducted a presentation about the Dream Charter School and their work with East Harlem families. Parents from Dream Charter School (Reyvon Escalante and Wagner Matornta) were present and discussed the positive effect attending the school has had on their children and the importance of not having a gap from middle school to college. Ms. Parkey and Ms. Colavito discussed the dream list that Harlem RBI had for youth and how Dream Charter School embodies that list-the inclusive environment, rigorous academics, whole child focus family and community engagement. They mentioned that Harlem RBI Dream Charter School has recognized the need for extending their school to include high school students and families also expressed the need for a high school for their children that embodied the ideals of Dream Charter School. Ms. Parkey and Ms. Colavito stated that the high school will be a community school and will be open to new students and not only current Dream Charter School students. Dream Charter School feels that they have the knowledge and a firm base to offer a really great community high school. They acknowledged that they still have a lot of planning ahead of them and there are many steps to be undertaken including involving youth in the planning, public hearings, facilities assignment and funding. David Giordano mentioned that in the past, organizations have come before the board for letters of support and it was the committee's intent to hold organizations accountable to reserve seats for this community. Both Ms. Parkey and Ms. Colavito emphasized the intent of working with East Harlem youth. They mentioned that the full capacity of the high school may be about 500 students and they may phase in students slowly because of academics and gaps from public schools. A question arose as to how they would deal with children and families that speak languages other than English/Spanish (Nilsa); Ms. Parkey assured the committee that they were working on getting a core group together for translation services. Mahfuzur asked about wheelchair and disability accessibility and STEM and was told that Dream Charter School is fully accessible and that Dream Charter has not developed the entire curriculum but that STEM emphasis and 21st Century skills will be incorporated. Carlos Diaz spoke about Progress High School (Eastern District High School-Grand Street Campus) and potentially contacting them for information.

Carlos Diaz made a motion to issue a letter of support for Dream Charter's School application for extension of their charter to include additional seats for existing grades and a potential high school. The motion was seconded by John Green and passed unanimously.

3. Informational Updates

- a. David Giordano made a motion to put off discussion of the East Harlem Youth Council and bylaws implementation/outreach until the January 2016 committee meeting; motion was seconded by Neil Flynn.

4. New Business

5. Old Business

- a. Danielle Sullivan encouraged continuing the discussion of the East Harlem Neighborhood plan next month.

6. Announcements

7. Adjournment

- a. Motion to adjourn was made by John Green and was seconded by Eudora Ortiz.