Youth and Education Committee  
Tuesday, April 10, 2019, 6:00 p.m.  
Board Office

*** Minutes ***

Present: Elsie Encaranacion, Lilybelle Gonzalez, John Green, Shawn Smith, Jason Villanueva, Nilsa Orama (ex officio), David Giordano, Mahfuzur Rahman

Excused: Yolanda Brown

Guests: Yolanda McBride, Phoebe Boyer, Miriam Martinez, Louis Berner-Herouv, Joannie Acevedo, Danny Gonzalez, Emily Johnson, Xavier Santiago, Henry Flores, Pilar de Jesus, Ranya Bautista, Adam Cruz, Reeshemah Brightly

1. Call to Order– Adoption of the Agenda

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Announcements

   a. Mahfuzur Rahman announced the Spirit of Service event on April 28th, 2018
   b. David Giordano announced the community meeting on the future of Children’s Aid East Harlem Center to be held at 130 East 101st Street at the East Harlem Center at 6pm on April 11, 2018
   c. Louis Berner-Herouv of Bike New York announced their initiative to teach children how to ride bikes and the safety measures they should take
   d. Stanley Issac Center announced their tutoring program for children who need help in reading and writing

3. Presentations & Discussions

   a. Children’s Aid

   Phoebe Boyer, CEO of Children’s Aid, came to the committee meeting to discuss the details of the program’s future upon the closing of the East Harlem Center and the playground. There was resistance from the committee and the public given
the fact that the CEO had not updated the presentation given to the committee from a previous meeting. The CEO heard the concerns of the committee and the public surrounding the closure and ensured she will make every attempt to help mitigate the situation.

b. Aspen Institute

Ranya Bautista, of Aspen, briefly presenter her organizations findings on the level of interaction Youth in East Harlem have with physical sports in a report project play. She left some information and brochures on how they went about the study and how to further advocate.

c. CUNY’s Manhattan Educational Opportunity Center.

Adam Cruz, of CUNY, gave an overview on the many trainings that their program offers to the community for low skill folks in East Harlem in an attempt to provide them with opportunities to be more successful in their attempts to enter the competitive workforce.

4. New Business

The committee felt compelled to ask for information from Children’s Aid after an inconclusive conversation with Children’s Aid CEO Phoebe Boyer, the committee wanted the Board take formal position in asking for the minutes of the meeting surrounding the purchase and documents related to the purchase. They formalized it by requesting the Board sends out a letter requesting this information. A motion was made by Mahfuzur Rahman to request the meeting minutes from Children's Aid's board meeting discussing the sale of the playground and building, as well as the supporting documents related to the purchase. The motion was seconded by Jason Villanueva. There were 6 in favor and 1 present not voting (David Giordano). The motion passed.

5. Old Business

a. Capital Budget and Expense

Next month the committee will not entertain presentations, but work solely on the budget and capital expenses from its committee.

6. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm
May 3, 2018

Phoebe Boyer, CEO
Children’s Aid
711 Third Avenue
New York, NY, 10017

Re: Closing of the East Harlem Center and sale of the playground

Dear Ms. Boyer,

The sale of the playground that is part of Children’s Aid East Harlem Center came as a shock to our community. Both the East Harlem Center building and its adjoining playground have been a part of the fabric of our community for many years providing necessary services and recreational activates for our youth and their families. The recent news that Children’s Aid had sold the lots where the playground is located and its plans to close the East Harlem Center have resulted in an outcry from the families served by the Center and the larger East Harlem community concerned about the loss of this valued community asset.

Children’s Aid has been a trusted and valued partner of our community for many years, so the news of this sale without prior alert to the community board and other community stakeholders was disappointing given the potential impact of this decision on our community. Prior notice and discussion could have resulted in alternative preservation and/or development scenarios that would have maintained the levels of service and access to which the community has long relied on at the East Harlem Center.

We respectfully request that Children’s Aid share copies of all the documents, including board minutes, related to the sale of the playground and decision to close the East Harlem Center so that it may be better understood how and why your organization came to this decision.

If you have any further questions, please reach out to our District Manager, Angel Mescain, at 212-831-8929.

Sincerely,

Nilsa Orama
Chair
Community Board 11

cc: Hon. Bill Perkins, New York City Council (via email)
Hon. Diana Ayala, New York City Council (via email)
Hon. Keith Powers, New York City Council (via email)
Hon. Jose M. Serrano, New York State Senate (via email)
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President (via email)
Hon. Adriano Espalliat, U.S House of Representatives (via email)
Hon. Carolyn B. Maloney US House of Representatives (via email)
Hon. Brian Benjamin, New York State Senate (via email)
Hon. Robert Rodriguez, New York State Assembly (via email)
Hon. Inez Dickens, New York State Assembly (via email)
Hon. Ben Kallos, New York City Council (via email)
David Giordano, Community Board 11
Alex Kohen, Community Board 11