



Diane Collier  
**Chair**

Angel D. Mescain  
**District Manager**

## COMMUNITY BOARD ELEVEN

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**Housing Committee**  
**Tuesday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016, 6:00 p.m.**  
**Community Board Office**  
**1664 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10035**

\*\*\* Minutes \*\*\*

**Present:** Elsie Encarnacion, Brodie Enoch, Emily Grajalas, John Green, Alvin Johnson, Nilsa Orama, Xavier Santiago, Shantal Sparks, Angel Mescain (staff)

**Excused:** LaShawn Henry, Wendy Hewlett, Celia Ramirez

**Absent:** Erica Jones

**Guests:** Dwayne Harris (VOA), Craig Hughes, Gabriel Hernandez (AM Rodriguez), Francis Mastrotta (CB11), Diana Ayala (CM8), Henry & Karen Sumak (neighbors), Dart Clark (DNAInfo), Jessica Tyler (neighbor), Tamika Mapp (T4SA), Eric Gonzalez, Catherine Trepani (Homeless Services United), Jose Luis Rodriguez (Picture The Homeless), Andres Perez (PTH), Mrs. A. Henry (PTH), Marcus Moore (PTH), Lynn Lewis (PTH), Cecelia Grant (PTH), Nikita Price (PTH), Liz Chae (community member), Barry Sleckman (116<sup>th</sup> St Resident), Emily Gonzalez

1. Called to Order by Chair, Brodie Enoch – 6:05pm. Motion to Adopt: Alvin Johnson, Seconded by Shantel Sparks. All in favor.
2. Presentations & Discussions
  - a. Presentation of the New Shelter: 448 E. 119<sup>th</sup> Street – Dept. of Homeless Services, Jose Del Toro (DRC), Kristina Dozier (DHS), Catholic Charities and associated team members present. NYC is facing a problem with homelessness and the administration is making this problem a priority. Archdiocese partnered with the city to establish small shelters to provide services to successfully transition individuals into permit housing. DRC operates the site and Catholic charities supplies the location and other needs. They explained the process of applying for the services. Catholic Charities is involved due to ownership of the property. The administration approached the diocese and other faith based organizations to partner. Ms. Sparks inquired as to prioritization of their focus. It was explained that there is an outreach program. DHS and others may refer. The outreach team contacts people at train stations and other locations where homeless congregated. Mr. Johnson pushed further for numbers regarding quantities from CB11 zone. Ms Encarnacion requested what the setup would be for shelter. They explained that there are units with two beds in each. This is an adult only shelter. Mr Johnson asked if there were children present, how would it be handled. Some couples or families with a father/mother and child (over the age of 18) could be allowed. Mr. Santiago requested how two out of sixteen members of the shelter are from this district. He requested how this will be

addressed to apply it equitably. Mr. Santiago asked if there was data showing that our residents were willing to be displaced instead of remaining in the community. Ms. Orama further expressed that the numbers are still not justifiable. Based on the outreach and case management, there is a disconnection with the application of the program and we need data to better partner with DHS and Catholic Charities. They clarified how the shelter is functioning. Mr. Enoch made the recommendation that the remaining 35 beds should be filled with our residents. Mr. Mescaïn inquired as to the methodology incorporating outreach. He asked who handles the subway and street outreach. Ms. Encarnacion inquired as to the requirements to qualify. Ms. Grajales asked if there is known phone number or local organization that the homeless may access. Mr. Price from Picture The Homeless stated that they have submitted names to DHS and the charity and that their individuals are not service resistant. Ten names have been submitted to the program since July. The director of Picture The Homeless registered concerns about how the homeless are referred to and the impact of the neighborhood's perceptions. She exclaimed that there needs to be adjustments to the application. Ms. Orama asked if they would provide the requirements for the facility so we may better partner. Mr. Hernandez expressed that AM Rodriguez is not supportive of this additional space and supports a more permanent solution for affordable housing. There are 1600 beds in our neighborhood alone. The focus should be on the working homeless. When will the focus be shifted beyond the temporary solutions? It was explained that NYC is a Right-to-Shelter city, meaning it has a legal obligation. The sentiment is balancing homelessness and affordable housing. DRC received inquires as to the services the homeless receive and the timeline. Cecilia Grant registered her story on being homelessness. She expressed how DHS has denigrated her and not allowed a place for her to stay. She submitted to Catholic Charities a year ago and was rebuffed. Other community members explained they are scared of the impact of the shelters and a gentleman wanted to know what security provisions would be in place. The entire group was invited to return in November to offer updates and engage the Community Board and the community more holistically.

- b. Capital Budget Requests & Expense Budget Requests –
    - i. Please see attached updates.
  - c. Committee discussion on planning of Housing Town Hall
    - i. Please see attached Agenda.
3. Old Business
  4. New Business
  5. Announcements
  6. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Nilsa Orama and seconded by John Green. Meeting was adjourned at 8:37pm

## **Land Use and Housing**

Most important issue: Affordable Housing Programs

East Harlem's housing stock is largely subsidized, rent stabilized or public housing, and only 22 percent is currently unregulated in any way. However, the Regional Plan Association projects that 282 subsidized units will be lost annually for the next 15 years due to expiring affordability programs, for a total of 4,230 units. This, combined with the pressures on stabilized housing due to increased development in the area, makes affordable housing programs the top concern in East Harlem.

The East Harlem Neighborhood Plan estimated the "affordable housing need" in East Harlem as 12,000 households. This number is based on 626 households entering homeless shelters; 10,616 households severely burdened by housing costs; and 758 severely overcrowded households (> 1.5 persons per room). Clearly, the construction of units that are affordable to a range of incomes, including very low, is a high priority within this community. Units should be permanently affordable as well. HPD and DCP should work creatively to maximize the number of affordable units, as well as the depth of affordability, in all new projects. The recommendations laid out in the East Harlem Neighborhood Plan should be used as guidelines to accomplish these goals.

### **Land Use**

East Harlem has a large supply of public and affordable housing, but affordable housing is being lost at an alarming rate, especially rent stabilized housing. It is imperative that more affordable housing is developed, but the current zoning is not conducive to the production of the high amount of affordable housing needed by the community. The zoning has been in place since 1961, and it permits the development of height factor "Tower in the Park" buildings instead of the more contextual buildings that the community wants.

The community also needs more nonresidential land uses so that East Harlem can be more than a bedroom community. Zoning should be changed to allow more commercial development, office buildings, manufacturing and retail in order to increase local economic activity. Fine-grained zoning changes should be applied throughout the community that can both facilitate the development of housing that is affordable to existing community residents, as well as incentivizing nonresidential development.

The East Harlem Neighborhood Plan, the result of a collaboration between local government, community organizations and local residents, contains many proposed zoning and land use changes. The community developed a fine-grained zoning proposal that would allow larger, denser buildings in some parts of the district while preserving the low-rise character of midblocks and other areas. The zoning and land use recommendations are attached here.

### **Housing Needs and Programming**

East Harlem has a very high need for affordable housing, both preserved in existing buildings and included in new construction. The recent city-wide zoning changes will require affordable housing to be built as part of any land use change, but additional subsidies are needed to increase the amount and affordability depth of these units. As the rezoning of East Harlem continues, it is important that the relevant city agencies look for creative ways to combine subsidies and zoning to maximize the affordability benefits to the community.

As more development comes to East Harlem, pressure will be put on existing tenants to vacate their apartments. These tenants need to be aware of their rights and have access to free legal services in order to protect themselves and their homes from unscrupulous landlords and developers. The current legal aid funding must be extended beyond its current three year term. The idea of an anti-harassment/anti-eviction district similar to the Special Clinton District should be studied to add an extra level of protection for East Harlem tenants.

Current residents should be better prepared for affordable housing lotteries as well. Housing preparedness clinics should be held regularly, and developers should be required to hire a third party organization to conduct credit counseling and marketing.

#### Capital Budget Requests:

- **Provide more housing for extremely low and low income households**

There remain many vacant properties or under-utilized residential buildings in East Harlem. [In keeping with the East Harlem Neighborhood Plan](#), it is imperative that the community, elected leaders and HPD work collaboratively to create the necessary incentive(s) for private property owners to upgrade and maintain their properties for active residential use. Newly developed or rehabilitated apartment buildings must include a balance of mixed-income units that also include a percentage of units for low and extremely-low income households. Further, the community should receive preference for 50% of the newly developed/rehabilitated housing to ensure local housing needs are addressed.

- **Provide more housing for special needs households, such as seniors, or the formerly homeless**

The increased cost of housing has drastically impacted seniors – [in some cases causing homelessness](#). They have fewer housing choices, particularly those that are mobility impaired and need access to elevators or more intensive assisted living arrangements. HPD and DFTA must identify local, State and Federal sources of housing subsidies to encourage the development of age-friendly affordable housing and a range of assisted living options in East Harlem. Residents should receive “Community Preference” for apartments in new Senior Housing being developed in their community, and targets should be set in other new developments to ensure that seniors can age comfortably and safely in place. Additionally, HPD should create a specific program that will regularly monitor and inspect the housing conditions of vulnerable seniors.

- **Provide more housing for special needs households, such as seniors, or the formerly homeless**

Ensure that [all](#) new units built via the MIH program include, [no less than 10%](#) of the [total-building](#) units for seniors [and special needs households](#).

- **Renovate or upgrade public housing developments**

NYCHA must focus its efforts on replacing persistently broken elevators, improving outdoor lighting and installing cameras for safety. NYCHA tenants regularly complain about their inability to secure necessary repairs to their apartments, [and must incorporate the NYCHA One Call system \(East Harlem Neighborhood Plan 1.3\)](#). There must be more accountability and efficiency in how repairs are made.

With long waiting lists of potential tenants, NYCHA must set aside capital funds to repair warehoused apartments that have been vacant for years.

- **Install security cameras or make other safety upgrades**

[Continue installing](#) live feed security cameras in all the NYCHA developments.

#### Expense Budget Requests:

- **Study land use and zoning to better match current use or future neighborhood needs**

Fund the necessary environmental assessment and ULURP application for the recommendations of the East Harlem Land Use & Rezoning Initiative.

- **Other zoning and land use requests**

Provide incentives for day care and early learning facilities to locate in the community facility space in new buildings. This will help ensure that there are enough seats for East Harlem's youth to begin their educational careers.

- **Other zoning and land use requests**

Hire an additional planner for Upper Manhattan.

- **Provide or enhance rental subsidies programs**

Using the data gathered through the Regional Plan Association report, buildings most at risk of rent deregulation based on the anticipated date of expiration must be addressed and supported. Community partners, local non-profit housing developers and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) should contact building owners and tenant associations to communicate the anticipated date of deregulation and explain the potential impact on tenant rent.

In consultation with HPD and pro-bono lawyers, community groups must work together with tenants to develop affordable housing preservation strategies for each building under threat of deregulation.

- **Provide or enhance rental subsidies programs**

[Increase by 200%](#) more affordable senior housing with SCRIE and DRIE subsidies.

[SCRIE and DRIE subsidies should increase with CPI per annum.](#)

[Outreach for SCRIE and DRIE should be engaged](#)

- **Other affordable housing programs requests**

Existing tenants of the newly deregulated buildings, as well as tenants of other poorly managed buildings, complain about poor housing conditions and have accused landlords of purposefully neglecting their responsibilities in order to push tenants out. Tenants regularly complain about broken appliances, holes in floors/walls, no heat or hot water and erroneous eviction notices when rent has been paid. Community advocates must work together to secure funding to hire dedicated lawyers to provide legal representation for tenants that are being harassed by landlords. Sources

of potential funding include elected officials and private fundraising. HPD and the DOB must increase code enforcement and inspections to ensure buildings are up to code and safe.

- **Other affordable housing programs requests**

Affordable Housing for homeless children within our district is in dire need of addressing. A permanent solution to create affordable housing for families with children attending our school districts should be created.

- **Expand programs for housing inspections to correct code violations**

Hire 20% additional inspectors to monitor building complaints.

DRAFT



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## \*\*\* Housing Forum Agenda \*\*\*

Title: "Housing in East Harlem Today"

Location: Hunter College Silberman School of Social Work

Objective: Residents will gain current information in relation to acquiring housing within the community. Various aspects of how each agency interacts and what each group is focusing on toward these goals will be covered. Residents will leave better equipped to navigate each system based upon their needs.

9:00 AM – 9:30 AM: Set up of furniture and materials

9:30 AM – 10:30 AM: Opening & Breakfast

10:00 AM – 10:30 AM: Introductions by Chair of CB11, Chair of Housing and  
Elected Officials Speak Focusing on Theme (Moderator Present)

10:30 AM – 11:30 PM: Moderated Panel Begins

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM: Q&A

12:30 AM – 1:00PM: Break out for public connection and interaction

1:00 PM – Closing of the Housing Forum

Elected Representative Invitees: BP Gale Brewer, CM Melissa Mark-Viverito, CM Inez Dickens, AM Robert Rodriguez, AM Keith Wright, Sen. Jose Serrano, Sen. Bill Perkins, Rep. Charles Rangel

PANELISTS\*: UHAB, Legal Aid, Tenants and Neighbors, HPD, DHS, Commissioner Rubin, NYCHA (pending)

\* Upon confirmation of all panelists, prepared questions will be focused to area of expertise and finalized for the forum in advance. All questions are subject to change in order to suit the needs of the forum.

