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COMMUNITY BOARD ELEVEN

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Housing Committee Tuesday, January 3, 2017, 6:00 p.m. Board Office

*** Minutes ***

- Present: Brodie Enoch, Emily Grajales, John Green, Wendy Hewlett, Alvin Johnson, Erica Jones, Xavier Santiago, Jeremiah Schlotman
- Excused: Elsie Encarnacion, La Shawn Henry, Nilsa Orama, Shantal Sparks
- Absent: none
- Guests: Melvyn Romero, VOA; Carl Payne, 119th Street Veterans Residence T.A.; Sherrill Henry, HCCI; Malcolm Punter, HCCI; Nicki Garcia, HCCI

1. Call to Order / Adoption of Agenda

Motion to adopt agenda by Wendy Hewlett, seconded by Jeremiah Schlotman and passed at 6:35pm

2. Presentations & Discussions

- a. Request for letter of support for Volunteers of America to continue site management of Veterans Supporting Housing facility at 22 East 119th Street.

VOA Director Melvin Romero in regards to the Veterans SRO on 119th St. between Madison and 5th. The VOA contract to operate the site is coming to an end and they are seeking a support letter from Community Board 11 that they will add to their application in the upcoming RFP for the site. Also in attendance was the elected tenant leader: Carl Payne. Committee members registered concerns regarding prior conditions and complaints against the site by residents expressed concerns. Complaints also included results of past CB11 walk through by Alvin Johnson in 2014, which included photos on insect and vermin infestation. Mr. Romero addressed the construction projects that led to several of the major issues due in part to the city's management and the previous VOA manager. Mr. Johnson also expressed concern over past blurring of the line with the role of the VOA in helping tenants choose their tenant leaders. Ms. Hewlett reminded Mr. Romero of the conditions and overall management issues. The tenant leader was present at the meeting and stated that these concerns were addressed and that for the most part residents were satisfied with the progress made at the site. On Friday Dec. 30th 2016 Housing Committee chair and vice chair made an official walk through and found that the mentioned conditions had been dealt with to our satisfaction. We were impressed at the improvements made over the last couple of years. Mr. Romero has held the position of director for a little over a year and a half and has made significant improvements. There were letters of support submitted. But the committee asked that there be more letters from

neighbors. Mr. Romero took full onus and reassured the committee by inviting anyone that would like to visit the location. Also the committee decided to wait until the release of the RFP before issuing any support letter. While we were satisfied with the progress made by the VOA it just seemed prudent to see the RFP first. There are 21 living spaces offline while VOA is waiting for final approval from DHS to complete the repair work to the sewage pipes. This has been going on for quite a while. DHS has just switched contractors. CB11 is going to reach out the agency to ascertain the causes for the delay in work as well as get an estimated date for completion. Mr. Mescain asked if they would accept donations of books and other items to benefit the veterans. Mr. Romero said they would gladly accept any book donations.

- b. Update presentation by Harlem Congregation for Community Improvement (HCCI) regarding rehabilitation of the 46-48 East 129th Street HDFC property: Presented by HCCI CEO and President Malcolm Punter. An update was given by Mr. Punter on the progress of the HCCI project and they welcome any inquires. The construction loan is closed and 30% of the project is completed. The GC is located within CB11. HCCI will manage the building once completed. Tenants have temporarily been relocated.

3. Old Business

- a. Mr. Enoch presented a draft scope of work for a proposed HDFC Taskforce: Questions were raised regarding the assembling taskforces. Mr. Mescain explained the logistics of establishing a taskforce. Mr. Santiago reminded everyone that whether a taskforce is assembled or not, that decision doesn't preclude members from working together and passing a position through the relevant committee. The bullet point list will be presented to the chair of CB11. Ms. Hewlett reminded everyone that the window of opportunity is closing as the deadline for monitors and managers is closing January 17th. Mr. Mescain reminded everyone that the CB has precedent for forcing pressure on amending RFPs or outright pulling them due to community involvement. Mr. Santiago will work with Mr. Enoch to assemble a team for the taskforce once approved. The committee raised many of the issues encountered by this new regulatory agreement.
- b. Mr. Enoch will forward a proposal for a NYCHA forum to be held Summer 2017, details forthcoming.
The Comptroller's office would like to work with us on planning this event. Recommendations were made to reach out to the TA heads. Mr. Green recommended that outreach is integral. Some TAs can be hesitant but the inroads made by Ms. Hewlett should be engaged. Attending the regular TA meetings will help overall outreach.
- c. Mr. Enoch updated the committee on discussions regarding scheduling an upcoming Housing Committee meeting at the MNN Network's studios in East Harlem.
The meeting would be live streamed.
- d. Ms. Erica Jones updated the Housing Committee on the African American Burial Site Taskforce:
The Taskforce will be invited to the March meeting to give a full update as many of their points raised also covered housing concerns, especially affordable housing. Mr. Mescain explained the opportunity for us to inform everyone of the definition of affordability and we should be proactive. Any specific examples should be registered. There were inquires to our position but the taskforce didn't adequately address this aspect. Mr. Mescain recommended that people aware of the housing needs should attend or offer instructions

for our positions. Ms. Hewlett asked why the reasoning for the members involved. The chair made appointments without consulting the committee. The committee would have offered experienced members such as Mr. Johnson, Ms. Winfield, Ms. Orama and others. Mr. Mescaïn recommended for us to help the new members.

4. Announcements

- a. Mr. Mescaïn announced that the Health, Human Services, Immigration and Seniors Committee has organized the *CB11 Know Your Rights Forum* to be held at the Johnson Houses Community Center, 1833 Lexington Avenue, on January 19, 2017.

5. Adjournment

- a. Wendy Hewlett made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Xavier Santiago and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.