

**Community Board 12**  
**Housing and Human Services Committee Meeting**  
**Thursday, December 3, 2020 (via Zoom)**

*Committee Members Present:* Ariel Miranda, Osi Kaminer, Edda Santiago, Marielle Ali, Ayisha Ogilvie, and Leo Jimenez

*Public Members Present:* Marshall Vanderpool

*Fellow Board Members Present:* Danielle Jettoo, Curtis Young, Shinelle Paniagua

- Meeting called to order at 7:02PM
- Chair of HHS Committee Ariel Miranda opens the meeting with note in regard to the meeting agenda that included three items. BRC, an organization that focuses on shelter services, had previously contacted CB12M to present on a project. BRC hasn't established contact with HHS, so item was formerly removed.
- Board Member Danielle Jettoo wanted to collaborate in passing a resolution, in regards to a DHS shelter that was mentioned by Ebenezer Smith in a previous report. But with limited information and/or details, we will not discuss a resolution at this time. Ariel will follow up with Ebenezer.
- Ariel welcomes attendees and introduces Community Members, Phil Zablocki, Gary Altheim, and Zadie Adams.
  - Dr. Gary Altheim – Founder & Executive Director of Growth & Development Services.
  - Phil Zablocki – Member of Advocates for Equality & Integrity.
  - Zadie Adams – Community Liaison & Program Coordinator of Growth & Development Services.

**Agenda Item 1**

- Dr. Gary Altheim presents a brief video from GSD Youth expressing the importance of their program. He also elaborates on the recent eviction (April 2019) from The Armory. He mentions public officials stated that they would help GDS stay in The Armory, and public officials and DHS also agreed to assist in locating a new site for their program.
- Phil Zablocki presents “Community Use of the NYC Fort Washington Armory Upper Manhattan, Washington Heights December 2018 to December 2020 Update.” He was asked to investigate allegations preventing community use of The Armory. Presented the findings of his investigation to HHS on December 2018. (Add link to Phil Zablocki’s Presentation for timeline purpose). Previously, CB12M passes “Resolution G – Resolution in support of issuing a stay of eviction of Growth and Development Services

Community based organization occupying space at the Fort Washington Armory” 37-0-2-0-0. CB12M sent a letter to DHS and public officials with a copy of the resolution. DHS has not responded since last meeting.

- Zadi Adams introduced herself and expressed the importance of the organization and its programs, which advocate for the youth in our community. GDS, an ally to the youth in our community, mentors and assists the youth in obtaining resources to succeed. She reiterated timeline with DHS meeting in 2019 and requests that we advocate and address community concerns, specifically with this matter.
- Ariel Miranda thanked the community members for their presentation. He emphasized that he has not received any further details regarding this matter from The Armory Foundation, Department of Parks & Recreation, and DHS in regard to GDS’s eviction and the use of public space in The Armory Foundation. Furthermore, he explained that moving forward he would like to draft and present a resolution that addresses these concerns, specifically with GDS, and potentially a committee that will address the use of public space.
  - Marielle Ali – Expressed her disappointment with the use of public space, particularly at The Armory Foundation, but echoed Ariel Miranda’s sentiment on overall use of public spaces in our community, and the lack of public space for community-based groups/organized that cater to the vulnerable community members.
  - Ariel Miranda – He will also follow up with Ebenezer Smith in regard to a new location for GDS’s programs.
  - Marshall Vanderpool – Shared the same sentiment as other community members. Emphasized his discontent, and questioned, the use of The Armory by The Armory Foundation for other financial benefits, and not for the purpose of the actual license of the public space (i.e., NYS Bar Exam and Early Voting).
  - Osi Kaminer – Posed the question that it’s a possibility that information might have been brought up to the Community Board Office, but potentially wasn’t communicated to HHS. Recommended that HHS follow up monthly with this matter moving forward.
    - Ariel Miranda – He hasn’t received any information or further details on this matter.
  - Gary Altheim – Recently, spoke with Chair Eleazar Bueno, and he has no update or new information. He also stated that several Public Officials, including Senator Robert Jackson, and City Council Member, Mark Levine, advocated for GDS and the importance of the organization and program for the youth of the community. They ensured Gary Altheim and GDS they would accommodate the program at a different location because their mental health counseling is important for the youth of the community (MBP Gale Brewer & Assemblywoman Carmen de la Rosa). Reiterated, and emphasized, The Armory’s License states, “All occupants in the building should

service the community,” and is solely meant to be a community space. As per his claim, GDS was evicted because they investigated the use of The Armory for other purposes, aside a public space for the community. He again reminded the committee of the timeline on this issue and asks the community board to advocate on behalf of their program, and the community as a whole, for this public space.

- Phil Zablocki – Agrees with Gary Altheim’s statement and re-emphasized he has provided documentation that supports evidence.
- Osi Kaminer – Recommended this issue should be included on the committee agenda moving forward, so we can follow up monthly on updates and/or new information.
- Ariel Miranda – He wants to gather all facts and documented evidence submitted by Phil Zablocki, to include in a resolution, highlighting lack of response from DHS, The Armory Foundation, and Elected Public Officials.
- Marshall Vanderpool – Empathizes with other members sentiments on the wrongful eviction and agrees that the committee should follow up.

**Ariel Miranda allows public community members in attendance to ask questions and/or voice their concerns about this item on the agenda.**

- Maggie Velez – Pointed out that this issue is similar to the items mentioned for the NY Restoration Program with the boat house located near a public school by the FDR. It was supposed to be used as public community space, and it wasn’t used fully for these purposes. She shares similar sentiments with other community members and agrees that these public sites are being under-utilized and are non-beneficial for the overall community.
  - Osi Kaminer – Advised and recommended that the issue with the boat house should be addressed to the committee of Parks & Cultural Affairs.
- Theo Pinson – Proclaimed and requested that the committee, and the general community board, should take the lead in advocating for public disclosure of finances of larger non-profit organizations, especially for those non-profit organizations that use public spaces and public grants, funded by taxpayer dollars.
  - Ariel Miranda – Asked if non-profit organizations are required to show their bookkeeping to the general public, if they are requested to do so.
    - Theo Pinson – Clarified that these organizations don’t need to show where they are spending public money but are required to publish form 990-N, which is “a summary of where the money is spent”. But it isn’t information accessible to the general public.
- Ayisha Ogilvie – Explained the timeline and background of this item, and the lack of handling and attention from the general community board, DHS, and other stakeholders. Agreed with other community members to address and advocate for this item, and overall use of public spaces by larger non-profit organization. The Armory is under-utilized in a community that has dire needs for all people, including our youth. As former Chair of HHS, she probed the licensed-use and contract of The Armory, and with supporting

evidence, documentation, and witnesses, determined that the DHS is the sole-entity responsible for upholding the use of this public space.

- Ariel Miranda – Reiterated following up with Ebenezer Smith in regard to this item and empathized with other community member about the impact it has on the youth and their mental health during these times. Committed to prioritizing this item in commemoration with all individuals and groups that have worked hard to bring this issue to light over the years, and especially, the youth affected by the lack of attention and follow up from the board.
- Phil Zablocki – Stated that he has all pertinent documents and presentations, if anyone should need more information or questions for it.
- Gary Altheim – GDS was left out of a letter addressed in January to CB12M by Jacqueline Carter, which should have included GDS’ commitment and dedication to mental health counseling, free-of-charge for the community’s youth. He emphasized, and requested, that the community board should respond to Jacqueline Carter, and clarify GDS 20 years of service to the youth in our communities. He also restated the question previously asked, “What has happened to our space?” In lieu of providing services to the community, GDS was evicted with no explanation.
- Ayisha Ogilvie – Gave a personal account of her discussion with several youths and students from GDS, and the importance of the resources provided to these students. GDS and Gary Altheim provided support for all students, especially the vulnerable youth experiencing mental health concerns, like Mori Ayura (deceased). She explained that in her research, she discovered that one of the rooms was used as a Queen-sized bedroom for over seven years for an account executive of The Armory Foundation, when he traveled to NYC. This expense, and the public space, could have been used to fund for youth services, senior program, extracurricular programs, etc. She requests that the committee take action on this matter.
- Ariel Miranda – Will gather all information and follow up with Ebenezer Smith.

### **Removal of item proposing a resolution for a DHS Shelter in Inwood.**

Ariel Miranda notes that there was a request from fellow board member, Danielle Jettoo, to contribute to a potential resolution on the proposed DHS shelter in Inwood (next to P.S. 98). Manny de los Santos wanted to discuss concerns of the shelter next to a school. Ariel Miranda wants to gather more information and details of the actual location (W. 212<sup>th</sup> St & 10<sup>th</sup> Ave.) before drafting and proposing a resolution.

- Daniel Jettoo – Clarified that she isn’t advocating for a specific group, nor is she soliciting the board to build a shelter in Inwood. Ebenezer Smith had mentioned in September’s General Board meeting the proposed plan by DHS to build a shelter in our neighborhood. She works in the jail system, specifically with the elderly, and recommended that if there are plans to move forward with a shelter in Inwood that the committee advocate, and potentially propose a resolution for a medical shelter. She agreed to postpone discussion on this item until the board has more information.

- Ariel Miranda – Notes that he doesn't have further details on this matter. He shares information regarding "Shelter Maps" from The NYC City Council's website (see link). He highlights the entry rate in CB12M (770 people) gradually increasing compared to other districts in Manhattan.
  - Danielle Jettoo – Clarified that she isn't a mental health expert and answered a question from community member asking about shelters for mental illness. She explained there are MICAH shelters for people with mental illness, but she was referring to shelters for people with diseases and complicated medical issues (i.e., dialysis, cancer, elderly, etc.).
  - Ayisha Ogilvie – Emphasized her concerns with an increase in shelters in our neighborhood, and the entry data compared to other community boards. Requested information and date of capacity at the shelters (4 total) in our district compared to other districts.
  - Maggie Velez – Asked if this has been communicated to the school, if this proposal of a shelter goes into fruition.
    - Ariel Miranda – Researched, but there isn't much information available about this matter. Proposed to re-visit this item in the following months once there are more details. Again, he stated that this proposed shelter was mentioned at a previous meeting by CB12M DM in his reports.
    - Danielle Jettoo – Concurred that there wasn't much information given by Ebenezer Smith.
    - Osi Kaminer – Confirmed that there wasn't information about this, nor has DHS presented on this proposal.
    - Ariel Miranda – He will communicate with The Youth & Education Committee Chair, Fe Florimon, to gage her perspective on this matter. He also wants to get a contact for the school that may be impacted by the shelter.
      - Osi Kaminer – Recommended Ariel Miranda to reach out to Wayne Benjamin, Land & Use Chair, for more information.
    - Curtis Young – Supports and empathizes with GDS and Gary Altheim. Elaborated on the need for community spaces for the youth, especially during this time of the current pandemic and social and racial inequalities in our communities of color.

## **New Business**

### **Ariel Miranda discussed two new agenda items on new business.**

- Ariel Miranda spoke with Regina Tyler of Community Options and confirmed that she will present on behalf of her organization at HHS Committee Meeting in January 2021. He noted and explained that Community Options cannot discuss any legal claims at this time, as per their legal team. She will present about the organization, and their work with our community.

- Ariel Miranda read an email from community member Martin Collins and noted from DOB's website that 26 Sherman Ave will be in construction for a new residential property.
- Curtis Young – Public Safety Committee discussed future agenda and priority for 2021, including redefining public safety, which involves decriminalization of homelessness, mental illness, housing for re-entry after being incarcerated. Proposed a panel discussion in the next couple of months, in collaboration with HHS, to elaborate on these topics.

- **Closing Remarks for Meeting**

For complete Meeting discussion:

<https://fb.watch/2iiBRNfZPD/>