Housing and Human Services Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 6, 2021

H&HS Committee Members Present: Ariel Miranda (Chair), Marielle Ali (Asst. Chair), Edda Santiago, Ayisha Oglive, Bruce Robertson, Angel Vasquez, Marshall Vanderpool (Public Member)

Other CB12 Members: Sally Fisher, Tanya Bonner

Public Participants: Dr. Gary Altheim Growth and Development Services Inc. (GDS), Phil Zablocki, Zadie Adam, Michael (?), David Allen, Amanda, Deborah Carbona, Akim Marino, Rose

Call to Order
• Meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm. Marielle seconded the motion.

Introductions
• Ariel provided an overview of the meeting's agenda. Community Board members introduced themselves.

Agenda

1. Rent Regulated Apartment Guidelines Resolution
Ariel (Chair) Presentation:

- should not increase in 2021 due to Pandemic's impact on economy
- Economic Reports show NYC 2020 - 11.1% decrease in jobs v. 2019; NYC unemployment rose to 12.3% vs. 3.9% historic low in 2019, (highest in 45yrs during entire period of recoding NYC History)
- 52-week periods total unemployment claims up 2,133,298 claims vs. prior year
- Rent Guidelines underemployment rate 25% individuals trying to work
- US Census Bureau – Household survey found 12.7% renters housing insecure
- Average rental cost rose 2% vs. Consumer Price Index 1.7% in 2020
- Mayor's OMB, Comptroller's Office forecast economy won't rebound until Spring 2022; Independent Budget Office bleak forecast unemployment rate end of 2025 unemployment 7.1%, double that prior to pandemic
- Long period of time before wages to increase among low income and working class
- Arts, Entertianment industries bleak forecast, total wages -62% and -49% respectively
- Higher rate of unemployment and rent burden in CB12; actual rates for CB12 will take time to compile
- See resolution document for further details
- **RESOLVE:** NYC Guidelines Board should not grant any rent increases for all rent regulated apartments for 1- and 2-year lease renewals commencing Oct. 2021.

Committee Comments:

- Ayisha – unemployment rate for CB12 roughly double city rate.
- NYC 600K job losses impact and what will CB12 suffer disproportionately
- Furman Center CB12 unemployment rate higher (not specified)
- Ayisha – questioned why not ask for rollback option versus freeze?
- Ariel – landlords say they're suffering too, can't really gauge at this time, limited data.
- Angel – what are options in past: (1) rollback to a certain % of past; (2) increase as historically 1-2%, or (3) freeze 0% increase in 1-year lease, small increase in yr. 2.

Public Member Comments: None
Committee Member Comments:

- Ayisha – recommends future conversations about rent guidelines and how to increase affordable housing in CB12. Housing crisis existed before Covid, and along with homelessness has seriously risen during pandemic.

Ariel Motion to Pass Resolution. Angel second. no objections, passed unanimously.

2. Fort Washington Armory Foundation Resolution(s)
Discussion – Growth and Development Services Inc. (GDS) was evicted 7 years ago from the Fort Washington Armory by NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS). H&HS Committee drafted a resolution in March 2021 to reinstate GDS and establish oversight of the Armory Foundation's community involvement and access to its facilities. At its General March meeting, CB12 membership voted to return that resolution to committee to separate the issues.

Ariel- April H&HS Committee meeting issue about 2 separate resolutions was unresolved due to lack of quorum. Now taking up the 2 resolutions again.

- Sally – questions/comments for plaintiff versus Armory Foundation and Dept. Homeless Services
- Unclear about services and scope. Requested #'s of youth/pgm, # staff/pgm, current operations, IS-52 locale, hours at Armory by season. Supports 2 separate resolutions. GDS v. Armory is a legal matter, not CB12 jurisdiction.
- Gary – real question is why was GDS unlawfully evicted and why hasn't CB12 done anything about it?
- Ayisha - GDS has provided information over years. Agree question s/b about GDS eviction, no requirement that GDS had to operate in any way. Where is information from Armory Foundation to answer questions? Dept. Homeless Services never responded.
- Ariel- separate resolutions to: (1) Armory Foundation oversight, and; (2) GDS reinstatement in Armory by Dept. Homeless Services
- Angel – keep 2 issues separate
- Ayisha – it's a complicated situation, ongoing history for over 7 years. Asking for Task Force is insufficient to resolve problems. Suggest public hearing about community access to Armory. Models elsewhere in NYC and country for public spaces utilization by community, and governance models to adapt. Could have been fixed during past 7 yrs, vs. intention to suppress by creating a new group of experts to determine functionality and oversight of Armory facilities. Councilmembers have purview over city facility, but CB12 has local stakeholder voice in what Armory governance should be. Responsibly of CB12 to resolve action from City Council.

Comments:

Public:

- Michael (?) – issue dates back to joint committee 2014 resolution (H&HS and Youth & Education Committee) was told not going to general board. Ayisha removed from H&HS committee chair. Armory Foundation sways former CB12 members to join their board. Lawsuit between GDS and Armory is because Armory owes $1Mil taxes.
- Zadie Adams (Public) –disagrees 2 separate issues; GDS eviction due to Armory mis-management. GDS advocacy exposed lack of community access to Armory not separable from eviction reason. Did Armory divulge requested information about services and access to community? Will my questions be answered now about Demographics of non-track services, etc.
- Ariel – Zadie questions were asked but not answered by Armory
- Akim – Track athlete growing up benefitted from Armory programs because he was in the athletic program. Community youth not allowed access will hurt them, their families, and community in general. Need to advocate for more community access and youth programming at Armory for locals.
- Gary - (Public) – long 20 years, Dr. Sanders said "can't have these kinds of kids in building." Armory increased rent and called it a fee. DHS told Dr. Sander this buildng has to be opened to community. GDS was overcharged to be paid back. CB12 has not done their job since 2012. Evicted 3 times, wants to know where is RFQ for former GDS space? Question – where is the RFQ that DHS said would be offered to GDS, and what is happening to that space?
- Michael – what's going on in this community, stand behind GDS and stop Armory influence peddling. What's problem with Armory oversight and what are they trying to hide? Lying to us. DHS is not made for this, it's a homeless service. Dept. of Youth and Community Services should manage. DHS subject to political influences.
- Ariel – Let's focus on the language to complete these resolutions. Highlight what information is supposed to be provided by the Armory, and what hasn't it been. Armory city funding/contracts outlined in resolution
- Ayisha – Sallie's question re lawsuit, Board has taken past position (resolution) saying GDS should not be evicted without proper review of DHS answers, which they've not done to date.
- Ariel – questioned use of "alleged" to modify charges about licensing breaches that have not been formally investigated by CB12, e.g. renting and subletting spaces violates their lease from DHS. Evidence?
- Ayisha – Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests have shown Armory licenses, contracts and documents that violate their charter

- Angel- charge that a caterer requesting a liquor license was confirmed by CB12's Licensing Committee, fact.
- Marshall- is there a distinction that "allegedly" is a criminal charge; are we doing that?
- Ariel – other offenses were told or heard by community members "this has happened" at the Armory
- Ayisha – not just heresay, advertising and other violations are on record that rental events have happened. No question.
- Ariel- can we say they've breached their license?
- Ayisha – yes, clear that actions are obvious. Tone is that the Armory is too big to fail. Take position that Armory is at fault, and committed breach of community trust and DHS license.
- Ariel – let's not make specific charges
- Edda – use "allegedly" in the initial statement, followed by items. Conditions, but doesn't water down the clause.
- Ariel – let's continue with various language adjustments and editing to complete
- Ayisha – Matthew Borden, left DHS, moved to another agency. Lost continuity of issue with his departure.
- Ariel – Reso will establish a City Council oversight committee called to consist of various CB12 members and others to review the Armory Foundation's actions
- Ayisha – There should be appointees from various CB12 committees besides H&HS to this oversight group
- Angel – did we review other similar bodies, entities to model this one?
- Ariel – yes, looked at Navy Yard Dev. Corp., Park Corporation organizations
- Ayisha – holding a public hearing could entail discussing oversight, outcomes and composition of new oversight group
- Marielle – likes independent community representatives; tricky. How to select and elect them?
- Ayisha – should specify the purviews. Nomination process can be determined at the public hearing. Include Neighborhood Advisory Board (NAB)?
- Ariel – let's switch over to the second resolution about GDS re-instatement
- Tanya Bonner, CB12 board member added to meeting as panelist
- Ariel – include resolution passed by CB12 on January 22, 2019
- Amanda (Public) – community organizer in Bronx with GDS, community should hone in on ownership of local space for local groups. Armory should be accessible for locals and provide services to all students in the area including GDS and others. Housing, domestic violence and youth-based issues are crucial.
- Deborah Carbona (Public) – promises were made for the kids; she's an educator who's ready to start a middle school program. Left district because wheels stopped moving. Compare other large facility spaces elsewhere in city. Elderly population underserved. Community Board's have forgotten their advocacy responsibility to all groups. CB12 District has plummeted over the past 25 years.
- David (Public) – no community can survive without volunteers. Passionate about equal access to mental health services. Hard for residents to ask for help even if readily available. GDS services being obstructed after 25 years, should be a priority.
- Gary (Public)- has forwarded documents to CB12 and questions about GDS operations clearly addressed. GDS wants the opportunity to bid for its former space in the Armory. Where is the RFQ? Can CB12 inspect former GDS space and report?
- Ariel – all documents from GDS and Armory were re-sent to all CB12 members. RFQ not received from DHS/Armory.
- Ayisha – observed over 7 years that GDS has attempted to forward information to CB12 Facebook page, including that GDS won Changemaker Award.
- Phil (Public)- long and hard battle. Lelani Irvin, DHS March 4 meeting, 3 questions:
  (1) why GDS evicted, (2) what's their former space being used for now, (3) reinstate GDS? No answer from DHS. Well documented over past 7 years.
  Sally – forward other documents. GDS utilization important to know about.
  Ayisha – thanked Ariel and Marielle for persisting in this effort to divulge the truth over a long period of time

Ariel – Called for Motion to pass resolution regarding Armory oversight. Seconded by Marielle. No objections, passed unanimously by Committee. Sally abstained. Ariel no need for individual committee member vote or other Board members.

Ariel - Called for Motion to pass resolution regarding GDS reinstatement. Ayisha seconded. Resolution passed with 3 abstentions. Question how can a vote be unanimous if there are abstentions. Ariel changed motion to call for a new vote by member. Seconded. Vote called, motion passed by Committee (3 yes/0 no/3 abstained). Board votes: (1/0/1). Public votes: (8/0/0)

3. Old Business - none

4. New Business
- Dr. Gary Altheim invited public to GDS event for Mental Health Awareness Month, May 19, 5:30pm.
- Sally recommended changing the day of H&HS Committee monthly meetings because they are same time as Health & Environment Committee, causing conflict for members of both committees to address overlapping issues.

5. Meeting Adjourned
Ariel motion to adjourn, Edda seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9:56pm.
Total meeting time 2:53:56
Meeting Recording: **https://bit.ly/3fDFjrI**

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