

**Community Board 12, Manhattan General Meeting Minutes
May 24, 2005 (Yeshiva University, Belfer Hall)**

Members Present

Dora Maria Abreu	Adam Eggers
Jackie Rowe Adams	Peter Ferrara
Anita Barberis	Leslie Foster
Raquel Batista	Julissa Gomez
Rafael Beaumont	Beatrice Hall
Aidee Camacho	Andre Harris
Kotie Cannon	Fern Hertzberg
Emilia G. Cardona	Eduardo Hoepelman
Martin Collins	Joyce F. Holland
Sybil Dodson-Lucas	Mark Levine

Jose Lopez
Elizabeth Lorris Ritter
Maria Luna
Glenda Swanson Massa
Jay D. Mazur
Renato Mena
Helen Morik
Dr. Pamela Palanque-North
Julio Peguero
Barbara Smith Ramos

Nelson Rojas
Cleofis C. Sarete
Aaron Scott
Steve Simon
Gloria Vanterpool
Manny Velazquez
Milagros Vicente
Janifer Wilson

Members Absent

Emmanuel Barrientos
Wayne Benjamin
James Berlin
Albania Jimenez
Zead Ramadan
Julio Rodríguez (exc.)
Llewellyn Seaborn
Bienvenido Toribio

7:10 **Call to attention** by the Chair, Martin Collins. In the absence of a quorum, he began with the **Chair's report**:

- Welcomed new Board members Andre Harris, Eduardo Hoepelman, Aaron Scott and Janifer Wilson.
- Met with Miosotis Muñoz of Congressman Rangel's staff and representatives of the US Postal Service regarding service in CB12, particularly at the Washington Bridge (10033) Station. It was reported that all post offices in CB12 have a seniors' window and a dedicated window for money order sales. USPS also is looking into automated postal vendors in various locales to increase access to postal services.
- Gave updates on various meetings attended in the last month, including (but hardly limited to) the McFadden Scholars' dinner, opening of the Malcolm X & Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial & Educational Center, Councilmember Robert Jackson's town hall, Public Safety Committee meeting on youth gang activity, Drums Along the Hudson/Shad Festival, Irving Center dedication, and others. With respect to the town hall meeting, he noted that the possible siting of the Gregorio Luperón High School (GLHS) in the building on West 215th Street currently occupied by the Northeastern Academy was the major item of discussion, that an environmental impact study is being conducted by the Department of Education/School Construction Authority, and that any discussion of school siting in the community should include an assessment of all possible sites and the community's total need for schools.
- Announced upcoming events, including 6/22 presentation at St. Jude's Church for a new after-school program and the annual Memorial Day parade Monday 5/30 @ noon.
- West 215th Street has been mentioned as a possible site for a marine transfer station. Councilmember Miguel Martinez has already written Speaker Miller objecting to the site, and the matter has been referred to the Health & Environment Committee for review and response.
- Gave updates on the upcoming Uptown Arts Stroll; Tenth Avenue reconstruction (slated for this summer); WE ACT's newly-formed MTA task force; Dyckman Job Center; Sherman Creek; joint workforce development grant application by Audubon Partnership for Economic Development, Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation and Washington Heights-Inwood Coalition; FDNY fire company relocations; retaining wall collapse onto the Henry Hudson Parkway (HHP); CB12 RFQ for urban planning consultant services; and the BP's recent response to the severe rat infestation in the area of 155th – 163rd Streets. (With regard to this last item, DSNY has provided 850 rat-resistant garbage cans.)
- DM will reach out to "Fresh Direct" home delivery internet-based grocer regarding (apparent lack of) service east of Broadway.
- Under "good & welfare", congratulated Jackie Rowe-Adams on her recognition by Police Athletic League and Leslie Foster on the recent publication of her book.

7:21pm **District Manager's report**:

- Update on crime stats. Also noted that the 34th Precinct is #1 in NYC in employing anti-graffiti initiatives.
- With respect to meeting with USPS, please bring any problems to DM's attention to ensure better follow-up. Please also let board office know of good possible locations in the community for stamp vending machines.
- Working with DCA, vendors and NYPD to ensure no illegal vendors on streets.
- Brief update on Harlem Hospital EMS stations; FDNY and EMS to report later this meeting.
- DEP doing air quality check in the wake of retaining wall collapse along HHP.
- DA's office is doing summer youth internship; several interns are CB12 local youth.
- Announced various employment opportunities: USPS 90-day temp summer jobs, PANYNJ, Con Ed full-time customer service reps, etc.
- Welcomed new board members. Orientation/training set for June 20th.

7:27pm **Presentation by Nancy O'Connell, New York Metropolitan Transit Council (NYMTC)** NYMTC represents the five boroughs, and Westchester, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk and Nassau Counties. NYMTC coordinates transportation issues between and among various state, county and local agencies. Is doing a study for the HHP corridor re scenic, historic, intrinsic beauty, cultural and recreational resources, etc., and is working with local CBs to determine local issues. Try to put together a plan to preserve beauty of the parkway, and the surrounding area, including the view shed of the parkway – parks, scenery, historical aspects, etc. If we can get the Henry Hudson Parkway designated as a scenic by-way, it will qualify for special funding for the parkway overall, as well as to improve specific aspects of the parkway that have been designated by the stakeholders as important features. Mr. Collins: what are some of the funding benefits, especially for our friends at Castle Village (the owner of the retaining wall)? Unfortunately, it wouldn't help them right now, but the plan certainly can address other retaining walls and put together other partnerships to keep this from happening in the future. Elizabeth Lorris Ritter: what about rocky outcroppings, Riverdale overpasses, billboards in Harlem. A: HHP is a

complicated corridor because it's under both State and City jurisdiction, and many agencies are involved. It is up to the communities adjacent to the parkway to determine what should be included in the Corridor Management Plan; there is no set thing.

7:36pm **Victor Morisete, Community Association of Progressive Dominicans (ACDP):** founded 25 years ago. Provides free counseling and other social services, including teen pregnancy prevention. Currently offering tutoring, literacy development, counseling, etc., in fifteen schools in Manhattan and the Bronx; planning to expand to three other sites in lower Manhattan. Created Amber Charter School, currently operating K-5, but re-chartered to go K-8, with ultimately plans to go K-12. This year is the first 8th grade class that came up through the beginning; all graduated, and all were accepted at their first choice high schools. ACDP also runs a small daycare center in the Bronx, which also is expanding. It is opening 194 units of affordable housing, also in the Bronx. In CB12, ACDP works on a variety of housing issues, including displacement prevention, and currently is rehabilitating abandoned building through an HDPC project, will open in August for 18 families. ACDP also offers immigration services, ELA, an emergency food pantry, etc. Mr. Morisete concluded by showing a brief video that introduced some of ACDP's programs, staff and success stories.

7:52pm **Motion to adopt agenda** by Julio Peguero, seconded by Peter Ferrara; no objection. Some members requested additional time to review minutes, so this item was postponed until later in the mtg.

7:54pm **Presentation by FDNY on EMS stations,** David Harney, Executive Assistant to Deputy Fire Commissioner. Began with a fire safety reminder to change smoke- and CO₂-detector batteries twice a year, when setting clocks forward and back again for daylight savings time.

EMS stations #13 and #16, which are based at Harlem Hospital, will be demolished later on this year to facilitate hospital's modernization/expansion, but FDNY is working with the Health & Hospitals Corporation to provide relocation space within that footprint. This will provide all of the necessary features to maintain operations. Ms. Tirado: there was some discussion about building an additional station in WH or Bronx; is that still on the horizon for us? A: As part of merger of EMS and FDNY there was a large-scale plan to expand, and FDNY came to this community many times to site a facility within CB12, and no agreement could be reached. After September 11th, EMS lost funding for expansion. It is difficult to site a facility here due not only to the budget constraints but also to the lack of space, currently exacerbated by current "red-hot" real estate market. Ms. Tirado: can we help by adding something to our budget requests? A: yes, we would love to come up to this community if there were the capital funds and also the space. Steve Simon asked several clarifying questions, all related to ensuring no diminution of services to CB 12 area, both during the temporary relocation and after the construction of the permanent base station. A: the same level of service will be provided during both periods.

8:01pm Public Speakers Session

Fernando Fernandez & Hope Knight, UMEZ: Spoke about the new, planned Harlem auto mall, a Dan Keys dealership on 122nd & 2nd Ave. 60-75 jobs available: full-time union jobs with benefits (phone operators, cashiers, clerks, greeters, dispatchers, technicians, drivers; some management).

William Guerrero, 700 W 178th Street Tenants Association: Working to improve tenants' quality of life. Main problem relates to traffic on 178th Street: the street itself is in terrible condition and the steady flow of cars and heavy equipment brings honking and noise at all hours; no one can sleep. The traffic, which is all NJ-bound, shakes the building's foundation. Other problems include idling buses, with related noise and fumes. Coming to CB for help. Mr. Collins noted that CB12 has been working on many of these issues. Ms. Tirado will contact City tomorrow regarding potholes; please advise as to exact location, and also continue to report idling buses. The speaker was invited to the next T&T committee mtg.

Ricardo Roman, Affinity Health Plan: Shared information on their programs, including Child/Family Health Plus and Medicaid health services. Has several mobile units, a service that actually started in this neighborhood. Stated that health care is a right, not a privilege. Gave contact info.

Carole Mulligan, community resident: what might be next steps to help secure adequate space for GLHS? Concerned that one student expressed feeling of discomfort (and unwelcome) at last night's town hall meeting.

Virginia Lugo, 700 W 178th Street Tenants Association: echoed Mr. Guerrero's comments with regard to living standards and conditions. Noted that 17+ people from the building came out to this meeting, which is a lot, considering the inclement weather. Also noted problems related to the presence of independent jitney services and Atlantic City tour buses, and poor synchronization of lights on 178th Street.

Eileen Hunter, Opening Doors for Youth: a youth services pilot program for young people in northern Manhattan. Assisting just 3-5 young people to stay out of jail and get on track has a ripple effect to benefit hundreds. Requested help with outreach; gave contact info: 212-544-7711.

Rodney German, Prepaid Legal Services: a publicly traded company that offers retainer legal services at affordable prices. Services include contract and document review, phone consultation, wills, healthcare proxy, debt collection, personal financial review, tenant advice, traffic court in any state, government benefits, etc. Distributed literature and gave contact information.

Melvin Reddick, community resident: Lives in 950 St. Nicholas Ave. A nearby building is slated to be rehabbed as a church. There already are three churches in a two-block radius; a fourth would negatively affect quality-of-life due to increased traffic and noise. Noted that many neighbors are in attendance this evening, though they did not sign up to speak. Mr. Collins asked Ms. Tirado to look at zoning issues. Joyce Holland invited Mr. Reddick to the next Housing Committee meeting; Mr. Collins suggested he also attend the next Land Use Committee meeting.

Jose Adames, community resident: took his case challenging Miguel Martinez' election to the City Council to the Supreme Court, which declined to hear the case. Mr. Adames asserts this is because he told too many hard truths. He also challenged results of the Mayoral election.

Jeanne Dubnau, RENA: encouraged people to attend Rent Guidelines Board hearings 6/14 and 6/16. Spoke of dire problem of tenant displacement. Most public officials say they are for tenants, but they do nothing. Assemblyman Farrell has sent out letter to all constituents, and Senator Schneiderman's staff have organized people to attend the hearings, but City electeds have done nothing. Spoke passionately about the need to fight for tenants rights and to show up to the RGB hearings. Also spoke in support of Housing Committee resolution later on the agenda.

Lisa & Larik Dais, Felicia Bradford & Gloria Reddick, community residents: echoed Mr. Reddick's comments. The church would occupy the ground floor level of a brownstone. Would cause property values to go down, but taxes would still be assessed based on higher value. Not at all anti-religious, but a block of seven individually-owned brownstones has shown commitment to the block to renovate, clean up and contribute to the neighborhood; a church will negatively impact this. Asking for CB12 support.

Kristin Borhofer, community resident: Recently moved to Inwood, and wants her daughter to be able to walk across the street to school. Would like to see a community-based lower school at the Northeastern Academy, and the convent converted into a computer center for community children, and for all people to work together in harmony. Although many new schools have opened in the last decade, the need for K-8 seats has not been met; many of these children continue to be bused out of the community. Critical to meet needs of Inwood's young. Ms. Lorris Ritter: wouldn't an elementary school bring bus traffic to that site? A: Not if it serves 4-8 grades, or is a "walk-to" school.

Ydani Rodriguez & Sybil Dodson, community residents: for the interests of the residents of the community, we must fight together to keep Luperón a small school, in which case it would be acceptable to place it at the Northeastern Academy site. The community cannot accommodate a large school, and if the school grows to more than 400, it would irrevocably alter its identity. Noted that two of the Isabella scholarship recipients are from GLHS, and that the graduation rate is almost 100%. Pointed to the many members of the audience who support the school, including teachers and students. Helen Morik: does the plan to move to 215th enjoy the support of the school community? A: Yes. Peter Ferrara, on behalf of a member of the community: does GLHS allow military recruiters? A: we have students in all careers.

Yokarina Duarte, GLHS student: Spoke eloquently in support of her school. "I came to NYC/US in January '01, and here I am, speaking English to you, and not afraid to do it." Noted that there is no gym, no labs; would be glad to give tours of the school so that people can see how great this school is, and what its needs are. "I'm a senior, and I'm leaving the school to move on, but I am not leaving in spirit, and I will not rest until my school has a better home. I am only the second person in my family to graduate from high school; we are an example to this city."

Evaristo Espinal, GLHS teacher: spoke in support of the school.

George Espinal, Friends of Payson Avenue (no relation to previous speaker): plugged a new local event in the parks at the end of July targeted for youth, 7-17. Also encouraged everyone to pick up after their dogs.

David Scott, PS 18: concerned about siting issues for schools in this community. His child's school is near bus depot, Time Warner, many garages, etc., and in a commercial zone; we must be concerned with these siting issues.

Presentation of citations by Councilmember Jackson to several members of FDNY, Engine 95, Ladder 36, and Engine 43, Ladder 59 for their heroism in saving a life in the course of battling the recent terrible fire on Seaman Avenue. Mr. Jackson spoke passionately about the FDNY's heroism and bravery. Read from the citations, and thanked these fine and humble public servants on behalf of a grateful city, noting that one company lost a member last year, Thomas Brick, fighting a fire in Inwood.

<public speaker's session resumes> Daniel Guillen, Joel Beltre & Ivan Laureano, Alianza Dominicana, Plaza Beacon School & Afterschool Program: Spoke about youth violence. Only one police officer available in the 181st area, and this is not enough given the enormity of the problem of youth hanging out, cutting school, etc. we must, as a community, come together to solve the problem of gang violence. Maria Luna: encouraged to attend 33rd & 34th Pct Community Council meetings. Mr. Collins, Ms. Dodson and Cleofis Sarete noted prior involvement of CB12 on this important issue.

9:26pm: Motion to adopt minutes of April meeting by Jay Mazur; seconded by Glenda Swanson-Massa; no objections.

9:27pm Elected officials and their Representatives:

Lilliam Perez, for State Senator Eric Schneiderman: Update on the Campaign for Fiscal Equity's and Alliance for Quality Education's fight for fair funding; shared article. Offering free tennis classes in schoolyard of PS187 for ages 6-18, Monday-Friday 3p-6p, through June 24th. Spoke in support of Luperón High School, and encouraged all assembled to not make premature decisions, given that SCA/DOE has not completed site review. Shared letter by the Senator supporting CB12's proposed Housing resolution up for discussion this evening and encouraged all to vote "yes". Working with NYPD to not ticket cars that are double-parked during alternate-side cleaning regulations.

9:32pm Roxanne Dodds for Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields: formally introduced new CB members appointed in April and May: Raquel Batista, Adam Eggers, Julissa Gomez, Andre Harris, Eduardo Hoepelman, Albania Jimenez, Joseph Sanchez, Aaron Scott, Manny Velazquez and Janifer Wilson. Ms. Fields is committed to filling the remaining two vacancies. Regarding the retaining wall collapse, the Borough President is concerned and will always come to the community when situations arise that need her attention. With regard to the rodent-resistant garbage cans, Ms. Dodds noted that persistence yielded results. Congratulated Ms. Rowe-Adams and Ms. Foster.

9:37pm Rafael Escaño for Comptroller William Thompson: Welcomed new board members, and congratulated Ms. Rowe-Adams.

9:39pm Councilmember Robert Jackson: City Council has earmarked \$10 million for workforce development programs; deadline for letter of intent is tomorrow. NYC budget \$3.3 billion in the black. FDNY, NYPD and UFT currently are working without contracts; the Mayor has only budgeted same increase (\$1k, 3%, 2%) that DC37 got, but the above-mentioned unions have deemed this unacceptable. With regard to GLHS, DOE does things and does not consult electeds; it is not clear why things are or are not in the capital plan. Fought to restore \$1.3 billion to schools capital budget; threatened to vote against budget if funds were not restored. Announced upcoming town hall mtgs. Jay Mazur: would you support GLHS in the budget? Yes, if there is a location. When DOE put that location in the budget, they hadn't looked at the proposed site. Mr. Mazur: Is that a "yes" or a "no"? A: it's a yes, but I am trying to explain that things get listed in different places in the budget, depending on if there is approved siting. GLHS has been removed from the capital budget and is not even in the section listing funded schools without sites. Mr. Simon: isn't it a problem if GLHS isn't listed in that section? We have to hold on to that money. A: yes, it should be. I think DOE was just playing games with us.

9:47pm Frank Hess for Assemblymember Denny Farrell: in the interests of time, directed attention to written report. Noted that community owes debt of gratitude to the great job that the city agencies did with respect to the retaining wall collapse on May 24, 2005.

9:49pm Cindy Espinoza for Councilmember Miguel Martinez: spoke of the Councilmember's recent meetings and activities to combat youth violence and provide opportunities for youth activities, including a basketball tournament and a citation for local youth dance program that is the subject of the recently released, critically acclaimed film, "Mad Hot Ballroom." Echoed Mr. Jackson's comments on workforce development initiative; 30% of the

\$10 million is specifically for youth services, so we should take advantage of this funding. Spoke in support of GLHS; clarified that it is funded and is in the plan, not in the section for additional capacity but in the section for seats currently in leased space that must be moved to permanent space.

9:57pm Committee Reports:

Traffic & Transportation (Martin Collins for Aidee Camacho) resolution to co-name SE corner of 207th & Seaman Ave. after Bobby O'Shea, who died 9/11. Sybil Dodson asked if this person already is included as an honoree in "Heroes of Inwood Way?" A: Yes. Motion to table by Ms. Lorris Ritter and seconded by Ms. Dodson. Motion failed 12-16-3-0. The question was called and seconded; there was no objection. The resolution passed, 19-7-6-0. A second Traffic & Transportation Committee resolution to co-name SE corner of W 217th St & PTW after Joseph Kellett, who died 9/11 passed with no discussion, 17-7-8-0. Milagros Vicente noted that some biographical information should have been presented at the meeting so people know what they're voting for. There was a fair amount of discussion about the process of street co-naming, and the presence of 9-11 victims on co-named streets. Maria Luna stated that it was unfair, and she was upset that other resolutions passed by this board to co-name streets had not been carried out. A: Edith Kamiat Place has been approved by the City Council and signed into law by the Mayor. The interested parties are responsible for the follow-up. The families of the 9/11 victims have tracked this process, and Assemblyman Farrell's staff has spent a lot of time on this. Ms. Espinoza also spoke of the process that Councilmember Martinez's office goes through, in terms of making sure that there is contact info.

10:14pm Housing Committee resolution calling for no rent increase by the Rent Guidelines Board passed without discussion, 28-2-2-0.

10:17pm Public Safety Committee, Pamela Palanque-North: referred to minutes. Brief update on last week's informational meeting regarding the retaining wall collapse onto the Henry Hudson Parkway. Upcoming meeting will focus on issues related to youth violence.

10:22pm Economic Development, Julio Peguero: referred to minutes; next meeting is June 7th and will discuss several liquor license renewals, as well as issues at Passions Lounge and other night-spots about which there have been many community complaints.

10:22pm motion to adjourn; multiple seconds; approved by acclamation.

Respectfully submitted:
Elizabeth Lorris Ritter, Secretary