

**COMMUNITY BOARD 12
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN**

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

November 28, 2000

Members Present

Anita Barberis	Leslie Foster	Manuel J. Méndez	Bertie Ray, III
Rafael Beaumont	William A. García	Luís H. Minier	Julissa Reynoso
Abby Belkin	Beatrice Hall	Helen Morik	Steven Rizick
James Berlin	Herbert Harwitt	Victor Morisete-Romero	Nelson Rójas
Ronald J. Botelho	Soledad Hiciano	Norma Nadien	María Sierra
Emilia G. Cardona	Joyce F. Holland	Marcos Navarro	Barbara Smith Ramos
Laurie T. Cohen	Robert C. Liebeskind	Dr. Pamela Palanque North	Ricardo Ureña
A. Fredericka Cuenca	Elizabeth Lorris Ritter	Julio Peguero	Sandra Wachspress
Walther G. Delgado	Maria Luna	Martha Pepín	
Sybil R. Dodson	Isidoro Martínez	William C. Ortega	
Jack Fogle	Miguel Martínez	Zead Ramadan	

Members Absent

George Sánchez (excused)	Juan Villar
Laura Sterling	Msgr. Gerald Walsh (excused)
Cheryl Tidwell	Elouise Whitehurst (excused)

Public Officials, Ex-officio Members and Guests

Council Member Guillermo Linares	Frank Hess, for Assemblyman Farrell
Miosotis Muñoz, for Borough President Fields	District Manager Gregoria Feliciano
Deputy Inspector Charles Rubin, 33 rd Precinct	Inspector Terrence Monahan, 34 th Precinct

The General Meeting of November 2000 was held at New York-Presbyterian Hospital. **Community Board 12 was called to order and began its Regular Session at 7:20 p.m.** The agenda was approved with an amendment to include a resolution regarding lights at the George Washington Bridge. The revised minutes of September 2000 were approved as presented. Members were asked to review the minutes of October 2000, which would be taken up in a later part of the meeting.

Chair's Report – William A. García

Gave an update on the developments taking place in the community regarding a halfway house proposed by the Correctional Services Corporation (CSC), a contractor of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Noted that a representative of CSC will speak this evening. Sent a letter expressing CB 12's concerns about its location on W. 182 St., and received a general letter in response from the Bureau of Prisons. Reported that West Harlem Environmental Action, a community organization, filed a lawsuit against the MTA, which stemmed out of the MTA's recent actions at a bus parking lot at W. 215 Street and the disproportionate number of bus depots located in Northern Manhattan. Discussed a concern raised by Sandra Wachspress regarding the ranking of budget priorities, and will look into possible defects in the format used and propose changes.

District Manager's Report – Gregoria Feliciano

Highlighted items included in her written report to the board. Attended the 34th Precinct Council's meeting regarding the CSC halfway house; working with Buildings Dept. on inspections in CB 12; provided a local vendor list to NY-Presbyterian, and has attended its community jobs meetings. Has been discussing the creation of an inter-agency task force to address the problem of merchandise obstructing sidewalks. Noted that pick pocketing incidents and street con-games are increasing. Reported that a paint removal job lasting 24 months will begin on the GW Bridge, along with work to stabilize rocks along the parkway, and replacement of a deck near Dyckman St. The Port Authority Police is undertaking a quality of life enforcement initiative in and around the bus station. Confirmed that the rotation of the garbage collection schedule will result in nighttime pickup in the southern part of CB 12. School crossing sign work will begin next month.

The Minutes of October 2000 were approved, without change.

Nominating Committee Report – Robert C. Liebeskind, Chair

Thanked Beatrice Hall, Manuel Mendez, Isidoro Martinez, and Rafael Beaumont for their work on the committee. Report of the Nominating Committee:

Committee held two meetings and its first order of business was to develop criteria for selecting nominees. Noted that the Committee had hoped to develop more stringent criteria, but members were not fully prepared or familiar with the process or the individual board members to undertake this task. There was also no clear precedent to guide the process.

Criteria used were: good attendance, defined as 70% attendance including excused and unexcused absences, and board membership for at least a year. A total of 29 of 47 members met these criteria, including an exception made for illness with a demonstrated dedication to the board, and all qualified members were called. Few members were interested; therefore, most of the executive positions are uncontested.

Mr. Libenskind added the following recommendations: members of the Nominating Committee should be selected based on experience; consideration should be given to adopting consistent criteria for every election; and a policy regarding executive board members who also chair committees.

Several members withdrew their names from the nomination list presented. It was clarified that the term of office is for a six-month period, to adjust for a recent change made to CB 12's bylaws. Barbara Smith Ramos was nominated from the floor for Treasurer. The candidates presented for next month's election are:

<u>Chair:</u>	William A. Garcia	<u>Treasurer:</u>	Emilia Cardona
<u>1st Vice Chair:</u>	A. Fredericka Cuenca		Barbara Smith Ramos
<u>2nd Vice Chair:</u>	Walther G. Delgado	<u>Secretary:</u>	Marcos Navarro
	Zead Ramadan	<u>Asst. Secretary:</u>	Elizabeth Lorris Ritter

Chair William Garcia thanked the Committee and added that several of the recommendations made are being worked on through the Bylaws Committee and that the issue of standards for nomination has been elusive and was tried in the past without success.

Public Session

Inspector Terry Monahan, Commanding Officer, 34th Precinct

Has been commanding 34th Precinct since September 1999, and worked in this precinct before. Crime is down by more than 8.5%, which leads all of Manhattan. Most dramatic decrease is violent crime; so far this year only 8 homicides have occurred in the 34th Pct., a significant drop from a few years ago. This has enabled the precinct to concentrate on other problems, such as vandalism and illegal activity following major events. Precinct works with community groups and acts on complaints received from District Manager. In response to questions, commented on efforts to curb obstructions of the street by vendors, but to be effective the penalties must be strengthened and allow for the forfeiture of goods.

Deputy Inspector Charles Rubin, Commanding Officer, 33rd Precinct

In response to questions, clarified a homicide incident that occurred in area, and the policing of the wall on upper Riverside Drive. Emilia Cardona suggested greater communication between the 33rd Precinct Council and CB 12. Officer Lopez is the new Community Affairs Officer for the 33rd Precinct, replacing Officer Maria Galarza.

Jesse Nelson, Correctional Services Corporation (CSC)

CSC has been in existence for 13 years, nationwide. Ms. Nelson explained aspects of the program and its criteria to reject violent ex-offenders. About 70% are from the local community and she introduced several CSC staff that live in the community. Program will recruit locally for any staff vacancies.

To inquiries from Victor Morisete-Romero, Helen Morik, Sybil Dodson and other board members, Ms. Nelson responded that the area was chosen because it will enable better integration of the program's clients, the building's tenants were living in overcrowded single rooms and were helped to relocate but none were evicted, and that the building is leased to the program for 5 years. CSC has other locations in the city and further clarified the rejection criteria. Board members noted the site's vicinity to numerous schools and urged that a new location be found, and questioned whether the 70% community resident ratio and non-violent status of clients will be maintained given the turnover of clients every two months. It was indicated that CSC is for profit. Ms. Nelson invited members to visit its other facilities and noted that the local program is scheduled to open in March. The lease at the current location, near 31st St., has expired.

Miosotis Muñoz, for Borough President C. Virginia Fields

Provided a written report to board and noted the Borough President has sent a letter opposing the halfway house; a nightlife task force has been created and although the transportation bond was defeated, other measures are being worked on. Borough President's uptown office has moved to the state office building on W. 125 Street.

Jon Gabriel, American Red Cross

Three alarm building fire on November 18 at W. 172 St. and Amsterdam Ave. forced the displacement of 17 families, consisting of 59 adults and 12 children. An emergency reception center was at up at P.S. 8 and served meals. Eight apartments were damaged. The building is privately owned.

Allen Hodge

Former district leader. Opposes the halfway house, and noted that this is in addition to a facility opening on RSD in the W. 140's. Presented flowers and acknowledged the contributions to the community of Miosotis Muñoz, Helen Morik, Sybil Dodson, Gregoria Feliciano, Elouise Whitehurst and Maria Luna.

Leslie Foster, Isabella Geriatric Center

Spoke in support of the proposed quiet zone in the perimeter of Isabella Geriatric Center. Read and provided for the record a letter from a nursing home resident regarding noise in the area.

Carmen Rójas, Member of the Parents Association of P.S. 132

Through a translator, noted that parents are not necessarily opposed to the halfway house but to its location. Criticized the support given by elected officials to the proposal, and the lack of input from the community.

Helen Morik, New York -Presbyterian Hospital

Hospital is conducting outreach for vendor opportunities in the expansion projects. Distributed a flyer on this matter.

Victor Morisete-Romero, Community Association of Progressive Dominicans

Spoke against the proposed halfway house, and read a statement from a tenant who was forced out. His organization discovered in court that a halfway house was being planned. Work was done without permits and CSC brought in security guards to force tenants out. Together with Legal Aid, sued CSC to overturn the illegal evictions and force adequate relocation measures. Urged CB 12 to pass a resolution opposing this proposal.

Public Officials Report

Council Member Guillermo Linares

Noted that his office has seen a surge in people seeking help with immigration related matters. Worked to find a solution to the truck food vendors situation and thanked the 33rd Precinct, Health and Parks Dept. for helping to bring this to closure. Conducting a donation drive for children's coats. With regard to the halfway house, organized a hearing on Nov. 22 with other area public officials, which further confirmed the community's opposition to the site. He has brought these concerns to the Justice Dept. and to the governmental liaison at the White House, which has led to the proposal being put on hold. Most recent opposition was from Senator Charles Schumer. Urged CB 12 to take up this matter and adopt a resolution noting the lack of consultation and its position on this proposal.

Questions arose regarding the 16 letters of support the project received, and whether these could be obtained through a freedom of information request. Councilman Linares is working to bring the issue before the City Council.

A roll call confirmed that 35 of 41 members who signed in were present for the following part of the agenda.

Committee Reports

Transportation and Public Safety Committee – Ronald J. Botelho, for the Committee
Remarked that the Committee has plans to call for a special hearing to address the halfway house proposal. Will invite leaders of CSC and ask for documents contained in their proposal. Suggested that CB 12 should not take up a resolution on this matter until this hearing takes place.

A resolution commending the Port Authority for the new lighting on the George Washington Bridge was presented and unanimously passed, by a vote of 35 in favor.

A resolution creating a quiet zone in the perimeter of Audubon Avenue, Amsterdam Avenue, W. 190 St., Ft. George Avenue and adjacent streets was presented and modified without objection. The resolution was unanimously passed, by of vote of 35 in favor.

Land Use Committee – A. Fredericka Cuenca, Chair

Reminded members and the public of CB 12's Task Force hearings on New York-Presbyterian's expansion plan. Urged wide distribution of the meeting notice and attendance.

New Business

Fredericka Cuenca motioned to adopt a resolution opposing the location of the CSC's halfway house, and was seconded by Maria Sierra. A discussion followed regarding the timing and the process for the resolution. The Chair requested that the resolution be heard, since the motion was appropriate under new business. Once read, members made a case for or against adopting the resolution and matters related to the proposal. CB 12's hearing and meeting calendar for December was also cited as a consideration. Members cited the need for additional fact finding, while others cited the extensive media coverage the issue had received and other information already uncovered.

The motion, as read, was approved by a vote of 22 in favor, 4 opposed, 3 abstentions and 1 not voting, by William Ortega, who recused himself due to possible conflict.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Walther G. Delgado
Secretary