

## GENERAL MEETING MINUTES – NOVEMBER 27, 2001

### BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Antonio Almonte	Beatrice Hall	Dr. Pamela Palanque North
Jacqueline Aristy	Herbert Harwitt	William C. Ortega
Anita Barberis	Soledad Hiciano	Julio Peguero
Rafael Beaumont	Joyce F. Holland	Martha Pepin
Abby Belkin	Robert C. Liebeskind	Ron Peterson
Jim Berlin	Elizabeth Lorris Ritter	Zead Ramadan
Ronald J. Botelho	Maria Luna	Nelson Rojas
Emilia G. Cardona	Benjamin Mantell	Maria Sierra
Fredericka Cuenca	Isidoro Martinez	Barbara Smith Ramos
Walther G. Delgado	Manuel J. Mendez	Juan Villar
Sybil R. Dodson	Helen Morik	Sandra Wachspress
Leslie Foster	Marcos Navarro	Msgr. Gerald Walsh
		Elouise Whitehurst

### BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

J.F. Sanchez Acosta  
Rev. Lee Arrington  
Martin Collins (Excused)  
William A. Garcia (Excused)  
Miguel Martinez  
Luis H. Minier  
Victor Morisete-Romero  
Norma Nadien (Excused)  
Bertie Ray, III  
Steven Rizick (Excused)  
George Sanchez (Excused)  
Cheryl Tidwell

(7:05) Chair introduced Columbia University Associate VP for Community Affairs Ivelisse Fairchild, who introduced the Dyckman Scholarship. The scholarship represents the liquidated assets of the Dyckman Institute and Manhattan Free School, started by Alexander Hamilton's widow Liza Jumel, and closed in 1943. The scholarship supports Washington Heights/Inwood residents attending Columbia University. Scholarship winners Alexandra Hernandez (Mother Cabrini HS) and Katherine Paez (Tabo Academy) accepted, saying, "I want to tell kids you can go as far as you want," and "I won't let you down."

(7:20) Stanley Michels – congratulated scholarship winners; thanked the community; introduced his successor Robert Jackson.

(7:30) A moment of silence for the victims of American Airlines flight #587. Father Almonte of Incarnation Church, and CB 12 members offered words of solace and prayer.

(7:33) Ben Mantell moved adoption of agenda; Fredericka Cuenca seconded. Passed unanimously.

(7:34) Leslie Foster moved adoption of minutes; Helen Morik seconded. Passed unanimously.

(7:36) Introduced new 33<sup>rd</sup> Commander, Deputy Inspector James McNamara.

#### (7:39) Chairman's Report: Walther G. Delgado

- Parking issues – new facilities, more cars, not enough spaces
- Completed budget process. Thirty-seven capital and 25 expense items. Seniors are #1 priority in the neighborhood, followed closely by youth; environment, business and infrastructure not neglected.
- Writing periodic column for local paper to cover CB 12 issues
- Spoke of loss in community from AA 587
- Mayor's town hall meeting upcoming – last Manhattan town hall meeting was to be in another board but held in CB 12 in solidarity with Dominican community after AA 587 crash.
- Congratulated committee Chairs for efforts in past month, completeness of minutes and fullness of agenda.
- December meeting will be on the 18<sup>th</sup> in CU alumni auditorium; will include farewell recognition to outgoing Council Members.
- Executive committee has formed a personnel committee to look at staffing issues (membership, still in formation, includes Leslie Foster, Fredericka Cuenca and Elizabeth Lorris Ritter)
- Spoke of beautiful mural commemorating 9/11 at 207<sup>th</sup> St. & 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Q: Sybil Dodson: Stressed importance of CB 12 work. Important to express our thanks to our staff even though we cannot, due to faced budget cuts, give raises.

Q: Barbara Smith Ramos: Wants to make sure that CB 12 members get seating preference at town hall meeting.

A: As per Mayor's office – seating is first come first served.

#### (7:53) District Manager's Report: Gregoria Feliciano

Referred to written report. Additionally:

- In response to questions from October's meeting, 25-27 officers/precinct have been deployed at Ground Zero. Also there is a detail at GWB, so staffing is short in both precincts. That said, hard crime is down, though QOL complaints are still an issue.
- National Guard is patrolling GWB, and NYPD rookies will be available for neighborhood patrols during holiday season.
- Reiterated FDNY warning regarding open flames and candles. Three-fold increase in fires since 1999.
- Requested study by DOT Borough Engineer to look at congestion on Ft. Washington Avenue, which is worsening.
- Community outreach – Viacom is starting 4 information kiosks at phone booths throughout the neighborhood.

Q: Elizabeth Lorris Ritter: Question re: Port Authority closures of GWB and effect on traffic

A: There is no plan in place. The Port Authority doesn't inform community as to closures, access, etc.

Q: Barbara Smith Ramos: What outreach for fire safety during holiday season?

A: Ms. Feliciano: Reiterated information provided earlier regarding FDNY outreach.

Q: Sybil Dodson: Vandalism along Isham Street and elsewhere in Inwood

A: The DM, Chair and Board Members encouraged people to take this issue up with the Precinct Community Council, to report these crimes to precinct when they occur, to bring it to CB 12 safety committee.

Q: Emilia Cardona: Will kiosk announcements be in English and Spanish so that people can understand and also learn and become familiar with English?

A: Yes, what is mailed to members will be posted.

Q: Jim Berlin: Why is traffic so much worse since 9/11?

A: Chairman recommended that this question be asked on Thursday at the Mayor's town hall meeting.

Q: Helen Morik: One way to ease traffic is to enforce existing traffic regulations and this is not being done.

A: Insp. McNamara: The Precinct is doing enforcement, but hospital has closed parking lots and there are many cars from people going to the hospital. Also, hospital security guards should tell cars to move along and existing lots should not allow cars to form in street when lots are full.

Q: Pamela Palanque-North: flood of crime in the south east end of district. Commended the 33<sup>rd</sup> Pct. and CB 12 staff for their efforts in responding.

#### **(8:20) Nominations and Elections for Assistant Secretary**

Robert Liebeskind, Nominating Committee Chair, presiding.

Fredericka Cuenca nominated Anita Barberis, who accepted.

Leslie Foster nominated Sybil Dodson, who declined.

Ron Botelho moved for voice vote and to suspend rule for ballot vote. Elouise Whitehurst seconded.

25 In Favor      6 Against      1 Abstention

Roll call vote for Anita Barberis: 31 In Favor, 1 Abstention, 1 Not Voting

#### **(8:31) Public Speakers Session**

Nichole Smith, Outreach Coordinator, NYC Dept. of Parks & Recreation: Speaker unable to remain; had left business cards, and encouraged people to contact her w/ any questions regarding parks issues.

Walter Rodriguez, Coalition for the Homeless: Spoke in favor of affordable housing, expanding NYC's housing stock, and increasing availability of housing to most vulnerable populations. Currently 29,000 homeless in NYC, 12,000 of whom are children.

Derick Rolle, Ft. Washington Men's Shelter: President of Client Advisory Council. Lack of affordable housing is a serious issue. Spoke about a variety of housing programs, including NY, NY housing and Section 8, which provide support and funding for mentally ill, impoverished people. SSI and even low-paying jobs are not enough for people to live on.

Michael Alvarez – Inwood Library: Offered congratulations to Felix Morales, local librarian at 179<sup>th</sup> St. branch, who was voted "most popular" librarian in Manhattan.

Dale Powell, Community Resident: Are parking meters being installed on W. 165<sup>th</sup> Street between Broadway & St. Nicholas Ave.? Urged CB12 to investigate and take action.

Q: What are existing parking regulations?

A: Alternate side cleaning in effect M/W/F.

Q: Referred to Transportation & Public Safety Committee

A: Soledad Hiciano, Transportation Comm Chair: Invited to attend next meeting on 12/4

Ms. Feliciano reported that she has spoken with meter division of the Dept. of Transportation.

Nilma Baez, 278 Nagle Avenue Tenants Association: Issue with local restaurant's kerioke night and related noise. NYPD responds, but noise resumes when police leave. Requested help.

Q: What precinct? A: 34<sup>th</sup> Precinct.

Q: location? A: 278 Nagle @ 207<sup>th</sup> /204<sup>th</sup> near St. Jude's Church.

Chair clarification: at last month's Economic Development Committee, the committee voted not to renew their liquor license although the SLA had already renewed it. Reminded speakers that, as landlord, they could end the lease. The building is city owned, currently managed by tenants, but HPD has not yet formed HFDC. Recommended to get legal counsel and also to follow up with Councilman (Linares) for constituent support.

Q: Why is HPD not following up? A: Chair: DM to follow up with HPD.

#### **Committee Reports**

##### **(8:59) Executive Committee**

Resolution to remove 2 board members (Bertie Ray, III and Cheryl Tidwell). Moved by Fredericka Cuenca; seconded.

[note: at the request of member Ron Botelho, the following exchange is transcribed verbatim]

Ron Botelho: has anyone spoken to the individuals personally?

Walther Delgado: No. The process is laid out in the body of the resolution. Warning letters were sent. This issue straddles at least 18 months of non-attendance to committee and/or general Board meetings. There were certified letters sent. There were no responses to that, back in the May-June period. Prior to that there were warning letters. The only markings they have on their attendance has been those that have been given to everybody, let's say, for a cancellation of the September meeting. Those are the only times they have recorded attendance. It is a very, very careful process that we undertake. We send a warning letter; if they don't respond, we send a certified letter, and they haven't responded to that.

RB: I was wondering why there wasn't an attempt to reach out to these individuals by the Executive Committee; simply calling them up, saying, "Hey, what's going on?" I mean, these are individuals who are members of our community, and notwithstanding the fact that they have been absent without excuse for some time, at some point the Executive Committee should have reached out to them.

Elizabeth Lorris Ritter: Well, you were on the Executive Committee at the time, Ron.

RB: Yes, but I wasn't in charge of reaching out to them.

ELR: You weren't at the meetings, either.

WD: It's a good point, and maybe we should

ELR: Aw, c'mon.

WC: Remember, there's a warning letter, there is

RB: Yes, but I think at minimum a phone call: "Hey, listen, did you get our mail?" For goodness sakes, these people may be dead. We don't know.

ELR: You're right. Well then, if they're dead, they definitely should be removed from the Board.

<laughter from Board & audience.>

RB: While I appreciate the levity

WD: Can we not have cross discussion because it's not on the agenda.

RB: OK.

[unidentified female voice]: Let's move on.

RB: Is it resolved that someone from the Executive Committee will attempt to reach out

WD: It is taken into consideration, but there was a very deliberate discussion by the Assistant Chairs, by the Executive, of how do we notify, and it puts the responsibility back on the Board if we have to make that additional effort to call. Many of us network outside of this room. I haven't seen one of them since we held the meeting at Good Shepherd [April '00]... On this, the record is fairly clear.

Jim Berlin: The only problem I have with the resolution is that there should be a "Whereas" indicating that the Board has followed all of its procedures in terms of notifying members with delinquent attendance.

ELR: Is that a friendly amendment or a substantive one?

WD: That sounds friendly.

JB: I have a smile on my face.

<WC and Board laugh>

WD: There is a friendly amendment on the floor

ELR: Can someone give me the language?

WD: [provided language.]

ELR: [repeated back language]

Q: Ron Peterson: Was certified card returned indicating letter was received?

A: Yes, but there was no response from Board Members.

Q: Robert Liebeskind: Can't we just remove by letter?

A: No, only the Borough President can do that. Needs recommendation from the Board.

Barbara Smith Ramos: we have a commitment to attend.

Zead Ramadan: Clarification of By-laws which were given by Chair.

Maria Luna called the question; several people seconded simultaneously. No objection to calling the question.  
Resolution vote: 29 In favor, 1 Opposed, 3 Abstentions.

Emilia Cardona: Indicated that meetings are inefficient and it is a problem that people come late, or don't show up at all.

(9:20) Housing & Human Services Committee

Several friendly amendments to the resolution were accepted.

Q: Jim Berlin: this is a canned resolution; CB 12 did not write this.

Q: Ron Peterson: Is it a problem to have assistance with resolutions?

Berlin: We can have assistance, and one support resolution, but if all boards pass same resolution, it dilutes the voice of each board public officials to whom it is sent.

Chair: Citywide movement passed by many boards already. CB12 passing this resolution would show solidarity w/ broader movement.

Sandra Wachspres: Called the question; seconded by Emilia Cardona; no objection to calling the question.  
Motion passed unanimously.

(9:28) Youth & Education Committee

Resolution commending NYC school teachers on 9/11. A friendly amendment was accepted, but it created grammatical problems with the grammar of some of the other clauses. The Committee will fix the errors and grammar of the other clauses. There was additional discussion; the questions was called and seconded. Vote: 29 in favor; 1 abstention; 1 not voting due to conflict.

Q: Jim Berlin: this is a canned resolution; CB 12 did not write this.

Q: Ron Peterson: Is it a problem to have assistance with resolutions?

(9:37) Carlos Rodriguez, Manhattan Borough President

- Thursday is Manhattan Borough President's "Night Out."
- Warned about unscrupulous attorneys encroaching on grieving families of AA 587 crash. MBPO is trying to reach out to families for assistance from CBOs, legal aid, etc.

Socrates Solano, Liaison, City Council Speaker Vallone: Offered condolences regarding AA 587; thanked CB 12 for support; will try to organize an event to honor teachers at City Hall.

**Announcements:**

Ground-breaking ceremony for 163<sup>rd</sup> Street playground to honor local activist, Lillie Brown.

(9:44) Meeting adjourned.