

**GENERAL MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 23, 2001**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Rev. Antonio Almonte	Herbert Harwitt	William C. Ortega
Anita Barberis	Joyce F. Holland	Julio Peguero
Abby Belkin	Robert C. Liebeskind	Martha Pepin
Jim Berlin	Elizabeth Lorris Ritter	Zead Ramadan
Ronald J. Botelho	Maria Luna	Steven Rizick
Emilia G. Cardona	Benjamin J. Mantell	Nelson Rojas
Martin Collins	Isidoro Martinez	Maria Sierra
Fredericka Cuenca	Miguel Martinez	Barbara Smith Ramos
Walther G. Delgado	Manuel J. Mendez	Juan Villar
Sybil R. Dodson	Luis H. Minier	Sandra Wachspress
Leslie Foster	Helen Morik	Msgr. Gerald Walsh
William A. Garcia	Marcos Navarro	Elouise Whitehurst
Beatrice Hall	Pamela Palanque North	

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

J.F. Sanchez Acosta
Jacqueline Aristy
Rev. Lee Arrington
Rafael Beaumont
Soledad Hiciano
Isidoro Martinez (Excused)
Victor Morisete-Romero
Norma Nadien (Excused)
Ron Peterson (Excused)
Bertie Ray, III
George Sanchez
Cheryl Tidwell

Meeting was called to order at 7:25pm

Walther G. Delgado, Chairman welcomed those present.

(7:27pm) There was a **minute of silence** in view of the events of September 11th.

(7:29pm) The Chair **reviewed the agenda** and pointed out **public speakers sign-up list**.

(7:30pm) Adoption of agenda: Bob Liebeskind proposed that item U become item III; seconded by Abby Belkin; approved unanimously.

(7:32pm) Adoption of minutes: Elizabeth Lorris Ritter moved to table, to give members a chance to review minutes, which had not been mailed to the members. Seconded by Marcos Navarro; unanimously.

(7:33pm) Ramona Van Cleve, Federal Emergency Management Agency (representing a contingent of 6 from FEMA)

Human Services at FEMA. Everyone is busy in these times and getting information is precious. It is important to register with FEMA. Big impacts: if you have lost your job due to 9/11, 11/16 is the last day to apply for disaster unemployment assistance. The speaker gave out printed materials and phone number; mentioned FEMA's housing assistance support and programs for business owners.

Q: do self-employed people need tax return?

A: You will have to provide whatever NYS Dept. of Labor requires.

Q: What about undocumented workers?

A: Federal Law: cannot assist unless citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified aliens. FEMA is working with local church groups and volunteer agencies to help undocumented workers, of whom at least 65 are known to have been lost. Also, there are existing and newly formed foundations which have pledged to work with businesses on business relief. NYS AG has website listing these foundations: www.wtcrelief.info

Q: What about "gypsy" companies and limo services who have lost downtown accounts?

A: Disaster unemployment is available, also some help from teamsters union, even if non-union. NYS Dept. of Labor is doing driver education for truck other driving occupations who have been displaced. All information is multi-lingual. If you need assistance, they have language bank to provide assistance in whatever language.

(7:45pm) Cynthia Steed – Small Business Administration

Economic Injury Disaster Loan program provides working capital for businesses (including personal mortgage, credit card, etc.) as well as operating expenses. Maximum loan is \$1.5 million; interest rate is 4%. Call 800-462-9029 to register with FEMA and info will come from SBA. If you don't want to wait, there are 5 locations citywide with trained loan officers.

Q: How difficult or easy to get a loan, even if business has no collateral.

A: Collateral is not always an issue. Will take whatever you have as collateral, but not excluded if no collateral. Very flexible. May not be able to help if business was having problems before 9/11

Q: What about entrepreneurs, street vendors, independent operators, etc.

A: Everyone is eligible, even person shoe shining career. Doesn't matter how small.

Q: How do you define small?

- RFP for 181st parking facility was out at end of September, but deadline moved to 10/10. Concerned with exacerbation of traffic situation during construction.
- New elementary school open: PS 178 which opened at Ellwood and Bogardus, a site was obtained by the Board of Education through eminent domain.
- As per District 6 Superintendent, growth of elementary level has peaked, by pressure in future will be in middle schools. District moving towards leasing, not building.
- Some members wish to serve in more than one committee. Criteria were developed by Vice Chair in consultation with Executive Committee. There were seven members with good attendance (50%); five wish to fill additional service. Revised committee lists to follow.
- 15% budget cuts apply to CB 12. We will take a \$26,000 cut. This will come through PS accruals due to staff departure and OTPS. Not clear if we will be able to fill new ADM spot.
- Would like meetings to be two hours in duration.
- Secretary position vacant as Ron Botelho resigned yesterday. Resolution of this matter to be discussed under new business.
- Most meetings will be here in the alumni auditorium, but November's meeting will be in the Clark Conference Center, preceded by 6:30 reception honoring Dyckman scholarship winners.

Sybil Dodson: we are fortunate that no member of the board were lost 9/11, other than those who witnessed tragedy, but pointed out that 27 members of Good Shepherd Church in Inwood were lost, as were many other members of this community.

Pamela Palanque North: suggested that Board send a letter of condolence.

Q: Sandra Wachspres: when do we get board budget ranking priorities?

A: We should have it soon. Reminded Board Members that this is one of our most important function and yet we struggled for a quorum. There were flyers; phone calls to Board Members and yet many members did not show up. Reminded people that attendance is important and if members cannot attend, they should resign.

(8:13pm) Adoption of minutes: moved by Helen Morik; seconded by Maria Sierra; passed unanimously.

(8:16pm) District Manager's Report: Gregoria Feliciano

Expressed condolences regarding 9/11.

- Uneventful summer. Many water, water pressure and open hydrant complaints. Will follow up over winter to have a plan in place for next year.
- Sidewalk obstruction task force assembled; conducting sweeps orchestrated by Dept. of Consumer Affairs. Department of Sanitation has deployed additional staff and issued 300+ additional summonses. NYPD also confiscating illegally displayed merchandise. Noticeable impact, but please call to report any problems.
- 163rd Street and RSD playground groundbreaking 11/13.
- Mayor's street activity permits have all been cancelled; no new permit applications accepted.
- Operation Dumpster – can't store dumpsters on streets. Department of Sanitation Enforcement is enforcing this.
- Manhattan District Attorney's warning regarding phone solicitation, regarding 9/11. No relief agency is doing phone solicitation. Do not give into. If you get called, hang-up.
- NY HRA offering workshop.
- NYS Dept. of Health hotline for Anthrax: 877-817-7621
- NYS Dept. of Aging seminar next week at St. Lukes.
- Chief Lintz of NYFD has thanked CB12 for support.
- Various announcements of upcoming event in the community.

Q: Luis Minier regarding Operation Dumpster and pest control

A: Dept. of Sanitation is monitoring pest control issue as well as the Dept. of Health and the Borough President's Office.

Sybil Dodson: Citywide "rat task force" had been operating out of WTC but structure is in place for NYC to handle rodent complaints.

Q: Maria Sierra: regarding Operation Dumpster. There was to be training for business owners regarding new requirements. Did this happen?

A: Dept. of Sanitation reported that there was training. Copies of training materials in English, Spanish and Russian available in CB 12 office.

Q: Barbara Smith Ramos: question for Sybil Dodson regarding air and water quality

A: Many City agencies involved in testing and ensuring air and water quality citywide, not just at ground zero.

(8:29pm) Public Session

Chair introduced new electronic timer in lieu of three-minute "egg timer".

Allen Hodge, Community Resident – lost two friends 9/11. How many 33rd and 34th precinct officers and FDNY transferred downtown? What does it mean for borough-wide NYPD programs to be stationed in new 33rd Pct? Concerned about MTA fares, but wants to make sure that all of our stations be 24-hour access.

DM will research issues regarding FD/PP deployment and report back to the board at the next meeting

Q: Emilia Cardona: private not-for-profit organization?

A: Yes.

Al Adames, Al Frente Youth Program: Spoke about women's rights in democracy. Spoke supporting candidacy of a female running for City Council.

Nilda Luz Rexach, Republican Running for City Council, 10th District: Praised Republican elected officials; advocated hers platform and candidacy.

Elizabeth Loris Ritter, Hudson Heights Owner's Coalition

- Art opening at 10 Fort Washington Avenue gallery 11/2 through 11/30 via NatureArt
- 11/18 event in Bennett Park for 225th Anniversary of Battle
- HHOC outreach to local businesses

Leslie Foster, Isabella Geriatric Center, Club Isabella – Adult Day Care Center. Medical model, with physical and occupational therapy; program includes lunch and transportation. Approved/funded by Medicaid. Invited CB 12 for tour, especially Mr. Herbert Harwitt and Committee for the Aging.

Helen Morik, New York Presbyterian Hospital: Gave summary of NYPH response to 9/11. Described disaster preparedness procedures. Only 1 admission to Allen and none to 168th that are 9/11 related. City of NY and hospital industry to be commended on general preparedness. Regarding bio-terrorism, NYPH has CDC funded program to research bio-terrorism and response issues. (This program has been in place for several years.)

Q: Sybil Dodson: How prepared are we for community notification for a local disaster?

A: Communication is part of preparedness. There are some deficits in this area. Its needs are being addressed.

Q: [member of the public]: Does hospital rent out rooms of apartments and are people being displaced?

A: Not aware of problems. Offered to discuss with member.

Q: Maria Luna: Board Members on local organizations should bring other members of organizations to speak during the public session, or save announcements for end of agenda.

A: Chair affirmed practice both Ms. Luna's suggestion in general, and the propriety of Ms. Morik's remarks at this point in the agenda.

Elected Officials Report

Councilman Guillermo Linares: Things are not the same since 9/11. Lauded efforts of New Yorkers and NYC rescue workers. Councilman has been working with FEMA, Feds, CB, community, houses of worship, etc. in ongoing meetings, which CB12 has been hosting. Next one is 10/24.

- Spoke regarding the 33rd Pct. Buczek family has requested portion of Edgecombe to be named after PO Michael Buczek. Councilman will introduce legislature and requests CB letter of support.
- Opening newly renovated ARC Ft. Wash. At 174th Street on Friday 10/26. \$700,000 in expenses.
- Spoke regarding parking garage at 184th Street and Broadway moving forward.
- Congratulated Miguel Martinez on "nod from Democratic party for my seat." Praised community for high turnout in both primaries and in run-off.

Q: Emilia Cardona: any award ceremony planned for teachers and day care center and all the teachers who helped keep our kids safe on 9/11?

A: We'll take suggestion back to council regarding honoring this deserving group.

Q: Helen Morik: Clarification regarding ARC: seniors are moving in on Friday 10/26, but official opening has not yet been planned.

Carlos Rodriguez, Liason, Manhattan Borough President's Office: Their new phone number is 380-8300. Due to phone outages due to WTC attacks. Spoke about relief office at 119th & Amsterdam. Also will travel to local business if they cannot get to the office.

(9:21pm) Committee Reports

Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee – Marcos Navarro, Chair: The committee meeting is usually on the first Tuesday of the month. It was changed in October and November due to elections. Re: Cultural Affairs: Gorilla Repertory Theatre Company has been working hard to develop a community theatre in CB 12 near the Dyckman Street area. The company is working with the Parks Department on site.

(9:24pm) Economic Development Committee – Maria Sierra, Chair: Very busy last several months with public meetings at committee level regarding car base renewal applications and liquor license applications and renewals. The committee is looking at ways of streamlining the review process.

Q: Maria Luna: question regarding criteria for liquor license applications especially their proximity to schools, etc.

A: We only have advisory capacity with the State Liquor Authority(SLA). Check with precinct regarding complaints, but we can't regulate only recommend. We are raising these concerns with SLA and have asked them to attend the next meeting. Also trying to get listing from SLA of all licensees in CB 12. There is a serious proliferation. Urging SLA to be responsive to community concerns.

Q: Elouise Whitehurst: question about a specific licensee.

A: Clarified that they did not want a cabaret license, and no license has been granted in that case.

(9:41pm) Housing & Human Services – Beatrice Hall, Chair: Guest at next meeting from HPD to talk about abandonment. Also announced a new feature: housing clinics immediately prior to each meeting. First workshop will lead by representative of Audubon Partnership. Working on getting additional community groups to lead subsequent clinics.

Q: Ron Botelho: How did Committee get representatives from Audubon Partnership?

A: CB12 Chair, who is also Executive Director of Audubon Partnership, suggested she contact one of the Partnership's housing people as a resource, as well as other housing groups in the community. On her own initiative she already had contacted HPD and other agencies in CB 12.

Q: Joyce Holland: Has problem with outreach being focused solely on renters. There are others in the community: property owners, co-op owners, general contractors in housing, etc.

A: We will reach out to these other groups.

(9:48pm) Transportation & Public Safety – Absent – No Report

(9:48pm) Youth & Education – Sandra Wachspress, Chair: Reiterated that next meeting is at Inwood Library. Last meeting featured guest from School District 6; input incorporated into budget priorities. Hopeful regarding CSD 6 continued liaison to CB12. Echoed Mr. Harwitt's concerns regarding funding to youth programs. Award reception for Dyckman Institute /Columbia Scholarship on 11/27, immediately preceding CB12 meeting.

(9:53pm) Land Use – Fredericka Cuenca, Chair: Has been working on budget. Next month beginning zoning review process, starting with a guest from City Planning Department. Other pending issues relate to disposition of soon-to-be-former 33rd precinct facility.

(9:55pm) Assistant Chair's – Fredericka Cuenca, Co-Chair (w/Julio Peguero): This committee deals with CB12 internal management issues and works with the Executive Committee. The committee has been looking at improving community outreach, and also at the budget priorities process.

(9:57pm) Announcements: The Council on Aging is having an "Expo" of all research projects that are ongoing in the community at Columbia University and the New York State Psychiatric on Thursday at the Isabella Recreation Hall. Lunch will be served.

(9:58pm) New Business: Resignation last night of Secretary of Ron Botelho due to recent commitment, having been called to active duty in national guard. The Assistant Secretary is obligated to resign or assume the position of Secretary. She has done the latter. The Chair noted By-laws requirement to have special election and entertained suggestions.

(10:01pm) Roll Call – 28 Present

Jim Berlin: Vacancy was only created 24 hours ago. Suggested we wait till next month for a vote.

Fredericka Cuenca: What are By-laws provisions?

Ron Botelho: By-laws call for either a special election, or election at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

Sandra Wachspress: Suggested referring procedural discussion to Executive Committee.

Maria Luna: Can we take nominations from the floor so that notifications can go out in the next meeting notice?

Elizabeth Lorris Ritter: Clarified that nominations can be taken from the floor at the meeting during which elections are held, as long as nominee is present (in person or by proxy) to accept.

Jim Berlin moved that there be a special election at November meeting; seconded by Ben Mantell; Passed unanimously.

Ron Botelho: Suggested that all elected officers of Board be seated at front of meeting and be presented to the community. Also asked if possible to honor country during meeting with display of the American flag.

Chair: Will discuss first issue at the Executive Committee. DM to follow up with Columbia University regarding a flag in the alumni auditorium.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15pm

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Lorris Ritter
Secretary