



**Community Board 12, Manhattan**  
530 West 166<sup>th</sup> St., 6-A – New York, NY 10032  
Phone (212) 568-8500 Fax (212) 740-8197

**Manhattan Community Board 12**  
**Housing and Human Services Committee**

**Committee Members Present:** Emily Marte (Assistant Chair), Marielle Ali (Chair), Bruce Robertson, Marshall Vanderpool, Ayisha Oglivie, Jay Baez, Michelle Lee, Richard Allman  
**Community Members Present:** Curtis Young (Manhattan Borough Advocate), Anastasia Hannah (Housing Preservation Development), Grace DeFina (HPD), Wayne Benjamin (CB 12), Chris Espinoza (Assemblymember Manny De Los Santos' office), Andrea Shapiro (Met Council NYC), Psiquis Gonzales, Carlos Manzueta, Dr. Gary Altheim, Jamilah S (CM De La Rosa's Office), Tom Okada, Nina, Nick Goldbach

Meeting called to order at on February 2, 2023 at 7:07 PM.

**Welcome and Introductions**

The committee members introduced themselves.

**HPD Presentation**

Grace DeFina (Assistant Commissioner at HPD, Division of Special Enforcement) introduced herself and Anastasia Hannah (Community Coordinator responsible for oversight of AEP buildings in CB 12). Grace gave an overview of the divisions in Enforcement & Neighborhood Services: The Code Enforcement division (borough housing inspectors who respond to 311 complaints), the Emergency Operations division (deals with emergency repairs, like no heat and stop immediate hazard), the division of Special Enforcement (which Grace leads), the Housing Litigation division, and division of Neighborhood Preservation. Grace is the Assistant Commissioner of Special Enforcement—in her role, she oversees the Alternative Enforcement Program (AEP), the Emergency Response unit, the anti-harassment unit (lack of maintenance as harassment), and the 7A program (removes management responsibility from building owners).

**Alternative Enforcement Program (AEP)** is 16 years old program, designed to get at landlords that would patch the repairs but not do the long-term repair needed for the building, e.g. a roof leak. They focus on larger buildings with many violations in last 5 years and large amount of emergency repair spend. Every January 31<sup>st</sup>, owners get notice that their building is put into the program and they have 4 months to get their building discharged by correcting 100% of heat and hot water violations, 100% of their mold C violations, 80% of mold B violations, 80% of vermin and 80% of all other B and C violations. Pay off all charges or enter into an agreement to pay off all charges. If all are met and the building is discharged, the division of Neighborhood Preservation will monitor for a year. For buildings not cleared in 4 months, owner gets a failure

to discharge letter and roof to cellar inspection and HPD tells them what system replacement work needs to be done. Heavy fees encourage compliance with the law, e.g. \$500 per dwelling unit fee imposed if building doesn't get out of the AEP program in 4 months, more after. AEP has housing inspectors, construction project managers, and community coordinators.

Curtis Young is representing Manhattan Borough Advocate's office. The office publishes a worst landlord list, he is looking to listen. His email: cyoung@advocate.nyc.gov.

#### **705 and 709 W 170<sup>th</sup>**

Grace reviewed the two buildings. Both buildings were part of anti-harassment unit in May 2021, performed roof to cellar inspections. In August 2021, litigation was initiated.

Focusing on 705 W 170th, the building was selected for AEP on January 31, 2022. AEP ordered the landlord to point the exterior of the building, AEP believes that leaks and mold are coming from the exterior wall. Consent order in May 2022. In early December, owner agreed to provide automatic fuel drops and agreed to hire supers and a managing agent by Dec 31<sup>st</sup> 2022 and produce a comprehensive scope of work. Currently in housing court seeking contempt for lack of follow-up. \$86k has been billed to owner for repair work done by HPD.

For 709 W 170th, they had comprehensive litigation in August 2021 and order in May of 2022, and now seeking contempt. \$74k has been billing to owner for repair work performed by HPD. It met the criteria for AEP and is now in AEP on Jan 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

Wayne asked if HPD provides property owners with any financial assistance to finance the repairs. Grace mentioned that division of Neighborhood Preservation works with owners on getting loans if the owners are willing to work with agency. Bruce asked how HPD pressures landlords to make the repairs. Grace mentioned that a recent approach is the task force approach, which is working with DOB, the AG office, and other agencies to go after the landlords. Ayisha mentioned that the fees are not pushing the landlord to do repairs and asked about the timeline since it's been about 2 years. Grace mentioned that immediate hazards have been repaired by HPD, and she has seen good outcomes in the past. If tenants have any issues, should notify landlord then report to 311 and be in contact with Anastasia. AEP would be willing to meet with tenants at the building (especially 709) and answer questions.

Emily asked about the timeline to do repairs, Grace mentioned that HPD must wait to give the landlord time to do repairs before litigation. Jay asked whether the super was hired by the end of Dec 2022, as agreed to. Grace said that the amount owed for repairs becomes a lien of the property when it becomes payable. Jay asked at what point would HPD take over and do the pointing and bill the owner? Grace mentioned that with an active landlord they try to compel the work through litigation. Grace mentioned that 7A is reserved for the most egregious cases, and HPD has arrested landlords for being in contempt of court. HPD could do the point work in the spring if no results from litigation.

Ayisha mentioned that the buildings are organized. And spoke to the silos between DOB and HPD when bricks were falling off the building and septic was leaking. She asked for the timeline of when the city must respond. Grace mentioned that AEP works closely with DOB and Department of Health. Michelle asked what to do if she hears of anyone with heating issues. Grace said report to landlords and 311, certain complaints are given priority with the emergency response inspectors and HPD will inspect and complaints can be tracked online.

Grace and Anastasia provided their contact info. Grace DeFina: [Definag@hpd.nyc.gov](mailto:Definag@hpd.nyc.gov) and 212-863-8713. Anastasia Hannah: [hannahah@hpd.nyc.gov](mailto:hannahah@hpd.nyc.gov) and 212-863-8702.

Psi quis Gonzales lives in 709 W 170. She said the landlord came out in the news as the worst landlord in NYC. They put in complaints, and inspectors take pictures and leave and tenants don't hear back from them. Some tenants are in court with the landlord, who lives in California, and the court cases get adjourned. Recently a pipe burst, and super put the pipe out the window instead of fixing it and a resident didn't have water for 3 weeks. Grace mentioned that HPD can bring an inspector to a tenant meeting. Psi quis mentioned that the tenants do Zoom meetings, and Ayisha suggested using space at the new Radio Hotel offered to the community. Anastasia mentioned that she would be coming through the building on Monday to meet tenants, will bring an inspector and contract project manager. Mariel said that Jamila from CM De La Rosa's office can support and join the tenant meeting as well.

### **Met Council NYC**

Emily attended a meeting about the rents being too high and met Andrea Shapiro, the director of programs and advocacy at Met Council, a tenant rights organization. Andrea said two of her organizers are working with 705 and 709. Many New Yorkers are rent burdened. Andrea wants us to pass a law for good cause eviction, to help prevent unregulated tenants being evicted for no reason and huge rent increases for them. Need a statewide voucher program called the housing access voucher program to pay people's rent, especially for people who have difficulty getting regular vouchers. Wants to change rent guidelines board system, rent controlled buildings are currently facing a 5% rent increase which is the highest increase since Bloomberg. Need to reform the system by how the rent guideline board is appointed. Need more social housing in NY that is community controlled, and tenant controlled. Andrea added this link: <https://housingjusticeforall.org/our-platform/our-homes-our-power/> and shared the Tenants' Rights Hotline: Mon 1:30-8pm, Tue 5:30-8, Wed 1:30-8pm, Fri 1:30-5pm 212-979-0611.

Ayisha asked how we can get engaged and support. Andrea said passing a resolution in support for these 5 bills would be great and sharing the link to send support to elected officials and getting on the bus to Albany. Marielle asked if there are workshops or resources for tenants that want to organize. Andrea said they have 3 tenant organizers working in Inwood and Washington Heights, so send info to Andrea.

### **Old business**

#### **Updates on conversation with CM De La Rosa and Shaun Abreu**

Emily and Marielle met with CM De La Rosa is thinking about how to address budget cuts, displacement caused by fires, and infrastructure for legal services. Next month we will meet jointly with the Health and Environmental Committee and address sanitation.

They also met with CM Shaun Abreu and he supports true affordable housing, mentioned free legal services, and wants to pass good cause eviction. Interested in writing legislation for protocols for displacement due to fires. Both offices want to have more touchpoints with us.

### **Committee Priorities**

Marielle is working on a document capturing where the HHS committee's priorities are. Juxtapose it with the City Council priorities. Is there any legislation in City Council that we could support via a resolution?

Marielle wants owners to lead different committee projects. Emily suggested that SMART goals could be added to budget priorities. Marielle suggested having different agencies and community partners come to meetings when available, and elected at our meetings quarterly.

### **Fort Washington Armory Public Forum**

Marielle attended an organizing workshop on re-envisioning how the Kingsbridge Armory in the Bronx can be used for the community. The result is a request for proposals. Over 200 people attended and had small group discussions. We could use a similar process. Some questions: "What would you do with this space?"

Ayisha mentioned that the event was hosted by developers, which raises concerns. She likes that the Fort Washington Armory public forum is coming from the community. Emily suggested we tour the space. Ayisha mentioned that in the past they have done tours of the Armory but weren't able to see everything.

### **Community Meeting on Unaffordable High Rents across Upper Manhattan (Jan 25)**

Emily attended the event. Lots of elected were there, including Senator Jackson and MBPO Levine. A lot of testimony was shared, including stories about issues with out-of-state owners and Airbnb's. New project called Housing Manhattanites from MBPO's office assesses city vacancies (old buildings, parking lots) that could be used for housing. Richard suggested confronting NIMBY's sentiments in the neighborhood. Ayisha mentioned the idea of a community land trust.

### **New business**

Ayisha mentioned that HUD announced over \$116 million to public housing agencies for the family self-sufficiency program. Ayisha talked about reforming the real estate appraisal industry. Ayisha mentioned that someone at 605 W 170<sup>th</sup> street (surname Levin) had pollution concerns from dark smoke blowing in her window.

Meeting adjusted at 9:08PM.