



Community Board 12M

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Katherine Diaz, Chair
Ebenezer Smith, District
Manager

Community Board 12 Manhattan Housing and Human Services Minutes October 6, 2023

Attendance:

In-person: Jay Baez, Rahdiah Barnes, Emily Marte, Richard Allman,
Online: Marielle Ali, Michelle Lee, Indiana Porta, Tanesha Grant

Community Board Members: Wayne Benjamin

1. Call to Order and Welcome and Introductions

Meeting was called to order at 7:07 pm. Committee members introduced themselves.

2. Right to Counsel Coalition

Representative was not present, so the committee skipped this agenda item. In 2015, Community Boards approved a resolution on the right to counsel. The resolution is brought back to Community Boards to reaffirm the right to counsel.

3. Monthly Updates from Elected Representatives on Housing and Human Services

Laurie Tobias-Cohen shared updates from Congressman Adriano Espaillat's office on housing and human services issues, particularly the migrant crisis. The Committee inquired about the impact of the migrant crisis in CB12.

Congressman Espaillat and Congresswoman AOC led a tour of New York City migrant shelters, and the team is working on how to best respond to the crisis. Locally, the district offices are not experiencing a big influx of cases related to the crisis. Laurie agreed to return to the November meeting to provide a more detailed update following requests from the committee. Laurie shared the Congressman's call for additional funds to support the Mayor's position on migrants seeking work authorization

permits. The office has two immigration specialists who can support asylees and constituents to navigate the process.

Committee Member, Marielle, encouraged the committee to think about opportunities to engage on the migrant issue locally with elected officials. Marielle asked if there are particular capital and expense items the committee should consider ahead of its budget ranking on the migrant issue. The committee talked about balancing the needs of recent migrants and asylum seekers with the needs of existing residents whose needs are equally important.

4. Human Services Presentations

Director Rocio Santos from **The Bridge** presented on the organization's "Navigator" program. The organization is over 70 years old and mainly serves the unhoused and people with mental illness and substance use. The Bridge also provides beds for the doused offering over 1,500 beds. The organization serves New Yorkers in Brooklyn and Manhattan. Some of their services include support to unhoused New Yorkers in the subway system and above ground, a mental health clinic with in-patient and out-patient services and more.

The Bridge received funding from the New York State Attorney General's office to provide the Community Navigator program for four areas in New York City, including Washington Heights and Inwood. The organization is meeting with community boards and local organizations to engage with partners. The Bridge is also looking to hire 12 Community Navigators from the selected areas to help serve clients.

The program is person-centered and will support clients experiencing homelessness, mental illness, and/or substance use to navigate city services over the period of 9 to 12 months. For Washington Heights and Inwood, the Bridge is seeking to hire 3 navigators by February. Interested candidates need a high school diploma. The Bridge will provide the necessary training. The goal of the program is to become an initial resource for neighbors seeking care. As the program will only have 3 navigators, the organization seeks support and input from Community Boards to identify the high-need areas within Washington Heights and Inwood.

Committee Member Tanesha shared concerns about insufficient support in her neighborhood for people in transitional housing and asked about The Bridge's potential to reach out.

Committee Member Marielle asked about the program's plans to support clients after the initial period of 9-12 months. In the organization's outreach, how can the program complement existing services? How does The Bridge identify high needs? Rocio (The Bridge) shared that although the program is only 9-12 months, the organization will be in the community for at least three and a half years. The program is small-scale because it

will serve as a pilot in hopes of further expansion if there are positive outcomes. Each navigator will have up to 16 clients at a time. Through their outreach, the organization's outreach, they are identifying areas where the program can fill in the gap. Marielle also encouraged The Bridge to return to the Community Board in a year to provide an update on how the program is running. Rocio agreed and shared that the organization has a data analyst to provide regular updates.

Committee Member, Jay, asked about the organization's goal to move people to different neighborhoods to ensure they can access the services they need. Rocio mentioned that the goal of the program is to meet people where they are and not uproot them from their homes. The organization's mental health clinic will move to Washington Heights in the coming year.

5. FY25 Capital and Expense Budget Priorities

The Committee reviewed and discussed capital and budget expense items based on the last fiscal year, including comments from the NYC Office of Management and Budget. The Committee agreed to follow up with the relevant agencies and OMB on commentary from FY24 requests.

The committee agreed to keep the same items as last year but also added two new expense items: funding for programs on home ownership and workshops for landlords on Local Law 97, and one new capital item: providing funding to construct affordable, accessible housing for people with disabilities. In all, the committee agreed on the following items:

FY25 Expense Items

Rank #	Expense Item
1	Increase funding for free legal representation in housing court and increase the eligibility criteria for receiving services to 300% from 200% of the Federal Poverty Level under the Right to Counsel program.
2	Increase funding for more HPD Housing Code and DOB Building Code Inspectors.
3	Increased funds to food pantries
4	Provide more operational funding focused on expanding staffing for the Homebase Program in CD 12, M and adequate housing to prevent individuals and families at imminent risk for entering the NYC shelter system.
5	Increased funds for programming to inform tenants of their rights
6	Provide ongoing funding to ensure that secure NYCHA building entrances stairwells, and apt doors are self-closing and self-locking.

7	Funding for Programs on home ownership
8	Increase Tenant support specialists specific to CB12 M
9	Increase funding for supportive housing LGBTQ+ Youth
10	Workshops for landlords on Local Law 97

FY25 Capital Items

Rank #	Capital Item
1	Provide funding for the construction of 100% permanent long term affordable housing units (based on the average median income throughout CD12M) to Non-Profits, Community Land Trusts, and Land Banks that are partnered with non-profit developers
2	Provide more housing for at-risk and transitioning individuals and families
3	Additional funding for AEP and PPP programs for preservation and rehabilitation of distressed buildings in CD12,M - immediate priority.
4	Provide funding to construct affordable, accessible housing for people with disabilities
5	Provide funding to construct affordable, accessible housing for seniors
6	Allocate capital funds to support a planning and development initiative for Washington Heights and Inwood whereby vacant city-owned lots and buildings, or lots and buildings purchased or otherwise acquired by the City in Washington Heights and Inwood, are identified and packaged in one or more Requests for Proposals dedicated to scattered-site infill affordable residential development projects for which affordability is defined by the area median income (AMI) of current CD12 residents.
7	Funding for supportive housing (construction) for LGBTQ youth.

6. New Business

7. Old Business

- a. Bowery Residents' Committee (BRC) Men's Shelter Tour

Committee Member, Michelle, is following up with BRC for a tour date.

8. Adjournment

Jay motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Rahdiah. The meeting adjourned at 9:37 pm.