

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 4
September 7, 2011
FULTON AUDITORIUM, 119 9th AVENUE

MEETING MINUTES

AGENDA

Public Session: Christine Berthet
Adoption of Agenda: Corey Johnson
Adoption of Last Month's Minutes: Corey Johnson
Report of the Manhattan Borough President: Sandy Myers
Reports of Local Elected Officials: Various
Report of the District Manager: Robert J. Benfatto, Jr.
Report of the Chair: Corey Johnson
Committee Reports -- Letters & Resolutions
Old Business
New Business
Adjournment

PUBLIC SESSION:

First Vice-Chair Christine Berthet led the public session.

Ashley Curran from the Muhlenberg Branch of the New York Public Library, located at 209 West 23rd Street, announced that hours have been extended. The branch is now open Monday & Wednesday from 11 am-6 pm, Tuesday & Thursday from 11 am-7 pm and Friday & Saturday from 10 am-5 pm.

Irina Ivanova from the Fashion Institute of Technology spoke of upcoming programming at the school.

Phyllis Gonzales related continuing issues with the construction of housing at the northwest corner of West 25th Street and Ninth Avenue. She believes that the conditions of sale have changed and that the builders "were supposed to give current residents help in the end for being allowed to build". Miguel Acevedo noted that there are ongoing discussions between the builders and the elected.

Danya Sherman from Friends of the Highline detailed upcoming programming and events, including the debut screening of the short "All Aboard" as well as showings of the classics "Some Like It Hot" and "Strangers on a Train". Also, future family programs on Wednesday afternoons include "Play with Your Food" Danya also mentioned that High Line co-founders Joshua David and Robert Hammond have a book out October 11th titled "High Line: The Inside Story of New York's Park in the Sky".

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CB4 Chair Corey Johnson explained that there had been a lengthy series of negotiations with the builder regarding the project thru HPD and that the income level is moderate to middle. Corey stated that he will ask the issue to be put on the agenda of the Housing Health and Human Services Committee.

Miguel Acevedo noted that there are ongoing discussions between the builders and the elected.

Sadeqwa Atkinson from the Columbus Branch of the New York Public Library, located at 742 10th Avenue, announced that hours have been extended at that branch as well. Effective immediately, operating hours are Monday & Wednesday from 12-7 pm, Tuesday & Thursday from 10 am-6 pm and Friday and Saturday from 10 am-5 pm.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND THE MINUTES OF THE JULY, 2011 FULL BOARD MEETING:

Upon the conclusion of the public session, CB4 Chair Corey Johnson asked that the night’s agenda be adopted with Item #2 being withdrawn, Items # 3 & 4 being merged and with Item #15 being added. Item #15 is a new business item from C/HKLU. There followed a discussion of exactly why the Item #2 was withdrawn. The letter dealt with the Intrepid property on the southeast corner of the West Side Highway at West 46th St. JD Noland said he hoped the letter was being withdrawn for some transparent reason while Ed Kirkland stated that more background was needed on what the situation is there. Lisa Daglian reported that the Parks and Waterfront Committee had several questions concerning the property while she was co-chair, including who will actually run the proposed operation and who does the land actually belong to? Corey reassured the Board that there will either be an item on the agenda or he will include what transpired in his monthly Report to CB4 The agenda was ultimately adopted with the above changes.

The Board accepted the July 27 minutes as submitted by Burt Lazarin.

REPORT OF MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT SCOTT STRINGER:

Sandy Myers, representing Borough President Scott Stringer, announced that now available online is a Back to School Basics Handbook, which is available in English, Spanish and Chinese. She explained that it’s a guide for parents with tips, resources and information on how to start the year successfully in the New York City public school system.

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REPORTS OF OTHER ELECTEDS:

Congress member Jerold Nadler is preparing to co-sponsor a bill to abolish the federal debt ceiling, according to representative Katie Smith. He believes the debate to raise the ceiling has had an adverse effect on the U.S. economy.

Sarah Myers Zimble related that there has been much concern about the former St. Claire's Hospital site on West 51st St., which is still vacant years later and reportedly home to a growing rat population. Myers Zimble stated that a rat abatement program was taking place. CB4 member Lisa Daglian asked when the remediation will start and also when would the scaffolding be coming down. Myers Zimble responded that the remediation is expected to begin by mid-October. Daglian requested that lights be erected immediately and all debris/garbage be removed.

Dick Gottfried reports, thru Jeffrey Lafrancois, that under pending federal health reform legislation, health insurance plans will be required to offer preventive health services without charging a co-pay or deductible.

Paul Swere, the representative for Linda Rosenthal, relayed various legislation passed in the State Assembly, including those on tax abatements and a requirement that schools inform students of their right not to participate in the dissection of lab animals. Also, Rosenthal has joined with other elected in urging the DOE and SCA to speed up the removal of PCB contaminants from city schools.

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn liaison, Michaela Miller, related that the City Council has intervened in the case involving the BRC, arguing in legal papers that a local law limits the size of homeless shelters for adults to 200 persons. Miller stated that Speaker Quinn's office has been working with both residents and relevant block associations regarding noise complaints and other issues emanating from the rooftop of 233 West 15th Street. Several violations were documented by FDNY and were subsequently corrected.

REPORT OF DISTRICT MANAGER ROBERT J. BENFATTO:

Benfatto announced that the CB4 Quality of Life Committee, which normally meets on the third Tuesday of the month, would instead be meeting on Monday, Sept. 12 this month. The committee will resume its regular meeting schedule in October.

Regarding the World School at 259 10th Ave., Benfatto reports that he attended hearings at the Dept. of City Planning and presented CB4's position. According to Benfatto, DCP Director Amanda Burden is not happy there is (currently) no commercial space on the first floor of the property and doesn't want to find out there's any empty space in the middle of that avenue. CB4 Chair Johnson noted that the developer has agreed to provide scholarships for Chelsea students, provide community facility usage space and to hold job fairs with the emphasis on local hiring.

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REPORT OF MCB 4 CHAIR COREY JOHNSON:

On the topic of the World School, CB4 Chair Johnson noted that through negotiations, the developer has agreed to provide scholarships for Chelsea students, provide community facility usage space and to hold job fairs with the emphasis on local hiring. In answer to a concern from Maarten de Kadt that many non-local hires have already been made, Johnson reiterated what they have agreed to and that the developer will be encouraged to honor their commitment in relation to jobs.

Johnson related that CB2 will be having several committee hearings during the month of September addressing the closure and future of St. Vincent's.

The new Co-Chair of the Landmarks Committee, Johnson announced, will be Damyanti Radheshwar. Outgoing Co-Chair John Lamb, who Johnson stated has been a great member, has resigned from CB4 but will remain a public member of the Landmarks Committee.

Johnson reports that 38 police parking spaces are being eliminated in Hell's Kitchen adjacent to the Studio City site and that the city wants to relocate these spaces into the basement of the affordable housing building. Johnson said that CB4 strenuously objected to this, saying it did not want 38 police cars pulling in and out of a building on a residential block. CB4's position is that these spaces should instead be relocated to the top of the Sanitation garage at 11th Avenue and 24th Street.

In speaking with PS 51 Principal Nancy Sing Bok, Johnson related that she is excited by the school's temporary move to the Upper East Side and that the DOE has been very helpful with the logistics.

COMMITTEE LETTERS AND RESOLUTIONS:

Executive Committee

Presented by Corey Johnson, MCB4

Item 1: Letter to SLA re Flaming Saddles – 793 Ninth Avenue. It is a straight forward transfer and there will be no changes to the method of operation. Approved.

Waterfront & Parks

Item 2: Letter to Intrepid Museum re placement of Space Shuttle Enterprise (WITHDRAWN)

Transportation Planning

Presented by Christine Berthet, Co-Chair Transportation Planning

Item 3: Letter to DOT re W. 29th & 30th Street Bike Lanes. Lisa requested that the word "careless" be removed from line 56. Ed Kirkland offered that unless you limit the number of turns permitted, there will be problems. Maarten de Kadt added that he wants enforcement on the bike riders, because without enforcement, the signs don't mean anything.

Item 4: Letter to DOT re W. 25th Street & Eighth Avenue pedestrian safety and dedicated turning light.

Items 3 & 4 were voted on together. Approved.

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Item 5: Letter to DOT re Taxi Relief Stand at NWC of W. 26th Street & Tenth Avenue. Approved.

Item 6: Letter to DOT/NYPD re installation of painted gridlock box and assignment of traffic enforcement agents. Lisa Daglian would like additional locations added. Approved.

Item 7: Letter to DOT re tour buses. JD Noland is concerned about the three locations in the 50s that are listed. He thinks that with the rezoning of 11th Avenue, the staging of buses in these locations will be a source of frictions and would like to see those proposed locations withdrawn from consideration. Noland He further stated that a bus garage is needed, this should be spelled out to DOT and that street parking should not be looked at as a permanent solution. Berthet responded that this is an attempted solution and that there many buses today idling without legal spaces. Nolan pointed out, with regard to Line 45, that the Mayor's Midtown Citizen's Committee's objectives are not always CB4's and we need to be careful in this regard. Ed Kirkland stated that the problem is not peculiar to Clinton and that Chelsea also suffers from this shortage of bus parking. Approved.

Business Licenses and Permits Committee:

Presented by Lisa Daglian, Co-Chair

Item 10: Letter to SLA re CM-36 LLC, CM-36 Operator LLC and CM-36 Management LLC – 341-343 W. 36th Street

Item 11: Letter to SLA re Don Antonio Restaurant – 309 W. 50th Street

Item 12: Letter to SLA re Porteno LLC – 299 Tenth Avenue (27/28)

Item 13: Letter to SLA re La Nacional – 239 W. 14th Street

Item 14: Letter to SLA re Hot Bread of 58th St. Inc. d/b/a European – 370 W. 58th Street

The above items (Items 10-14) were bundled. Paul Seres noted that Item 10 was just a corporate change of ownership. Walter Mankoff suggested that we use appropriate standard language which conveys what we mean in regard to sound stipulations. Approved.

Item 8: Letter to SLA re W27 Highline Owners LLC d/b/a La Piscine La Piscine, Hotel Americano, Bar Americano and El Privado – 516-518 W. 27th Street

Item 9: Letter to SLA re W27 Highline Owners LLC d/b/a Americano – 516-518 W 27th Street. These two items (Items 8 & 9) were voted on together. Co-Chair Lisa Daglian stated that this establishment was slated to open on 9/1/2011 and has agreed to the stipulations in the above letters, even though the SLA has already approved the license. The applicant has agreed to these stipulations and this information has been forwarded to the appropriate department at SLA so that it may be incorporated into their method of operation. Jay Marcus asked for clarification regarding rooftop hours. Martin Treat requested that we check to be sure that a sound report is submitted as agreed to by the applicant. Approved.

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Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee:
Presented by Gretchen Minneman, Co-Chair

Item 15: Letter to re the Parking Garage at 322 West 44th Street, between Eighth and Ninth Avenues. CB4 Chair Johnson noted that there is yet a corresponding letter. CHKLU Co-Chair Gretchen Minneman explained a letter was sent by CB4 last month asking the operator to comply with stipulations agreed to back in January of 2000. In a subsequent meeting with Central Parking and the West 44th Street Better Block Association, a variety of stipulations were agreed to by Central Parking. A letter outlining the operator's acceptance of these stipulations regarding barriers, plantings, signage, etc. will be composed by District Manager Robert Benfatto. DCP and the elected will be copied on the letter. In addition, Minneman said that CB4 will work with DOT over the mid-block light on West 43rd Street. Approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Larry Roberts