



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

**SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MANHATTAN BOROUGH BOARD**

August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016

***In Attendance:***

***Presiding:*** Matthew Washington, Deputy Borough President for Policy and Budget; Jessica Mates, Chief of Staff; Lucille Songhai, Director of Community Affairs;

***Council Members:*** Cory Epstein (representing Hon. Daniel Garodnick); Sean Fitzpatrick (representing Hon. Helen Rosenthal)

***Community Boards:*** Anthony Notaro, Jr. (CB 1); Terri Cude (representing Tobi Bergman) (CB 2); Jamie Rogers (CB 3); Burt Lazarin (representing Delores Rubin) (CB 4); Eric Stern (representing Vikki Barbero) (CB 5); Rick Eggers (CB 6); Elizabeth Caputo, accompanied by Audrey Isaacs, Susan Schwartz & Polly Spain (CB 7); Jim Clynes (CB 8); Brian Benjamin (CB 10); Diane Collier, accompanied by Marie Winfield (CB 11); Gerard Dengel (representing Shahabuddeen Ally) (CB 12)

***Minutes:*** Morris Chan, Community Liaison

*Agenda for August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Borough Board – Adopted*  
*Minutes for July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016 Borough Board – Adopted*

**Office of Borough President Report**

Deputy Borough President Washington: Thanks to all the hard work from chairs and members of all 12 Community Boards throughout summer events and parades. A special mention goes to Gerard Dengel, who is representing CB 12 today, for active participation at events and parades. Application for FY 2017 Manhattan Community Awards Program is now online, due September 25<sup>th</sup>. Borough President Brewer is also setting aside \$40,000 of the program funds for the “Fresh Taste Manhattan” initiative that will bring food demonstration to seniors.

Chief of Staff Mates: Borough President Brewer will host Women’s Equality Day press conference at City Hall steps on August 26<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 AM. Member of Borough President’s Council of Young Leaders of Manhattan will conduct voter registration on that day as well. Office will hold an event to assess future impacts of driverless car technology in September. A training session for Community Education Council members is also coming up in the fall. Greater coordination, advocacy and nexus between Community Boards and Community Education Councils are the goals.



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Community Affairs Director Songhai: Office held a meeting on Community Board by-laws on August 11<sup>th</sup>. Community Board executives raised a number of issues on the standardized languages. It is understood that each Community Board is different and knows what works best for itself. Office is open to suggestions on best practices. There will be standards for some provisions, such as duties, functions and officers' elections, but there will also be many additions and changes. Office can distribute notes from the meeting and provide updated discussion documents to reflect what has transpired from the meeting. Another meeting to finalize recommendations on Community Board by-laws will take place in the fall. Each Community Board should identify individuals in charge of its by-laws to participate in this process alongside the executive; the process is transparent, with information available to all members. Borough President Brewer had a meeting with Dept. of City Planning and Office of Management and Budget to review statement of district needs and budget priorities process. As borough budget consultations are coming up next month, all community liaisons will receive Office of Management and Budget training on budget priorities submission process; they will be available to assist the Community Boards.

Cude (CB 2): Glad to see some of the changes and the incorporation of City Charter-mandated languages. CB 2 is especially encouraged that "election coordinating" committee, instead of "nominating" committee, is the direction taken on this matter.

Caputo (CB 7): Will there be any standardized protocols on member absences?

Notaro (CB 1): What is the expectation for the Community Boards on evaluating the documents and providing feedback? The development has been generally positive, but some provisions, such as requiring minutes for all committee meetings, seem onerous for Community Boards with their minimal staff and resources.

Community Affairs Director Songhai: Member absences and protocol for removal for cause will be left for each Community Board to handle on its own. Each Community Board should also ensure due process within its protocol for such removals. The by-laws process began in August 2015; meeting has taken place quarterly, with lots of feedbacks. The better the input, the better the final recommendations will be. The ultimate goal of transparency for public interest remains the same. Community Boards all know how to best accommodate these goals.

Eggers (CB 6): Budget process at CB 6 has significant member involvement. CB 6 has a standing committee that meets regularly and follows up on all priorities listed in the statement of district needs.



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Lazarin (CB 4): CB 4 has a standing budget task force led by the Second Vice-Chair.

Community Affairs Director Songhai: Dept. of City Planning has developed a number of tools and best practices. It has also provided information on similarities across districts and best submission protocols. Hope to share information soon.

### **Council Member Reports**

**CM Garodnick:** Construction near Queens-Midtown Tunnel has led to severe traffic backup and excessive honking. Office is working with Dept. of Transportation and Metropolitan Transportation Authority to address the matter. Vanderbilt corridor litigation has been resolved, with the promised transit improvements permitted to proceed. Council Member Garodnick has introduced legislations for “Three Strikes” suspension of taxi driver licenses and for diaper-changing stations in all restrooms.

**CM Rosenthal:** Sean Fitzpatrick is introduced as the representative and expresses thanks for the opportunity to hear voices and concerns from across the borough.

### **Community Board Reports**

**Community Board 1:** CB 1 continues the re-examination of its organizing structure. The current committee setup is decades old and based on geographical areas. Work continues with the executive members. CB 1 participates with Borough President Brewer on the Lower Manhattan Community Resiliency Task Force. Lots of work still lies ahead on design components. CB 1 will remain committed to the process despite frustrations on the speed and the projected deliverables.

**Community Board 2:** CB 2 is awaiting Borough President’s recommendations, submitted yesterday, on the Pier 40/St. Johns Terminal development application. The proposal has significant impact to the area and to Hudson River Park Trust. CB 2 will also soon see impacts from NYU 2031 plan. Issues such as the proliferation of drinking establishments, squeeze on small businesses, transportation needs and overall infrastructure needs remain.

Deputy Borough President Washington: Borough President Brewer recommended conditional denial on the application for development rights cap, massing and other grounds. The 25-page recommendations will go out to CB 2 today.

**Community Board 3:** CB 3 adopted its FY 2018 statement of district needs at the general board meeting on July 26<sup>th</sup>; document is available on CB 3 website. CB 3



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spoke with Dept. of City Planning on waterfront development in Two Bridges and learned that agency does not incline to require Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) process for the area; only environmental impact study is applicable.

**Community Board 4:** CB 4 general board meeting for July and August took place on July 27<sup>th</sup> at the High Line by West 15<sup>th</sup> Street. The meeting was in “participatory budgeting” style, with the public taking part in the discussion of district needs. Many of the needs proposed by the general public are already items that will become part of FY 2018 statement of district needs and budget requests. CB 4 is not pleased with the site selection and decision-making process for the proposed new Port Authority Bus Terminal; the plan will involve demolition of two blocks west of Ninth Avenue that are amongst the last remaining parts of the southern portion of Hell’s Kitchen. CB 4 has communicated its concerns at a meeting with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Elected officials are increasingly finding these meetings not a viable way to proceed and to request a better decision, especially as site selection pre-emptively eliminated any option to site the new terminal in New Jersey. CB 4 continues to see proliferation of demolitions. Not all of them are illegal, but many are suspicious, and it shows how agencies lack overall coordination and vision. CB 4 is waiting for a meeting, arranged by Mayor’s Community Affairs Unit and Council Member Johnson, with Dept. of Buildings and Dept. of City Planning

**Community Board 5:** In December 2013, CB 5 adopted a resolution requesting that Dept. of Transportation conduct a feasibility study for the re-design of Fifth Avenue and Sixth Avenue. Over two years later, CB 5 has yet to hear a response or see any improvements, save for a parking-protected bike lane on Sixth Avenue south of West 34<sup>th</sup> Street. Is this item not on agency priority at all? Is it not feasible? Why is it left unaddressed given the number of collisions and the overall inefficient traffic flow on these two avenues? CB 5 welcomes any help on this end and will work with CB 2 and CB 4 for options. CB 5 continues to work with Borough President Brewer and City agencies to incorporate steering committee recommendations, complete with transit and public realm improvements, into East Midtown planning process. Developer has applied for Zoning Resolution §74-711 special permit at the Adorama site, located in Lady’s Mile Historic District, to increase height and setback to allow for an extra 20,000 ft<sup>2</sup> of floor area. CB 5 has argued that Mandatory Inclusionary Housing should apply. Borough President Brewer has invoked “Triple No” power to force City Council review. Something with discretionary changes to add residential floor area should be made to include affordable housing.

Deputy Borough President Washington: “Triple No” is a scenario within the ULURP process, in which Borough President files a second objection to the City Council for a



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City Planning Commission-approved application after both Community Board and Borough President register their disapprovals. It serves to mandate the City Council to review the application. Borough President Brewer feels strongly that Mandatory Inclusionary Housing should apply here because the applicant seeks to increase in the residential floor area. Hope that City Council will also support this contention.

**Community Board 6:** Thanks to Borough President Brewer and staff for mapping construction project locations within the district. CB 6 has seen projects permitted in very close proximity of each other. It hopes to receive a Fund for the City of New York community planning fellow to take up a demonstration project on this matter. CB 6 established a Communications and Technology working group last month. It is a collaborative effort between members and staff and is responsible for examining data use and exploring ways to generate more studies and reports. CB 6 will have to move out of United Nations Plaza; the building has been sold and will undergo conversion. District manager is currently seeking to move CB 6 office to a temporary space in the same building, pending arrangements to move to its new home on Third Avenue between East 39<sup>th</sup> Street and East 40<sup>th</sup> Street, likely in March 2017. CB 6 is taking part in the East Midtown planning process and hopes that steering committee goals will be met. Where does Community Board fit within the government? Is it an agency or an adjunct of the Borough President? City agencies are bound to comply with lots of rules and regulations, all too cumbersome for a Community Board staff of two to comply. Many deadlines, such as the 30-day review period, are almost impossible for Community Board to meet. City may need to look into changes to agency rules, legislative actions or even City Charter revision to address the issue.

**Community Board 7:** CB 7 had the meeting on the affordable housing component of Riverside Center last night; Mayor de Blasio has also recently announced the intent to advance the work on the proposed school. The meeting was productive and did manage to secure vital information, as developer promised adequate affordable housing units and committed to building no “poor door” entrances. CB 7 continues to review the impact and the effects of the Amsterdam Avenue bike lane. CB 7 will have a major public meeting on the proposed American Museum of Natural History expansion in early fall. The expansion will only lead to slight reduction in public parkland. CB 7 has jurisdiction on the landmarks component only and will also be tasked to review the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). How should CB 7 communicate to the public on this matter, especially as the proposal has become intensely charged for both supporters and opponents? An increasing number of religious congregations are selling houses of worship to developers for residential towers in exchange for a ground-floor church. A citywide plan, whether via a trust or other models, will be needed; houses or worship are not easily re-used.



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Deputy Borough President Washington: Office will explore this issue in-depth. A number of non-religious community-based non-profits are also doing the same.

**Community Board 8:** Work on East 81<sup>st</sup> Street pedestrian bridge, which provides access to East River across the FDR Drive, has stalled for some time. Dept. of Design and Construction, Dept. of Parks and Recreation and Dept. of Transportation are all unsure which agency has jurisdiction over which aspects of the matter. CB 8 will take up the issue at the committee level and will host a public forum to discuss the concern on September 14<sup>th</sup> at the New York Blood Center at 6:30 PM.

**Community Board 10:** Parking meters are popping up all over CB 10, with very little notice and no public input at all. What is the role of “community input” on this matter? What role does Community Board, block associations, tenants/residents and area businesses play here? It seems that Dept. of Transportation has been implementing them unilaterally, without much of input from either CB 10 or Council Member Dickens, save for a notice for upcoming implementation one week prior. CB 10 will discuss the matter at the committee level and hopes to have either a public town hall or a meeting with the agency. CB 10 is preparing a “state of CB 10” plan per City Charter §197(a) and hopes to complete the work by the end of 2016. CB 10 is also seeing a large number of churches cashing out on their property or cutting deal with developer in exchange for new sanctuary under a tower. Many churches are experiencing hardship and unable to pay bills.

**Community Board 11:** CB 11 met in July to respond to Lexington Gardens ULURP application, which plans to add 350 new apartments. The big concern for CB 11 is the fate of the existing units. Developer heard from the community the desire for local hiring and has pledge to extend affordability for existing units by another 30 years. CB 11 would like to see local organizations involved in the process, pending Conflict of Interest Board determination on what is permissible. CB 11 adopted the plan after the application was amended to provide affordable units for those at 20%, 30% and 50% area median income (AMI). CB 11 is seeking a part-time community assistant. To echo CB 7, churches in East Harlem are also giving away properties to developers in exchange for a ground-floor sanctuary; many congregations find themselves later on without sufficient funds to build out the space.

**Community Board 12:** CB 12 celebrated Dominican Day Parade with Borough President Brewer. Economic Development Corp. held a public meeting at Alianza Dominicana in June on the proposal to re-zone area to the east of 1 Train. Council Member Rodriguez and Borough President Brewer worked out an arrangement to have 50% affordable housing, with financing to be worked out. A lot of CB 12



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members feel that they do not understand the deal and would like to re-consider, despite their support for affordable housing. Council Member Rodriguez held a press conference at Sherman Plaza and pledged to focus on the larger re-zoning.

Collier (CB 11): Is it that City Council voted down Broadway-Sherman re-zoning? Where are the subsidies that will allow affordability at a lower AMI level? AMI is a critical component of affordable housing financing, but it is a Federal figure solely at the discretion of U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development. It begs the question how the community can lobby and advocate before the Federal agency.

Dengel (CB 12): All are working hard to make the deal happen. The question is now about permanent affordability, and CB 12 is unsure what is next.

Caputo (CB 7): Is there any other similar project, elsewhere outside CB 7?

Stern (CB 5): As illustrated by the Adorama site application, legal application of the affordable housing requirements in a special district has been an issue.

Benjamin (CB 10): AMI level is essentially an executive decision, effective by the promulgation of the President. Any change requires similar promulgation. There has been no word as to whether any of the pledged 200,000 affordable units will reach the very low-income. Program naturally skews in favor of the middle-income unless Community Boards join forces to push for the low-income. What is the willingness of the City in paying for these programs without §421(a)?

Deputy Borough President Washington: The talk was to have 20% permanently affordable units and 30% affordable for 30 years, all privately owned. Community also wants ground-floor retail at the site. No one is exactly sure if there is any other similar application out there. Additional subsidies are needed to reach the extreme low-income; it often means a mix of income levels to achieve an average income band in compliance with the desired AMI level. There are lots of comments on how community may best direct its advocacy.

Chief of Staff Mates: Broadway-Sherman may come back at a later time. The site allows as-of-right building with no affordable housing. There has been lots of controversy and misinformation in the process. On AMI, one must note figures change if AMI goes up or down, even as the percentage stays the same.

*Borough Board adjourned without hearing a scheduled presentation because the presenter was ill and unable to attend.*