



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

**SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MANHATTAN BOROUGH BOARD**

November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016

***In Attendance:***

***Presiding:*** Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President; Aldrin Bonilla, Deputy Borough President for Community Affairs and Constituent Services; Matthew Washington, Deputy Borough President for Budget and Policy; Jessica Mates, Chief of Staff; Lucille Songhai, Director of Community Affairs; Rosalba Rodriguez, Deputy Director of Northern Manhattan Office; Lesly Almanzar, Community Liaison; Diana Howard, Community Liaison; Drew Lombardi, Community Liaison; Yissely Ortiz, Community Liaison

***Council Members:*** Paul Leonard (representing Hon. Margaret Chin); Carlina Rivera (representing Hon. Rosie Mendez); Cory Epstein (representing Hon. Daniel Garodnick); Jay Ko (representing Hon. Mark Levine); Stephanie Arroyo (representing Spkr. Melissa Mark-Viverito)

***Community Boards:*** Anthony Notaro, Jr. (CB 1); Tobi Bergman (CB 2); Jamie Rogers (CB 3); Delores Rubin (CB 4); Vikki Barbero (CB 5); Rick Eggers (CB 6); Roberta Semer (CB 7); Jim Clynes (CB 8); Padmore John, accompanied by Ted Kovaleff (CB 9); Brian Benjamin (CB 10); Diane Collier, accompanied by Marie Winfield (CB 11); Shahabuddeen Ally (CB 12)

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

*Agenda for November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Borough Board – Adopted*  
*Minutes for October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Borough Board – Adopted*

**Presentation: Community Nexus in Filming Operations (MOME)**

*Presenter: Julie Menin, Commissioner*

Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME) is the City agency supporting all film, TV and theater operations. As of this year, its oversight has expanded to music, digital media content, advertising and the use of City real estate for media functions. It functions as the go-to agency for all matters related to the creative industry. The office consists of two arms: 1) Mayor's Office of Film, TV and Broadcasting (MOFTB), created in 1965 as the one-stop permitting office for all filming operations using City streets, sidewalks and parks; and 2) NYC Media, the largest municipal public media nationwide. NYC Media runs a number of public service channels, the most well-



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known of which is Channel 25, which was formerly under Dept. of Education but saw its oversight moved to this office under Mayor Bloomberg. Agency is also now engaged in re-branding and revamping of City-owned media channels.

Film and TV operations represent a \$9 billion industry employing over 130,000. In 2015, 52 serial TV shows and 335 films were shot in New York City. Residential communities, however, have long had concerns that filming operations disrupt people's daily life. Even as filming leads to only about 100 out of over 1 million 311 complaints each year, it is still known to have quality-of-life impacts, to the point that Community Boards have even adopted resolutions requesting a moratorium on filming in the district. The agency now maintains a "hiatus list" of City blocks for which it will not issue permits. The block placed on the list normally remains on the list for six months, but factors such as construction may result in extended hiatus upon review after the six-month period expires.

In line with City objectives, agency is focusing on a number of inclusion-oriented initiatives. It has started five women's initiatives specifically aiming at landing women into senior roles in the media and entertainment industry. It has set up a competition grant that will award \$5 million to winning film and theater projects by, for or about women. It has launched a block of programming on NYC Live focusing on women and their perspectives. It is sponsoring a script-writing contest that will air two women-written TV shows on Channel 25. It is working on a report analyzing gender equity amongst film directors.

The office is also sponsoring "Made in NY" Writers Room, a one-on-one mentorship program pairing writers of diverse backgrounds with experienced showrunners in the industry. The program accepted 500 applications in its first year; winners will receive a six-month fellowship in New York City working with established writers and receive in-progress feedback. In response to criticisms related to the lack of diversity in the Academy Awards, the office launched #NominateNYC, a campaign allowing established professionals to nominate people of diverse backgrounds, be it themselves or others, to be considered for membership in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Over 50% of New York City residents rely on community and ethnic media as their main source of news. Many of these media outlets have long struggled with shortage in revenue and talent. With CUNY Journalism School, this office established a \$1 million grant program to support community and ethnic journalists. Funding will provide new media-related training for 1,200 professionals and help bringing their media outlets to remain competitive in the digital and social media age.



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The office has also launched NYC Film Green, a groundbreaking initiative aiming at reducing waste, encouraging recycling and promoting energy conservation. New York City is seeking to set a national trend for sustainable filming.

As it embarks onto the next half century, Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment remains committed to working with New York City and its people. It continues to engage entertainment luminaries to serve as "ambassadors" to the community. It has sponsored free tickets for public housing residents to go to Broadway shows and has staged Broadway shows in low-income or Outer Borough neighborhoods. The agency will continue with a commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Rubin (CB 4): Block associations in CB 4 have reported over-saturation of filming on their blocks. Many crews bring in fume-belching diesel trucks and trailers onto the set. Is there any enforcement or encouragement to nudge crews to engage in eco-friendly practices? Has the agency spoken discussed the initiative encouraging crews to patronize local businesses with industry staging and logistics companies? These companies are now finding the initiative eating into their bottom line.

Menin (MOME): Agency does not have the power to deny a permit for not willing to engage in eco-friendly practices. NYC Film Green has seen some positive results, such as *Madam Secretary*, which took part in the initiative. For *Money Monster*, Sony Motion Pictures hired hotel rooms for its operations and provided lunch money in lieu of catering. It has led to over \$300,000 spent in Financial District businesses. Agency will continue to encourage film crews to patronize local businesses.

Notaro (CB 1): Is there any way to see a report on local impact of filming? Can the office investigate cases of parking spot use for "interior" film shoots?

Menin (MOME): It is not always possible to quantify. A total of 52% of filming in the city takes place in Manhattan. Agency has doubled the number of permits issued to Bronx locations and has a list of suitable Outer Boroughs locations on its website. Please let the office know of all incidents of unauthorized parking spot use.

John (CB 9): West Harlem is seeing filming operations, as it witnessed a lot of these in one area of the district a month or two ago. CB 9 has been advocating having film crews shooting in front of its local library to donate to the library. Is there any mechanism to direct funding from filming operations to community non-profits?

Menin (MOME): Agency is seeking to put a stop of the "speaking for the community" phenomenon. It has come to light that organizations, some of which dubious, engage



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in this practice to solicit under-the-table payments, and film crews often pay up to get the organization out of the way before film shooting. The goal is to get all talks on community benefits directed to and through the Community Board.

Rogers (CB 3): Is there any criteria to land a block on the “hiatus list”? Is there any policy on areas of saturation? Filming taking place in businesses also has its own interesting dynamics, but negotiation for such arrangement is completely random. Can there be a data base of small businesses interested in hosting film shoots?

Menin (MOME): Agency determines hiatus eligibility based on complaints received, plus area construction and street closure activity level. It re-evaluates hiatus status eligibility every six months. Please reach out to the office for any issues or concerns, as agency seeks to strike a balance between film crews and communities.

Kovaleff (CB 9): First and foremost, please look at what filming takes away from the people in the community, especially parking spots. Filming permit may represent a way to stimulate the use of local resources, but CB 9 is now seeing so many film crews operating in the district that it has practically become a stage set. Film crews have exhibited disrespectful behavior toward the people in this community. Local residents have to call the police precinct to gain access to their homes. Pedestrian protection is required for all permits encroaching on sidewalk access.

Bergman (CB 2): Level of discontent as shown by 311 complaints does not paint an accurate picture at all. People do not call 311 if they do not believe that they will receive visible response. It is not just about a “hiatus list”—agency needs to work with location scouts. For example, in Central Park, much of the filming seems to take place at small number of locations, but the film itself ended up blurring it out. Crews choose the location because it has worked in the past, not because it is needed. Can the hiatus regime operate more like a “dimmer switch” and not as an on-off switch, with arrangements such as one-month moratorium, permit cap or days-of-the-week restrictions? This measure will help the “power streets” with over-saturation of filming to recover. Businesses pay astronomical rent to be there, and they cannot afford losing revenue, and they now feel discouraged from complaining.

Menin (MOME): Agency does revoke permits for violations. Please report all such instances. The six-month length of a hiatus is only an average, not hard and fast. Initiatives are there to assist location scouts to look into the Bronx and Staten Island, but productions teams often stick with the tried-and-true because it is the path of least resistance and that it does not put their jobs in jeopardy.



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Borough President Brewer: Block associations make deals with production teams. Organizations along Columbus Avenue have made all sorts of demands, including tree planting. They want the money from these deals. Homeowners on the block want the money too. Even as directing it to and through the Community Board makes sense, can there be guarantees for the money to go into a particular block only? Of course government cannot be involved in such types of actions, but people do want money for their block to stay on their block.

Menin (MOME): Community Boards are City agencies too and cannot engage in such actions either. This aspect of community benefits from film crews traditionally has no “sunshine” at all. People go around “speaking for the community” in order to engage in these deals. Agency wants all gifts and donations to non-profits in a fully transparent manner, with Community Board input and attentive to priorities.

Semer (CB 7): People do wake up to catering trailers setting up on their block, even in front of churches and synagogues and even on Sunday or Shabbat. How could it be that the crew is permitted to set up in front of a synagogue on Saturday morning, or in front of a school during arrival or dismissal?

Menin (MOME): Assembly Member O’Donnell has recently spoken about this issue. Office will push for more sensitivity in permitting.

Collier (CB 11): East Harlem would like to see more production in the neighborhood, but it now finds itself totally in the blank when film crews show up. Is there any way the Community Board can receive a notice for filming operations ahead of time? The industry is notoriously lacking in diversity and rarely wishes to profile communities like East Harlem. Film crews come neither engaging the people not patronizing local businesses. They come to the community completely tight-lipped and often do not even have a spokesperson or a point on contact to field complaints. On a separate note, New York City is big on music videos. Does the agency oversee them?

Arroyo (Spkr. Mark-Viverito): Council Members already receive such notices.

Ally (CB 12): Community Board chairs would like to receive notifications as well.

Menin (MOME): Agency sends out notices to elected officials and the Community Board for film shoots involving street and parking spot use. City does not regulate film shooting inside private properties. It can set up meeting with production staff, though. Production staff may be sitting in the office in Los Angeles and deciding on the location without ever visiting it. Office now has an entire team dedicated to



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promoting alternative locations, meeting with scouts and conducting walks. Agency continues to encourage local business patronage. It does regulate music videos. Ally (CB 12): What are the best practices related to notifications? A production is never a subtle event. People see the impact and end up feeling that productions are going on all the time, even as if they are infrequent in reality. It is a public relations issue. Film crews need to do their part to reduce the animus. Community Boards can be the logical starting point for suggestion and for benefits discussions.

Menin (MOME): It is not about suggestions, but about input from the community with full sunshine. City will conduct five public service announcement campaigns to speak about filming-related benefits for small businesses and attempting to get the message across. As it is now also responsible for music videos and commercials, it now has jurisdiction over fields and professions employing 385,000 people, a number greater than the Wall Street, which now employs 350,000.

Benjamin (CB 10): Block associations fight to negotiate a deal for the organizations and for the communities they represent. They need to be part of conversations and changes from the ground up and from the get go. Lots of the unauthorized film shoots are also taking place. Something has to be done.

Menin (MOME): Any film shoot with more than one person with camera requires a permit. Unauthorized filming often takes place with equipment and people simply descending onto a location and shoot by running the gamut with the City. Agency works closely with NYPD Movie/TV Unit, a 14-officer operation headed by a police lieutenant, to oversee complex productions. The unit makes this agency the only municipal film office nationwide with full regulatory and enforcement powers.

Rubin (CB 4): Can block associations have their needs “piggyback” on Community Board needs-requests process? The process can incorporate these needs and match them with funding obtained through community benefits. Community Boards all identify district needs each year and can be helpful to this agency.

Deputy Borough President Bonilla: How many of the 385,000 creative industry jobs are union jobs? Many of these are not job opening but “legacy” positions not open to minorities and women. Do the initiatives have any effect?

Menin (MOME): Agency has the “Made in NY” production assistant program, a free, five-week course with placement assistance. City hopes that this program will be a step in the right direction away from the legacy system. Effort to engage community groups, civic organizations and workforce development is ongoing.



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**Office of Borough President Report**

Borough President Brewer: Office will hold four discussion sessions on how to apply for Manhattan Capital Grants Program (MCGP) funding. Everyone with concerns over how to obtain funding should be directed to the session and to the application. This office has worked hard to secure Federal and State funding and will look at Community Board priorities in its grant determination. Schools all seem to need so much money; all of them have a long wish list. Information flyers will be available for distribution. State of the Borough event will be on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Office will have an ongoing focus on national issues. Manhattan elected officials will meet in December to discuss borough needs—health, education, entitlement benefits—vis-à-vis the new administration. How will all work together in furtherance of the interest of Manhattan? What will be the situations to address? All will watch the Federal situations closely. All five borough presidents will meet for lunch tomorrow in the Bronx. Northern Manhattan Office continues to hold “Access Manhattan” forums; please let the office know of topics to be included in the future.

Deputy Borough President Bonilla: Community Board Leadership Development Series continue; over 40 people attended the session on parliamentary procedure. Community Board application for 2017 will go live tomorrow or Monday. Please remind everyone interested to apply. Office has spoken with all chairs and district managers on targeted membership areas and hopes that the process will lead to a cohort of high-caliber members.

Community Affairs Director Songhai: Please remind this office as soon as possible if a vacancy arises or if a member does not plan to seek another term.

**Community Board Reports**

**Community Board 1:** Lower Manhattan School Overcrowding Task Force will meet this afternoon. The next Lower Manhattan Community Resiliency meeting will be in early December. Financial District is a neighborhood with a 17<sup>th</sup> Century layout; with the recent spate of deliberate development due to residential condominium conversions, trash accumulation, traffic gridlock and congestion on the sidewalks are now the norm. CB 1 continues to consider ideas for the “smart street” idea for this area in response to pressures from residents and businesses. CB 1 is excited to see [www.data2go.nyc](http://www.data2go.nyc) up live and relieved that there will be no new street fair rules.

**Community Board 2:** Borough Board has been a wonderful occasion for all the Community Board chairs to hear reports and learn about what other chairs are



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doing. CB 2 will elect a new chair at its general board meeting this evening. One also hopes that reports are concise and illustrative of major happenings in the district.

**Community Board 3:** CB 3 Land Use, Zoning, Public and Private Housing committee held a meeting on the proposed regulatory changes for housing development fund corporations (HDFCs). The district has over 3,000 housing units under the HDFC program. Meeting was well attended; CB 3 will continue to monitor closely.

**Community Board 4:** Elected officials sent another letter on the re-design of the Port Authority Bus Terminal. A community planning and envisioning meeting will take place on December 6<sup>th</sup> to hear users' concerns and neighborhood thoughts. Port Authority of New York and New Jersey owns a lot of properties, any of which may be a suitable "vehicle" for the terminal project. Public hearing on Moynihan Station took place November 2<sup>nd</sup>; only four people spoke despite that the issue has major impact to the community. City is placing the homeless into affordable housing units created by the §421(a) tax abatement. Is there any support services for them? Dept. of Housing, Preservation and Development is insisting that the individuals placed via this program do not need supportive services. The move may end up "hiding" the homeless in these units until funding runs out. Many who are placed in permanent housing return to homelessness once they are responsible for the full "affordable" housing rent bill. Conversation on the subject matter is still needed.

**Community Board 5:** CB 5 worked on three testimonies in the past two months. It testified on the street fair rules. District has over 60 single-block and street festivals every year. CB 5 thinks that local vendor rule and Community Board-level festival cap are at least good ideas even if some may disagree with these two proposals in the current form. CB 5 also testified on the street vendor legislative package and stated that business improvement districts (BIDs) are very concerned. CB 5 also testified in support of Governor Cuomo and the Economic Development Corp. on the Moynihan Station project. In 2013, CB 5 recommended, and City issued, certificate of occupancy for Madison Square Garden for 10 years. The idea of moving the arena elsewhere is worth a focused re-visit. CB 5 also hopes to re-examine the feasibility of commercial and residential use for the Farley Post Office annex. CB 5 supports the permanent closing of West 33<sup>rd</sup> Street from Seventh Avenue to Eighth Avenue. CB 5 is concerned with the spillover effect of Port Authority Bus Terminal project and is coming up with some in conjunction with CB 4. Security impact in Midtown related to the Trump Tower is also a concern.

**Community Board 6:** CB 6 has concerns similar to CB 5 on street fair rules, as home to a large number of single-block festivals, and is also relieved that City rescinded



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the proposal. CB 6 started a street vendor task force to find out where vendors are and how they related to the area BIDs. East Midtown re-zoning is moving forward, with certification likely in early December, and CB 6 feels that this timeline inhibits a full public input and community review process. CB 6 hopes that the City can move the certification to January. Dept. of City Planning will likely certify East Side Coastal Resiliency proposal in February 2017; CB 6 remains concerned that the project will require additional Federal funding at a time in which continued Federal support is uncertain. Queens-Midtown Tunnel construction has led to extreme congestion and noise in the area. It is vital work to repair Hurricane Sandy damages, but weekend one-tube closures have led to gridlock, honking and even fights. Community is now at a saturation point and feels that the chaos will affect future projects. Can all the agencies and private constructions coordinate in advance? CB 6 thanks the staff of Borough President Brewer for construction project database and mapping overlays.

Epstein (CM Garodnick): Elected officials sent a joint letter on Queens-Midtown Tunnel construction. It is also a safety issue, as there was a hit-and-run in the area two weeks ago. The letter called for traffic safety agents on Second Avenue from East 34<sup>th</sup> Street to East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street during one-tube closures at all hours.

**Community Board 7:** CB 7 manages its street fairs by cutting down on the event length and number of blocks occupied. It shares similar concerns over street vendor legislation package. State, not the City, maintains vehicular accident and incident data; community has no way of knowing how many crashes happened in the district at all. CB 7 is also focused on HDFC issue, specifically on its tax credit implications. CB 7 has concerns on special Section 8 voucher for public housing; rental assistance demonstration (RAD) hearing is coming up soon.

**Community Board 8:** CB 8 has seen proliferation of LinkNYC consoles on Third Avenue, sometimes two in a block. It is even blocking access to supermarkets. CB 8 adopted resolution requesting that LinkNYC consult with the local Community Board before program rollout in the district.

**Community Board 9:** Ideas and thoughts on HDFC regulatory arrangement should bear in mind the totality of circumstances. CB 9 held forums on the issue. It is also helping individual owners facing foreclosure. Dept. of Housing, Preservation and Development continues to move for foreclosure and third-party transfer despite all efforts by elected officials to intervene. It is time to have Community Board housing committees to get together and speak with each other. Teachers College at Columbia School is currently in co-location and running out of space; there is apparently no immediate solution to the problem. CB 9 will hold senior housing crisis forum at



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NYPD George Bruce Library on December 6<sup>th</sup> at 11:15 AM. Holiday lighting on 125<sup>th</sup> Street corridor will take place today at 4:00 PM; the corridor will feature the only motion-sensor “green” holiday tree in the nation this year.

**Community Board 10:** CB 10 will look into Community Board positions on both rental and ownership affordable housing. CB 10 continues to host many forums and has also taped an episode of “Represent NYC” show. An application for extreme low-income (ELI) program eligibility is under review at CB 10; community consistently receives complaints that the “affordable” units are not affordable for seniors and people with disabilities. ELI is aimed at people earning 30% area medium income (AMI), but AMI keeps going up and is now at \$90,000 for a four-person household. CB 10 adopted resolution on this application after a contentious 15-13 vote. People are now saying the affordability is not happening. Developer smugness, application timing and concerns over many generic issues are all making the situation ever more difficult. More forums and conversations are needed.

Barbero (CB 5): Community Board plays an advisory role only. CB 5 tries very hard not to have split votes. A Community Board has to reach a consensus favored by a large majority in order to force agencies to treat its recommendations seriously.

Benjamin (CB 10): It is also about all the anger that has been bubbling under the recent social and political climate. There will be implications.

**Community Board 11:** Dept. of City Planning will present its East Harlem re-zoning proposal at the committee level tonight. CB 11 expects a large turnout and questions in relation to the target AMI level. It is time to ask how AMI is calculated. The project is on an accelerated schedule, with scoping session on December 15<sup>th</sup> and City certification set for April 2017. CB 11 is asking the project steering committee to publish regular newsletters to inform the community on the issue. CB 11 is excited to see schools in Community School District 4 receiving iPad and Wi-Fi for school use for free; CB 11 was also in attendance at the program launch event at PS 96 Joseph Lanzetta School. CB 11 is now asking committee chairs to submit written comments for items requiring Community Board input, as most items for comment have a window of only 30 days, a schedule impossible for Community Board to meet. CB 11 was in support of Federal HOME Investment Partnerships program funds for rental assistance use in FY 2016, temporary accommodations for victims of domestic violence and for undocumented immigrants are ineligible.

**Community Board 12:** George Washington Bridge rehabilitation has dragged on for eight years. CB 12 recently learned that it will be delayed for another year and will



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host a forum on the progress of this project in December. CB 12 submitted its FY 2018 budget priorities; affordable housing comes out at the top of the list once again. The ever-rising AMI represents a true crash course for many advocates and community members in Washington Heights and Inwood. CB 12 held a workers' rights forum to educate both workers and employers. Feedbacks from the event show that information is spot on, and CB 12 hopes to host additional such events in the future. Community conversations on borough-wide issues are also needed. Thanks to Borough President Brewer and the staff at the Northern Manhattan Office for all the work to assist CB 12 constituents. Community Boards are now finding that constituents with nowhere to go to plead their cases are increasingly seeking help from the Community Board.

Rubin (CB 4): It is a question on how to use the Northern Manhattan Office, not as a place to channel anger but as a productive resource.

Ally (CB 12): CB 12 does not provide services or administer programs on its own. It hosts forums on various community concerns to help "match" constituents seeking help with organizations offering help. CB 12 members and staff take notes during such events and help constituents learn about resources available.

*Borough Board adjourned.*