



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

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MANHATTAN BOROUGH BOARD

September 15th, 2016

In Attendance:

Presiding: Aldrin Bonilla, Deputy Borough President for Community Affairs and Constituent Services; Jessica Mates, Chief of Staff; Adele Bartlett, Deputy General Counsel; Lucille Songhai, Director of Community Affairs; Athena Moore, Director of Northern Manhattan Office; Hally Chu, Policy Analyst; Diana Howard, Community Liaison; Drew Lombardi, Community Liaison; Yissely Ortiz, Community Liaison

Council Members: Vincent Fang (representing Hon. Margaret Chin); Cory Epstein (representing Hon. Daniel Garodnick); Paul Westrick (representing Hon. Ben Kallos); Stephanie Arroyo (representing Spkr. Melissa Mark-Viverito)

Community Boards: Anthony Notaro, Jr. (CB 1); Tobi Bergman (CB 2); Jamie Rogers, accompanied by Susan Stetzer (CB 3); Jesse Bodine (representing Delores Rubin) (CB 4); Wally Rubin (representing Vikki Barbero) (CB 5); Rick Eggers (CB 6); Elizabeth Caputo, accompanied by Mel Wymore (CB 7); Brian Benjamin (CB 10); Debbie Quiñones & Marie Winfield (representing Diane Collier) (CB 11); Shahabuddeen Ally (CB 12)

Minutes: Morris Chan, Community Liaison

Agenda for September 15th, 2016 Borough Board – Adopted
Minutes for August 18th, 2016 Borough Board – Adopted

Presentation: Needs-Requests Process: Resources and Improvements (DCP)

Presenter: Sarah Goldwyn, Director, Planning Coordination

Dept. of City Planning implemented the revamped online submission process for statement of district needs and budget requests starting with the FY 2017 budget cycle. The streamlined online submission form provides City agencies a clean and accessible format for all information. With the FY 2018 budget process underway, all Community Boards are now onto the second year of online submission. Dept. of City Planning has received input and feedbacks from the Community Boards and is committed to continued improvements to make the form even more useful.

Looking from a higher-level view on how information is used, Dept. of City Planning has now compiled 1) goals and accomplishments from the first year; 2) snapshots of



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findings from Community Boards; 3) planned improvements for FY 2018. The information gathered illustrates a broad overview for what city neighborhoods are requesting and what each community sees as its priorities.

Needs-requests process reform took place in the context of step-changes for the Community Boards in their interaction with the City. The online submission system links needs to requests and aligns Community Board needs with the larger City budget process. With a standard submission format, it channels information to City agencies, enables comparative analysis and facilitates information sharing across all parties to the budget process. The reform will lead to greater equality in resource allocation, enhanced Community Board participation, increase efficiency for City agencies and a better Community Board-agency dialogue.

Since January 2016, Dept. of City Planning conducted a series of listening sessions and workshops for Community Boards to solicit feedback. It briefed stakeholders and developed additional resources. It provided tips for substantive dialogues and incorporated feedbacks into the revised submission form. It conducted training sessions at 28 out of 59 Community Boards citywide. Dept. of City Planning will remain available for hands-on support throughout the process.

Each Community Board should ask itself, "What are the top three pressing issues in the district?" Answer to this question enables the agency to identify these issues and compare them across the borough and the city. From there, the online submission form divides all needs and requests into seven policy areas and allocates each item to one or more of the 28 City agencies involved in the process. The structured form requires each Community Board to identify a top issue for the policy area via a drop-down menu, which has a number of options developed by agencies and Community Boards. Each need item should be in broad categories specific to an agency, and each request item should be associated with a need item, in the form of a specific "ask" to the agency and to Office of Management and Budget.

Dept. of City Planning has aggregated all Community Board responses and produced report on district priorities for each agency. In the report to Dept. of Transportation, for example, it shows that four out of 12 Manhattan Community Boards identified "Traffic" as the top concern and another four out of 12 identified "Safety" in FY 2017. Only CB 8 identified "Other" and had to provide explanation. Each agency now has a booklet detailing the needs for each district, which means that they no longer have to gather information from 59 statements of district needs. Dept. of City Planning will continue to work on incorporating appropriate request categories and eliminate the use of "Other" category as much as possible. Each agency now also



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receives a table of all requests, broken down by category and by Community Board. This set-up allows agencies to see one report and learn about all requests at once, instead of reviewing 59 discrete documents.

Community Boards should keep in mind that quality of the request is a function of specificity of information and request items. Dept. of City Planning has compiled report from the FY 2017 process and added new information to the needs-requests online submission form. The system is still “in its training wheels” and may need time to mature. All final FY 2018 budget priorities submissions are due October 31st, 2016. The form should already have pre-populated prioritized requests from FY 2017. Dept. of City Planning also has a how-to guide, a request reference guide and webinar sessions available for Community Board members; these resources are there to help to educate Community Board members on how to use the form and access available planning and budgeting tools. Dept. of City Planning is also working toward a pin drop function for the online needs-requests submission form to enable precise geographic location data; it will allow latitude-longitude location data now in use to become even more user-friendly.

Dept. of City Planning would like to remind Community Boards that final prioritized budget requests should 1) reflect improved quality of needs narratives through existing data and trends; 2) provide specific location for each request, at street, block/lot and intersection level; and 3) resolve old and repeated requests and remove fulfilled requests. All final prioritized budget requests should speak loud and clear on what the district needs and what is requested to fulfill the need.

Wymore (CB 7): The online submission form groups land use and housing into one category. Community Boards finds it difficult to manage, especially if one has so many land use and housing requests. Can they become two separate categories?

Goldwyn (DCP): Agency will continue to update and revise the needs-requests form to align categories according to Community Board needs. The form must strive to balance out a manageable number of categories and the need to have categories specific to actual needs. Agency has also distributed guides along with the online form to assist Community Boards in formulating requests.

Notaro (CB 1): A borough-wide summary is just the beginning. How much “local flavor” was lost in the process? For example, what does a request for “accessibility” mean? Does it differ from district to district? How does the request translate into action? Can the agency share information on common requests and differences across districts?



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Stetzer (CB 3): Community Boards likes to know what can come out of a request.

Bodine (CB 4): Are there reports at the district level? Or is it borough level only?

Bergman (CB 2): Why are these reports not available to the general public? What is the intention not to make them publicly available, for simple transparency sake?

Goldwyn (DCP): The report is at the borough level for each of the five boroughs, as well as at the citywide level. District-level reports are accessible via an online link, with agency and policy area drop-down selections. The borough-wide district-to-district comparison is already a higher and more granular level of information than what was available in the past. Agencies tend to prefer information at the top level. Dept. of City Planning would like to look at the issues from the top first and drill down next. Community Boards should strive to provide information in a manner understandable to the agencies. Dept. of City Planning is also there to encourage conversation and dialogue. Reports are currently for agency use only and are all available electronically by internal access; Dept. of City Planning will conduct tests to see how to make them available to the public.

Deputy Borough President Bonilla: Total number of requests varies from one district to another in any single category. The online system, however, requires all requests to come in a data-driven standardized language. How does it help in terms of prioritization and agency accountability to requests? Could it work by having drop-down menus for more requests beyond the usual ones?

Goldwyn (DCP): Agency will continue to revise the form to match its functionalities with the associated needs. Number of requests varies, so are their levels of detail. City agencies value data and geographic specificity, and standardized languages are there to help agencies to understand the request. The online submission form includes mandatory items for description and location selection for all items.

Stetzer (CB 3): CB 3 general board meeting will only take place on October 31st. It could not submit the final prioritized budget requests until after the meeting, in which the list will be adopted by a vote.

Bodine (CB 4): A lot of Community Boards simply cannot adjust its timelines. Many have similar deadline crunch issues if new information from agencies arrives late, after borough budget consultations. The online submission form does not allow for easy sharing and response gathering amongst Community Board members. CB 4 can have it submitted only after its general board meeting on November 2nd.



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Wymore (CB 7): CB 7 constitutes a steering committee in June each year to direct the budget process, with all committees reporting needs and requests in July in time for needs-requests submission to in August. It votes on final priorities September to October. CB 7 also has a standing Budget & Strategies committee. The steering committee votes on the final priorities in late October.

Deputy Borough President Bonilla: Can Community Boards have committees voting on it first, to be followed by full board ratification, if necessary?

Goldwyn (DCP): Community Boards can enter committee-reported priorities first, all the while budget hearings and deliberations are ongoing. Agencies are required by City Charter to submit departmental estimates by early December. Have the final prioritized budget requests arriving by the October 31st deadline is absolutely critical. Dept. of City Planning will work with the affected Community Boards to explore work flow options and make adjustments accordingly, with tools, support and resources available. This system, however, requires 100% Community Board participation. Agency will continue to help Community Boards to corral information. Please let the office know when the submission is arriving. Dept. of City Planning is also open to working with Community Boards one-on-one if necessary.

Bodine (CB 4): District managers would like to express thanks to the Dept. of City Planning and Borough President Brewer for arranging the presentation today. On a separate note, for the record, district managers would like to find ways for better engagement and accommodation in the needs-requests process. District managers also wish that they were consulted in relation to this presentation ahead of time. All Community Board district managers hereby request to meet with the Dept. of City Planning in January 2017, after the end of FY 2018 budget process for Community Boards, for a more thorough and robust discussion. Community Board district managers are also expressing desire for more appreciation from the Dept. of City Planning for Community Board-level input in the run-up to January.

Notaro (CB 1): How about new categories of requests, or functionalities to report a request as new or repeated? CB 1 does remove funded and fulfilled requests. No one likes to throw in the same requests year after year.

Stetzer (CB 3): Some requests are there year after year for political reasons, often for the sake of gaining traction. CB 3 does state that "a particular item is listed as the most important request for a given policy area for a number of years" in order to drum up support for the request. It is also why Community Boards wish that this presentation would have taken place in October or November instead.



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Deputy Borough President Bonilla: Culture shift in the budget process is certainly not an easy undertaking, but it must start somewhere. Borough President Brewer will remain supportive of all endeavors to have community-level needs and requests heard, addressed, funded and fulfilled.

Office of Borough President Report

Community Affairs Director Songhai: Conversation on affordable housing is always ongoing. Office remains supportive of every single effort to have more affordable housing units. Borough President Brewer supports Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) and has asked for changes in the voluntary affordable housing programs. Borough President Brewer joined Council Member Chin to introduce Intro 1182, in relation to deed restriction removal. The bill will create a Community Board input process for public participation, and it also calls for all future actions concerning deed restrictions to undergo Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). Borough President Brewer, with Council Members Rosenthal, Rodriguez and Williams, passed Intro 405, which allows foldable bicycles inside passenger elevators in office buildings. Manhattan Community Awards Program application is now open, deadline September 25th; the program this year will also allocate \$40,000 in awards to a number of non-profits seeking to provide fresh and healthy food via supermarkets. African-American Parade reception is tomorrow from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM; Borough President Brewer will lead a contingent in the march. Office started a program last year to honor notable African-American leaders; the program will honor educators this year. Office is co-hosting with CB 1 a “Lower Manhattan Construction vs. Quality of Life” public information forum on September 22nd. Office will host a driverless car event on September 27th, in conjunction with NYU Rudin Center for Transportation; a prototype driverless car will be present at the event.

Northern Manhattan Director Moore: Access Manhattan series will begin once again shortly. The series this fall will focus on uptown issues. Constituent work on housing matters is ongoing. Office will also conduct NYC Housing Connect workshop. Office is working with representatives from the United Nations on initiatives related to the Million African Assembly. Complimentary tickets to Columbia University football game are available. CECM Street Activity Permit Office is slated to present at the Borough Service Cabinet next week.

Benjamin (CB 10): Has the report on by-laws become available? Where to find it?

Deputy Borough President Bonilla: It is 90% complete now, mostly on standards; the remaining 10% on Community Board discretion items to be finished by October.



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Council Member Reports

CM Garodnick: Office will testify in support of the proposal to require that the Police Dept. publish its patrol guide. Intro 1267, which will make “revenge pornography” a crime, was introduced. Office will kick off East Side Senior Housing Month on September 22nd to sign up eligible seniors and disabled tenants for the two NYC Rent Freeze programs. Council Member Garodnick will moderate the “Alexander Hamilton vs. Robert Moses” debate on September 19th.

Community Board Reports

Community Board 1: CB 1 continues to undergo intense real estate development, as it has been since the 9/11 terrorist attacks 15 years ago. The district has seen its population doubled since then, with large-scale office-to-residential conversion and full recovery of jobs. It has led to clogged streets, lack of school seats, transit crunch and increased amount of garbage. Dept. of Transportation no longer has a Lower Manhattan Borough Commissioner’s Office, and CB 1 is now left to fend for itself in light of 92 construction projects within 1.45 mi². CB 1 construction public forum on September 22nd will serve as an opportunity for residents to voice opinions on how to deal with them all. West Side Bikeway has become a “Tour de France” of speeding bicycles and bicycle-related conflicts, with a number of accidents, one of which led to one fatality this summer. There are not enough streets traversing east-west across Lower Manhattan, and many intersections have signals not timed to facilitate pedestrian crossing. Howard Hughes Corp. is back with “minor modification” for its Pier 17 application; CB 1 remains concerned over the “segmented” presentation with no master plan made public. CB 1 would like to ask if stakeholders could consider re-starting the Seaport Working Group. New owner at 28 Liberty Street is requesting modification to its deed restrictions to allow three entrance structures on the plaza; CB 1 finds the situation greatly concerning to its members.

Community Board 2: HRPT/St. John’s 550 Washington Street ULURP is now at City Planning Commission for review. Project is said to have substantial community benefits and will lead to re-development of a “dead area” in the neighborhood. The site was the southern terminus of the High Line and is 800 ft. long. CB 2 finds the process unusual, with some of its aspects badly designed. CB 2 adopted resolution in support with conditions, while Borough President Brewer issued recommendations in opposition with conditions. The proposed design is not satisfactory to many, even though the site is a difficult one. CB 2 notes for the record that the design is too car-dependent, with developer not willing to restore the old street grid. Dept. of Housing, Preservation and Development has released the request for proposals for



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Elizabeth Street Garden. CB 2 is still trying hard to ask the agency to consider the water tunnel shaft site on Hudson Street. Neighborhood is almost fully in support of keeping Elizabeth Street Garden there. It will be a fight. CB 2 continues to work with the needs-requests process reform. It has to be meaningful to succeed. The past processed did not lead to substantive Community Board impact on the overall budget outcome. No one will put any work into it if it remains insignificant to the budget process. An innovation to bring people into the process sometimes drives people out instead, as it ends up erecting a “wall” to thwart genuine participation.

Community Board 3: South Street and Two Bridges areas are now under intense development pressure, with four projects already underway while the Dept. of City Planning is finally initiating the environmental impact assessment process. CB 3 will be participating and will form a task force to channel the effort, especially as some of the proposals may lead to 1,000 ft. towers along the East River.

Community Board 4: CB 4 welcomes three new members and would like to express thanks for the appointments. Port Authority Bus Terminal design competition still went ahead as planned, despite staunch opposition from the community on the flawed process and lack of consideration for a full slate of options. CB 4 will meet with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey tomorrow and hopes to get into the conversation on scoping and planning. Block 675, a location within a special district and a historic district that is right outside the Hudson Yards area, may see a mixed-use project reaching as high as 800 ft. coming next. The location is in between Hudson Yards and Chelsea, and CB 4 is working with elected officials and the Dept. of City Planning to examine ways to have control on the situation. CB 4 is seeing the proliferation of LinkNYC consoles along Eighth Avenue; *New York Times* reported that some users occupy the console all day long and led to quality-of-life issues.

Community Board 5: Dept. of Homeless Services and Breaking Ground proposed a shelter facility at 25 West 24th Street, near Madison Square. Constituents came to CB 5 public hearing on the matter in droves, in excess of venue capacity. Protesters disrupted the meeting to the point that neither agency representatives nor CB 5 was able to speak. CB 5 plans to have another meeting, host to be determined.

Community Board 6: CB 6 takes on the budget process through members and standing committees, with staff providing administrative and logistics support. CB 6 welcomes the goals and objectives of the needs-requests process reform but feels that the effort is mostly directed to help City agencies, not as much the Community Boards. The drop-down menu system does not work well for CB 6. The direction of process reform, however, remains positive, while accountability and responsiveness



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remain the two major concerns for all Community Boards to monitor. Whatever the improvements secured will fall apart without diligent eyes to keep all parties fully participating in the manner as designed. CB 6 would also like to say that the budget consultations process could use some improvements. CB 6 had its general board meeting last night. CB 6 continues to work with Borough President Brewer's Land Use staff to map all construction projects in the district, in the interest of moving toward a pilot one-stop information portal on its website. United Nations General Assembly has led to the usual security presence and closed streets in the district. CB 6 adopted two resolutions in relation to the East Midtown re-zoning and will testify on September 22nd. CB 6 would like to see the eastern border of the East Midtown district moved to the west side of Third Avenue to stop tall buildings coming into Turtle Bay. Considerations on infrastructure needs and community concerns are needed. Thanks to CB 4 for bringing attention to the LinkNYC concerns; CB 6 will take up the matter at the committee level next month. It has now set up an online survey on its website to solicit comments relating to the execution of the initiative and the recent proliferation of misuse reported by the *New York Times*.

Community Board 7: CB 7 Preservation committee will vote on the American Museum of Natural History expansion on September 20th for consideration by the full board in October. The issue remains that the expansion will result in some loss of public park space, as the museum is located within a public park. CB 7 continues to look into options on how to conduct the meeting and set the agenda, and it plans to have rules in place to keep the public in order for the discussion. The proposed school re-zoning plan is splitting residents of Lincoln Towers into factions. CB 7 has no role in the process but has conducted several meetings and stated that the school in question no longer carries the "persistently dangerous" designation. The issue is an example of the grand intersection of many socio-economic factors. CB 7 would like to thank the Dept. of Parks and Recreation, as well as its own members, for taking on the Bloomingdale Playground initiative and transform it into an inclusive playground space for all children.

Community Board 10: CB 10 assistant district manager went to work at another City agency; CB 10 is looking for a community assistant as replacement. CB 10 Personnel committee has experienced turnover as of late. CB 10 received its first post-MIH ULURP application and will discuss the item at the committee level tonight. The application came from a developer with a positive track record and is seeking to build a 100% affordable housing project, but some block associations find the proposed building too tall and are opposing the project. CB 10 notices that MIH proposals are increasingly skewed in favor of taller structures, usually between ten to twelve stories, and the developer would often opt for as-of-right market-rate



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development if the City denies application for re-zoning. City is in need of more affordable housing units, but there is not a lot of land to build on in the first place. CB 10 held a meeting with a coalition of housing development fund corporation (HDFC) property representatives, where the Dept. of Housing, Preservation and Development made its presentation. Most HDFC shareholders do not support regulatory agreement requirements and are organized and mobilized. CB 10 does not necessarily want to advocate for a group like this one. CB 10 is looking to take up participatory budgeting and will be working with Borough President Brewer and Community Voices Heard to engage in the initiative.

Community Board 11: CB 11 also lost its assistant district manager and is seeking a replacement. As of now, CB 11 vice chair is stepping in to fill gaps and prepare for transition to the new staff member. CB 11 held the meeting at the committee level last night on the land use proposal for the African Burial Ground; public forum on the same matter will be tonight. CB 11 will look into options for a better budgetary allocation and will review its committee structure to align committees with policy areas to enhance transparency.

Community Board 12: City Council voted to reject the Sherman Plaza proposal; the issue is still a hot topic given its affordable housing-related ramifications. Inwood re-zoning for areas east of Tenth Avenue remains contentious. CB 12 will hold a town hall to address recent spate of violence near 157th Street 1 train station. CB 12 is also updating its website to make it more user-friendly and enable document upload. Traffic remains a top concern as well.

Borough Board adjourned.