

Community Board 9
890 Nostrand Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11225

Minutes of Housing Committee Meeting
October 14, 2015

Attendance:

Committee Members: Carmen Martinez (Committee Chair); Beverly Newsome (Committee Co-Chair); Patricia Moses – CB9; Eve-Lyn Williams – CB9; Hector Robertson – CB9.

Community Residents: Neil Morancie; Suwen Cheong (Concerned Citizens)

Absent Members: Kenya Sollas – CB9; Unella Rhone-Perry CB9; Paula Jones – Community Resident; Vivia Morgan-Frett – Community Resident; Cameron Page – Community Resident.

Meeting called to order by Carmen Martinez at 6:50PM

Ms. Julia Cuthbertson, representative from NYC Smoke-Free, Brooklyn; Mr. Stephen Beasley, representative from NYC Health Department; and Mr. James Fulton, Brooklyn Smoke-Free Advocate, made presentation to CB9 Housing Committee about Smoke-Free Housing in New York City which included a hardcopy Powerpoint presentation on the danger of Secondhand Smoke (SHS); particularly to children, and the benefits of living in smoke-free housing. The presentation included information from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey Data 1999-2012 indicating that exposure to SHS is higher for certain groups, 2 in 5 children (including 7 in 10 Black children) ages 3 to 11 are exposed to SHS. More than 2 in 5 nonsmokers who live below the poverty level are exposed to SHS. More than 1 in 3 nonsmokers who live in rental housing are exposed to SHS. The presentation also detailed how cigarette smoke travels throughout a building, the property damage that cigarette smoke causes and the cost of rehabilitating a non-smoking residential unit versus that of light smoking and heavy smoking.

Per the presenters, there are several subsidized and Market Rate/Luxury housing in Brooklyn that are already implementing smoke-free policies – Kings County Senior Residence, David Chavis Apartment listed among them. Issues and concerns were raised by members of the Housing Committee as well as Mr. Morancie, community resident, about the impact the conversion to smoke-free would have on tenants who smoke, and have been living in their apartments for years and able to smoke freely in the privacy of their apartments, should their landlord chose to convert the property to smoke-free. Presenters were questioned about their knowledge of any ensuing tenant/landlord cases as a result of conversions but they did not have information readily available nor could recall knowing of any cases. They presented a draft resolution for CB9 prepared by Phil Konigsberg, Health Committee, Queens CB7, for the Housing Committee to review, vote on and recommend to the full board for vote and adoption at the October 27th meeting. They further reported that several community boards in Queens have adopted smoke-free multi-family dwelling resolutions already. Committee members asked for copies of those resolutions but none were available and thus requests were made that the presenters provide copies to the committee in the coming days for further review. In the meantime, further discussions were had and a consensus was reached by the Committee that additional information and further research was to be done on this issue before consideration would be given to a resolution, particularly when the possibility exists for tenants who smoke and may not be able to adhere to a smoke-free policy to be subjected to evictions. Item tabled pending additional information at which time presenters will be asked to return to Housing Committee for additional discussions and resolve.

Due to time constraints, the second item on the agenda was assigned to committee members as homework, to be followed by discussion at the November committee meeting. The committee then proceeded to get an update from M. Eve-Lyn Williams on the status of 265 Hawthorne Street. Some tenants are in need of financial assistance in order to be able to purchase their apartment and discussion was had about a community fundraiser to assist the affected tenants.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45PM.

Respectfully Submitted by Carmen Martinez, Chair

October 26, 2015