

Community Board 9
890 Nostrand Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11225

Minutes of the
ULURP Committee Meeting
March 16, 2015

Attendance – Committee Members:

Jacqueline Welch – CB9	Timothy Thomas – CB9
Fred Baptiste – CB9	Rabbi Jacob Goldstein – CB9
Evelyn Williams – CB 9	Quest Fanning – community resident
Michael Cetera, AIA – CB9	Ben Edwards – Committee Chairperson
Augustine Blackwell – CB9	Warren Berke – CB9
Demetrius Lawrence – CB9	Brenda Scott – CB9
Esteban Giron – community resident	

Attendance – Members of the CB/public (who signed in)

Anne Pruden	Karen Fleming
Marcia McLean	Pamela Yard
Carol Blake	Lyn Quarles
Betty Hatley (?)	Will Asonin
Diana Foster	Reuvin Lipkind – NYS Senate
Phylcia Sampson	Andre Tirenin
Michael Colery (?)	David Carcelo
Jeannie Hildebrand	G. Borecia (?)
Reshonah Bennett	Suwen Cheong
Yasmin Ramiret	Jamal Pollard – Borough President's office
Dwayne Neckles	Ada Terry – CB9
Sarah Prudhomme	Beverly Newsome – CB9
Rachel Smith	Denise Mann – CB9
Carmen Martinez – CB9	Asim Muhammad
Cynthia Green	Holly biele
Maxine Barnes	Rock Hucksman
Lorraine Thomas	S. Foster-Golding – CB9
Janine Nichols	Jay Sorid
Alicia Boyd	Kenya Sollas – CB9
Sahan Ratnayake (?)	Carol Blake
Ernest Ortiz	K. Oliver
Schellie H.	G. Chaimzon (?)
Rob Roberts	(?) not sure of spelling of name.

NOTE: This meeting was typified by many outbursts, some of which made it impossible to make out dialogue. However, the secretary is confident that the main points have been preserved below.

Meeting called to order by Ben Edwards.

Alicia Boyd and members of MTOPP's coalition loudly challenge the validity of the makeup of the committee. In particular, Tim Thomas should not be on the committee as he was appointed by Jake Goldstein from the previous term.

Demetrius Lawrence says Dwayne kept them on. Alicia says bylaws say must be new appointments year over year.

Much yelling and talking over one another ensues.

Tim Thomas: There's a law against disrupting a government meeting.

Alicia Boyd: This is not a government meeting. It's a community board meeting.

Roll is called and quorum met.

Ben Edwards asked the board whether it would prefer to go with alternative draft or first draft.

Tim Thomas: I move we use the alternative draft tonight. Seconded (inaudible who it was)

Fred Baptiste: Let's establish the credentials before voting on anything. We must make sure that we do this by the letter of law.

Jake Goldstein: Mr. Chair you've gone through the list and they have been accepted.

Ben Edwards rules that the committee members have been properly vetted and approved.

Suki Cheong: Let's use this opportunity to discuss the motion.

Alicia Boyd continues to bait the members of the committee, calling them out as illegitimate. "No No No No." from Ms. Boyd becomes louder and louder.

Ben Edwards asked members of the 71st Precinct to remove Ms. Boyd from the meeting. After asking her to leave, she refuses. They arrest her and take her out. As she's leaving she shouts "Black people you better watch it, white people taking over your neighborhood."

Fred Baptiste. We should consider merits of both proposals. We need dialogue

Tim Thomas. I think the best to go through the drafts line by line.

Fred Baptiste: Let's discuss first

Tim Thomas: So what are we going to talk about? What's going to guide the conversation?

Jacob Goldstein: The chairman needs to make a decision.

Demetrius Lawrence talks to Ben Edwards, then: We're going to go line by line on the alternative draft.

Ben Edwards: Let's move forward. Does everyone have a copy?

More copies are distributed.

Ben begins to read alternative draft. Reads the perimeters of the proposed study area.

Unidentified attendee shouts City Planning won't consider infrastructure. They don't do that.

Beverly Newsome: How is modest defined in this letter? How do WE want modest defined? Because modest is subjective.

Tim Thomas: Modest is the right word. We start from a position of we don't want big towers, too many people etc. But you don't start a negotiation with a set number unless you are prepared to stick to it throughout.

Beverly: I get going to table conservatively.

Attendee: We want to be De Blasio's model neighborhood.

Jacob Goldstein: When Board 8 did its study they understand this issue very well. They understood that corridor streets like Franklin and Bedford can handle more density than inner streets. The proof is a building at Bedford and Eastern Parkway 8 stories based on their zoning changes. Inner blocks are protected by contextual zoning and downzoning where appropriate.

Suki: I understand your question about the word modest, but this is for Crown and Carrol Street, not the district generally. In the proposed letter it's talking about those blocks specifically. I think it's legitimate to ask what is contextual...six stories is contextual on some blocks, four on others, two on others. And the apartment buildings on my block are affordable. They're rent stabilized. So why do you have to build higher to get affordable housing?

Beverly: The reason affordable has to be added is that commercial developers won't build without the 421a tax abatement. So they and the City claim you need a bonus to add affordable, and that means taller.

Resident Sarah Prud'homme: Why do we need them to build more. Will they be built somewhere else and the luxury here, raising our income base?

Ben: Affordable housing is AT location. Read the draft.

Resident: What is affordable housing?

Ben: Based on Area Median Income. That's why I believe we need 50% set aside.

Joyce Stewart (320 Sterling Tenants Association): The reason I'm upset is because every day I'm in court over 320 Sterling because landlords wants my seniors out. They can't afford the rent. So what IS affordable, Mr. Chairman? Why don't you answer me?

Carmen Martinez: Should be 50 low, 30 middle, 20 market. Don't leave out middle income people.

Demetrius: Let's consider adding this to the draft.

Community Resident: It's called gentrification. They're bringing in high income people and pushing everybody else. We had affordable. We want to downsize not upsize. You're talking about six figure people here and changing the equation. No. No. No.

Gentleman from Union Street Block Association: Working people might not even qualify. They worked in the city, now they can't stay here.

Kenya Sollas: Each committee needs to have done some research to bring to the table. I'm not saying it wasn't done, but that research should be presented. We're talking blindly and it's a repeat of what we've been doing. The income limit should be based on a certain year. Like the median income in 2000. That's what we're speaking to, not today. We must say per a certain year. Also, seniors tend to like to live among each other. So there needs to be an initiative to create specific affordable housing just for seniors.

Gentleman from Union Street Block Association (Michael?): If you look at recent municipal study, we spent more than a billion dollars in tax giveaways and we didn't get much affordable housing. Affordable housing is gamesmanship, and CB9 you're showing too much of your hand. You're leading with the carrot in front of you and the cart behind you. The most subsidized industry in NYC is the real estate industry.

Resident: As to specific height limits, this letter is not well-defined and is too open. We need to be talking block by block, zone by zone. Plus Empire Blvd and Washington Ave should not be included because there have been studies and we're doing studies already.

Ben Edwards: Empire Blvd WILL be part of the study. It is right in the middle of the proposed area.

Karen Fleming: The language must be clear. Modest, or average, means nothing. Now here's another thing, when the community wants to speak, you're the only one with a microphone.

Kenya: I'm going to volunteer to move around with mic. Who is writing down what people say? Let's not be vague. Is there negotiation or not for perimeters. Lots of talking over each other and talking over each other. Would you change your process?

Ben: Sure.

Jay Sorid: I provided you with a document SECRA zoning for quality and affordability text amendment. The head of land use at CB17 Barak gave this to me. What we're doing may be moot. These are big changes and they'll make all of this moot. Are you familiar with this document?

Ben: No I'm not familiar.

Kenya: Chairman is not familiar. We should table this letter.

Tim Thomas: It's a proposal, it's not law. The only thing absolutely certain is that we're asking to start a study in these parameters. The reason we keep it vague is not to lead the conversation. Let's start a study. Everybody should be at every meeting going forward and bring whatever information you've got.

Diana Foster: I'm at CB8, lived in CB8 since I was 2 months. You need a perfect credit score to get affordable housing. We had 6,000 people apply for 23 units. 70,000 applied for 38 units. The only ones making a profit are the developers. We're not taking care of those of our people.

Fred: We're negotiating with ourselves. Perhaps we do want to go in the opposite direction and get less specific. The city must also not have preconceived notions either. So what are we all comfortable with? Issues like Empire Blvd pit neighbor against neighbor. People are saying I don't want the new buildings in MY backyard. I'm fine with the parameters. But everything should be on the table.

Kenya: Are we discussing the draft now?

Ben: We'll go back to the draft.

Suki: On being specific or vague, you can be specific enough without being too specific. When we came to BP and his director of Land use they gave specific language and described our neighborhood as low to medium sized apartment buildings and two to three story houses. Contextual zoning has specific meaning, but as Jay said it may change. The other way to be specific is to have an independent study before going in. We started with them...

Warren: The document is very serious referring to changes in zoning in the City. March 25 everyone should go down and protest. Also, Suki, you should do an independent study, if you can get the money do it. But the City is very clear...it's not going to pay for it.

Renee Collymore: This conversation makes me sick. If you don't hear 50/50. 80/20 or 70/30 says you aren't wealthy enough we want you down there while the wealthy people are up here. Do you think you're immune? Gentrification has taken over.

Kenya: In light of recent information, let's read up about it, and let's organize here. We shouldn't be sitting here. Let's scrap the letter.

Ben Edwards: Right now, big Developers are doing whatever they want to do. We're not scrapping it. Next item in letter. Consider Density (reads again from draft)

General agreement around room around the reading from draft.

Residents: What happened to parameters? We don't need you to read it to us. You have not given us your reason, your process, you haven't given us your thinking.

Ben Edwards: From the community's suggestions, that was our parameters. Read the previous meetings notes.

Residents: This letter is not our suggestions,. If this was what we said, it went through a washing machine.

Fred: All the pieces have to work together, that's how we came up with the parameters. We were told we need to do part of the CB, not the whole thing.

Residential: Why did we single out two blocks on Crown and Carroll?

Warren: Background, the predominantly Hasidic community asked not to be in the study. And no one from Wingate came. No one was lobbying for them. DCP said we could do two quadrants.

Tim Thomas: The JCC came to us to look at those streets in view of a different issue - families want to expand their homes and aren't allowed to because of constrictive zoning. But let me point out that all of this is relatively meaningless if we don't decide what we're comfortable with on Empire Blvd.

Fred: It doesn't make sense to concede Empire Blvd, nor does it make sense to leave it out.

Tim Thomas: The City has expressed that Empire Blvd must be on the table because they must meet affordable housing goals. That's where you can build new units, because none of us want them building taller.

Janelle (name could be wrong): Who are these community sponsors planners people are talking about?

Fred: DCP says "Can you do those studies, yes." So what this line is meant to say we do have groups doing independent studies. To advise.

Sarah Prud'homme: We want to make our own assessment. City Planning says "sure you can spend your own money" but they don't care.

Tim Thomas: It's not that they don't care. It's that they're the department of City Planning and planning is what they do. For the City!

Fred: We're negotiating with ourselves again.

Lots of "take Empire Blvd off" and general shouting. Someone says "You are saying when the Community Board sits down what happens to our voices?"

Ben Edwards: The hearings will be open.

Tim Thomas: We're not going to agree with everything you say, but that doesn't mean you weren't heard.

Many say "Throw Tim Thomas out"

Beverly Newsome: There were some changes that were suggested - 50/30/20 must be included. Modest must be defined so that the changes are in line with surrounding houses.

Tim Thomas: We're not locked into anything here.

Ben: We will vote on whether this alternative draft, with Beverly's proposed changes, will go to full Board.

Chaos ensues.

Ben calls roll; voting: 10 yes; 2 no; 0 abstentions. The alternative draft, with changes, is to be presented to full Board next meeting on March 24, 2015.

Respectfully submitted
Timothy Thomas – recording secretary/transcriber
March 20, 2015

3/16/15

Community Board 9, Brooklyn – submitted in response to March 3, 2015, FOIL request from Alicia Boyd for names of all members appointed to the ULURP Committee and who appointed them

ULURP Committee Members:

Assigned by Dwayne Nicholson (members of CB 9)

- ✓ Fred Baptiste *X NO*
- ✓ Michael Cetera, AIA *YES*
- ✓ Josette Coicou-Brioche
- ✓ Warren Berke *YES*
- ✓ Simone Bennett
- ✓ Ben Edwards *YES*
- ✓ Daniel Ingvaldstad
- ✓ Avi Lesches
- ✓ Rabbi Jacob Goldstein *YES*
- ✓ Augustine Blackwell *YES*
- ✓ Laura Imperiale
- ✓ Jacqueline Welch *YES*
- ✓ Demetrius Lawrence *YES*
- ✓ Diana Richardson
- 15 ✓ Evelyn Williams *YES*
- ✓ Rosemarie Perry
- ✓ Dwayne Nicholson

NO
YES *2*
NO

Assigned by Jacob Goldstein/Michael Cetera, AIA (former chairperson/ULURP committee chairperson)

- 1 ✓ Timothy Thomas – resident/CB9 member *YES*
- Edmund Fanning)
- ✓ Quest Fanning *YES*
- Natalie Diaz)
- Paula Jones) residents of CD9
- Julia Stanat)
- 6 ✓ Esteban Giron) by Pearl Miles *NO*

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Ex-officio members

- Hon. Mathieu Eugene
- Hon. Laurie Cumbo
- Hon. Darlene Mealy
- David Suarez – represents Hon. Mathieu Eugene
- Matthew Pitt – represents Hon. Laurie Cumbo

March 3, 2015
Pearl R. Miles
District Manager, CB 9, Brooklyn