

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARD 6
ECONOMIC/WATERFRONT/COMM. DEV. & HOUSING COMMITTEE
MAY 21, 2012

ATTENDANCE:

PRESENT:

| | | |
|---------------|---------------|----------|
| R. BASHNER | N. BERK-RAUCH | P. BLAKE |
| L. BUFFINGTON | R. CERVONE | N. COX |
| D. SCOTTO | | |

EXCUSED:

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| E. FELDER | G. O'CONNELL | L. SONES |
| J. FRANCIS | | |

ABSENT:

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| B. ATKINS | P. CARSON | M. DEPLAMA |
| A. FORNECKER | R. LUFTGLASS | L. TOLKOFF |
| D. REISS | M. SILVERMAN | |

GUESTS:

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| R. FUENTES – REP. FOR HON. STEPHEN LEVIN, CITY COUNCIL MEMBER\ | | |
| D. WILEY – REP. FOR HON. NYDIA VELAZQUEZ, MEMBER OF CONGRESS | | |
| R. LEVINE | H. HUGHES | T. DAVIS |
| A. KRASNOW | S. WILBER | C. WILSON |
| B. RICHARDSON | D. FELIX | R. STEWART |
| A. MELENDEZ | V. CORTES | J. HALL |
| L. BETHEL | M. PETROVICH | P. JEFFERSON |
| D. MACK | M. NG | |

TOWN HALL MEETING SPEAKERS:

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|---------------|------------|-------------|
| C. GADSDEN | M. SLARE | J. CHANCY |
| L. BUFFINGTON | G. BRYANT | S. MITCHELL |
| C. WILSON | B. LESTER | L. MCDONALD |
| S. OWENS | I. LUCIANO | I. DIGGS |
| M. WILLIAMS | S. BLUE | |

☆☆☆ MINUTES ☆☆☆

Town Hall Meeting on Public Housing for residents of 572 Warren Street, Gowanus and Wyckoff Gardens Houses.

- **At this meeting we invite residents of 572 Warren Street/Turning Point, Gowanus and Wyckoff Garden Houses to share with us your complaints, concerns and ideas for improving public housing so we can be more effective advocates for you.**

Richard Bashner (RB) began the meeting by giving some background about the Committee's tours of the Public Housing projects and asking residents to describe what's working, what's not working, what are the major building and project-wide issues. He stated that the information gathered will be relayed to the Community Board and NYCHA representatives.

Carrie Gadsden (CG) 423 Baltic: Have lodged 65 heat complaints for "no heat"; process of getting heat repaired is cumbersome; very slow response to complaints; seems to be a problem in the line; some apartments have too much heat; no improvement after \$4M repair project. There's too much steam in the cellar which has affected intercom and phone service; Emergency doesn't show up to address problems.

RB asked how many people had intercom and phone problems – several hands raised.

Comment: Problem with heat throughout Gowanus Houses; if one tenant is too hot and the temperature is turned down then other tenants are too cold.

Comment: Heat stops at 3rd floor.

Comment: Day tour guys show up to work but night tour guys don't do anything. Emergency comes but they just sit in the truck.

CG: Made a FOIL request in December 2011 but no response. Paint used has strong odor and is too much for people with respiratory problems. Elevator repair and exterminator come with no supplies.

Comment: There used to be scheduled pest control, but now you have to make a request.

CG: NYCHA spent \$10M on a report – waste of money, the problems were so obvious.

Mary Glover (MG) 198 Bond: Sidewalk bridges have been up for at least 4 years. Concerned that buildings are deteriorating and nothing being done. Requested a lock repair months ago but repair was promised for September this year. She repaired it herself. Concerned that NYCHA is deliberately letting the buildings deteriorate so that then they can empty them.

RB asked how many people had lock problems – several hands raised.

Comment: Some building entry doors don't lock or can be pulled open.

RB asked if everyone had enough keys.

Comments: Yes, you can buy extra; if you lose a key you must buy a replacement; management is very slow with key requests.

Comments: Drugs and shootings are still a problem.

Joyce Chauncy (JC) 427 Baltic: Roof is leaking into apartments for the past 2-3 years. It's been reported but not fixed. She was promised a new sink 8 years ago, never received it, has leaking below the sink. Concerned about the availability of housing for young people just starting out.

Lydia Buffington (LB) 95 Luquer: introduced herself: she is a housing advocate from Gowanus Canal Community Development Corp. She reports concerns to NYCHA and Housing judges. Invited people to contact her with problems.

Grace Bryant (GB) 427 Baltic: Roof has been leaking for years; drains are closed up and the water enters under the roof doors, goes down the stairs and into the apartments. When water gets into the elevator shaft, the service is interrupted. Water collecting on the roof breeds mosquitoes.

Comment: There have been 3 contractors hired to fix the roof, but they have all defaulted.

Attendees indicated that there were lots of leaks, both plumbing and roof leaks.

Sis Mitchell (SM) 182 Bond: Operates a food pantry at the church and needs assistance in keeping the street clear for deliveries. DOT tells her to call the police, but they don't respond. There are already 'no parking' signs there. RB advised that she should contact the precinct, meet with the community affairs and let them know that you need the area kept clear once per week.

Charlotte Wilson (CW) 185 Nevins: asked about CB6 role in refurbishing of the park.

RB: Community Board advises on proposed park work.

CW: is the park NYCHA responsibility or Parks?

RB: Parks has been slowly taking over maintenance of parks in housing projects.

CW: Will this become a locked park?

RB: There is supposed to be a passage across the park. Recommend contacting Leroy Branch for information.

CW: In 1969 there used to be social services offices, police on the housing sites. We need to have these returned.

Comment: The Council Member told us that 11217 was no longer on a priority list, that's why we've lost funding.

Betty Lester (BL) 417 Baltic: management doesn't inform people about what is going on, for example, the sign for this meeting was not distributed. There is no accountability, no access to management. Repairs aren't reliably done, doors are an ongoing problem. Sidewalk sheds remain up for too long; contractors don't do the work. The roofs leak; the problems can't be fixed by maintenance men. The buildings are old - all the systems are worn out. When repair requests are made, sometimes not scheduled until a year later. Garbage is sitting in front of the buildings. Why were the dumpsters removed from the back? Can't make appointments with managers, NYCHA is unresponsive. Maintenance doesn't have supplies or tools to make effective repairs.

RB: Are inspections done?

BL: There aren't any.

Comment: Management is short staffed.

RB: Management doesn't enforce the rules; can't get appointments with management, management people have been in place too long.

Loretta McDonald / Harriet New (HN) 574 Warren: toilet has been backing up into tub for years, the roof leaks, NYCHA says they can't address it until 2013. Need cameras at entrances, the money was allocated, but where are the cameras?

Ideliza Luciano (IL) 198 Bond: waited 3 years for repair to wall damage caused by a leak; a poor job was done, it was never painted. NYCHA wanted to install new floor tile over the existing broken tiles.

RB: Who does the repair work?

Comment: Both staff and outside contractors; big jobs by the outside contractors, but usually experience long delays.

IL: The leak still exists, need paint. They use oil paint unless you provide a letter from a doctor, then they would use latex. The paint they install peels rapidly.

Comment: If you aren't home when they come to make a repair, the repair ticket is voided and you have to make another request. They don't make appointments, they only inform you when they will show up.

IL: The caretakers don't clean effectively, I clean my hall. There is obscene graffiti in the elevator, but it isn't removed promptly.

Comment: The elevators are filthy and smell of urine.

RB: Was staffing cut?

IL: Yes, and they don't work.

Comment: Some residents are also dirty.

General discussion about going to court to get repairs ordered, and discussion about how to use the system.

Comment: More concern that NYCHA is deliberately letting the building deteriorate so they can empty it.

Irwin Diggs (ID) 130 3rd Ave: we had a piping problem, the plaster repair was scheduled for 1-1/2 year later. I took time off work but the workers didn't show up.

Comment: Sometimes the appointments don't match the date the contractor has. Staff doesn't answer the phone.

Milton Williams (MW) 178 Bond: NYCHA is trying to evict family members who have temporary permission.

Daniel Kummer (DK): you need to contact Legal Aid.

Shirley Blue (SB) 178 Bond: Moved in 1978, still have the old brown floor tile; was told it is asbestos by a staff worker. No samples were taken to confirm.

Comment: Buildings were built in 1949, tiles are surely asbestos. Tiles have been removed but without any special techniques.

SB: No paint since 2004; they used to have a regular schedule, every 3 years. NYCHA says I have to go see the painter and request it.

Comment: We paint ourselves.

RB: Make the request, if no response then go to court.

Comment: The city denies funding because the census shows improvement in income due to development and the Atlantic Yards project. Can Gowanus file a class action suit?

RB: Not suitable for a class action suit, but the community should organize and bring political pressure to bear.

DK: Closed facilities at Gowanus Houses should be reopened. There is space in all these buildings that could be used.

Dan Wiley: NYCHA operates Red Hook Houses community center. Gowanus should demand a similar center. Tenants should become active; they could form a non-profit to go after grants.

General discussion about tenant activism, forming a non-profit. Noted that the Wyckoff center is open and supposed to serve Gowanus Houses, but the Gowanus people don't use it. There is concern that the city lumps Wyckoff and Gowanus Houses together and Gowanus Houses suffer.

Comment: The park is torn up, there doesn't seem to be any work in progress; it won't be done in time for summer, the kids need the park.

Meeting ended.

Minutes submitted by Norman Cox.