

**COMMUNITY BOARD SIX
YOUTH/HUMAN SERVICES/EDUCATION COMMITTEE
MAY 25, 2011**

PRESENT:

E. FELDER	M. KOLMAN	M. SCHMIDT
B. SOLOTAIRE	S. TURET	D.C. VITO

EXCUSED:

L. HILL	L. HOROWITZ	C. MURRAY
G. O'CONNELL		

ABSENT:

J. BERNARD	Y. ROMAN	M. RUIZ
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GUESTS:

A. ZABLOCKI – DEPT. OF HOMELESS SERVICES
H. STEVENS – HOUSING WORKS
M. GRILLO – HOUSING WORKS

***** MINUTES *****

Presentation and discussion with representatives for the Department of Homeless Services on the results of their 2011 Homeless Outreach Population Estimate (HOPE) census taken in January 2011.

Presenter: Alex Zablocki, Director of Community Relations, DHS (and Republican candidate for Public Advocate in 2009)

Alex gave a brief overview of DHS Services, primarily providing shelter for single men and women as well as families in NYC. There are 94 shelters in Brooklyn, and one in CB6, the Park Slope Women's shelter. The number of people in shelters in NYC is approximately 36,000.

He also discussed Homebase, DHS's attempt to provide services to prevent those at risk from entering the shelter system. He mentioned that DHS is currently undertaking a study on the effectiveness of Homebase. He didn't have a date when it would be finished but promised to come back when it was to present its findings.

Derek Vito asked why people wouldn't go into shelter. Alex responded that there are many reasons, but preferring life on the street or having mental health or abuse problems might be two of them. He also described Safe Havens as a new approach with less restrictions than normal shelters that might attract people with mental health or abuse problems.

This year's HOPE count took place on January 31. It had 2,845 volunteers covering 15,000 square miles of NYC and counted 2,648 unsheltered individuals. This represented a 10% increase in volunteers and a 15% decrease in unsheltered individuals counted.

Benjamin Solotaire asked why NYC did the only point in time survey in the country. Alex responded that we aren't the only city just the only major city. And that DHS does go back and covers areas suspected of being miscounted for whatever reason.

Mark Kolman asked if people could go from shelter to public housing. Alex responded that there was no direct line from the shelter system to NYCHA since the Section 8 program had been discontinued first due to a perceived abuse of the system then eventually due to funding cuts.

Suzanne Turet asked why they were studying Homebase when prevention was proven to be the best way to keep people out of shelter. Alex responded that DHS was studying the effectiveness of Homebase, not prevention.

D. C. Vito invited DHS to come back before the next HOPE count, but Benjamin said we should consider that due to questions about the validity of the methodology and perhaps we could consult Coalition for the Homeless or other advocates before endorsing the HOPE count.

Presentation and discussion with representatives for Housing Works, Inc., a non-profit organization that provides health services and housing to New Yorkers who are homeless and living with HIV/AIDS, to introduce the organization and report on the opening of a storefront space at 266 5th Avenue (between Carroll St/Garfield Pl) in our district.

Marc Grillo and Holly Stevens presented regarding the new Housing Works Store on Garfield Place and 5th Avenue in Park Slope.

The Park Slope Store is the 12th store in the area and opened about 6 weeks ago. It has three full time employees and about three volunteers. They came to us to have us put out the word that they need more volunteers for the store.

Housing Works takes in donations of all kinds, with the exception of mattresses and bedding of course due to bed bug concerns. The Park Slope store has children's clothes as a minor focus but they will take anything and most of it will stay at this location.

Housing Works has offices and stores in many localities in the region as well as Washington DC, Haiti and Puerto Rico. They focus on assisting homeless individuals who are HIV positive or have AIDS. They have an annual operating budget of 45 million dollars of which about 25% percent comes from their retail operations. They have served 20,000 people since 1990.

People or groups who are interested in volunteering can contact Marc Grillo at (212) 966 0466 x1136, or Holly Stevens at the Park Slope store at (718) 636 2271. Volunteers are needed in any capacity they are capable, all ages above 16 are accepted.

Minutes submitted by Benjamin Solotaire.