

**HOUSING AND LAND USE COMMITTEE
PETER D. ROSADO, CHAIRPERSON
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2017**

Membership: Dr. Ian Amritt (Ex Officio), Evelyn Arauz, Shawn Coleman, Mildred Colon, Robert Crespo, Altagracia Cruz, Paula Fields –Conyers, Sonya Ferguson, Jazmine Goodman, Alexandra Guadalupe, Gilda Jefferson, Barbara Lopez, Lina Lopez, Dr. Francis Onukwue, Joyce Campbell Culler, Peter D. Rosado

Members Present: Evelyn Arauz, Shawn Coleman, Mildred Colon, Robert Crespo, Altagracia Cruz, Paula Fields-Conyers, Jazmine Goodwin, Alexandra Guadalupe, Barbara Lopez, Joyce Campbell Culler, Lina Lopez, Dr. Francis Onukwue, Peter Rosado (Chair), Ralph Acevedo (District Manager)

Guests: Ted Weinstein (Housing Preservation & Development), Justin Lamorella (

Meeting was called to order at 6:15pm by Chairperson Rosado. Quorum was established as 13 members were present at the time the meeting started. Chairperson Rosado started the meeting by announcing that after conversations with Dr. Amritt, Board Chair, that effective in April, he and Community Board First Vice Chair Robert Crespo will be swapping chairperson positions. Starting in April, Robert Crespo will take over as the Chair of Housing & Land Use and Peter Rosado taking over as Chairperson of Franchise, Liquor, & Permits. Both men will remain on as members of their original committees. After attendance was taken, **Robert Crespo made a motion to swap the presentation priority of items 1 & 2 on the agenda.** This motion was made due to Mr. Crespo's understanding that the originally scheduled second item on the agenda (Thessolonia Baptist Church/Lettiere Construction) was of an update capacity and that the Community Access presentation could be better served by being the final presentation of the evening and having the remainder of time to themselves. **The motion was seconded by Lina Lopez. The motion was passed unanimously.** With the motion passed, Thessolonia Baptist Church & officials from Lettiere Construction were invited up to present their update on 960 Prospect Ave.

Matthew Gross of Lettiere & Rev. Anderson of Thesselonia Baptist Church informed us that this development will be 120 units of housing in two wings; one located on Prospect (7 stories) and one located on Rev. James Polite (8 stories), which will be connected through a courtyard and breezeway. The project is mixed income allowing for multiple AMI's to be serviced and ranging from studios to 3 bedrooms. The only issue that the committee expressed concern with concerning this project was that Highbridge Management was being contacted as a possible property management partner. Many committee members feel as if Highbridge, due to past interactions with them as property managers, would not have the best needs of the community in mind and asked Thesselonia & Lettiere to look into other options as well, to which they agreed. The very beginning of the construction process has started with anticipated completion in the Fall of 2018.

The second presentation was by Community Access concerning a proposed housing development at 985 Bruckner Blvd. Community Access was asking for a letter of support from the committee to the Dept. of Homeless Services for this project. Marcus, the Director of Housing for Community Access, presented as the committee followed along with a packet. Community Access already operates 19 residential facilities that primarily focus on the housing of supportive tenants (tenants coming from the shelter system and those living with mental illness) with community residents as well. The proposed project contained 215 total units: 133 studios, 17 one bedrooms, & 62 two bedroom apts. 112 of the total units would be set aside for people with a mental health diagnosis and/or referred by the Dept. of Homeless Services with the remaining 103 units to be offered to families earning less than 57% AMI. Before opening the floor to questions from the committee, of which there were many, Chairperson Rosado gave the floor to District Manager Ralph Acevedo. Ralph & Robert Crespo relayed to the committee that

when the Community Access project was first brought to the attention of the committee, upon further research, they were asked to meet with Councilman Salamanca. Community Access was unable to reiterate any issues that were voiced by the Councilman at that meeting and it was revealed by Ralph & Crespo that a major concern was the distribution of housing to community members; advertised to be close to 50% but actually closer to 25%. While Community Access had said that 103 units would be available for community rental, it was actually 50% OF the remaining 103 units thereby only 23.7% of the total apartments would be for Community Board 2 residents. Other information shared by the District Manager included that Community Access currently operates a building in Community Board 2 on Polite Ave which has seen a HUGE spike in 911 calls since 2014. In 2014, seven 911 calls were made. In 2015, there were six. Yet, in 2016, this number jumped to 19 calls to 911; the majority of which were harassment and other dangerous issues. Community Access tried to explain away the calls as mental health concerns and the issues that may happen with people within that community. The committee did not accept this as a reasonable response. The following hour of the meeting was devoted to a litany of questions coming from the committee to Community Access based on the inconsistencies in their presentation, their unit and AMI distribution, and the perceived continuance of developments focusing on the lower third feeling as if the South Bronx districts were the areas where a project like this could fly. Multiple members of the committee voiced concerns that this project would not be approved at all in other districts of the Bronx or in areas of Queens and/or Manhattan and that Community Access wouldn't even try to push this project in those areas. A motion was made **to deny Community Access a letter of support for this project and was passed unanimously.** As an after text, the committee did tell Community Access that they were welcome back if they made a good faith effort to take this project back to the drawing board.