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THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD SIX  
P.O. BOX 1672  
NEW YORK, NY 10159-1672

**Housing, Homelessness, and Human Rights Committee**  
**February 13 at 6:30pm**  
**433 1st Avenue, NYC, Room 210 (NYU School of Dentistry)**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:**

Aissata Camara, Chair  
Rajesh Nayar, Vice Chair  
Aaron Humphrey  
Carin van der Donk  
Pamela Vassil  
Claude L. Winfield  
Sondra Leftoff

**Excused Members**

Claire Brennan

**Guests:**

Ryan Dubois, CCHR  
Leilani Irvin, DHS  
Amanda [Last name not legible]  
Jan Armstrong, SPNA  
Pei Ling Ae  
Patricia Mars  
Muzzy Rosenblatt  
Michelle D. Winfield, Tilden Housing Committee  
Beatrice Maloney, Community Resident  
Ben Jacobs  
Molly Hollister, Chair, CB6  
Maria Rocha-Buschel, Reporter Town Village  
Susan Steinberg, Member, CB6  
Sean Carroll, Community Resident

Aissata Camara called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. The minutes and agenda were adopted by majority.

**Committee Business**

## **1. Presentation by Muzzy Rosenblatt (BRC) to provide updates on 17th Street Safe Haven**

BRC provided an update on the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Safe Haven (327 East 17<sup>th</sup> Street). BRC has been in operation for numerous decades, their goal is to help people while maintaining their dignity. They provide outreach services to unsheltered individuals, transitional housing services, as well as, addiction and mental health treatments. Finally, BRC also provides workforce development services. BRC served 1,790 people through its safe heavens and more than half of them (over 800 clients) had positive outcomes (i.e. moved to permanent housing). BRC serves 500 veterans annually.

The Safe Haven model was created in 2006, it's a new model to help provide services to clients who were harder to serve either because of addiction, mental illness or physical disability. It is purposely created to be less restrictive to meet clients need.

BRC presented their plans for the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Safe Haven ("The Hand Up Safe Heaven") to the HHR Committee over a year ago. The goal is to respond to needs of community and individuals and to help clients transition quickly from homelessness. The 17<sup>th</sup> street Safe Heaven will be 4<sup>th</sup> Safe Heaven operated by BRC and will be referral based. BRC will work with organizations such as Breaking Grounds and City for referrals. BRC will also create service plan with clients. The Hand-up Safe Heaven will have 28 beds (approx. 2 people per room); clients can remain at the site during the day. BRC will give priority to clients from the community; however, they will not hold beds. Treatment is not a condition to get bed. BRC is looking to serve fragile populations because the building has an elevator.

Nearly 21 staff members will be assigned to the site and a minimum of 3 staff will be available per shift. DHS is repairing the elevator; BRC is also carrying out modest repairs. As such, the estimated opening is April 2018. Program Director will be Alvin Thompson; he has a strong background in managing these sites. BRC is also interviewing for the positions and has signed a lease with Beth Israel and a contract with the City.

BRC will have an open line of communication with the community to ensure it is able to mitigate issues and ensure appropriate referrals. BRC operates a 24hrs hotline (212-533-5151) for referrals; they will ask general questions about the homeless individual. BRC can also follow-up with callers to update them on the status of the homeless individuals to the extend allowable by privacy policies.

BRC provides volunteer opportunities for people across ages. They operate day-long education classes for youth (high school). Specifically, youth participate in outreach, meet clients in the safe heavens and after they transition to other housing situations. BRC does not provide opportunities for elementary school youth to participate; they can do drives for toiletries, etc.

Safety is a key concern as the Safe Heaven opens up. If there is personal conflict, BRC staff on site can manage as long as it is close to the site. All staff are trained in crisis intervention, CPR; they also have Narcans. Individuals should call 911 if they fear there is a danger. BRC has a good relationship with the NYPD. Clients will not be allowed to have weapons on site. All clients will be search when entering the Safe Heaven.

Multiple members of the committee raised concerns about the influx of additional beds in CB6.

BRC is open to do group training with various organizations; CB6 has a CAB and will include community organizations, as well as NYPD, and CB6 committee members. Issues and questions related to the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Safe Haven should be directed to:

Muzzy Rosenblatt  
[muzzy@brc.org](mailto:muzzy@brc.org)  
212-803-5701

## **2. Presentation by the New York City Commission on Human Rights. Human Rights 101: How can the Commission be a resource to the community?**

Ryan Dubois provided a presentation about the Commission on Human Rights (CCHR)' resources. CCHR is tasked with fighting discrimination. Goal is to educate individuals about their rights and to ensure they are aware of other people's rights. All services are free. Resolution of the issue depends on the individual who has been victimized. CCHR mainly works on cases that are in Administrative Court; they also manage cases that conclude without the need to go to court. CCHR works continuously to strengthen the human rights laws; they've recently added veterans and military status were recently added as protected classes. CCHR has a community center in every borough. The Commission covers discrimination in employment; can be in the process of hiring, firing, promotion and covers all types of employee relationships including internships.

The policy department is working to expand sexual harassment laws. They are looking at things that make individuals feel humiliated, intimidated or fearful.

Housing discrimination is broad and includes refusal to rent to people, illegal evictions and rent increases, and allowing deterioration of living spaces. Housing discrimination is between two parties- can be tenant to landlord, and tenant to management companies. Discrimination based on source of income is illegal- vouchers and public benefits are allowed and anyone who refuses them should be reported- this applies to landlords who have 6 units or more. Condos and co-ops laws are different and need to be reviewed on a case by case system. It is important to note that there is a difference between a negligent and a discriminatory landlord- the difference is intention to discriminate or to disparately treat tenants- unintentional discrimination.

Discriminatory harassment is the use of force and the threat of use of force. It is when you feel threatened and your well-being/physical safety is at risk. This is illegal. Call 911 if there is imminent threat and later call 911.

Biased based profiling by law enforcement is also covered by CCHR. It is any type of unfair treatment by a law enforcement officer.

Documentation is critical. The more evidence the better. Individuals should keep records of incidents/documents for use as evidence by CCHR. CCHR does investigation of cases

CCHR operates Project Equal Access which focuses on accessibility and disability issues (<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/cchr/community/equal-access.page>)

These rights and services are available to individuals regardless of their citizenship status. Citizenship status is a protected status.

CCHR encourages individuals to report instances of discrimination and harassment. Committee's test is simple: if you suspect there is discrimination or harassment, you can report it!

**In the instance of experienced or witnessed discrimination, individuals should call the CCHR info line at 718-722-3131.** Individuals can leave detailed voicemails. Getting an appointment takes 6-8 weeks; cases can be prioritized as needed.

### **3. Discussion of NYCHA Contractors Employing NYCHA/Low-Income Residents**

The Committee is concerned with the discrepancy in hiring of NYCHA/low income residents in NYCHA projects. The Committee has designated a member of to look further into the issue and to report back to the community. The Committee member will revert back on findings at future meetings. The Committee will also follow-up with elected officials and ensure alignment with the district needs statement. A key marker is that this stipulation will end in June 2018.

### **4. Resolution on Intro 150-2018 formerly Intro1641-2017 that would create a task-force to assess the barriers to arranging transportation to school for homeless**

The Committee reviewed the drafted resolution in support of Intro 150-2018; formerly Intro 1641-2017. The Committee approved the resolution by a majority vote. Raj made a motion to support the Intro 150-2018. The motion was seconded by Pam and passed 7-0.

### **5. Chair's Report**

The Chair discussed the new transitions and her hope to make the Committee inclusive and in-sync with the community. Specifically, she will share a survey with the members to identify key strengths and interests. Committee members will also be expected to take minutes on a rotating basis. The Chair will also work to engage key stakeholders to ensure the Committee is acting in a timely manner to serve the needs of the community.

### **6. Old/New Business**

The Committee continued the discussion of its structure and processes. Members reviewed points provided by Public Member Sondra Leftoff. The Committee will discuss these points at the March Meeting.

Meeting Concluded at 8:30 PM  
Minutes submitted by Aissata Camara