

EXCERPTS FROM COMMUNITY BOARDS' "STATEMENTS ON THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET" FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

Reactions to Agency Responses listed in the FY '16 Register of Community Board Budget Requests are collectively listed under Agency Subheading

Dept. of Buildings

BRONX 3

Bronx Community Board Three is pleased with the efforts of the city administration in appropriating an additional funding commitment of \$5 million to the budget for DOB.

- DOB audit - \$1 million for auditing improvements within the agency – 15 persons
- Enterprise Licensing and Permitting Project - \$7 million for system upgrades to IT systems – 13 persons
- DOB enforcement - \$2.2 million to fund the hiring of 32 Additional staff enforcement personnel

BROOKLYN 9

With the increasing number of building collapses and illegal renovations, there is need for constant inspections by the agency. There should be at least one inspector in each community district throughout the City and funding is critically needed to provide this improved service.

BROOKLYN 14

The board continues its support for agency funding to maintain safety inspection staffing and additional inspection personnel to address construction site, commercial and residential inspections and other complaints in a timely manner. Borough enforcement teams and continued Task Force funding must be supported in order to address egregious conditions and persistent offenders. The agency's inspection and enforcement functions are essential to local community preservation efforts. The agency's response that all requests will be accommodated within existing resources raises concern given the lag time between complaint and inspection and again from finding of violation to enforcement. Therefore, the board reiterates its request for *increased* funding.

MANHATTAN 4

Ask:

- **Funding of at least \$200,000 to hire Community Coordinator and two Administrative Associates**

The Department of Building's (DOB) ability to provide a level of code enforcement necessary to protect existing low-income housing stock as well as monitor practices such as unsafe and after hours construction is vital to preserving the neighborhoods. The Manhattan Borough office

remains understaffed with only one Community Coordinator responsible for the entire Borough of Manhattan. An increase of approximately \$200,000 in DOB's expense budget to fund an additional Community Coordinator and two Administrative Associates is needed. Equally as important more inspectors are needed to ensure compliance with zoning bulk and use requirements in order to preserve community character at a time when self-certification is being more widely depended on, and we note with regret that the preliminary budget provides for no increase in DOB staff. Funds are also needed to train plan inspectors including training on the zoning regulations applicable to special districts. Funds are also needed for additional inspectors to monitor compliance with special district regulations and to stop illegal use of rent regulated apartments for transient use. Multiple dwellings and SROs continue to be warehoused and rented as a short term stays illegally, which both deprives the community of affordable apartments that would otherwise be rented on a long term basis, and secondly, the nature of such short term use compromises the security and habitability for those living in the building. We ask that the needs of MCD4 – which consists almost entirely of special districts – be addressed when allocations of these funds are determined, after adoption of the budget.

QUEENS 5

Expense Budget requests:

The afternoon and evening inspections performed by the Department of Buildings Quality of Life Task Force, especially in Queens, must continue at and even above current levels to reduce the number of illegal property uses. The Department of Buildings is finally making a dent in this epidemic. Weekend inspections are critical.

The Queens Office of the Department of Buildings needs at least 30 qualified inspectors to cope with questionable construction and illegal uses of properties.

Plan examination, electrical, plumbing and elevator inspectors must be adequate in number to assure compliance with building codes. We must be careful of being overly reliant on and not monitoring self-certification.

The Queens Office of the Department of Buildings needs at least 20 qualified Plan Examiner's to cope with questionable construction and to reduce the need for self-certification.

The Department of Buildings, HPD, the Fire Department and the Department of Finance must plan and work together to assure compliance with housing codes and to get property owners to pay the fines they owe. Too often property owners leave buildings in disrepair and continue illegal uses, as violations are only a lien on the property.

QUEENS 7

Our area is inundated with illegal conversions, and many of our large homes and apartments have been converted into hotel and S.R.O.'s. These increase in inspectors, and plan examiners in order to be able to monitor more closely new construction, building renovations and illegal uses.