

COMMUNITY BOARD 9 MANHATTAN  
LANDMARKS COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

Date: January 24, 2012  
Location: Broadway Housing, 583 Riverside Drive  
Present: Walter South  
Simon Thoresen  
Larry English  
Kimberly Cameron

1. Chairman South called the meeting to order at 6.40pm
2. The agenda was adopted.
3. A number of neighbors of the Convent Avenue Baptist Church brought their grievances before the Committee:
  - Regarding the pending BSA Hearing to grant the Church a variance on the illegal extension constructed in 1976. The Church needs the variance in order to get approval from the Department of Buildings for a permit to construct an addition on West 145<sup>th</sup> Street in the Hamilton Heights Historic District.
  - The neighbors object to the design of the extension on the grounds that it is inappropriate for the district.
  - There is no outreach to the community.

The Committee disapproved the extension on the grounds that it was inappropriate for the historic district and that the Church could and should present a better design. However, CB 9 at the General meeting in March 2011 voted to approve the extension by one vote, which turned out to be irregular. Never-the-less, the proposal was approved by NYC Landmarks Commission.

The Committee also disapproved recommending support at the BSA for the original extension, which is illegal. The original application that was approved by DOB was for a single story structure with a basement. What was built is a basement and two stories, three feet higher than permitted and larger than the permissible foot print. The Board also overruled this recommendation. The neighbors object to the noise that is generated from activities in the extension, which is particularly disturbing in the summer when the windows are open. They did not attend the earlier Board Meeting as they were not made aware of it.

The Committee recommended that the neighbors bring their grievances to the next General Board Meeting and seek support from the Board on both issues. Also, they should hire a lawyer and attend the hearing at the BSA to try to negotiate an agreement with the Church whereby a variance would only be granted in return for sound attenuating measures in the extension, such as installing insulation, double glazed, sealed windows and air conditioning. Also the Church should hire a new, competent architect to redesign the extension and involve the community in the process.

The Committee voted to support this 4 – 0.

5. The meeting adjourned at 7.45 pm.

6. Next meeting: February 23, 2012 at Broadway Housing.