



**THE CITY OF NEW YORK
COMMUNITY BOARD 9
MANHATTAN**

Morningside Heights
Manhattanville
Hamilton Heights
Sugar Hill

Housing, Land Use, and Zoning Committee Meeting

David Ratner (Co-Chair), Metin Sarci (Co-Chair), Juan Colmenares, Ilana Mercado, Ria McDonald, Alexander Abraham, Theresa Cole-Ragin
April Tyler, Co-Chair (in memoriam)

DATE: Tuesday, April 14th, 2026

TIME: 6:30 p.m. (Called to Order at 6:40 p.m.)

MINUTES

Attendees:

Committee Members Present: David Ratner, Metin Sarci, Juan Colmenares, Ria McDonald, Theresa Cole-Ragin, Alexander Abraham, Ilana Mercado (zoom)

Public Members Present: Liz Waytkus, Barry Weinberg

Other Attendees: Andres Orejuela, Yuien Chin, Liam Valere, Sam Draeger, Vilori Thorton, Signe Mortensen, Victor Edwards (MCB9)

- I. **Call to Order:** Co-Chair David Ratner called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.
- II. **Adopt Agenda:** The agenda was adopted by unanimous consent.
- III. **Adopt Minutes:** The March 2026 meeting minutes were approved without objection.
- IV. **Introductions/Presentations/Announcements**
 - a. **Monthly Resource Agenda:** Co-Chair Metin Sarci presented a comprehensive listing of HLUZ resources and upcoming events for the period of April 15 to May 12, 2026. This includes a partnership with Palante for legal consultations on May 7, HPD "In Your District" events, and civil service information sessions.



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- b. **NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA):** Discussion regarding the ongoing conflict between NYCHA and the Department of Sanitation (DSNY) regarding garbage collection. NYCHA maintains they have sufficient staff for staging, while DSNY reports performing adequate pickups, yet refuse remains piled at developments.
- c. **International House:** The committee discussed reports of residents being required to sign "membership" license agreements rather than leases. There are concerns that these agreements are used to circumvent tenancy rights for graduate students staying longer than 30 days.

V. New Business Discussions

- a. **1727 Amsterdam Avenue:** Co-Chair Sarci reported on the HPD Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) hearing. He is advocating for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Emma Bowen and Harlem Heritage, a 1:15 caseworker ratio for supportive housing, and localized hiring requirements through NYC Workforce1 and NYCHA Office of Resident Empowerment & Sustainability (REES).
- b. **620 West 153rd Street:** Co-Chair Ratner reported on the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) hearing regarding the 14-story height violation. He described the process as a "kangaroo court," noting that the board took only five minutes to review a 13-page legal submission before dismissing it. The committee will pursue an Article 78 proceeding via the Borough President's office.
- c. **4 Hancock Place:** The property has been sold to the National Action Network (NAN). NAN leadership has indicated they intend to use the site as their headquarters and potentially house a museum, with a commitment to preserving the building's historic facade.
- d. **Mayor's Preliminary Budget:** The committee reviewed agency responses to FY26 requests. Most items received agency support but lacked immediate funding. The committee emphasized the importance of testifying at upcoming City Council budget hearings.



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VI. Old Business; Subcommittee/taskforce reports

- a. **RKO Hamilton Theatre:** No new updates; the owners remain unresponsive to community outreach.
- b. **Legislation/Developments:** Liz Waytkus reported that HDFCs are experiencing insurance premium increases of up to 400%. The committee discussed the role of New York Labor Law 240 (Scaffolding Law) in driving up construction and replacement costs.
- c. **Morningside Heights Community Coalition (MHCC):** An agreement has been reached between the MTA and Columbia University to install three ADA-compliant elevators at the 125th Street subway station.
- d. **Deed Theft:** The committee noted the Mayor's plan to establish an Office of Deed Theft and will monitor potential state legislation regarding eviction stays for victims of deed fraud.

VII. Action Items

- a. **1727 Amsterdam:** Co-Chair Sarci to provide formal testimony at the HPD hearing on April 15th.
- b. **620 West 153rd Street:** Co-Chair Ratner to coordinate with the Borough President's office regarding BSA oversight and legal challenges.
- c. **HDFC Advocacy:** Committee to draft support for insurance reform and investigate the impact of current liability laws on cooperative housing.
- d. **142nd Street Monitoring:** Liz Waytkus to monitor new scaffolding permits and filings at the 142nd Street row house site.

VIII. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Next CB9 HLUZ Meeting: Tuesday, May 12th, 2026.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Metin Sarci