



**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, Michael Gross, Alexander Abraham, Theresa Cole-Ragin
April Tyler, Co-Chair (in memoriam)

DATE: Thursday, November 6th, 2025

TIME: 6:30 pm

MINUTES

(these minutes have been recorded with AI assistance)

Attendees

Committee members present: David Ratner, Metin Sarci, Juan Colmenares, Ilana Mercado, Ria McDonald, Michael Gross, Alexander Abraham

Committee members absent: Theresa Cole-Ragin

Public member attendees: Signe Mortensen, Liz Waytkus, Barry Weinberg

Other community board attendees:

Others Present:

- I. Call to Order – 6:40 p.m. started
- II. Adopt Agenda – action accepted
- III. Adopt Minutes – September minutes were approved. The October minutes were not yet prepared, so the item was adjourned to the December meeting.
- IV. Introductions/Presentations/Announcements
Introduction of committee and attendees
- V. New Business Discussions
 - a. Tenant Association of 507/509/561 West 149th Street
 - i. Sandra Machala, representing tenants in Hamilton Heights, expressed concerns about a predatory condo conversion plan by their landlord, David Brecker, who is offering to purchase their rent-stabilized apartments for over \$400,000 while simultaneously attempting evictions of elderly and Section 8 tenants.
 - ii. The tenants, organized into a board of seven with a group chat of 60 neighbors, have faced numerous maintenance issues and code violations, with hundreds of immediate hazards in their buildings.
 - iii. The discussion revealed that while the Attorney General's office is reviewing the situation, no formal enforcement action has been taken yet, and there are pending questions about the requirement for Spanish translations of documents, though Cuomo's executive proposal mandates translations into several languages.



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- iv. Tenants reached out to Palante and awaiting response from Director. Committee member suggested that Palante might arrange for representation by Himmelstein & McConnell (private firm)

- b. **16 Convent Avenue Application** - Joseph G presented new construction project at 16 Convent, an as-of-right, 7RA 11-story mixed-use building with residential and daycare facilities, which is set to begin construction in late 2025.
- 85-unit residential development project in Harlem, with 17 units designated as affordable at 40%, 60%, and 80% AMI levels. Joseph from Houseman Development presented the project, which will break ground in January 2026 and open in 2027, featuring a mix of one- and two-bedroom units with a small parking lot and daycare facility accommodating up to 15 children aged 0-5 with 3 staff members.
 - The discussion included concerns about the architectural design fitting into the Harlem neighborhood's aesthetic, with some community members expressing hope that future developments would better respect the area's architectural heritage while acknowledging the need for new housing.
 - Discussions about the breakdown of units at 40%, 60%, and 80% AMI levels. Project would be privately financed and not pursue HPD financing packages like Mix and Match, citing limited public resources and long waiting times. Public noted the need for more intentional partnerships with local communities.

Joseph G to provide:

- detailed AMI breakdown chart for 16 Convent development units to the committee
- provide numerical breakdown of affordable units across 40/60/80% AMI categories HPD possibility of increasing affordable units and reducing AMI requirements below 80%
- work with architect to review building design and consider more contextual architectural
- Information on daycare operator selection process and requirements

- c. **Budget Needs FY 2027**
- Metin presented updates on budget requests, including adjustments to narratives for HPD and DHS, and clarified funding needs for additional inspectors and health programs.
- d. **620 West 153rd Street Zoning Variance**
- 28-story building at 620 West 153rd Street found to be non-compliant with zoning regulations, proposing four conditions for approval, including increasing affordable units, maintaining rent-stabilized apartments, funding temporary relocations, and improving public open spaces.
 - Discussion whether to conditionally approve or disapprove application. Barry proposed a letter arguing that the Board of Standards and Appeals should not hear the case, as it involves a self-created hardship. Instead, he suggested the developer go through the ULURP process for a retroactive rezoning. Emphasized need to hold developers accountable and protect community interests.



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- iii. Public temp vote in favor of Barry's proposal (Conditional approve – 5; Conditional disapprove- 12), with conditions that if the BSA grants the variance, the developer must meet certain requirements, including making the building 100% affordable.

e. ULURP: 1727 Amsterdam - Discussion

- i. Committee reviewed multiple versions of the proposed resolution. Committee agreed to add language about affordable housing and to clarify their opposition to the ULURP application. Members debated the appropriate level of detail to include regarding supportive housing populations and unit counts. Committee also considered adding language about BRC's lack of experience with projects of this scale in West Harlem. Karen suggested simplifying some of the language for clarity. The resolution will be sent to the Borough President's office and City Planning Commission, with Mark Levine or Brad Hoylman Siegel as the reviewing officials.
- ii. Discussion around concerns about mix of residents and suggested removing HHC's requirement that residents be their patients and removing HHC entirely from project. The group agreed that while some supportive housing for people with serious mental illness (SMI) or substance use disorder (SUD) might be necessary, the current proposal of 120 SMI units out of 200 total units seemed excessive. Committee agreed to limit SMI and/or SUD residents to no more than 10-25 units out of 120 total supportive units. The board also approved adding language to ensure the community health center is properly relocated before demolition of the site. Committee discussed upzoning the project to R8A zoning with MIH designation targeting a 40% AMI weighted average. The board agreed to strengthen language in the resolution addressing the racial and historical impact of the project on the Black and Latino communities.

f. 4 Hancock Place Deed Modification

VI. Old Business; Subcommittee/taskforce reports – *moved forward to next meeting due to time.*

- a. ~~RKO Hamilton Theatre Taskforce~~
- b. ~~Legislation we are watching~~
- c. ~~Developments we are watching~~
- d. ~~Public Members updates~~
- e. ~~NYCHA Updates~~
- f. ~~MHCC Updates~~
- g. ~~TIL~~
- h. ~~Community Planning Fellow Application~~

VII. Action Items

- a. 1727 Amsterdam ULURP Resolution above – no consensus on some points - final vote to be deferred to Exec committee

VIII. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned 10:15 pm



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Next CB9 HLUZ Meeting: Tuesday, December 9th, 2025

The minutes were respectfully submitted by Signe Mortensen (with AI assistance)