

**Chair Report**  
**February 18, 2021**  
**General Board Meeting**

***Mourning a Fallen Warrior***

Tragedy befell our Community Board, the West Harlem community, the HDFC Coalition, and all of New York this week with the unexpected passing of our Treasurer, our friend, and our advocate, April Tyler.

I do not have to tell any of you how deeply this loss hurts. April was one of the leading voices on our Board, Co-Chairing the Housing, Zoning, and Land Use Committee, leading us through the budget process as Treasurer, and generally keeping us honest and active as a Board in confronting the rising tide of development that is sweeping the district. To many of us, she was also a valued friend, confidante, and comrade-in-arms, someone to whom you could turn for advice, a joke, or just a good cry.

I know that the Board stands with her mother Sylvia Tyler, her sons Dietrich and Thabo Geister, and her entire family during this difficult time. More information regarding memorial plans will be circulated shortly.

I challenge all of us as Community Board 9 members to stretch ourselves to attempt to fill some of the enormous void April has left. April was a leading voice on the fight to redevelop the former site Child's Memorial Church at 1763 Amsterdam as permanent, deeply-affordable housing, as well as to restore and redevelop the Hamilton RKO Theater at W 146<sup>th</sup> Street. She led the fight to defend HDFCs here in Harlem and across the City, not just defeating proposals by HPD and in the State Legislature to take over HDFCs, but working to make sure an alternative legislative framework was proposed to ensure the autonomy and support of HDFCs well into the future.

One of the things that made April formidable as a leader on our Board was her refusal to solely be reactive to challenges. April forced the Board to develop a vision for the community based on our common ideals and then take concrete, assertive action to make that vision a reality. She was intent on getting developers in front of the Board *before* they made their plans so that they could hear what the community needs and plan to meet those needs. She wasn't content to kill bad bills in the City Council or the State Legislature; she made sure to develop and advance community-based alternatives to go beyond defending the status-quo and build a better future.

None of us can fill April's shoes alone. But one of the best ways we can honor her memory is to challenge ourselves to step up and be as proactive as April was. Call and text each other outside of meetings, follow-up with our agency contacts and elected officials, and set aside the time to stop and consider, "What do we want our community to look like in 10, 20, or 50 years? What do we need to do to make that vision a reality?"

While we honor April's memory through that work, I also want to remind us to support one another. Check in with your fellow committee-members and board and community members, ask how they are doing, and let them know that you appreciate them. The work we do is hard, and we must take care of one another.

Eutha and I will continue to inform the Board about memorial plans and efforts to support April's family in their time of loss and mourning. We will also be discussing ways to honor and remember April and all

of those great CB9 warriors we have lost over the years in our new temporary office space as our move-in date approaches.

Your Chair,

Barry Weinberg

***Manhattan Borough President's Capital Funding Application Closes February 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>!***

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer's Capital Funding applications are live for both City entities and non-profits with City contracts. Capital projects must have a useful life of at least 5 year and meet certain other requirements and criteria. More information, including video explanations, can be found online at <https://www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov/funding/capital-funding/>. The deadline for schools and other organizations that serve the City is February 21<sup>st</sup> at 5pm. The deadline for non-profits is February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5pm.

***Community Board Applications have been Extended through Monday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>***

Are you active and involved in your local community in West Harlem? Do you live here, own a business or attend school here, or have other substantial involvement and investment in our community? Apply to be on Manhattan Community Board 9! The application deadline has been extended through Monday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>. You can apply at <https://rebrand.ly/mbpoCBappEN>. For more information, visit the Manhattan Borough President's website at [www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov](http://www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov)

***Press Conference re 1763 Amsterdam Ave/Child's Memorial Site held on Monday, January 25, 2021***

Manhattan Community Board 9 held a press conference this coming Monday at 10am at the former site of Child's Memorial Tabernacle Church at 1763 Amsterdam Avenue between 147<sup>th</sup> and 148<sup>th</sup> Streets to call on the Department of Homeless Services not to approve an inappropriate contract with a shelter provider to allow a developer to construct a building consisting entirely of studio units to be leased to the provider for 7 years to be used as a shelter for homeless families with children. In addition to the fact that studio units are not adequate or dignified shelter for families with children, CB9 believes that this development site should instead be used to develop permanent affordable and/or supportive housing for homeless individuals or families so that they can escape homelessness and finally have permanent homes. We call on DHS to work with CB9 to acquire the site for such housing. Coverage of the press conference can be found at <https://patch.com/new-york/harlem/west-harlem-leaders-oppose-new-shelter-call-housing-instead> and <https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2021/01/26/community-leaders-protest-the-construction-of-homeless-shelter-call-for-the-city-to-build-permanent-affordable-housing/>

***New Eviction Moratorium Allows for Hardship Declaration to Delay Proceedings Until May 1, 2021***

In December, the State Legislator Passed and the Governor signed the COVID-19 Emergency Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2020. This act stays pending eviction proceedings and residential mortgage foreclosure actions for 60 days, stays actions and proceedings first filed in December for 30 days, and allows tenants or mortgagors to file hardship declarations that will further stay any

proceedings and actions until May 1<sup>st</sup>. If you are facing eviction or foreclosure, I strongly urge you to consider going to <http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/nyc/SSI/images/corona/HardshipDeclaration.pdf>, download the Hardship Declaration form, and send it to your landlord or mortgage holder. More information can be found at <https://www.nycourts.gov/covid-eefpa.shtml>. Please note that this does not constitute legal advice, and I am not an attorney.

### ***Governor, State Legislature Agree that More Tax Revenues are Needed***

In February of this year, before the pandemic upended all of our lives, Manhattan Community Board 9 was the first Community Board to pass a resolution calling on our State Legislature and the Governor to address an apparent budget shortfall by increasing taxes on the highest-income and wealthiest New Yorkers. Many of the proposals most likely to be adopted, including a possible tax on high-value second homes (the pied-a-terre tax), increasing the millionaire's tax, and removing the rebate for the stock transfer tax were included as possible solutions in our resolution. I want to commend all of our Board Members for their early advocacy on this issue.

### ***December Federal Stimulus Bill and Additional Round of Paycheck Protection Program***

On December 27<sup>th</sup>, a second federal COVID relief bill was signed into law. Provisions include an additional \$600 in Economic Impact Payments, \$300 per week in federal unemployment benefits, \$25 billion in rental assistance, \$82 billion for local schools, and \$284 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program. This is a start towards much-needed federal assistance for individuals and businesses to survive the ongoing pandemic. Please be on the lookout for scams around the Economic Impact Payment. Individuals who received a first EIP in 2020 should automatically receive a check in the mail. You can also go the IRS website at <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payments> for more information.

If you own a small business or know a small business that needs assistance from the Paycheck Protection Program, please see the information page here at <https://www1.nyc.gov/nycbusiness/article/paycheck-protection-program-ppp>

### ***Tax Lien Sale Delayed Until 2021, Measure Up for Renewal***

When property owners do not pay their tax and water bill debts owed to the City, those unpaid debts become liens on the property. Since a law passed during the Giuliani administration went into effect, the City can choose not to take possession of those properties and instead can sell the liens to private Wall Street financial institutions for cash upfront. The financial institutions that purchase the liens can then attempt to collect the debt on an accelerated basis and with higher fees and rates. This process is called a tax lien sale.

The tax lien sales have been delayed until at least 2021 by Executive Orders issued by Governor Andrew Cuomo. Additionally, the City law allowing such sales is due to expire, requiring a renewal from the City Council. Given the dearth of real estate available for affordable housing and other priorities, this is an important opportunity to rethink and potentially end the practice of selling tax liens. Intro 2166-2020, introduced by Councilmember Adrienne Adams of Queens, would delay any future tax lien sales through at least December 31, 2024 and change what properties are subject to the sales. CB9 will be exploring proposed changes to the tax lien sale ourselves to submit to the City Council for further review.

### ***NYCHA Blueprint for Change Proposes Privatization of NYCHA, Erodes Tenant Protections***

With the public comment period for NYCHA's Blueprint for Change ending on December 28<sup>th</sup>, it is of the utmost importance that NYCHA residents and the public in CB9 give their feedback on the plan. The Blueprint proposes to turn NYCHA over to a private Preservation Trust, led by Mayoral appointees, that will have the ability to borrow money against the properties to make repairs. Borrowing against public housing is prohibited by law, which is why the buildings would have to be first transferred to a private trust. As with all debt, there is a danger that if the new Preservation Trust is unable to repay the debt, then New York could lose its public housing that have kept hundreds of thousands housed for generations.

Public housing is an integral part of any housing strategy that can meet the needs of a 21<sup>st</sup> century New York. The nearly 30 year deliberate disinvestment and austerity campaign, begun by Congressional Republicans in the 1990s, has starved NYCHA of previously-available federal funds for repair and maintenance. The resulting long, slow decline of our public housing stock was specifically engineered to bring about the privatization of this housing. Community Board 9 will work together with NYCHA residents and others to make sure that NYCHA and our federal officials are held accountable and stop the march to privatization and, potentially, erosion of tenants' rights.

The feedback page is: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nycha/about/contact/transformation-plan-public-comments.page>

### ***Free City COVID Testing at 21 Old Broadway***

The coronavirus continues to spread in New York, albeit at a greatly reduced rate compared to the spring. New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation offers free coronavirus testing at the clinic at 21 Old Broadway at W 126<sup>th</sup> Street 7 days a week, Monday-Sunday, from 9am-7pm. No appointment is necessary. Please call 844-NYC-4NYC if you have any questions. Help us keep coronavirus in check and keep your friends, neighbors, and family safe. It pays to get tested!

### ***Get Your Flu Shot!***

Flu season has unfortunately arrived. This year it is more important than ever to be vaccinated for the flu so as to avoid getting sick and requiring medical attention, which may further expose you to COVID. Per the DOHMH, "Flu vaccines are widely available at doctor's offices, pharmacies, community health clinics and through employer-sponsored programs. Most health insurance plans cover flu vaccination without a co-pay." Many of the drug stores in our area offer flu shots with no copay and with no appointment necessary. To find the nearest location offering flu shots near you, you can go to <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/flu-seasonal-vaccination.page>

### ***Proposed Development at W 142<sup>nd</sup> Street and Riverside Drive***

Manhattan Community Board 9's Housing, Zoning, and Land Use Committee saw a preliminary presentation by a developer seeking to build a 17 story residential tower on the north corner of W 142<sup>nd</sup> Street and Riverside Drive. The proposed tower would contain 81 apartments, 21 of which would be

affordable. In order to develop the site, the owner would have to destroy two of the historic townhouse on the site. The development would require an upzoning on the site from the current R6A designation (which has a 70 foot height cap) to R9A, which has a 170 foot height cap. The developers have not yet formally had their application at the Department of City Planning finalized, which would begin the formal Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP), at which point the Community Board 9 would hold a hearing and formal vote to recommend for or against approval of the rezoning application.

If you are interested in this development, please email [mcb9housing@gmail.com](mailto:mcb9housing@gmail.com) to sign up for the HZLU Committee mail list and plan on attending the upcoming meetings of the Committee, which meets the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30pm.

***December 21 Uptown Town Hall on COVID-19 Vaccine Now Online***

Manhattan Community Board 9 will be cosponsored a virtual town hall about the COVID-19 vaccine with Columbia University, Ryan Health, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, and Manhattan Community Boards 7, 10, 11, and 12 at 6:30pm on Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup>. The town hall was a success, and can be viewed at <https://neighbors.columbia.edu/events/community-briefing-covid-19-vaccine-nyc>

***St. Luke's Episcopal Church Potential Sale and Redevelopment***

The Episcopal Diocese of New York is exploring a sale of the property and building of St. Luke's Episcopal Church on Convent Avenue and W 141<sup>st</sup> Street. CB9 has engaged in preliminary discussions with the Hamilton Terrace Block Association about the future of the site, which is in a Historic District. If you are interested in being part of the research and discussion around the site, please email [mcb9housing@gmail.com](mailto:mcb9housing@gmail.com) and mention St. Luke's Church in the subject line.