**Community Board 17**

**Land Use Committee Virtual Meeting**

**Thursday, January 6, 2022**

**Present: Guests:**

Kwame Afreh Damaris Falero,

Vanessa Quashie Dept. of Buildings,

Joan Erskine Community Engagement Team

Dale Dawes Ken Lazar,

Mary Gallagher Dept. of Buildings,

Dr. Carol Reneau Community Engagement Team

Allyson Martinez Trisha Ocona

Hazel Martinez

Julia James

Jorge Tait

Joan Bakiriddin

Adele Bennett

Pierre Albert

Yolanda Alleyne

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The **Land Use Committee** Virtual meeting was held on **Thursday, January 6, 2022 at 7:30pm.**

**Mr. Kwame Afreh** called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

**Chairperson’s Report**

**Mr. Afreh** said there are some upcoming housing related issues that will be on the schedule. The Foreclosure Courts will probably be opening and he had heard the moratoriums are going to be lifted, but they will see in the coming days. With the change in administration, a lot of their point of contacts have changed.

Did everyone receive the November meeting minutes? Are there any objections or corrections to the minutes?

**Ms. Hazel Martinez** said on page 5, the Councilmember should be Inez Barron, not Dalene Mealy.

**Mr. Afreh** asked for a motion to accept the minutes with the corrections?

**Ms. Joan Erskine** made a motion to accept the minutes.

**Ms. H. Martinez** seconded the motion.

**Mr. Afreh** said the Buildings Dept. is here to discuss construction noise complaints in the local communities.

**Ms. Damaris Falero** said she is here with Mr. Ken Lazar from the Buildings Dept. Community Engagement Team in Brooklyn. They heard that there were some issues regarding AHVs or concerns with AHVs in the community and they are here to provide more information and insight and answer questions they may have.

After hours variances are permits the Dept. of Buildings issues for construction activity before 7am and after 6pm or on a Saturday or Sunday. It is a simple process for the contractors to apply for an AHV and there are several reasons why AHVs are requested and granted and is usually in an area with a lot of traffic congestion. They are seen at schools during normal business hours and the building is occupied with children and people and it is easier for the contractor to do the work after business hours. DOB has a real time interactive after-hours variance map and it can be found on the Website. It basically shows the location of construction projects where DOB has issued permits allowing construction to proceed outside of normal business hours.

AHVs renewals are not available for projects where the scope of the work has changed, or the contractor or licensee is not in good standing with the Dept. or there is an issue with the job application that requires correction. Not all jobs have after hours variance permits, so if there is an issue or complaint for after hours work, they can call it into 3-1-1 and an Inspector will be sent out and if there is no after-hours variance permit, a violation will be issued.

On the other side, there have been issues were the community does not approve of an after-hours variance permit, and usually, it is the borough that approves the permits. If they get any complaints within the community that there are issues regarding the noise, they will take it to the Borough Commissioner, and it is within his discretion to basically deny or approve the after-hours variance permit. There have been situations where maybe the contractors will work with the community to come to some sort of agreement as far as the hours, so there is some communication or an opportunity for communication between the contractors and the community and this way, both parties are satisfied and there are no noise complaints.

**Mr. Ken Lazar** said he posted a link in the chat for information on the after-hours variance and when and how they are issued. The noise is monitored by the Dept. of Environmental Protection.

**Ms. H. Martinez** said in the past, the contractors would come to the Board to ask for approval. The contractors would get the variance and work all weekend to remove asbestos. The neighbor on one side is a Minister and has his services on Saturday and the other one has his services on Sunday. When it comes to this community in particular, nobody cares their Sabbaths or needs or the disturbance in the community.

**Mr. Lazar** said the permit for asbestos removal falls under the Dept. of Environmental Protection. The Dept. of Buildings does not have control of asbestos removal. As far as working on the weekend to do regular construction work, they would have to apply for a permit, working between the hours of 10am to 4pm. Construction work on a one or two-family house does not require an after-hour variance.

**Ms. H. Martinez** said there is an apartment building being constructed at 3511 Farragut Road. Complaints were submitted by the residents and the complaint were not looked at for 10 days, what was the purpose.

**Ms. Falero** said there is no AHV for that location, so they were doing the work illegally. The complaint was received on Dec. 11th and was inspected on Dec. 13th and there was no work being done at that time. When the Dept. receives a complaint, they are prioritized from A to C and they respond within the timeframe for the priority. They can only issue violations if a violation occurs and the Inspector sees the violating conditions.

**Ms. H. Martinez** asked how can the residents get any kind of resolution, if they are never there when it happens.

**Ms. Falero** said someone can be sent out as soon as they send in the complaint. They can send an email to her cell and she will expedite the inspection when someone is on site and they should not be. This is not just in this community, this is an issue that comes across with any complaint in any borough. Sometimes when contractors are doing things illegally, they are looking in the system to see when Inspectors are going out. They have to see the condition, they cannot just issue violations, if they did not observe it. They did go out to the illegal demolition and asbestos removal at 3511 Farragut Road and the Inspector said they were performing an abatement operation on the two story building for demolition, but there was no construction activity going on and there were active permits in place from the Dept. of Environmental Protection.

**Mr. Afreh** asked if their violations come in the form of fines or stop work orders? Can she explain what happens when violations are issued?

**Ms. Falero** said there are several different types of violations. If there is active construction going on at the site and there are permits on site, they can issue a stop work order and there are tons of different violations that can be issued. Some come with fines and there are also some civil penalties, that are usually related to work without permits. There is a lot of information about permits and it varies widely. DOB does not put liens on properties, even if the property has $100,000.00 in violations.

**Dr. Carol Reneau** asked if community activist or anyone in the community can upload pictures or sound recordings to assist with the violations or is it only verbal?

**Ms. Falero** said they can provide pictures or videos to any complaint. They will not be able to issue violations based on pictures, the Inspector would actually have to observe the violations.

**Mr. Jorge Tait** asked if the complaints are for after-hours work, are the Inspectors coming out at night?

**Ms. Falero** said they have Inspectors that work all hours, 24/7, so anything after hours will be responded to by the Emergency Response Team.

**Mr. Dale Dawes** asked how would the photos be used as evidence if a fine cannot be issued based on them, even if they are time stamped?

**Ms. Falero** said they do not necessarily use them, but they don’t deter the public from providing them because sometimes they are helpful and sometimes the public will have structural concerns regarding a site, the videos can be helpful to understand from the Inspector’s perspective what is actually happening there, but a physical inspection is always required.

**Mr. Lazar** said 3-1-1 does allow photos and videos to be submitted on-line when putting in a complaint. The Inspector has to witness the violating condition.

**Mr. Tait** asked if the pictures are time stamped at 9pm, are they going to send the Inspector at 9pm the next day to see if this is still going on? Would they receive an update on the status of the complaint?

**Ms. Falero** said if the time stamp says 9pm, and an Inspector is not available at that moment, they will go back when they believe the work is taking place, so they would have a better chance to see the actual violating condition. Every time a complaint is submitted, it is dispatched and generated, then basically the Inspector has to always disposition what he sees at the time of the inspection and that information is uploaded into their system and available to the public.

**Dr. Reneau** said what she sees happening in their neighborhood is the construction crews understand their system well and they know that someone is not going to come out for a day or two. Are there Inspectors inspecting these sites, just doing walk throughs without violations being reported to make sure everything is in order?

**Mr. Lazar** said they have multiple units that respond the same day, some over the course of a couple of days. It depends on the type and level of severity of the complaint and what the situation is. Their Inspectors are in the field all the time and in the office a minimal amount of time.

**Ms. Falero** said they do have Inspectors that do pop-up visits to bigger sites, not one or two family homes. They make sure everything is up to code and they are in compliance. It is usually for bigger sites where it is not on a complaint basis.

3511 Farragut Road has no permits at all, and DOB would not usually go out there randomly. They did file for permits, but nothing has been approved.

**Ms. H. Martinez** said they were planning demolition a few weeks ago and it just happened that people complained and now it has stalled.

**Mr. Lazar** said first, they would have to remediate the asbestos and once it is removed, then they can go through the filing for the pre-demolition inspection and then they would file for demolition.

**Ms. Allyson Martinez** asked if notification can be provided when the permits are approved?

**Mr. Lazar** said that is part of the demolition process. Once they apply for the permits, they will be sending a letter to the neighbors and the Community Board that the demolition will be taking place within the next 10 days.

**Mr. Dawes** asked what is an example of a same day offence that would require the Inspectors to come out on the same day?

**Mr. Lazar** said contractors throwing stuff off the roof of a building, bricks falling off the building, major cracks on the side of the building, a building falling over and that would be a same day response, in addition to other City agencies.

**Mr. Afreh** asked what are the tiers of their response levels?

**Mr. Lazar** said they are assigned to A, B, C and D. Bricks falling off a building would be an A. Curb cuts that are already there, would be a C or D. Zoning issues would also be a C or D.

**Ms. Falero** said priority A complaints are extremely hazardous and present a clear risk to public safety are usually inspected within 24 hours. Bs are a serious hazard, but that does not necessarily present an eminent threat to public safety.

**Mr. Dale** asked if something is being constructed next to your home and they notice a change in the foundation, would that be a priority A.

**Mr. Lazar** said if there is a construction site next to your home and you notice the foundation is cracking, that would be a priority A, and they would be out the same day or next day. That would be reported as the construction site is damaging their property and the Inspector would be out almost immediately.

**Mr. Tait** said regarding traffic, if they have construction trucks and no flagman **(INAUDIBLE)** Would that be a violation of their permit with the City?

**Mr. Lazar** said that would fall under the Dept. of Transportation. They permits are limited to the construction site. Their responsibility ends at the property line. The DOB permits the crane and DOT would be involved with the traffic.

**Ms. Falero** said if a complaint is called into 3-1-1, it will be routed to DOT.

**Ms. A. Martinez** asked if they have a printout of the grading system that can be sent out to people?

**Ms. Falero** said no, not available to the public, but she will try to find out for them, but it is not posted on the website. They have complaint categories of what the codes mean, but not any detailed information on the actual priority codes.

**Mr. Lazar** said it would be helpful, but people would be fishing for what code can they put this under to get them there faster, when it is not an actual complaint. When calling 3-1-1, they would be given a timeframe for when the Inspector would be there and it is usually longer than the actual response time, but they would be there in a lesser time than given by 3-1-1.

**Mr. Afreh** asked if there were any system they could use to find what active permits are on a property, regardless of agency or should they try to decide who or what’s **(INAUDIBLE)**

**Ms. Falero** said open data, there is an actual real interactive map for AHVs and she can send the link for them to see all the AHV permits for all the boroughs. The open data also has all active permits for all agencies. It is user friendly and the file can be downloaded and filtered by Community Boards.

**Dr. Reneau** said for some of the construction sites that have stalled in this area, when she calls 3-1-1, they route her to Sanitation. There is a lot of garbage being dumped in or on some of the construction sites.

**Mr. Lazar** said Sanitation does not do that, they do not go onto private property. In that case, it would probably be the Dept. of Health who would issue them a violation.

**Ms. Falero** said they have inspected sites that have a lot of stored materials, basically, illegal storage and the do issue for inadequate housekeeping and DOB does respond to those types of complaints on active construction sites when there is a lot of debris.

**Dr. Reneau** said this location has a stop work order and there is one behind her that is starting to accumulate a lot of garbage. She will send them the address.

**Ms. H. Martinez** said in terms of construction sites, is the developer required to post the permits publicly?

**Mr. Lazar** said the permits are supposed to be on the fence. If there is a construction site that does not have the permits posted, call 3-1-1 and report that the permits are not posted.

**Mr. Afreh** asked if there were any questions for the representatives from the DOB in regards to the noise complaints or **(INAUDIBLE)**

**Ms. H. Martinez** said work is being done on Sunday at 319 Lenox Road and they are making a lot of noise.

**Mr. Lazar** said for reports of working without a variance, the best thing to do when the work is happening, is call 3-1-1 because there may be an Inspection Crew available in the area, they will go right over and catch them. They are also documenting the time when they are working on the weekends or after hours. ESP is not an enforcement tool. People have called on Tuesday to say they are working on Saturday and the following Saturday, they would go out and they are not working. Because they worked on one Saturday, does not mean they work every Saturday. If they are working at 11am on a Saturday, call at that time and this way it will be documented and if a ERT crew happens to be available, they will go right over there. ERT teams work throughout the night and these are not the regular inspectors.

No complaints have been put in for 319 Lenox Road.

**Ms. Falero** said there is a AFV for 319 Lenox Road and even if a complaint was put in, it would come through. The AHV is for Sunday from 9am to 5pm.

**Ms. H. Martinez** said the contractors have no consideration for the residents in the area.

**Mr. Lazar** said they are receiving complaints from the community and he will let the Borough Commissioner’s office know that the community does not want them to have an after-hours variance and the Borough Commissioner will discuss this with the contractor. It is at the discretion of the Borough Commissioner to issue after-hour variances.

**Ms. Joan Bakiriddin** asked if this is not required to be brought before the Community Board?

**Mr. Lazar** said if the Buildings Dept. does not receive complaints, then it is assumed the community does not have any objections. He is receiving complaints and he will let the Commissioner know the community is complaining about it.

**Ms. Falero** said if the Dept. does not know there are complaints coming in regarding after hours variances, then they will continue to issue AHVs to the contractors.

**Mr. Afreh** said as he understands, it does not go through the district, it actually goes through the Borough Commissioner and he approves the variances on a case by case basis.

**Ms. H. Martinez** said they used to. Why was it changed?

**Mr. Afreh** asked do they know when that was changed and not brought up to the community level and just went to the Borough Commissioner?

**Ms. Falero** said she has been in Brooklyn for 3 years and since she started, that was never the process.

**Ms. H. Martinez** she has been this committee for 30 years and she remembers them having to vote on the different variances over the years. She would like to know when this change took place and why was it taken away from the residents of the community?

**Mr. Lazar** said it has been the decision of the Commissioner to ask or not ask. He has been back in Brooklyn for 3 years and he does not know whose decision it was to change this. The Commissioner, Kazimir Vilenchik has been here for about 5 years.

**Ms. A. Martinez** said when she was a Board member, they sent a letter to DOB stating there was a blanket no after hours policy in this community. They always had to vote on them and they always said no.

**Ms. Falero** asked did the Commissioner respond to the letter?

**Ms. H. Martinez** said it was adhered to at one point and she cannot figure out when this change took place and how come they were unaware.

**Ms. Falero** said they have received complaints from Community Boards about AHVs and when brought to the Commissioner, he would say forget it, no more AHVs or renewals. This is only on a complaint basis.

**Ms. H. Martinez** said there have been numerous complaints made to 3-1-1 and she thinks they are being ignored. She had also written to the Commissioner.

**Ms. A. Martinez** said there have been complaints that came from the Councilmember’s office that she drafted herself that went to DOB about the construction work that was going on.

**Ms. Falero** said if it is for a specific property, they can give it to the Commissioner and he will stop the AHVs, but if they are talking about an entire Community Board not allowing AHVs, she is not familiar with anything like that.

**Ms. Bakiriddin** said they were proactively contacted regarding after hour variances before within recent times, 3 years, pre COVID-19, was the last time she remembers being contacted. It is shocking to her that this is no longer the case and is now on a case by case basis and only if there is a complaint, that they should be contacted. It is important for them to make note of that and also for them to figure out a way to not have to individually and for the quality of life, it becomes exhausting for the neighbors to consistently micromanage developers. They can have a conversation about what it means and how it can be mitigated going forward that there is a process in place if there is going to be a deviation to the after hours work, they should be notified proactively as opposed to reactively.

**Ms. Falero** said they will bring that to the attention of the Commissioner and let him know their concerns.

**Mr. Afreh** said the AFVs and the expediated construction schedules, if someone wanted to work on Saturday and they filed for this, wouldn’t they be able to get it in under a 24-hour period to do that work?

**Ms. Falero** said they would have to file between Monday through Friday and the process usually takes 2 days to get approved.

**Mr. Afreh** said in those 2 days, there is no way for the community to be informed that something will be happening that weekend. The only thing they can use is the link that was given to know if the actual AHVs are approved or not.

**Ms. Joan Erskine** said looking at the website, what does the builder have to provide to get this variance and there is nothing there for what they have to provide? It sounds like they can get a variance very easily within 2 days and they are left with a reactive position. They cannot stop it before it starts and they are already there and they make the call and maybe someone is available to come look at it and meanwhile, they are still working. It is illegal and they finish the work by the time anyone comes. How do they get the variances to begin with?

**Ms. Falero** said she does not know exactly the details and documents they have to provide and she can find out from the application office. It is basically different for every property. They will bring their concerns to the Borough Commissioner because before this, that was never the process as far as they know. The Commissioner is very responsive to complaints given to him regarding AHVs.

**Mr. Afreh** said all they need to get an AFV, is to have an active construction permit and then they can file, that would be the only restriction.

**Mr. Lazar** said no, they would actually need a legitimate reason. Certain contractors are creative, but they do need a legitimate reason to ask for a variance. if they look at the reason and it is not legitimate, the Commissioner is very receptive to the community and he does very quickly revoke permits if it is not a legitimate reason.

**Ms. A. Martinez** said if no one is running the analytics within DOB, how do they know their effectiveness rates and accountability?

**Ms. Falero** said the Chiefs and Enforcement do have access to those analytics and they have to respond to all complaints within the priority, A,B,C,D, to make sure they are responding to all complaints according to the priority.

**Mr. Dawes** said he understands what was said about the Commissioner responding once they complain, but that is being reactive. Do they have any suggestions on the being proactive about this and be a part of the process?

**Ms. Falero** said that is why they are here. They are basically the middleman between the community, the elected officials and the Dept. If there are any issues and if they want to be more proactive about these concerns, it is their job to bring them to the Commissioner, so he can have a conversation with the community and basically resolve any of these issues.

**Mr. Dawes** asked how can they find out about the AHV applications as soon as they do or shortly after?

**Ms. Falero** said for the applications, there is no real time data that they have available to the public, but she can find out. Applications are only available once the permit is issued.

**Mr. Dawes** said given the current infrastructure, it would be easier if there was a policy against and then they find out and then they can approve.

**Ms. Falero** said all of these concerns will be taken to the Borough Commissioner and come to a recommendation and he will move forward.

**Mr. Lazar** said with the current after hour variance is issued and it becomes a problem, contact them immediately and they will address it. Yes, the contractor has the right to apply for one, the law allows it, and if they are not following the rules or the noise codes, they will shut them down. The residents have the right to live peacefully.

**Mr. Afreh** thanked Ms. Falero and Mr. Lazar for joining them and sharing information on how to address these issues.

In regards to the Cease and Desist Zone, there is a survey and questionnaire that is out there that everyone would like to have filled out and he believes there is a public hearing on January 11th, between 6-8pm, if they want to get their opinions heard. They have been trying to get this Cease and Desist Zone for a long time. It is probably the most effective method to have what they want in their community, which is control over the rezoning. He hopes that everyone can participate. The questionnaire seems moot, but any participation and any addressing of the issue is progress towards correcting the issue at hand.

**Ms. A. Martinez** said it really does help if people tell their stories and continue to collect the advertisements that come to their door, note and document any phone calls, especially seniors they are in contact with who get harassed. This ties into the tax lien sale because people going through that get doubly bombarded with phone calls. One concern about this legislation is that it does not have a component that sets up standards on how to appropriately engage the community about property market values and she is afraid there will be a vacuum created for **(INAUDIBLE)** where it is profitable to scam people out of their homes and if they are the only one in the community willing to put up flyers because they are not licensed, whereas real estate professionals have licenses to protect, speculators don’t. Creating a vacuum for those people to operate where they are the only information people have, worries her. They have to do some additional legislative work around creating good criteria and standards for how to appropriately engage people.

**Mr. Afreh** said solicitation does not come in forms just for the people that are in dire straits, but to people who are minding their business. If they are in an area they are interested in, then they are going to get bombarded just like anyone else.

It is a simple questionnaire and he hopes everyone will participate and answer the questionnaire. It is small and seems meaningless, but it really all helps, it is all data. This information was sent to all the committees across the board and he hopes that everyone will participate and help them to get this form forward. There will be a forum for them to voice their opinions and make themselves heard.

There are a lot of contact changes in the regime. This has been an ongoing issue since he became Chair and there was a pause, and this is the first meeting since the regime changed. Now is the time they are going to take action and once that name is given to him, they are going to be all over him and try to get their agenda back to the top of the list, because it has been in pause since COVID-19. He hopes this is an issue they can take on, if not in this form, then in another way to advance it from where it was paused at for the last year or so, with no movement or action. If anyone is willing to help that, they can contact him and if anyone has any input, he is willing to hear it. Put him to the task and he will go after whoever he has to, to make it work.

**Ms. H. Martinez** asked what happened to the lady’s door on East 26th Street?

**Mr. Afreh** said he has not been updated on that. Ms. Fraser has the packet. The last piece of information that went out, they double downed on the request, they want the LPC application, the specs and the scope of work for the door and unfortunately, the resident was not able to provide that.

**Ms. H. Martinez** said what are they going to do with that information, because no one on this committee has any qualifications for reviewing that.

**Mr. Afreh** said as a committee, they developed those questions and formalized the requests and sent them out. As far as qualifications, they asked for the information as a committee. No one person put that input in and generated these requests. This was done as a group and everyone gave their input and it was formalized **(INAUDIBLE)** and he is trying to hold the line based off the things they asked for. They will review it and once they do, they will vote on it at this level and then it will advance to the Executive level for approval.

**Ms. Bakiriddin** said when they get the information, would it behoove them to engage with Landmarks and Preservation?

**Mr. Afreh** said the problem is, they have not gotten the information.

**Ms. A. Martinez** said she suggested a couple of meetings ago, they need to proactively contact the LPC to get someone to do a training and to also do a forum with the people on that block. They need to make sure they have all the forms and that they have to engage an advocate in LPC to give them the forms and get them through the process. They are going to have to come up with a toolkit to help guide them.

**Mr. Afreh** said he did speak to Ms. Fraser about that and speaking through a third party, it is hard to get the information directly from the person they are dealing with. He is going to LPC, but he wants to go to the tenant herself, because she is trying to give him the information because LPC is the one directing her to them.

**Ms. Bakiriddin** said in terms of them being proactive, for them to get the information and have a teaching so they can know what needs to happen going forward, so when she gives it to them, what do they do with it, they reach out to them as opposed to already having that information with them and then going to the block and helping them because that is their **(INAUDIBLE)** making sure the community is ready for it and the it is what happens after they are landmarked.

**Mr. Afreh** said them being involved in the process is new to him and a lot of them. This came through as a request from Ms. Fraser and they do need clarity on it. They just basically said they need approval from them with no notice. He needs to get in contact with somebody to tell them what they need exactly from them. As a committee, they did come up with their own request as far as information. The person who owns the house generated an email and he presented the email and the images and that information was deemed inadequate at the time from the committee as a group.

**Dr. Reneau** said she lives on this landmarked block and sometimes when she is listening, there is a disconnect and they have a Block Association President and a landmark share. Information was sent out to all the residents on this block and the residents should know what needs to be done. The resident wants to put up the door, but before Community Board 17’s Land Use Committee does all this work, she suggest going back to the resident and ask if they exhausted all of their resources on their block with the Block Association President and the Landmark’s Chair, because the information is here. If the person said it has been exhausted, they come to them and that is when they are directed to Landmarks. This will happen again, because windows and doors will need to be changed. Some of the work being done on the block is being done illegally. People are still do whatever they can get away with. They are a big resource and guide for this block and the information discussed has already been disseminated on this block.

**Mr. Afreh** said as a committee, their position is it was not disseminated to them and that is the disconnect. They were included in the process and it doesn’t seem like they have ever been in this situation before. It seems their position is to just approve or disapprove of her changing the door. From her position, she is making it seem they are the linchpin that is stopping that situation. From his understanding, they are just a part of the process and he does not believe they are holding up the situation, but just as an agenda item they have to progress forward. This is just an ongoing issue.

**Ms. A. Martinez** asked if there were an update on the East 98th Street development, where they sent a package and wanted to discuss the community needs for the space.

**Mr. Afreh** said the office was contacted about an invitation to come and speak to them. He has not followed up and neither have they.

**Ms. A. Martinez** said they need to be proactive because they can always move forward without having to do anything. This is the opportunity for them to have some leverage.

**Mr. Afreh** said he will follow up with them to see what they want to do on or before the next meeting. He is trying to get them to address them as a forum, but they seem to just want to have conversations and dialog with him and that is not what he wants. He wants them to speak to everybody and he always table those discussions when they contact him and tells them to come before the committee to speak their peace and display what they are doing and make sure they are clear on what their actions are going to be.

**Ms. A. Martinez** said she thinks they should also engage Darlene Mealy’s office as a good opportunity to make a contact, since they are going to be involved in the project anyway, so they might as well all be at the table.

She thanked everyone that participated in the tax lien sale work they did. It is really important and what they learned about the issues of trusts and estates is really important to share. She reached out to the Dept. of Finance to see if they can do a joint training or an education piece for the community that could be useful in that area because that is underlining a lot of the reasons why people end up on that tax lien sale list. She would like to see if they could work jointly on creating legislative proposals for the elected officials at the State and Federal levels. They are not going to get rid of the tax lien sales altogether, but if they can create another exemption category for people whose properties are tied up in probate or look it up and see that the owner has passed away or is incapacitated and that way not add to the harmed and the grief those families are already dealing with. They can work on that as well and see where they can push that.

Trusts and estates get an exemption for that category of properties that end up in Surrogate Court. They **(INAUDIBLE)** and can’t really move things or don’t know what is going on with the properties and they should not be penalized for that and that Court is backed up and it was that way before COVID-19.

She put the information for the New York Homeowners Fund website in the chat. If they know of anyone having issues with delinquency or in default with their mortgages, their co-op, reverse mortgages or property taxes, can sign up through that portal and get up to $50,000.00 of State funding. If they don’t get the funding, they will still get help with loan modifications and payment plans. This is on a first come, first served basis and once that money if finished, that is it. They need to make sure they are pushing people in the community to sign up and get the help they need.

**Mr. Afreh** asked who is eligible?

**Ms. A. Martinez** said it is up to 100% AMI for a single person in a family and can earn up to $83,000.00 and still qualify and it depends on the number of people in the family. The system can verify them through their social security number and address, and they will not have to upload many documents, but they will have to upload the mortgage statement showing the delinquency. They can also assist with issues of paying going forward, not just arrears.

**Ms. Erskine** said Feb. 28, 2022 is the last day for the tax lien sale and hopefully, there won’t be another one. The last one in East New York will be on Feb. 12th and the Abolish the Tax Lien Sale is going to have a trial and execution of the tax lien sale to banish it from New York. What is in question now is, what is going to replace it and the idea of exemptions for people whose properties are in probate, would be a good thing to bring up and she will it up with the people that she is involved with and what is going to replace it.

**Ms. Adele Bennett** said there is a Construction Compliance Unit with the NYPD Traffic Division that goes around and writes summonses for people working without permits or variances for after certain times and Mr. Lazar did not mention that. The summonses can be for $25,000.00 or more. Construction workers know that the Traffic Division and the NYPD are trained to write construction summonses.

**Mr. Afreh** asked how can they as a group utilize this information? They were instructed Mr. Lazar to call 3-1-1, which goes to the agencies. How do they use the NYPD resources?

**Ms. Bennett** said they can file a complaint at the Traffic Division located on Ralph and Church Avenues and ask for the Compliance Unit. When she sees things that are irregular on construction sites in the community, she contacted them, they came out, looked into it and wrote them up. The number for the front desk is 718-345-1800 and ask for the Compliance Unit. There is a unit in Manhattan that comes out in the evening and does the same thing.

**Ms. Bakiriddin** asked does the data get captured?

**Ms. Bennett** said yes, it is a legal, binding document.

**Mr. Afreh** asked if there were any other business to discuss? Having heard none, he asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting?

**Ms. Erskine** made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Dr. Reneau** seconded the motion.