



## Foundry Dialogues

FOODWATERSHELTER; Neighborhood 101 : June, 2006

### NYC COMMUNITY BOARDS: THE BASICS

#### History of Community Boards

1951 – First Community Planning Councils established by the Manhattan Borough President

1963 – 62 Community Planning Boards established by the New York City Charter

1968 – Local Law 39 expands the powers of Community Planning Boards

1975 – 59 Community Boards established by the Charter Revision Commission

1989 – Charter Revision Commission changes the structure of City government and increases the role of Community Boards in environmental review

#### Role

Community Boards are autonomous City agencies

Board members are City officers

Each Board adopts its own bylaws and elects its own officers

Chairperson usually selects Committee Chairs

#### Community Districts and Boards

- There are 59 Community Districts/ Boards;
- Maximum of 250,000 people per Community District
  - 12 Community Districts in the Bronx;
  - 18 in Brooklyn; 12 in Manhattan;
  - 14 in Queens;
  - 3 in Staten Island
- The Borough President appoints Board members
- City Council members nominate at least half of the appointees (divided proportionally based on the share of the district's population represented by each Council member)

#### Board Membership

- Up to 50 members who reside in, have a business, professional or other significant interest in that community; appointments should consider all neighborhoods and segments of the community
- Members serve staggered two-year terms that begin on the first day of April;
  - of the membership is appointed every year
- Not more than 25% of the appointed members shall be City employees
- Non-Board members can serve on committees
- Removal: A member maybe be removed for cause, including frequent absence from Board and committee meetings over a period of six months, (by board or Boro Pres)

## Community Board Mandates

The City Charter mandates that each Community Board:

- Consider the needs of the Community District which it serves
- Cooperate with, consult, assist and advise elected governmental officials about any matter that “relates to the welfare of the Community District and its residents.”
- Community Boards participate in:
  - o Service Delivery
  - o City Budget process
  - o Land Use planning
  - o Other Responsibilities: Long -Range planning, Community Advocacy

## Community Board Committees

- Any and all district issues should be able to be considered and addressed by Board committee
  - Responsibilities:
    - o Research issues, develop goals, plan activities, conduct public hearings, and present recommendations to the full Board
    - o Committees also have input into the City budget process and Uniform Land
  - Committees are composed of **Board members, and non-Board (public) members**. Public members can vote only in committees
  - **Mandate:** Committees are open to the public, and are required by the New York State Open Meetings Law to keep full and accurate minutes
  - Board members must join and regularly attend committee meetings
- Mandates

## Community Board Meetings

- The entire Community Board membership meets to consider the needs of the district and its residents
- Monthly Board meetings are required except during July and August
- Actions, decisions, etc. can only be authorized by a majority of the members present and entitled to vote during the presence of a quorum.
- The Charter also requires:
  - o Adequate public notices of meetings and hearings;
  - o Time to hear the public at meetings must be set aside; and
  - o Meetings are to be available for broadcasting and cablecasting
  - o Public session
  - o Public hearing
  - o Reports, e.g., Chairperson, District Manager, elected officials, guests, etc.
  - o Committee reports, presentations, etc.
  - o Action items and voting, e.g., resolutions, etc.
- Public hearings are required each month except during the summer Rules Governing Meetings