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**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Voting Reform and Charter Revision Task Force**
Tuesday, March 11, 2025 - 6:30 PM
Conducted remotely on Zoom

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Michele Birnbaum, Alida Camp, Ed Hartzog (Co-chair), John McClement, Judy Schneider, Shari Weiner (Co-chair)

Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 8

The meeting was called to order at 6:30.

1. Reviewing the History of 2 Current Charter Revision Commissions.

Shari explained that the purpose of the meeting was to determine areas of interest to put in an amendment to the City Charter to be submitted to the two charter change commissions.

Then Ed and Shari explained the current city charter commissions.

In December 2024, Mayor Adams formed a commission to explore proposals to city government regulations and procedures in housing and land use. The mayor's announcement stated that the commission's purpose was to "focus on promoting Fair Housing across the five boroughs and ways to ease the city's affordable housing crisis."

Then, this Fall, the City Council passed legislation to establish its own charter commission. Its official name is "The New York City Commission to Strengthen Local Democracy." Its purpose would be to focus on improving and restoring public confidence in city government by strengthening local democracy and improving government accountability.

Unless the New York State legislature changes the law, the Mayor's Commission has precedence over the City Council amendments. All proposed amendments will be placed on the ballot and will have to be approved by the voting public.

2. Discuss CB 8 response in preparation for April 23rd Manhattan Public Hearing.

Ed explained that the public hearing being held on April 23rd is scheduled to focus on housing and land use. However, the instructions indicate that the public can testify on any matter of importance to city government and suggest changes to the city charter. Furthermore, it would be better to have something to respond to, but the Mayor's Commission was not due to release its report until later in the spring.

Shari provided some of the amendments brought up at earlier hearings:

- Speed up development process
- Solve problems citywide, not just for a specific neighborhood
- Reduce cost and time to develop new housing
- City landmarked areas should be reduced to allow for more housing
- Changes to ULURP

- Speeding up the lengthy environmental process before ULURP is started
- Potential comprehensive planning process for the city
- Reduce time for Community Board and Borough President review
- Exempt minor projects from the ULURP review – Minor projects could be decided by city agencies or commissions.

3. The potential topics offered by members of the Task Force.

Members of the Task Force made the following suggestions for amendments to the city charter:

Eliminate term limits for members of Community Boards (Shari will call Gale Brewer to see if she is still supportive)

Community Boards should have more power than just being advisory

Requirement that the wording of ballot questions be objective and not reflect the opinion of the writer

The ULURP process should not be amended to provide for more housing

Community Boards and citizen oversight should be maintained in the development process

City-designated historic districts should be maintained and not decreased to promote more housing

There was an agreement that the decision whether one or two resolutions would be prepared would be made at the April 8th meeting of the Task Force. The resolution would be then submitted to the Full Board on April 16th, and, if approved, public testimony would be presented on behalf of CB8M.

4. Old Business

No items of Old Business were discussed.

5. New Business

No items of New Business were discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Sharon Weiner and Ed Hartzog, Co-Chairs