

EAST RIVER HOUSING CORPORATION



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September 2, 2015

Dear Fellow Cooperators,

As we approach the third anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, there are still hundreds and hundreds of New Yorkers in the 5 boroughs who are still displaced from their homes in addition to the loss of lives and incredible total loss of entire blocks of homes due to the intensity of that devastating storm. Although over 100 of our cooperators lost their cars in the Delancey Street parking lot due to the surging and flooding salt water which also crashed through the lobby of Building 4, we were actually very fortunate that, with our large senior population, not one life was lost or serious injury occurred to any of our cooperators. The city is now planning for the eventuality of another major storm, should that event again occur. Hundreds of millions of dollars in funding is expected to be spent on berms (a raised land barrier separating a flooding river from people living on the other side) and other flood protection measures across Lower Manhattan. Exactly where the berms will be placed is still being decided based upon where the FDR Park is wide enough to accommodate it among other factors. It might be that this barrier will be placed just north or south of us as the city is very interested in protecting the vulnerable public housing developments that line the FDR Drive up to Houston Street and then beyond up to around 14th Street. Part of that decision will be based on engineering reports.

One decision which we can all get involved in is making sure that our side of the FDR Drive has proper and increased storm drainage and bioswales wherever possible. Bioswales are enhanced versions of the tree pits that line our streets, and are designed and proven to absorb much larger amounts of storm water by diverting it from along the curb into a rehabilitated pit filled with flowering shrubs and trees. Please remember that as we are alongside the East River, the city's sewer system naturally flows in our direction and in the event of a major storm, because of our low elevation we will be the resting location for water from all sides. Because of this, improved drainage conditions should be a top priority to improve our ability to recover from major storms and even the regular storms that often lead to flooding around our streets and crosswalks. The protection, safety, and ability to recover (resiliency) of our cooperators must be of paramount importance to all of us.

As such, the Board at its last meeting voted unanimously to adopt a resolution calling upon the city to spend any available money on drainage and flood prevention systems rather than on one of their proposals to spend some of this money on moving all or part of the Delancey Street Overpass right in front of Building 4. Such a diversion could prove extremely dangerous for our cooperators as runners and especially bicyclists picking up speed to enter the upward sloping overpass or more dangerously the increased speed that naturally occurs when one is coming down the sloping overpass on a bicycle, comes in possible contact with a pedestrian entering or leaving the main entrance of 473, 475 and 477 FDR Drive. In addition, such a move of the overpass to any

Over, please

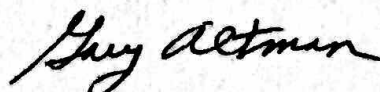
part of the FDR Drive service road in front of one of our buildings may very well prevent EMS, Hatzolah, the FDNY or NYPD from gaining immediate access to our buildings in case of an emergency. Such a move closer to Grand Street when we already have the Cherry Street overpass a block away is a risk that neither I nor your entire Board is willing to take. Can you imagine an overpass directly in front of the entrance to one of our buildings without any regard to the safety of the people living right there? Even one possible injury is one too many. And, most of us know that a fall, such as those that can be caused by being run into by a runner or speeding bicyclist, can prove debilitating or fatal to a younger person let alone a senior. I have expressed the Board's position in a personal conversation with Public Advocate Tish James, in meetings with the senior staff of our Borough President Gale Brewer and our Council Member Margaret Chin. I have also sent letters to all of them including State Senator Squadron and our Assemblyman Shelly Silver who is always incredibly helpful to our community. I also wrote and had a long phone conversation with the Mayor's senior advisor at the Office of Recovery and Resiliency about our concerns for the safety of our cooperators if the overpass or a new extension arm diverts all or part of it in front of Building 4. I explained that we are a NORC (naturally occurring retirement community) which is home to many elderly but active seniors in their 80's and 90's and any money spent must be used for storm drainage on our side of the FDR Drive in addition to the berm being built somewhere across the highway on the park side. The Board does however support the rehabilitation and enhancement of the overpass at its existing location on Delancey Street, if necessary.

My written concerns, including the Board's resolution sent to the Mayor's office, have been forwarded by his senior advisor to the project engineers for review and consideration. But for the City to know that we are serious in our concern for all our cooperator's safety we, who agree, must make our voices heard.

A special additional community workshop meeting of the EAST SIDE COASTAL RESILIENCY PROJECT has now been added and set for just the residents of our neighborhood from Montgomery to 14th Streets. If you agree that the safety of all our cooperators must be our top priority and especially for those living in Building 4, please come down to the meeting taking place on September 10th at Henry Street Settlement at 301 Henry Street (just a couple of hundred feet up Henry Street from Grand Street). The workshop and presentations begin at 7. More information can be found in the bulletin boards by our mailboxes. A public hearing on the proposals is expected in October but if you are concerned about the placement of the overpass, please come and make your voices heard next Thursday evening.

It is said that one who saves but one life it is as if he or she saved the entire world. Let's not gamble and take a chance with even one life. May everyone observing the holidays starting next week have a happy and healthy New Year and to those observing later in the year may they bring you and your families peace, health and happiness.

In the spirit of our cooperative way of life,



Gary Altman, Board President