

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – December 7, 2017

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Simon (Chair), Richard Allman, Sara Fisher, Andrea Kornbluth, Elizabeth Lehmann, Beatrice Hall (Public Member).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Daryl Cochrane, Wanda Garcia.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mary Anderson.

GUESTS: Rebekkah Robbins, NYC Dept. of Health & Mental Hygiene; Julio Batista, NY-Presbyterian Hospital; Edna Fernandez, Rachel Bridge Corp. Tenants; Joshua Goldberg; Kimberlee Gonzalez; Jose Ruano, Borough President's Office; Nayma Silver.

S. Simon, chair, called the meeting to order at 7:23 p.m. and introduced the committee members who were present.

1. **Annual update on HIV/AIDS in our community** -- Rebekkah Robbins, MPH, Senior Data Analyst, HIV Epidemiology and Field Services Program, Bureau of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, gave a Powerpoint presentation, "Trends in HIV Diagnoses 2007-16, Manhattan Community Board 12." It contained the following information:
 - Mandated reporting of AIDS cases went into effect in 1983, was expanded in 2000 to include partners and expanded again 2005 to include incidence and resistance testing
 - In 1982, NYC had half of AIDS diagnoses nationwide: 159 of 323
 - New AIDS diagnoses and deaths peaked in 1983
 - Untreated HIV takes 10 years to progress to AIDS
 - People living with HIV/AIDS has been growing steadily, now at 121,000
 - The 2016 annual HIV/AIDS surveillance report is on the DOHMH website as well as tables for 2001-16
 - 2016 data for 5 north Manhattan zip codes (10031, 10032, 10033, 10034 and 10040):
 - 94 new HIV diagnoses
 - 90% males, only 10 females
 - 78% Black or Latino/Hispanic
 - 13 concurrent AIDS diagnoses, 38 new AIDS diagnoses
 - 4,635 people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) as of 12/31/16
 - 31 deaths among PLWHA
 - Our area has higher rate of HIV diagnoses than NYC overall: among the top 5 or 10 communities in the city (We asked her to check the DOHMH data and report back on where our community ranks citywide.)
 - There have been fluctuations in the rate of HIV diagnoses in West Harlem/Washington Heights-Inwood, including an uptick between 2014-15.
 - WH/WH-I had a decrease in the rate among women in 2016; the citywide numbers went up. Historically, our rate for females is usually the same or lower than the citywide rate.
 - WH/WH-I had a steeper decline among black residents between 2015-16 but a higher rate than NYC overall: 55.7 per 100,000 population vs. 51.9 per 100,000 populations citywide.
 - There was a 40% decline among Latino/Hispanic residents citywide. The rate in WH/WH-I is slightly higher than NYC overall: 31.8 (56 cases) vs. 30.9 (768 cases)
 - There was an increase in the rate among white residents between 2015-16. The rate in WH/WH-I is almost 4 times higher than the citywide rate: 53.7 vs. 12.8.
 - She discussed the various HIV/AIDS services provided through DOHMH, including through local CBOs.

S. Simon: we have been concerned about the closing of the HIV/AIDS clinic at the District Health Center, 600 W. 168th St., several years ago. Its restoration has been one our annual budget requests.
2. **Report on Columbia University Medical Center's Institutional Review Boards** – Kimberlee Gonzalez, a community member of one of the IRBs, reported as follows:
 - She applied to be an IRB member after hearing a presentation at an H&E Committee meeting.
 - Her background in the health field: she has a home health care aide certificate.
 - She has been an IRB member since January, following a background check and two interviews.
 - The IRB reviews clinical research trials and studies in areas such as cardiology, ob/gyn, pediatrics, drugs, medical devices, HIV testing, etc., including international studies.
 - Community members or non-affiliates of the Medical Center focus on the consent forms to make sure they are readable so that a layman would understand them.

- The IRBs meet twice a month on Wednesday afternoons for 2-3 hours.
 - She has found the work to be “inspiring” – “You get to help the community...Your voice is heard as a non-scientist. They appreciate the input from a community member.”
 - The consent forms are tailored to the community and are translated into different languages.
 - They are looking for more community members. S. Simon said he would send the information to anyone interested in applying.
3. **NY-Presbyterian Hospital Report** – Julio Batista, Director of Community Affairs, reported as follows:
- A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on Monday for the completion of the Adult Emergency Department expansion. \$100M project began four years ago and was done in sections. Capacity was doubled to 88 treatment bays, including new psychiatric and rapid evaluation units. Now getting 90,000 visits per year.
 - He will arrange for someone from the Allen Hospital to speak at our next meeting regarding changes taking place there. Surgical units, labor/delivery and pre-natal care being expanded. 30 mental health beds would be cut. Those patients would be served elsewhere within the NYPH system at Westchester Hospital or Gracie Square on the Upper East Side. Transportation would be provided to family members.
 - Annual Three Kings celebration will be held at the Morgan-Stanley Children’s Hospital on Jan. 6 @ 2-5 p.m. 600 kids are expected.
4. **Isabella Geriatric Center Report** -- Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications, reported as follows:
- As of Friday, Isabella is now an affiliate of MJHS, a much larger entity with nursing homes and other facilities in Brooklyn. MJHS (its commercials talk about how it was founded by “the four Brooklyn ladies”) is 110 years old and has a \$1.3 billion budget. Isabella has been independent since 1875 and has a \$135 million budget. The new administrator, Loyola Princivil-Barnett, will attend the CB 12 meeting in January to introduce herself. The merger was necessary to survive in the current climate in the health care climate, with the need for operational efficiencies as reimbursement rates are declining. It was mutually beneficial. This is MJHS’ first facility in Manhattan. Some services may change, depending on their financial viability. MJHS will be looking into every part of the operation. We’ve been working with them for a long time. They have been providing palliative/hospice care at Isabella. Impact on staff not known yet. MJHS is very interested in the affordable senior housing project, a 15-20 story building, that Isabella has been considering.
 - Two holiday events are planned: NY Cares is doing “Jingle Bell Rock” on Dec. 12. CBS and NBC are jointly delivering presents to adult day care and nursing home patients on Dec. 18.
5. **Old Business** – S. Simon reported on the following:
- Street and Sidewalk Cleanliness Ratings: The rating for acceptably clean streets in our district for October was 86.9%. Sidewalks were rated as 95.9% acceptably clean.
 - MTA’s Resiliency and Mitigation Project at the 207th Street Subway Yard: In response to an inquiry, the MTA said that the resiliency project is in final design and scheduled to go out for bid in June 2018. The mitigation work in North Cove might start as early as October, a little later than originally promised.
6. **New Business** – Upcoming Review of Inwood Rezoning Plan: S. Simon reported that the rezoning plan is scheduled to be certified for ULURP on Jan. 16 and CB 12’s 60-day review period would begin on Jan. 25. He said that the committee meetings in February and March would likely be devoted in large part to a discussion of the Draft EIS for the plan, which will be issued at the same time.
- Lead Testing at NYCHA Projects: S. Fisher reported that in light of the disclosure that NYCHA had failed to do legally required lead-paint inspections in thousands of apartments, WEACTION is calling upon the City to provide free lead tests for children at all NYCHA projects. She urged the committee to pass a resolution in support of WEACTION’s position. S. Simon said we should consider this issue at our January meeting.
7. **Announcements** – S. Simon: The Parks Department will be holding Mulchfest on Jan. 6 & 7 at five sites in Washington Heights-Inwood.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:19 p.m.
Respectfully submitted, Steve Simon.