

## HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – March 2, 2017

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Steve Simon (Chair), Mitchell Glenn (Asst. Chair), Richard Allman, Daryl Cochrane, Andrea Kornbluth, Elizabeth Lehmann, Javier Trejo, Beatrice Hall (Public Member).

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:** Wanda Garcia.

**GUESTS:** Katherine Hanner and Maggie Clarke, Manhattan SWAB; Julia Symborski, NYS Nurses Assn.; Ting Barrow, Uptown Progressive Action; Maximo Javier, CLOTH; Catarina Rivera, City Harvest/WHIN Food Council; Sara Fisher, Valinn Ranelli.

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S. Simon, chair, called the meeting to order at 7:19 p.m. and introduced the committee members.

1. **Presentation on Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board Priorities for 2017** -- Katie Hanner, a SWAB Member, gave a Powerpoint presentation, with Maggie Clarke, a fellow SWAB member, assisted with answering questions.
  - The SWAB has 35 members appointed by the Borough President. Meets the second Wednesday of the month.
  - Established as an official advisory body by Local Law 19 of 1989. Its goal is to increase recycling, waste prevention and reuse, and to influence City's policy and budget. Its focus is on zero waste initiatives.
  - SWAB in partnership with the Citizens Committee of NY gives out small grants to gardens and other not-for-profits for composting and repair & reuse initiatives. Applications available in March and September.
  - Average New Yorker throws out nearly 15 lbs. of waste at home and 9 lbs. at the office or in stores every week.
  - NYC spends \$2.3 billion a year handling residential waste.
  - NYC only recycling 17% of its solid waste – half of U.S. rate (34%). NYC was at 20% in 2000 before the City temporarily reduced curbside collection of metal, glass and plastic. 15% of our waste is incinerated.
  - 76% of our trash is transported upstate or out of state to landfills. Mayor's plan: zero waste for landfills by 2030.
  - 74% of NYC residential waste stream can be recycled or composted: 33% curbside recyclables, 31% organics suitable for composting, 10% other materials.
  - Supported passage of the plastic bags law. We should use reusable bags for shopping. Plastic bags take up to 1,000 years to disintegrate and are made of fossil fuels. NYC spends \$12.5 million / year to send 91,000 tons of plastic bags to landfills and incinerators.
  - Buildings with more than 10 units can sign up for electronics and textile recycling, also organics collection. .
  - What can you do? Take the Zero Waste Pledge! I pledge to:
    - recycle metal, glass and plastic; and paper & cardboard
    - recycle food scraps and yard waste
    - recycle electronic waste
    - safely dispose of harmful household products
    - reduce waste by using reusable shopping bags, bottles and mugs
    - donate clothing and textiles

K. Hanner agreed to find out the recycling rate in our district and report back to us.

2. **Discussion regarding proposed NY Health Act** – Ting Barrow, NY Progressive Action Network, and Julia Symborski, RN, NYS Nurses Assn., gave a Powerpoint presentation regarding the pending legislation in Albany.
  - The average cost of employer-provided family health plan is over \$17,500.
  - If the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) is repealed, over 1.6 million people in NYC will lose coverage.
  - If the NY Health Act were passed, 2 million more people would be covered than under ACA, which covers 2.2 million in NY State.
  - NY Health Act would be funded by a low progressive payroll deduction. Coverage for a family earning \$100K would cost \$666/month or less. Employers would pay 80%. There would be no fees, no deductibles, no co-pays. It would replace Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP; would be administered by the state.
  - Unemployed would not pay anything.
  - Insurance and pharmaceutical companies' profits would be eliminated. \$70 billion savings in NY State.
  - While 150,000 insurance industry jobs would be lost, 200,000 new health care jobs would be created. Funds would be provided for retraining.
  - Both citizens and non-citizens would be covered.

Much discussion followed. Questions were raised about what would happen to retirees who live outside NY State and have already paid for medical coverage, and whether Albany could be trusted to administer this

system, among others. The committee agreed to do further research and continue the discussion at the next meeting before deciding whether to vote on a resolution supporting the legislation.

3. **Cleanup campaign for Washington Heights – Inwood** – Maximo Javier, BID Project Organizer, Community League of the Heights (CLOTH), said that CLOTH has received \$123,000 from Council Member Rodriguez to organize a cleanup campaign called Northern Manhattan Picks Up in the CB 12 district as well as in Marble Hill, starting 4/8 east of Broadway between W. 155<sup>th</sup> – 160<sup>th</sup> Streets. Subsequent events would be held going north along Amsterdam and St. Nicholas Avenues 4/22 and 4/29. They intend to involve community groups, block associations and schools. In order to spend the full allocation by June 30, the end of the fiscal year, they will stock up on supplies, rakes, brooms and water for this year-round campaign. Most of the funds will be spent on salaries: \$36K for a coordinator, \$25K each for two additional staff.
4. **Isabella Geriatric Center Report** – Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications, reported that Isabella House, an independent living facility for people 62 and over at 525 Audubon Ave., will be holding an open house on 3/11, and a public forum on hearing loss will be held at the Milstein Hospital Building also on 3/11.
5. **Old Business** – S. Simon reported on the following:
  - Update on Street and Sidewalk Cleanliness Ratings: The ratings for January for our district once again were 100% in both categories.
  - DEP Service Complaints from CB 12 Residents: The top requests in January involved dirty water (66 complaints), noise from barking dogs (22) and lead testing kits (20).
  - George Washington Bridge Safety Fence: The Daily News in its Feb. 25 issue featured a letter from Shah Ally, CB 12 chair, referring to the resolution we passed calling upon the Port Authority “to act with the urgency this situation demands and install temporary and permanent safety fencing on an expedited basis in order to save as many lives as possible.” We have not yet received a response from the Port Authority.
6. **New Business**
  - R. Allman: We should ask Sanitation about the age and maintenance of its trucks. Street sweepers leave a lot of litter behind.
  - B. Lehmann: Council Member Rodriguez has formed a group to create a Northern Manhattan Agenda, a 5- or 10-year plan for the community. R. Allman, C. Rivera and she are members of the Health Committee. She suggested that S. Simon should be invited to join the committee. C. Rivera said the committee is currently in its first phase of collecting information about resources in the community.
7. **Announcements**
  - S. Fisher: A 3-day festival will be held around Earth Day (4/22) in Inwood Hill Park with the theme “Environmental and Climate Literacy.”
  - C. Rivera: City Harvest is sponsoring a special event with cooking demonstrations in the Super Foodtown at W. 160<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway, on March 11. There will be five stations in the store, and \$10 coupons and other incentives will be given to 150 people who attend. Next WH-I Food Council meeting is 3/23. They were awarded a garden plot at Swindler Cove. Street Vendors Modernization Act, introduced by Council Member Levine, would increase the number of permits. Only 300 of the original 1000 Green Cart food vendor permits are now in use.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Steve Simon.