

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES – April 3, 2014

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Simon (chair), Edgard Nau, Karen J. Arthur, David Kach, Elizabeth Lehmann, Juan Mejia, , Beatrice Hall (Public Member) . **BOARD MEMBER PRESENT:** Jim Berlin.

ABSENT: Lorenzo McGougan.

GUESTS: Laura Mascuch, Angie Gilbride and Lou Villani, Con Edison; Gisselle Mejia, City Harvest; Ross Frommer, Columbia University Medical Center; Hector Carrasco, CHALK, NYPH; Ky Williamson, Rotary Club of Inwood; Mary Anderson, Sara A. Fisher, Osi Kaminer, Haebitna Chong and Stephen Knight.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm in the CB12 office, 560 W. 166th St., 6th floor, by Assistant Chair Edgard Nau. All those in attendance introduced themselves, at which time Chair Steve Simon arrived. He said the committee invited Con Edison to tonight's meeting because of the importance of learning about protective measures being taken to safeguard the area's power supply.

1. Con Edison: Resiliency Measures to Protect the Inwood Substations – Lou Vilani, Department Manager, Project Engineering, gave a comprehensive presentation, starting with an overview of the impact of Superstorm Sandy (10/29/12) on the Inwood facilities. Compared to other parts of Manhattan, where facilities lost power due to the storm, the Inwood substations fared well. The new Academy substation, which is enclosed, received some water in the basement from the sewer line but withstood the storm. The Sherman Creek substation, which is spread out over three blocks and is open on all sides and to the sky, received 2-3 inches of water, but its functionality was not affected. All facilities are evaluated October thru December in anticipation of hurricane season. Con Edison met with other utilities in the region, and new designs were created to protect systems from future storms. The following storm hardening objectives were identified:

- Prevent de-energization of power supply equipment due to flood water intrusion
- Maintain relay protection integrity
- Maintain remote control and situational awareness (metering and indication)
- Minimize equipment damage from salt water
- Allow for future flood elevation increase (new water level mark – FEMA 100-year flood level plus 3 feet)
- Allow for rapid recovery

The measures to be taken to mitigate potential flood damage include the following:

- New concrete flood walls around the Sherman Creek substation
- Watertight doors and flood gates
- New submersible pumps (to be deployed 5 days before the storm)
- Nitrogen driven pumps for pressurization
- Seal critical panels and cabinets (strong, breathable, resilient wrap)
- Seal conduits and cable trenches with expansive foam

Mr. Vilani said Con Ed will implement these measures this June thru 1st quarter, 2015 and construction will continue thru 2016. Con Ed will revisit the stations Oct/Nov 2014. Questions were raised about the aesthetics of the walls and security around the substation. He said that finishes can be applied to make the walls more attractive. He volunteered to return to the committee in the fall to give us an update on the work being done. In response to a question from the Chair regarding whether Con Ed has any long-term plans for an empty lot it owns on W. 204th Street, Ms. Gilbride said Con Ed wants to hold onto the property in the event it is needed to help meet future energy needs.

2. City Harvest: Healthy Food Access in Washington Heights-Inwood – Gisselle Mejia, Manager, Healthy Neighborhoods campaign in Washington Heights, discussed City Harvest's efforts to improve access to and demand for healthy foods in this community. The organization conducted an in-depth assessment and found that quality and affordability were the biggest issues, not access. It is partnering with senior centers and other community-based agencies such as Community League of the Heights to provide cooking classes and nutrition education. (It was noted that grandparents are targeted for training since many of them are child care

providers.) Its Cornerstone project works with neighborhood bodegas to improve the quality and display of produce. Healthy food is being distributed to local food pantries. Other key initiatives include shopping tours educating consumers how to read labels and shop on a budget. A survey rating local supermarkets is being designed. The Chair asked whether there were any printed material on healthy meals that CB 12 could give to restaurants applying for alcohol licenses to encourage them to include healthy food options on their menus. Hector Carrasco, program coordinator for Choosing Healthy Lifestyles for Kids (CHALK), distributed some handouts ("My Plate Planner") showing how healthy meals can be planned by including ¼ starch, ¼ protein and ½ vegetable. He said El Presidente restaurant is working with them.

3. **Columbia University Medical Center Report** -- Ross Frommer, Vice President, Government & Community Affairs/Associate Dean, updated us on the impact of the federal and state budgets on CUMC. Construction at the 168th street subway station now underway (a two-year project to rehabilitate the ceilings at this station and the next one at 181st Street on the #1 line) should also make it more pedestrian friendly. CUMC and NYPH are contributing \$1million towards this aspect of the project. Construction is proceeding on the Graduate Medical Education bldg. at 171st Street and Haven Avenue; it should open in 2016. Construction of a new state-of-the-art School of Nursing building behind the Russ Berrie Pavilion on Audubon Avenue should begin this fall. He is planning to conduct another all-day program this summer in which community leaders visit the Medical Center and learn about its various affiliated schools and programs. In response to a question, he explained that NYS Psychiatric Institute, affiliated with CUMC, is funded by NIH and provides mental health research, clinical studies and limited patient services.
4. **NY-Presbyterian Hospital Report** -- Juan Mejia, Vice President -Operations, Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital, updated us on various construction projects. A Bone Marrow Transplant unit with in-patient beds will open shortly on the 11th floor of Harkness, the first time NYPH has ever had such a unit. Work is progressing on the new adult emergency room, which is being built in phases over a 3-4 year period. The Milstein building is being completely renovated, one floor at a time. The first phase is almost completed. A new kidney dialysis unit for in-patients is being built on the first floor. A new CPAP (behavioral unit) also is being built. As a follow-up to last month's presentation on the measles outbreak in northern Manhattan and The Bronx, the Chair noted that the Health Commissioner announced on Tuesday that it spread to the Lower East Side. A total of 25 cases have been reported since February, including 13 adults and 12 children.
5. **Isabella Geriatric Center Report** -- Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications, said as follows:
 - Renovation of rehab unit increased beds from 45 – 120, more than doubling the number of patients to be served.
 - The McFadden Scholarships, given to graduating seniors who live in Washington Heights-Inwood, will be presented at an award dinner on May 15. Besides good grades, students must perform community service.
 - May is Older Americans Month and volunteers are encouraged to share their talent on May 20th.
 - The summer festival is being expanded to include the larger community and will take place on July 24.
 - The health fair is scheduled for October 8, 2014. She said CB 12 would be welcome to co-sponsor it.
6. **New Business** – Ky Williamson: The Rotary Club is concerned about the health of trees in Inwood. In partnership with IS 52, an education campaign will be launched about toxic waste (dog poop) killing trees.
7. **Mail** – Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center invites us to two events being held for National Minority Cancer Awareness Week on April 15 & 16. Free head and neck cancer screenings are being held at Breast Examination Center of Harlem, 163 W. 125th St., its community program on 4/23.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.
Respectfully submitted, Karen J. Arthur