

## HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES – May 1, 2014

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Steve Simon (chair), Edgard Nau, David Kach, Elizabeth Lehmann

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** George Fernandez, Wanda Garcia, Arlene Schulman

**ABSENT:** Karen J. Arthur, Lorenzo McGougan, Juan Mejia, Beatrice Hall (Public Member)

**GUESTS:** Mary Anderson, Nancy Bruning, Omari Jinaki, Sheila Massey, Ermin Siljkovic

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S. Simon called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m. in the CB12 office, 560 W. 166<sup>th</sup> St., 6<sup>th</sup> floor. All those in attendance introduced themselves.

**1. Status of the Recycling Program in Washington Heights-Inwood – Ermin Siljkovic, Manhattan Recycling Outreach Coordinator, GrowNYC, reported as follows:**

- The diversion rate in our district (% of materials diverted from the waste stream for recycling) fluctuates over the year but has been consistently lower than both the citywide and Manhattan averages. Between 2/12-2/14, the rate in WH-I has been 13-14%, Citywide 15-16%, Manhattan 17-18%. Recyclables constitute 35% of the waste stream.
- There is a correlation between the diversion rate and asthma and rat infestation.
- Plastics recycling was expanded last year. All “rigid” plastic now must be recycled. No Styrofoam.
- Buildings with 50 or more units can get bins for electronics recycling from Sanitation Dept. (DSNY).
- The United War Veterans Council picks up donations of clothing and household goods such as appliances. It gives the items to veterans or sells them.
- Re-fashion NYC – NYC’s official clothing reuse program in partnership with Housing Works – provides buildings with bins for people to drop off clothes, towels, blankets, curtains, shoes, handbags, belts and other textiles and apparel. They are also collected at Greenmarkets.
- Compost: organics (food scraps, eggshells, used paper plates, no meat and dairy) also can be dropped off at Greenmarkets, including ones in our area at 168<sup>th</sup>, 175<sup>th</sup> and Isham Streets. DSNY offers organics recycling, including meat and bones, to buildings with 10 or more units. Castle Village is participating, starting 5/5. Incentive for buildings is that it should reduce rat population since they won’t be able to get to food left at the curb in thin plastic bags. Buildings can apply through [nyc.gov/organics](http://nyc.gov/organics).
- How to improve our low recycling rate? Increased outreach to residents and supers.
- He is available to attend meetings and visit buildings.
- He distributes color-coded shopping bags (“sort and store stations”) people can use to facilitate recycling. Residents are responsible to sort recyclables, not supers.

**2. Upcoming Fitness Events: Hike the Heights and Green Gym Day – Nancy Bruning, M.P.H., reported that Hike the Heights will be celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary on June 7, starting at 10 a.m. It’s a “conceptual giraffe path” running for six miles from Central Park West and 110<sup>th</sup> Street to the Cloisters in Ft. Tryon Park. Groups converge at the Sunken Playground at 167<sup>th</sup> Street in Highbridge Park for a party with entertainment and food. Green Gym Day is held the following day, June 8, starting at 9 a.m. It’s a three-hour walk from 110<sup>th</sup> Street & CPW to the Cloisters.**

She leads fitness walks in Fort Tryon Park, more than one mile long, with stretches and strengthening exercises, on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7:30-8:30 a.m. and Saturdays 8:30-9:30 a.m., starting at the Heather Garden.

**3. NY-Presbyterian Hospital Report – Julio Batista, Director of Community Affairs, dropped off flyers for upcoming talks, “Time Is Brian: Stroke Detection, Treatment & Prevention,” 5/6 in Spanish, 5/13 in English, sponsored by NYPH, CUMC and CB 12.**

- 4. Isabella Geriatric Center Report --** Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications, reported as follows:
- McFadden Scholarship awards ceremony will be held 5/15. Everyone invited.
  - May is Older Americans Month. Event will be held at Isabella 5/20. CBOs will make presentations about volunteering in the community.
  - Summerfest celebration will be held July 24: booths, dance floor on top of garage; requesting that street be closed for pony rides.
- 5. New Business –** S.Simon: CB 12 has been notified by NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation that YWA-Amsterdam LLC submitted application for Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP) for Shell gas station at 2420-30 Amsterdam Ave. (180-181 Sts.). Owner plans to build a 6-story residential and an 8-story commercial building on the site and will come to CB 12 when he has more details about the project. H&E Committee will review the BCP application and the cleanup plan when it is submitted at a later date. CB 12 will serve as an official repository for the documents along with the Fort Washington Library for community residents who wish to review them.
- Sheila Massey spoke about the Feral Cat Initiative, part of the Mayor's Alliance for NYC Animals, which is based on Trap, Neuter/spay and Return (TNR) stray cats to community. She has been doing this work in 162<sup>nd</sup> Street area since 2008. She traps cats, takes them to an ASPCA clinic in Glendale for rabies vaccinations and feeds them every day. Cats stay in colonies (7 or 8 cats) but no longer breed. Rats avoid the block because of cats. There are an estimated 800,000 to 1 million stray cats in NYC. Reproduction rate is exponential: 1 cat and offspring can produce over 200,000 cats in 7 years. 600 people are doing TNR work in the city, taking care of 25,000 cats. Volunteers like her pay for vaccines and medications; can cost \$50 per cat. The Health Dept. animal shelters spend \$300 to euthanize a cat. She is proposing that DOH sponsor a large-scale TNR program and is seeking committee's support. She also suggests that DOH legitimize cats in bodegas, which use them to deal with rats, instead of issuing fines for them. CB 12's Public Safety Committee is considering a resolution in support of an NYPD investigation of incident in which stray cats were poisoned. After extended discussion, the committee advised her to do some more research and finish her draft proposal, which we would ask DOH to comment on.
- Omari Jinaki reported that Fantastic Lounge, 238 Sherman Ave. between 207<sup>th</sup> St. & Isham St., which opened last Wednesday, has been disturbing local residents with loud music until 4-5 a.m. He tried complaining to manager who brushed him off. George Fernandez said he would visit the owner to follow up on the complaint and advised Mr. Jinaki to also attend the Public Safety and Licensing committees.
- 6.** Mail was reviewed.
- 7. Announcements –** Mary Anderson: People's Theater Project events in May & June; movies, opera and children's concert at United Palace. Arlene Schulman passed out clean up after ytour dog and anti-littering posters. Nancy Bruning: yoga walkabout in Inwood Hill Park will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays at 11 a.m. through June. MindBodyYoga offers free yoga, acupuncture and massage at Fort Washington Avenue & 170<sup>th</sup> Street.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Steve Simon