

## Minutes from Committee for Concerns of the Aging

Tuesday April 4<sup>th</sup> 2023

Attendance:

**Committee:** – Present: Mary Anderson (Chair), Yosef Kalinsky (Assistant Chair), Maria Luna, James Bosley, Richard Allman. Absent: Mariam James **Public Members:**–Present: Dory Garcia (ARC – Ft. Washington). Absent: Carol Weeks, Elizabeth Urena **Public Attendees:** Diane Ashley (MJHS -Isabella Center), Miryam Rabner (MJHS), Leidy Jorge-Pena, Lisa Beth Miller (Lighthouse Guild), Eman Rimawi-Doster, Luz Mercado, Liliete Lopez, Madisen Gray, Kaylee Lamarche, Toby Weiss, Rosie Bernard (MJHS)

Meeting called to order by the chair at 10:40am

- Presentation by Eman Rimawi-Doster, executive director of Harlem Independent Living Center ([www.hilc.org](http://www.hilc.org) ; [erimawi.doster.hilc@gmail.com](mailto:erimawi.doster.hilc@gmail.com)) about accessibility for those with disabilities and seniors on MTA buses. We need to advocate for our rights and the rights of others in our community to be provided the services that they need to have access through our public transportation.
  - Eman, in addition to her role at HILC, is a member of Advisory Council for transit accessibility (ACTA) and chair of the para-Transit committee, is involved in all kinds of accessibility needs in the city. As someone with a disability she understands the lived experience of dealing with an inaccessible city. Today's presentation is about access-a-ride and some of the issues riders face with it.
  - Unfortunately, access-a-ride often blames traffic when again it's just mismanagement.
  - The app is supposed to be being updated. It does not always work. It's not always as seamless and accessible as it should be, but they claim to be working on it.
  - The issue with calling the number now is that the operators don't necessarily connect with the broker companies that are supposed to be picking up the trips.
  - 80% of the trips now are on the broker companies, which means they're not the traditional blue and white vehicles that access right can actually track. It is disingenuous to tell your customers that the trip is 2 to 5 min away when they're really 20 or 30 min away, especially if we can't accurately track our trip.
  - Working to make them do a whole new pilot by studying a diverse amount of people who use it once a month.
  - The new Vice President of MTA is Chris Pangilinan. He uses a wheelchair – so he shares that perspective. He is the first disabled person hired to run a para-transit system which has not happened in any other state anywhere.
  - Eman asked that those who use access-a-ride to get involved in three ways:
    - 1) Please use the complaint line and you know we might think oh, they're not listening. But they are.

- 2) Attend an MTA board meeting. Just go and show up and share your complaints, because it makes a difference.
  - 3) Talk to your elected officials. Share your thoughts with them.
    - o You can learn more about MTA procedures and policies and file for a complaint at <https://new.mta.info/>
- Lisa Miller ([millerl@lighthouseguild.org](mailto:millerl@lighthouseguild.org)) – the Lighthouse Guild has programs for adult day health care for anyone with a chronic condition that needs more than what a senior center can provide, even if not visually impaired. For example, someone with diabetes. Please send them to visit the Lighthouse Guild as part of their routine and as a resource in our community. They have a nurse on staff and this can help those that want to stay out of a nursing home.
  - Dory Garcia – ARC celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in June at the Shabazz Center.
  - Luz, Madisen & Kaylee – students at NYU’s school of Global Health – presentation about recruiting members for their study on family members of Spanish speakers who experienced an ICU hospital stay during Covid-19 between March 20’—22’ – to talk about their experience in our health care facilities as Spanish speakers. You can contact them at [icustudy@nyu.edu](mailto:icustudy@nyu.edu) if you are interested in participating in a less than 60 minute interview and receive a \$20 gift card upon completion.
  - Chair, Mary Anderson announced her upcoming surgery necessitating a two month absence while in rehab.

Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday May 4<sup>th</sup>

Meeting adjourned at 11:42am