

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – February 4, 2016

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Simon (Chair), Mitchell Glenn (Asst. Chair), Domingo Estevez, Wanda Garcia, Andrea Kornbluth, Elizabeth Lehmann, Alyce Smith, Javier Trejo, Beatrice Hall (Public Member).

ABSENT: Terriell Peters.

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mary Anderson.

GUESTS: Capt. Dorlan Freeman, FDNY-EMS; Cheryl Pahaham and Aida Solomon, NY State Comptroller's Office; Sandra Harris, Columbia University Medical Center; Guillermo Acevedo; K. Gonzalez; Oliver Grullon; Paul Hintersteiner; Sidney Horenstein; Nicole Johnson; Catarina Rivera, City Harvest; Jasjit Smith; Courtney Vose, NY-Presbyterian Hospital; Joel Yoffie.

The meeting was called to order at 7:16 p.m.

1. **EMS Response Times and Workload in Washington Heights-Inwood** – Capt. Dorlan Freeman, EMS Station 13, reported as follows:

- The response time for ambulances in our district has been significantly better than the borough and citywide since station opened three years ago at Amsterdam Ave. & W. 172nd St.; close to being the best in the city. During week of 1/3/16-1/9/16, average response time for district was 5.14 minutes (only 1/10 of a second behind District 1); for Manhattan overall, it was 5.25 minutes; citywide = 5.48 minutes.
- Calls are growing by 3% per year citywide. Estimate for 2015 = 1.5 million calls.
- Let me know if there are any problems with a response to a call.
- There are 6-8 ambulances in our district, assigned to different street corners throughout the area. New trucks have an improved diesel system. When they are in their assigned areas, they need to leave the motor running to have equipment and/or supplies stay at a certain temperature. Trucks parked at the station should not be idling.
- In response to a question from S. Simon, Capt. Freeman confirmed that the turnaround time for EMS crews dropping off patients at the ER on W. 168th St. is still 30-35 minutes because of time it takes for hospital staff to accept the patient and complete paperwork.
- Courtney Vose, Chief Nursing Officer, NY-Presbyterian Hospital, said the hospital is working hard to reduce the turnaround time, has implemented teletracking to speed up getting a bed inside the ER for patients. Construction underway to double the size of the ER for a total of 88 beds will ease this problem. The largest area is under construction now. 44 more nurses hired for the ER recently.
- W. Garcia asked why Station 13 has such good response times. Capt. Freeman: because of the sense of community and cohesiveness among the staff, all of whom have been handpicked.

2. **Community Noise Survey** – Cheryl Pahaham, Director of Planning and Product Development, Office of the State Comptroller, discussed survey of neighborhood noise her office is doing to prepare profiles for all 59 community boards. She is asking CB 12 to encourage people to fill out the survey form by sending out a link to our email list repeatedly over a five-week period. There also will be paper forms distributed.

- Based on her research, she found that Washington Heights-Inwood is the #1 community for noise complaints in Manhattan: we made 42,655 noise complaints to 311 from January 2010 to November 2015. Most of them involved loud music and parties and came from people living in 10034 and 10040.
- Noise complaints have been increasing all over the district during that 59-month period: 132% in 10032, 95% in 10033, 206% in 10034 and 276% in 10040.
- 27,766 complaints were for noise from loud music or parties; 11,150 for street and sidewalk noise; 9,988 for noise from a business; 5,094 for noise from cars.
- Many addresses had repeated complaints: 70% of addresses had 1-4 complaints each; 14% of addresses had 5-9 complaints; 13% of addresses had 10-49 complaints. One business at 130 Audubon Ave. had 752 complaints. The average number was 4.

- Worst months for complaints: May-July.
 - NYPD found nothing in 60% of cases. DEP is primary agency responsible for enforcing Noise Control Code. DEP says a lot of people who make complaints don't open their doors when DEP goes to follow up.
 - Noise affects children's learning, which was confirmed in seminal study by Dr. Arline Bronzhaft years ago at P.S. 98 in Inwood. She found that the reading scores of kids in classrooms facing the elevated #1 subway tracks were one year lower than kids in classes on the other side of the school. The trains interrupted learning every 4-5 minutes. Reading scores went up after noise control measures were taken both in the school and on the subway tracks.
 - The goal of the survey is to help the community mitigate noise. The final report will evaluate the results from calling 311 and offer suggestions for reducing noise. She will return to report on the results of the survey.
- 3. NY-Presbyterian Hospital Report** – Julio Batista, Director of Community Affairs, was not present but dropped off flyers for upcoming colorectal cancer and lung awareness events at the hospital. He reported that NYPH is following the advisory from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention regarding the Zika virus and keeping employees updated on the latest developments regarding the epidemic. It was reported in the last two days that the disease can be transmitted through sexual activity.
- 4. Columbia University Medical Center Report** – Sandra Harris, Assistant Vice President, Government & Community Affairs, reported on various programs sponsored by CUMC:
- America Reads program for 2nd and 3rd graders – 24 students from local schools enrolled – 8 medical students serve as tutors; 3-5 pm; can accept more students.
 - Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul visited two labs to highlight research technology initiative in NY State; she was very pleased with what she saw.
 - 6th community research forum was held Jan. 20. Topic was mental health research involving adolescents and adults; well attended - 100 participants; part of effort to share research findings with the community.
 - Finished recruiting high school students for CURE cancer education program – begins June 6; paid internships; encourages them to pursue health careers.
 - Received grant to begin a State Pre-College Enrichment Program (S-PREP) for academically talented minority and economically disadvantaged 7th – 12th grade students; summer program for those seriously interested in medical and STEM careers; very competitive – national initiative.
 - College of Dental Medicine is offering free screenings, treatments and education to 800 kids in “Give Kids a Smile Day” on Feb. 5. 80 dental students participating.
 - Launched 3rd cohort of program in which community organizations are matched with faculty for research training in key areas of study; \$40,000 grants; have funded 6 community-based organizations in 3 years.
 - Young Docs program for under-represented minorities in health education with young students; encourage careers in health sciences.
 - SAT prep program run by Stanley Kaplan – 75 students total – 20 from Washington Heights-Inwood; had to work hard to recruit them.
- 5. Isabella Geriatric Center Report** – Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications, reported as follows:
- Short-stay rehab unit with 30 more beds now scheduled to open in March.
 - McFadden Scholarship is continuing for another year. Open to graduating high school students from Washington Heights and Inwood; need a B average, perform community service and have to write an essay. Application deadline end of March.
 - Working with George Washington Educational Complex high schools and other schools to introduce students to health careers.

- Isabella current operates two Naturally Occurring Retiring Community programs in the coops on Fort George Hill and Fairview Avenue and in the area east of Broadway around W. 168th Street and is now starting a new one at the River Terrace coop. Provide support services, nurses and social program. More than 50% of residents must be over the age of 60. Objective is to help them stay healthy at home and avoid going to hospitals or nursing homes.
- Breakfast – February 19 – 9-11:30 – Topic: Palliative Care. Guest speaker: Dr. Daniel Gardner of Hunter College School of Social Work, will discuss methods of coping with pain.
- Isabella was one of the recipients of \$40,000 CUMC grant to do research on health conditions.

6. Old Business

Street Cleanliness Ratings – S. Simon: Our ratings for January were probably the best ever – **96.8%**. Two of our four sectors were rated at 100%.

Remediation at 153-57 Sherman Ave. – S. Simon: NYC Office of Environmental Remediation reports that The Equity Project expects to start construction the spring (March-May). The financing is being finalized, and closing is expected in the following few months. Once closed, a 24-month construction period is expected. The cleanup would take place in the early phase of construction.

Tourist helicopter rides -- S. Simon: the City reached an agreement with helicopter tourism industry to reduce the number of flights by 50% from the downtown heliport over residential neighborhoods. CB 12 passed a resolution calling for a reduction in flights in our area a few years ago. It was agreed that further research is needed to determine the impact of this agreement on our community.

7. New Business

City Harvest – C. Rivera: working on community access for food; Bravo and Liberato supermarkets threatened with being closed. Court hearing for Associated Supermarket at Fort Washington Ave. & 187th Street postponed for 30 days, perhaps to work out an agreement between the parties.

Brown water incident – S. Simon: DEP representatives said they were unable to come to tonight's meeting to explain what happened in recent incident in which a water main repair evidently caused many residents in WH-I to have brown-colored water coming out of their taps. He will invite them to attend next month's meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Wanda Garcia and Steve Simon