

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – March 3, 2016

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

ABSENT: Terriell Peters, Alyce Smith, Javier Trejo.

GUESTS: Daniel Walsh and Horace Zhang, NYC Office of Environmental Remediation; Kinsey McManus and Dana Daugherty, National Alliance on Mental Illness; Julio Batista, NY-Presbyterian Hospital; Catarina Rivera, City Harvest; Casey Constable, Touro College student; Joel Yoffie.

S. Simon, chair, called the meeting to order at 7:17 p.m.

1. Presentation on cleanups of various sites in Washington Heights – Inwood – Daniel Walsh, Director, NYC Office of Environmental Remediation, gave a presentation on the work of his office:

- He formerly worked for the State DEC's superfund program, came to NYC in 2008 to start OER, which was created by local law in 2009.
- OER's purpose is to revitalize vacant, contaminated properties.
- The Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP), modeled after state program, was established in 2011.
- The program has grown by 50%, expect to enroll 120 properties this year, for a total of 500 projects since 2011, tripling the sites that go through government oversight.
- It means that an impartial third party is looking at the site investigation and cleanup plan. This is one of the most transparent cleanup programs. All the documents are on the website.
- We reach out to Community Boards at three points: send a notice of intent to enroll in the VCP with the cleanup plan; notice of when work is scheduled to begin, and notice of when project is completed.
- A community protection statement included in every cleanup plan is of greatest interest to the public. It's in non-technical language and translated into six languages.
- When finished, these sites are among the cleanest and safest to live and work in the city.
- If area is rezoned, the city places an environmental designation on former industrial sites on presumption that remediation will be required. They can only obtain Dept. of Buildings permits after OER signs off.
- OER regulates 3-5% of the development sites in the city.
- Vacant lots constitute 6-7% of NYC property.
- May take 100 years to clean up all the sites in the city.
- OER is currently involved in two sites in Inwood.
- The Equity Project charter school site at 153-57 Sherman Ave. (1/4 acre) is presumed to be contaminated because of dry cleaner previously located there. The soil is remarkably clean, meets residential soil quality. The groundwater is OK. Evidence of PERC found in vapor. Cleanup plan was developed with the state. Soil 4-feet deep will be removed from the entire site. A vapor barrier, a thick plastic layer on the bottom and the sides, will be installed. Also piping in a gravel bed, which allows it to vent. The contaminated vapor is at a very low level, won't affect outdoor air quality or collect in the interior space of the school.
- At most sites, monthly inspections are done by the building super. Standards are higher for schools. Super should inspect weekly. Also annual inspections by outside professionals and OER.
- The other site in Inwood is 3875 Ninth Ave., currently a parking lot next to the 207th Street Bridge. It's a 2-acre site where three apartment buildings are planned: 187 units, 288 units and 350 units. Also retail units. It's in the initial stage of the program. OER is planning to study the site. Waiting for remedial investigation work plan from the developer. OER will notify CB 12 of the plan in near future.

S.Simon: OER will probably have a lot more work in this area as a result of the Inwood NYC rezoning plan.

2. Presentation on services provided by National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) – Kinsey McManus, Services Director, gave the following overview of NAMI's work:

- NAMI is the largest, grass-roots non-profit for people with mental illness in the country. NY is the largest affiliate.
- People with mental health problems live 20-25 years shorter than the rest of the population.

- NAMI offers 24 support groups for family members and people with mental problems. Also psycho-education courses and a helpline. We work with families to improve communication with their relatives. All services are free.

- NAMI is funded by NYC government, fundraising events, donations and membership.

Dana Daugherty, Program and Outreach Coordinator, added the following:

- North Manhattan has a very high need for services.
- NAMI held its first community health fair last July in East Harlem. 130 people participated. There were 20-24 information tables, anxiety and depression screenings, and four workshops.
- A Family and Friends support group in Spanish (10-15 people) currently meets weekly at 40 Haven Ave.
- This year NAMI wants to hold a fair in Washington Heights on July 16. Looking for a place.

Committee members suggested possible locations, including the Alianza Cultural Center. Julio Batista said NY-Presbyterian Hospital might be able to provide space.

- NAMI would like CB 12 to co-sponsor the health fair.

Simon/Garcia: Move that the committee pass a resolution recommending that CB 12 co-sponsor NAMI's community health fair in Washington Heights. Passed by the following vote:

Committee Members	6-0-0
Members of the Public	5-0-0

3. NY-Presbyterian Hospital Report – Julio Batista, Director of Community Affairs, reported as follows:

- Dept. of Surgery is holding a Lung Health Awareness Day on April 9 at the Faculty Club, 630 W. 168th St.
- Working with Council Member Rodriguez on Car-Free Day on April 22. Activities will be held at our hospitals in Washington Heights-Inwood, Upper East Side and Downtown that day. Plan to close Have Avenue 168th-169th Sts. to traffic.
- The Mental Health Task Force may report in April. Some recommendations involving inter-departmental cooperation have started to be implemented inside the hospital.
- Offered to arrange for a presentation on the Zika virus at next month's meeting.

4. Isabella Geriatric Center Report – Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications, reported as follows:

- Working with Presbyterian Senior Services on "Circle of Care" program in northern Manhattan and the south Bronx, \$7.5M grant for five years to provide an array of services in English and Spanish for Alzheimer's caregivers, including support groups.
- There are seven vacancies in Isabella's independent living building, 525 Audubon Ave. (total of 78 apartments). Studios cost \$2400/month, 1-bedrooms cost \$2800/month. Utilities and meals included.
- Pastoral Services looking for volunteers – "bedside buddies."

5. Old Business -- S. Simon: After having probably our best ever Street Cleanliness ratings in January (96.8%), our scores dropped drastically in February down to 75%. Inwood, however, still did very well (91.7%).

6. New Business – M. Glenn reported on the Take Care NY 2020 Community Consultation he attended at the Inwood Public Library and distributed copies of the Community Health Profile (CHP) prepared by the Department of Health & Mental Hygiene. S. Simon: we will be getting a full presentation on the CHP at our April meeting.

S. Simon distributed copies of a letter from DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd regarding the quality of NYC's water in light of the crisis in Flint, Michigan and describing how DEP addresses the potential presence of lead that comes from old plumbing in some buildings or homes.

7. Announcements – C. Rivera: City Harvest is holding an event at the C-Town in Inwood on Saturday, showing people how to buy and cook healthy food on a budget. Also forming the Washington Heights-Inwood Food Council for residents to take action on food access issues. Meeting on March 30 at the Cornerstone Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Steve Simon