

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – October 6, 2016

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Simon (Chair), Mitchell Glenn (Asst. Chair), Richard Allman, Daryl Cochrane, Andrea Kornbluth, Elizabeth Lehmann, Javier Trejo, Beatrice Hall (Public Member).

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT: Wanda Garcia,

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Obie Bing.

GUESTS: Stephen Ferrara, Columbia Nurse Practitioner Group; Samuel Biagetti, Graham Ciraulo, Rachel Furer, Rita Gorman, David Huggins, Cheramie Mondesire, Ana Rosario, Katherine Sullivan.

S. Simon, chair, called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m., introducing the committee members.

- 1. Presentation on New ColumbiaDoctors Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Group Practice – Stephen A. Ferrara, DNP, FNP-BC, FAANP, Associate Dean, Clinical Affairs, Columbia University School of Nursing:**
 - The group practice opened on Sept. 14 at 516 W. 168th St. (same building as the Edge Hotel). This is the first time the Nurse Practitioner Group has had a high-profile office in Washington Heights. It previously had an office in the old School of Nursing building on W. 168th St. and has had a location in midtown (51 W. 51st St.) since 2004. Also another location in Morningside Heights (601 W. 113th St.).
 - It is the faculty practice of the Columbia University School of Nursing and is staffed by registered nurses with advanced education. Services cover both physical and mental health. They can prescribe medication, provide referrals, order lab tests, give vaccines, etc.
 - Appointments can be made; now taking walk-ins. Can see 50 patients/day. Now seeing only 7-10/day.
 - Not a free clinic. Patients without insurance are referred to NYPH's Ambulatory Care Network (ACN). Medicare accepted. Application for Medicaid pending, expected to be approved by end of year.
 - Why see a Nurse Practitioner? They provide a holistic, patient-centered approach. They take a lot of time with the patient, an average of 40 minutes, to take down a comprehensive health history. Specialize in women's health, LGBT care. Provide hormone therapy to transgender individuals. School of Nursing received two grants to target elder LGBT population.
 - Office is open five days a week, 9am-5pm. Will expand to 8am-6pm, maybe later depending upon the demand, and will be adding one Saturday a month.
 - Have access to ACN records; eventual aim is to have a fully integrated system with the hospital's records.
 - Insurance companies allow you to choose NP as your primary care provider.
 - Staff is fluent in Spanish; two providers are native speakers.

M. Glenn: Why not have a mix of doctors and nurses?

S. Ferrara: We don't have an abundance of doctors in this area. We're filling a gap in primary care. There are 220,000 Nurse Practitioners in the U.S. We can't survive without physicians; they can't survive without us.

M. Glenn: What's the difference between a Physician's Assistant and a Nurse Practitioner?

S. Ferrara: The PA is based on a medical model, the NP on a nursing model.

- 2. Brownfield Cleanup Program Application for 3875 Ninth Ave. at W. 207th Street – S. Simon reported that the NY State Dept. of Environmental Conservation has published a notice seeking public comment on the application by the owner of the property at the NE corner of Ninth Avenue and W. 207th Street, currently a parking lot, for the Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP). The cleanup would be done to prepare the site for the proposed development of three high-rise, mixed-use buildings (25, 30 and 32 stories) that would include affordable housing. A remedial investigation of the soil, groundwater and soil vapor would be undertaken upon acceptance into the BCP. It is already known that the site contains an array of contaminants resulting from its former use for auto repairs and auto wrecking dating back to the 1930s.**

S. Simon distributed a draft of a letter to be sent to DEC with CB 12's comments on the BCP application.

O. Bing expressed his concern that groundwater contamination from the site could be entering the Harlem River and soil vapors could be intruding into adjacent properties. "We need to see where the contaminants are going." He also expressed concerns about the infrastructure (gas and electrical lines, sewers, catch basins, etc.).

G. Ciraulo: Concerned about the potential effects of gentrification and displacement from the planned Inwood rezoning. The development proposal for this site "should wait until the rezoning process is determined."

R. Gorman: "The developer should understand we have many unsettled issues. We're still questioning the rezoning."

S. Biagetti: "The cleanup should not be construed as approval of the ultimate development."

S. Simon pointed out that many of these issues will be addressed when the development proposal and request to rezone the site comes before the Land Use Committee. He agreed to include several of the points that were raised in the draft letter. [The letter was subsequently revised and sent to DEC.]

3. **Discussion and Vote on FY 18 Expense and Capital Budget Priorities** – The committee reviewed its FY 17 priorities and made various changes. On the Expense side, the item regarding Sanitation services was changed to request an increase in weekend trash basket collection on commercial streets. The request to allocate funds for supplemental street cleaning services by non-profit agencies was dropped since this is now being done by the City Council. Based on recent presentations to the committee, two Expense items were added: services for Alzheimer's patients and their families and water quality testing in the Hudson and Harlem rivers. On the Capital side, the previous requests that energy-efficiency improvements be installed in schools, NYCHA developments and residential buildings operated by non-profits and HDFCs were dropped. A new request calling for the expedited replacement of old water mains and sewer lines was added.

Motion by Glenn/Cochrane to adopt the committee's budget requests (9 expense and 3 capital items) in the priority order as discussed was approved by the following vote:

Committee Members 8-0-0 Board Member 1-0-0 Members of the Public 2-0-0

4. **Columbia University Medical Center Report** – Sandra Harris, Assistant Vice President, Government & Community Affairs, submitted a written report listing upcoming events.
5. **NY-Presbyterian Hospital Report** -- Julio Batista, Director of Community Affairs, submitted a written report on "Partnering with Community Board 12 to Enhance Mental Health." With the help of CB 12, the hospital "could build on our current relationships with the community" by having the Adult Psychiatry Clinic provide "trainings and/or workshops geared to the staff or to the consumers at community-based organizations...two specific clinical needs seem especially important at this time: LGBT and maternal mental health." He also encouraged the committee to pass a resolution "requesting action by the Governors of NY and NJ to compel the Port Authority to install barriers or netting on the George Washington Bridge to prevent people with mental distress from jumping off the bridge." A teenager from Brooklyn jumped off the bridge yesterday. The committee discussed the issue, and S. Simon agreed to draft a resolution for the next meeting. R. Allman found an article from the San Francisco Chronicle reporting that the lowest bid (\$142 million) for installing steel-mesh netting on the Golden Gate Bridge to prevent suicide jumps is nearly double what was estimated.
6. **Isabella Geriatric Center Report** – Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications, reported as follows:
- The renovation of the social hall should be completed by the end of the year. They uncovered interesting architectural elements, which delayed some work. No community meetings can be held there until next year.
 - Working with Presbyterian Senior Services on support groups for caregivers for Alzheimer's patients.
 - Vacancies at Isabella House, independent living for those 62+ years old, 525 Audubon Ave. Includes meals, cable TV, utilities, etc. Studios cost \$2400/month. One-bedrooms cost \$2800/month.
7. **Old Business** – No update on the Street and Sidewalk Cleanliness Ratings was available. S. Simon distributed chart from DEP showing total air and noise complaints from CB 12 in FY 2016. The #1 air pollution complaint (17) involved idling vehicles. The #1 noise issue (165 complaints) came from construction before or after hours. E. Lehmann: we should ask Con Ed for an update on the installation of natural gas lines in the district. S. Simon: I invited Con Ed to come to the next meeting to report on its upgrades to our electrical system. We can ask them to talk about the gas lines, too.
8. **New Business** – The committee agreed that we should co-host the next Columbia University Medical Center Community Research Forum on Prevention, possibly in December or January.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m.
Respectfully submitted, Steve Simon.