

Manhattan Community Board 9
General Board Meeting
May 2020

Called to order at 6:38PM. D. McIntosh-Brown moves to adopt agenda. D. Cohen seconds. Adopted. W. Alexander moves to adopt minutes, D. Hanzal seconds. Adopted.

Presentations

Nicole Yearwood, Census 2020

Census had to cease in person operations. No fieldwork happening right now, and still figuring out how to make contact while maintaining social distancing. People can respond online, over the phone, and via paper form.

Make sure everyone in your network -- friends, families, neighbors, coworkers -- has responded. Conducting virtual walk-throughs online. Current 51.9% response rate for CB9 census tracts. A lot of areas above 40%, but areas below average are Columbia University and tracts around Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

Ms. Yearwood's job is to talk to trusted voices who can speak to others about the census. People respond best when they hear from people they know. All census data is private and confidential for 72 years. Completion date pushed back to October 31 to allow for in-person non-response follow-up starting in August.

Chair B. Weinberg emphasized need for Columbia to contact their tenants to remind them to respond. Need to start doing block-by-block analysis to do outreach to underreporting areas. He demonstrated using the Response Rates map on the census website:

<https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>

Introduction of new members

John George - Rising Columbia sophomore from Rome, NY. Has interned with MBP Brewer, involved with CM Levine and Broadway Democrats.

Indiana Porta - 146th and Broadway, works at NYC Council Office of Strategic Initiatives, has been counsel to Council's Immigration Committee. Experience with human services. Speaks Spanish.

Elizabeth (Liz) Waytkus - 20 year member of community. Historic preservation professional. Exec. dir. of Doko Momo, which focuses on modern architecture. Cares about built environment, has been a public member of Housing, Zoning, Land Use Cmte.

Derrick Johnson.

Chair's Report

Virtual meetings have gone well with generally good attendance, but will continue for foreseeable future. June meeting will be virtual as well. Likely full in person meetings will not be in person until 2021; usual space is not conducive to distancing. Still need flexibility under state and city open meetings laws, will convey to Governor and Mayor. Long slog until there's a vaccine widely available.

Concerned that reopening advisory councils lack CB representation. CBs will have a big role to play in facilitating reopening in coordination with local businesses and nonprofits.

Held excellent Zoom housing forum on eviction moratorium. Working with NYCHA and Mayor's office on issues at Grant and Manhattanville, including recertification deadline of July 1.

Major role to play to interface with city agencies during budget planning. Pandemic causing giant hole in state and city budgets. Committee chairs will be in touch with corresponding agencies.

Treasurer's Report

District Manager's Report, Eutha Prince

Welcome to new board members. Working remotely on phone, internet, social media. Mayor's office is distributing masks -- get in touch w/ district office if masks are needed. City also distributing over 10K tablets to seniors to keep in touch with family members.

Free 1-year Citibike membership for essential workers. Public school families eligible to receive funds via P-EBT card. NYPL offering free online tutoring for public school students (bilingual). Absentee ballots allowed for June 23 primary.

WHDC Board, Pat Johnson

COVID-19 Impact Task Force created to craft response to pandemic. Senior program proposed to be administered in the fall instead of the summer. Youth program is open; deadline is May 31.

Public Session

Ken Miles, WHDC ARISE program.

Making adjustments in response to COVID. Looking to reach 100 youth. Anyone 13-18 y.o. in CB9 can apply. No employment component; focus on academic enrichment. July 6 to August 14. Application includes survey to understand technical needs. Trying to create engagement while recognizing access challenges; not just putting kids in front of screens. There will be a stipend.

Miriam Aristy-Farer

Board and community need to talk about cannabis legalization. State needs revenue, need to push electeds in that direction. Already in wide use but no one benefiting from it.

Monica Dula

COVID cluster at Grant Houses. Several articles about it. Protocols should be followed and cluster should be investigated. Re: OASAS reso, urge them to come to general board.

Annette Robinson

Resident of 3333 Broadway. Rising drug trafficking on 135th between Broadway and Riverside resulting in shootings. Trade happening in broad daylight. Addicts congregate in front of closed storefronts. All the same features of crack epidemic.

M. Palma responded with a comment that heroin is being sold, visibly, to folks in supportive housing.

MBPO, Gale Brewer

Thanks to Chair for thinking through reopening at Borough Board. Aware of concerning COVID numbers at Grant. Participating with Fresh Direct to deliver food there. Testing sites in immediate area, with more to come. Contact tracing starts June 1 with 1,000 tracers, then 2,500 by mid-June, up to 25,000 by August.

Drug issues reminder of importance of funding city SYEP. Opportunities for young people, for example, to help seniors set up their tablets from the city. Uptown arts call next week.

Borough historian and Columbia holding event on oral history. Need 1 social worker in every school more than ever. Focused on PPE -- has masks to distribute if needed. Private donor giving 100K masks to NYCHA residents.

Elected Officials

AM O'Donnell

Working w/ Sen. Benjamin to ensure access to food and business for local restaurants. Pairing donors with restaurants to send food to essential workers including nursing home staff. Can access SOMOS testing site, call to make appointment: 1-833-SOMOS-NY (1-833-766-6769).

Assembly Democrats going into conference to discuss what to do going forward. Voted against state budget because of cuts to hospitals and Medicare. Supportive of marijuana legalization, has to be fair and equitable.

Office remains open, staff dealing with unemployment claims. State has paid \$10B on unemployment; immense pressure on that system. Everyone who applied in March should have gotten benefits. Keeping busy by cooking during lockdown.

State has \$15B budget hole; need federal assistance to get out. But workers pay into uninsurance, so apply if you need it.

With AM Dickens, met with DOE to get Columbia to honor commitment to put a school in the district. Meetings on hold due to pandemic, but will keep on fighting.

CM Levine

SYEP had been zeroed out in Mayor's exec budget. Needed for economic and social wellbeing for young people. Finance committee hearing indicated positive movement to restore the program.

21 Old Broadway is a site for free antibody test: needed to donate or for reassurance, but does not guarantee immunity. Food distribution sites at schools also providing free mask distribution.

Safe reopening depends on contact tracing: identify contagious people to quarantine them, give security to everyone else. Will entail lots of good jobs, including entry-level jobs. Will require city-provided hotel accommodation for infected people (including food/medicine). Concerned about trust factor, perception of government intrusion.

Soft launch of tracing on Sunday, broader launch the following week.

Sen. Jackson's office, Porfirio Figueroa

Holding meeting on impact of COVID on communities of color. Office responding in real time to all calls. Newsletter has information on testing sites in Upper Manhattan. See website: covid19.senatorjackson.com.

AM Inez Dickens's office, Nina Norwood

Providing meals throughout district: 250 yesterday, plus masks and sanitizer. Goal is to cover all NYCHA housing in districts. Lot of families concerned about providing for their families.

Comptroller Stringer's office, Nina Saxon

Comptroller and Public Advocate called to ramp up emergency food programs for seniors. Comptroller sending weekly "NY by numbers" newsletter on economic outlook and effect of pandemic. Special report on Board of Elections operations. Wrote joint letter with Sen. Benjamin on social distancing in communities of color and CBOs' role in community policing.

Manhattan DA's office, Ely Silvestre

Thanks for sharing resources on youth programming: anticipate violence going up without it. Saturday Night Lights program: state of the art physical/athletic activities. Nothing happening in person, but some like America Scores are doing virtual challenges and activities, which will be disseminated.

Lot of conversation about domestic violence; school and work can be safe haven. People in abusive relationships can call DA office hotline or national hotline, or 911. Hate crime unit is also working to answer questions about what it looks like. Concerns about scams around stimulus check, email phishing.

Action Items

Action item 1: health committee, PPE (40-0-0-0)

Action item 2: OASAS (39-0-1-0)

Action item 3: Federal Relief Bill (40-0-0-0)

Action item 4: DOE Budget Cuts (41-0-0-0)

Action item 5: Osborne Foundation (41-0-0-0)

Action item 6: Window plan at 420 RSD (41-0-0-0)

Meeting adjourned 9:37PM.