



Manhattan Community Board 9

Serving Hamilton Heights, Manhattanville and Morningside Heights

Senior Issues Committee Meeting Minutes Tuesday, April 3rd, 2018 11:30 AM

Meeting was called to attention at ca. 11:30. There was not a quorum. Martin Wallace chaired the meeting.

WHDC came to speak about their Summer Jobs for Seniors program.

Their skill center (Located at 500 W 134th street at Amsterdam Ave.) is open from 9-5, Monday through Friday. They offer training, jobs, career change advice and resume help. They are asking CB9 to help spread the word about their summer employment program. The deadline to apply is May 31st. The jobs can develop into long-term employment, but for those concerned about going over their income limit and affecting their social security benefits, the 6 week summer job program will not affect these benefits.

April Tyler presented on behalf of the Housing/Land Use and Zoning committee for CB9. There are three NYCHA Forums coming up this Spring (one already took place on March 28th). See the Flyer attached.

Ms. Tyler touched on a number of issues affecting seniors.

Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) are growing in NYCHA and, currently, seniors make up between 25% and 30% of the population in Grant, Manhattanville and Audubon houses. Attempts have been made to move seniors (and others) into smaller units even when these moves are clearly inappropriate due to the fact that there may be a live-in attendant or that the spaces do not accommodate a wheelchair or other needs.

The city has been trying to fill in open space in order to address population growth, but this negatively affects residents through the loss of open space such as parks, playgrounds and gardens. We need to be vigilant in defending these spaces for all of our residents.

Ms. Tyler spoke about potential resources that are available for CB9 from the Government and the need to follow (and get) the money. The government decides who gets money for work and, more often than not, this money is going to private contractors.

Ben Carson is not an advocate for NYCHA. Elsewhere in the country, public housing is being demolished and Carson is actively disinvesting from NYCHA. The classic "Death by a thousand cuts".

What can we do? – Actionable items:

Organize for *real* affordable housing. In Staten Island, the starting line for income requirements for affordable housing is \$0. In Harlem, median income is determined using data that includes incomes from Westchester County and Suffolk County. The city can change this, but we must demand the change.

Policy Changes – Reach out to agencies, elected officials, and work to change how affordable housing is built.

Churches – Our local faith institutions are selling their air rights to developers without securing the true value for the exchange. We need to reach out to our church leaders and build plans with them to defend our community by building affordable housing, especially for our seniors.

Martin asked Ms. Tyler about organizing a forum for the Fall to specifically address transportation issues. The forum would be a joint forum with the Housing, Transportation and Senior Issues committees.

Ms. Verna Arthur from the Department for the Aging (DFTA), let us know that they received \$30 million from the city council in their budget. Senior Centers will benefit from this contribution.

Mr. Samuel White, from Uptown Advocacy at Mount Morris Presbyterian Church, is honoring two seniors, Ms. Rice and Ms. Blake.

On April 14th, at the City College Campus, there was a health fair from 10-3. Students from Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education were in attendance at our meeting and were helping at the Fair, offering free medical and dental checkups.

Finally, our current chair, Reverend Morgan-Thomas, asked if we could move our meetings to a different day of the week as her schedule has made it difficult for her to chair our meetings on the first Tuesday of every month. The majority of our members were unable or unwilling to make such a change. I reached out to Padmore John, our chair, to let him know about our current situation and the challenges we face in maintaining a core of members on our committee and offered to be an interim chair if necessary. In response, Mr. John let us know that he spoke with Rev. Thomas and she has confirmed her ability to continue to support the activities and events out of the committee as chair. “As I explained to Rev. Thomas, in our recent discussions with the BP’s office and CM Levine for appointments we encouraged adding seniors to the board to support this committee, Rev. Thomas also discussed plans of increasing participation from seniors, and also encouraging other committees to raise and share items that affect seniors as well”.

Submitted by: Martin Wallace

Cb9M Board Member & Member of the Senior Issues Committee