

SENIOR ISSUES MEETING MINUTES FOR JULY 7, 2020

In attendance: Hon. Anthony Fletcher, Hon. Martin Wallace (co-chairs); Hon. Marti Cummings (excused), Hon. Walter T Alexander; Ray Maclin (CB9), Kieran Mahoney (DFTA), William Hamer and Antionette Emers (Harlem Advocate for Seniors), Carnetta Clark (AARP), Lorraine Wilbourne, Cara Gilmore, Ameenah Muhammad, Iretha Fletcher, Rita Carrington, Bessie Davis, Anne Burley,

I-Call to Order @11:13am

II-Adopted Agenda

III-Adopted Minutes

IV-Discussion-William Hamer (Harlem Advocate for Seniors)

The Agency was started in 2011 and have been certified 501C3. They operate three sites which bring information to Harlem seniors. They are advocates and conduct for seniors. Their plans are to expand to seniors who are not attending senior centers and are seeking funds to be able to do so. Their mission is to empower, engage, and support in four key areas:

A. Food-to address hunger and food insecurity. No one should go hungry in NYC. They offer halal and kosher food to those who request them. Food is available!

Q-What happens when the pandemic ends? Will the programs end?

A-Some will end in August but most will continue as long as the need is there.

Q - Will city continue to fund the meal program?

A - We don't know the answer at this point.

Q-With the upcoming budget cuts, will DFTA be able to operate?

A-The cuts are unknown thus far but presumably DFTA will still do as much as they can.

B. Health and Wellness-programs to improve senior well-being.

Q-Will large groups be able to gather again? Q What is potential impact on people being socially isolated for an extended period of time?

A-We address social isolation, loneliness, depression, and active living/aging fitness programs as well as mind strengthening. Our immediate plans are to go virtual for the time being.

Antionette Emers-DFTA has a component doing outreach to seniors for health and wellness checks-Aging Connect Hotline (212) 344-6469

C. Technology-Seniors do not have the use of technology currently. NYC tends to think all seniors are living in NYCHA housing! There is a need for laptops and/or tablets for all seniors! In addition Wifi is needed in NYCHA and in Harlem in general and programs to teach seniors how to use them. NYC wants to use income limits in order to qualify for these benefits. Harlem Advocates for Seniors wants the City to be more flexible in this area.

D. Social Engagement and Connectiveness

DFTA-Kiernan Mahoney (sitting in for vacationing Verna Arthur) thanked Mr. Hamer for his presentation and for the work he is doing for Harlem seniors. Concert in Motion brought concerts to senior centers-hopefully, this can resume in the future. There is a Senior Farmer's Market \$20 coupon-application is online. Anyone in need of food should contact the Food Czar at 311.

Q-(Gilmore) -Are there doctors who specialize in geriatrics?

A-Every senior should have access to a geriatric doctor, but the issue is that there aren't many doctors who choose this specialty. Thus there is a shortage of them. However, each health plan should have a geriatrician.

Q-(Burley)-What's happening with affordable housing for seniors?

A-Another hot button issue topic in NYC but no update at this time.

Q-What about prescription drugs?

A-There is no update about this.

Q-In spite of the budget cuts, can technology be facilitated for seniors who lack resources?

A-Not very likely. Will have to seek outside community agencies in NYC.

Q-Will NYC be able to maintain services (especially food services)?

A-Some programs are expected to stop in August. We will see in the future.

Q-Regarding food/mental health/technology/health & wellness-if Harlem Advocates for Seniors runs out of money, what will their priorities be?

A-For mental health services, Strive.NYC services are still available. Mental health ambassadors/practitioners are needed to engage seniors not in senior centers.

Q-Who has numbers for seniors to be able to spread information?

A-Due to privacy/confidential concerns, cold calls to seniors won't work.

Q-How do we knock on senior's doors to invite them to come to CB9 meetings?
A-Seniors have to give consent to do this (like cold calls).

Q. How will seniors get access to information without the necessary technology?
Depends on how long the pandemic lasts and Federal Government policies.

Q-(Alexander)-What is the contact information for the Harlem Advocates for Seniors?

A-(347) 698-8878 email William_Hamer95@gmail.com

Q-When is the next fireside chat?

A-July 13, 2020

Old Business

Too many firecrackers this year!

New Business

Happy Birthday to Mrs. Fletcher!

CB9 Calendar for 2020-21 will be distributed.

Meeting adjourned at 1:02pm. Next Meeting August 4, 2020