



Manhattan Community Board 9

Chair's Report August 8, 2019 Executive Committee Meeting

Welcome Back

I hope you have had a relaxing and recharging first half of summer. It is my enormous pleasure as the newly-elected Chair of Manhattan's Community Board 9 to welcome you to our August 2019 Executive Committee Meeting, where we will prepare for the start of our new session in September. I am immensely grateful to our former Chair, Padmore John, for the decorum, strategic vision, and seriousness his tenure brought to Board 9. I hope to build upon his legacy, and the legacies of those Chair from prior terms, in the coming two years.

If there is an overriding theme for what I would like to see the Board strive towards in the next two years, it would be "proactive, comprehensive planning." So many times, either with a new development, a new RFP, a new agency initiative, or a new program, we as a Board find ourselves reacting to the proposals of others, scrambling to conduct the research and identify the data that will allow us to make the best decisions or recommendations on behalf of the community with regards to the proposal. Rarely do we get to prioritize what proposals we know will address needs in the community. Rarely do we get to go to an agency with a proposal in hand and have *them* react. Rarely do we get to *create* opportunities in our community.

To change that, I will be meeting with the Co-Chairs of the Committees to get a better sense of how they spend their time, what resources they need, and how they can set aside time to conduct proactive assessments in their portfolios to identify areas where new initiatives can help set the community on a positive, inclusive trajectory.

I look forward to undertaking this work with you all, and I know that it cannot be done alone. I will ask you to give me guidance as Chair, correct me when I make a mistake, and suggest alternative paths forward when you see a better way.

Thank you for serving our community of West Harlem.

Barry Weinberg

Census 2020

Former Chair Padmore John set our Community Board up for success by building a relationship with the Census 2020 team and working with the Manhattan Borough President's Office to ensure a complete count of everyone in West Harlem. We will continue that engagement with the new Census Director Julie Menin and her team. Please continue to reach out to your neighbors and local organizations to

encourage them to apply for census jobs and spread the word about the importance of every person being counted. Now that the federal government's illegal efforts to suppress census response rates has been prevented by the courts, we must spread the word so that *all* of our neighbors know that it is safe and important to be counted.

Methadone Clinics and Opioid Addiction Treatment Sites

While the community achieved a victory in blocking the establishment of a methadone clinic in a historic brownstone at 730 St. Nicholas Avenue, more organizing remains to be done to ensure that our neighborhood has a thoughtful, well-planned response to opioid addiction that does not violate the City Council's Fair Share Criteria or the spirit of Section 203 of the New York City Charter. Importantly, we must make sure that sites with detrimental effects on street life and public safety are not unfairly clustered in our neighborhood of West Harlem beyond the capacity needed to provide for the members of the community. I have confidence that the efforts of the Health and Environment Committee on these matters, working in concert with other groups and individuals in the community, will allow us to get a more comprehensive picture of the challenges and opportunities we face.

Development Projects and the Land Use Study

Some days, it can feel like West Harlem is under siege from developers. The Housing, Zoning, and Land Use Committee has well over a dozen development projects before it, and new ones continue to appear on the horizon every day. The Committee has taken the first step to equipping itself to better handle these developments by contracting the Bond Center at City College to do a land use study of Manhattanville and Hamilton Heights that will identify likely target sites for development, buildings susceptible to tenant harassment and abuse, and potential projects for additional affordable housing. Additionally, the Committee continues to push for a rezoning of Morningside Heights to limit out-of-context luxury development while promoting new affordable housing and the preservation of existing affordable units.

DOT/MTA

Transportation has been a hot-button issue for our Board for at least the past year, centered around continued pressures from the Department of Transportation to reduce the capacity of Amsterdam Avenue and now based on the MTA's proposal to adjust the Bx15, create a new M125 route across 125th Street, and terminate the M100 at 125th St and Amsterdam Avenue. Over the years, we have been subjected to repeated proposals from the DOT that do not take into account the interests of our community in functioning bus routes, clean air, and safe streets. I look forward to the Uniform Services and Transportation Committees continued efforts to take a holistic look at our streets and transit and develop principles and proposals we can put to the DOT and MTA that work for all residents of West Harlem.

Criminal Justice Initiatives

As many of you know, West Harlem has been designated a target community of the New York District Attorney's Criminal Justice Investment Initiative, with an RFP posted January 23, 2019 requesting innovative and collaborative proposals centered on facilitating re-entry of formerly incarcerated people

to the Manhattanville and Grant Houses and the surrounding community. This is an initiative that is enormously important to the future of our community, and it is one that we cannot let flounder. The success of this initiative will mean the strengthening of our community and the ties that keep us healthy and connected. Its failure would mean increased isolation, the squandering of human potential, and a likely increase in violence in the future. I will be asking several of the Board members to volunteer to monitor this initiative and find ways for the Board to actively guide and support the eventual organizations receiving the grant for the project. The Board already made great strides toward proactive efforts on this front thanks to the efforts of Vice Chair Victor Edwards and Chair Padmore John's creation of the Upper Manhattan Collaborative for Justice, and I hope that the Collaborative can assist in this project.

Induction of Officers

Planning is underway for a ceremony for the induction of our newly-elected Officers. Similar to those held by former Chair Rev. Morgan-Thomas and the late former Chair Pat Jones, the ceremony will provide an opportunity to get together as a Board, celebrate our past successes and future efforts, and build relations amongst Board Members and elected officials. If you have any ideas on location or program, please email Eutha and cc me. Be on the lookout for further updates from the Board Office.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Barry Weinberg
Chair