



## Manhattan Community Board 9

### Chair Report May, 2019 General Board Meeting

#### ***Welcome to New Board Members***

This is always a special time for the board as we welcome new board members. Thank you to the community members who have decided to sacrifice their time to engage with and address many of the challenges that our community is currently facing. As a resident or business owner of CB9 you already have an idea of some of the challenges we are facing. Affordable housing; education; health, including nutrition, food security and environment; youth concerns; criminal justice; the Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) are all concerns that we are expected deal with on a daily basis. The work of the board is time consuming, and sometimes frustrating. However, there is an immense feeling of satisfaction having stake a position that is held by the entire community and the community and the Board standing firm on that issue. We look forward to the new members adding their experience, knowledge, expertise and commitment to addressing the cause. These are especially crucial times for the board in light of the City Charter Revision and the subsequent ballot decision to limit board members to term limits of 4 years. It is important that as new members come on, that they have access to the historical knowledge of the board and to speak to longer tenured board members to ensure that you are apprised of the historical information for an issue that the board is addressing. Again I would like to extend my warmest welcome to the new members and hope that you can continue to help CB9 be the best that it can be.

#### ***Census***

It is our duty to ensure that all of our community is counted. There is a concerted effort by the Federal Gov't to undercut all attempts for an accurate count of the citizens of New York. This is not a conspiracy, it's just a fact -- this is the purpose of the citizenship question. Furthermore, very little Federal funding has been directed towards community engagement around the new Census. As such CB9 will be working very closely with The Borough President's office to ensure that there is a coordinated and systematic effort to count and engage with all residents in CB9. This will require engaging with Non-Profits that provide services to residents, volunteers knocking on doors, collaborations with partners such as the libraries, and every individual in CB9 speaking to their neighbors to ensure that they participate in the Census. Everyone Counts! This is the reason why I have asked Aldrin Bonilla First Deputy Borough President to attend this month's general board meeting to discuss means and methods by which we can be supportive of the initiatives that will be underway in a lead-up to the census count.

#### ***Legalization of Marijuana***

Spearheaded by the Health and Environment Committee, CB9 together with CB10 hosted a forum on the legalization of marijuana and the expected impact it would have on our Community District. 4 subject areas were addressed in the event: Regulation, Policy, Wellness and Economic Opportunities. Key to the forum was whether our elected officials are on the right side of any

legislation that might come out of Albany. Many of the panelists spoke to the issues that were of a primary concern to us. Ensuring that there is criminal justice reform and that many young men and women that were imprisoned for sale or consumption of marijuana will have some amount of restitution by the state, whether it be expungement, sealing or early release for non-violent offenders. The issue of equitable access, ensuring that all residents have equal access to the drug, especially the medical marijuana, which based on a cash system, has proved to be out of reach for many needy clients. Furthermore, we explored the ways of ensuring that economic opportunities remained opened to all individuals, and special accommodations be made to support entry into the industry by communities that were and still are disproportionately targeted by law enforcement for infractions involving the consumption of marijuana. Finally we also discussed ensuring that some percentage of profit made from taxes be reinvested in communities most affected by the criminalization of marijuana. Of course, the bill has to pass first. Until then we should remain engaged in conversation between ourselves and elected officials. It is not everyone in our community that wishes see marijuana decriminalized. Having respectful and honest conversations addressing equity is important to proceed in reaching sustainable decision.

### ***Amsterdam Avenue***

At our April 18<sup>th</sup> general board meeting we were visited by protesters from Transportation Alternatives (TA) over Amsterdam Avenue. DOT wishes to introduce traffic calming measures to accomplish vision zero along Amsterdam Avenue. We have given feedback to DOT over an extended period of time, from 2017, that they have either ignored or refused. We passed resolutions supporting the plan but asking for improvements including coordinated enforcement. After the protest we meet with the local leadership of TA and came to the agreement of the need for extra safety on Amsterdam Avenue, and expressed to them that we also wish to ensure that the result of these changes should not lead to negative repercussions, such as: Increased accidents because of unprotected bike lanes which sometimes lead to a false sense of security; increased pollution levels and asthma rates; and lack of enforcement which typically leads to illegal parking causing delays and accidents. The Board did its part by identifying an air quality monitoring system, and working with local professors, will conduct its own monitoring and convey this information to the public. We hope DOT steps up to the plate to address our other concerns.

### ***Upcoming Activities:***

2019 WHEC Empowerment Fairs (SAVE THE DATES)

- Friday May 17<sup>th</sup> 4-7p  
W 134th btw Broadway/Amsterdam
- Friday, June 28th, 4-7p  
W 151st btw Amsterdam/Broadway
- Friday, July 19th, 4-7p  
W 143rd and Hamilton Place
- Tuesday, August 6th - NNO, 1-6p  
Carmensville Playground  
btw 151st/152nd on Amsterdam Ave
- Friday, September 20th, 4-6p  
W 145th St Subway Station

**Respectfully Submitted by,  
Padmore John, Chair**