



Chair Report

October, General Board Meeting

Census 2020

The next census is scheduled for 2020, but changes in the questioning on the census serves to dissuade many individuals from participating, causing an undercount of the city's and state's population. This is crucial as Federal funding is dependent on population sizes. These questions are targeted at undocumented residents from across the world, and because New York City and New York state both view themselves as places of sanctuary, we serve to be impacted by this decision more so than other areas. As such, the Manhattan Borough President's office has coordinated a trip to Rhode Island to review what that city has done to prepare and ensure all residents are counted as part of the census.

This delegation of New York County elected, civic, labor and nonprofit leaders will travel to Providence, Rhode Island to receive a first-hand account and briefing from officials in the only city in the country selected to conduct an end-to-end "dry run" rehearsal ahead of the 2020 Decennial Census.

Providence Mayor Jorge O. Elorza and participating partners in their Complete Count Committee have graciously agreed to host our delegation on Tuesday, October 23rd to share their insights and experiences regarding the test Census count conducted in their city earlier this year.

Providence officials are in a unique position to evaluate whether, from a municipal standpoint, the U.S. Census Bureau managed the process well, how it involved key stakeholders, how it engaged in public education and outreach, and whether it provided adequate resources to achieve an accurate and complete count.

The briefing will also shed light on the potential and nature of undercounts we may expect as a result of the transition from mailed paper questionnaires to online census form submissions. And although the citizenship question was not included in the Providence dry-run, local officials and stakeholders will be able to brief us on the impact that news coverage had on residents' anxieties, fears and subsequent participation rates, a subject of crucial concern to New York.

As stated earlier, a Census undercount would directly affect federal funding for myriad programs as well as representation in the federal government. No municipality can afford the lingering consequences and costs associated with an undercount. Therefore, I will be participating in this trip and hope to be able to bring back helpful recommendations to implement in preparation of the census count.

World Mental Health Day

Yesterday Oct. 10th was World Mental Health Day, and according to reports in the Lancet, the British medical journal, mental health illness has increased across the entire world. Here in NYC, one in five adult New Yorkers experience a mental health disorder in any given year. And that's a conservative estimate. But one in five doesn't begin to capture the devastating impact of mental illness on our city. The consequences of this quiet crisis are everywhere, and affect all of us. We see it in our schools, where 8% of public high school students report attempting suicide. We see it in our homeless shelters, where approximately 35% of clients suffer from a serious mental illness. We see it in our hospitals, which grapple with 70,000 alcohol-related emergency room visits and 1,800 alcohol-related deaths among 18- to 64-year-olds every year. Substance misuse is among the leading contributors to premature death throughout New York City.

To begin to address this NYC has created its Thrive program to support people who are suffering from mental illness. Part of this is to destigmatize seeking help and to increase resources and access to support. One such way is through first aid.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training teaches you how to identify signs of mental health distress, or substance use issues in your community. It will help you understand people's challenges or crises, and show you how to respond effectively.

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) offers free Mental Health First Aid training to all New Yorkers, as part of the Thrive NYC initiative.

Research shows that MHFA training has a number of benefits.

- Improved ability to recognize behavioral health challenges
- Greater confidence in one's ability to help
- Decreased negative attitudes toward behavioral health challenges

I encourage the entire board to register for MHFA training. We are currently working on establishing a date where board members can be trained in MHFA. Please stay tuned for this information.

Beyond Sims

On Tuesday April 17, 2018 the New York City's Public Design Commission (PDC), convened by Mayor Bill deBlasio to review statues around NYC, made the momentous decision to remove the statue of Dr. J. Marion Sims from its pedestal overlooking East Harlem on the outskirts of Central Park. The decision was not an easy one and was preceded by many years of protests, campaigns and other activities to draw attention to this issue. Although the decision was ultimately made by the PDC, the impetus behind this motivation was a collection of residents, community based organizations (CBOs) and elected officials. Dr. J. Marion Sims gained fame in Western medicine in the mid-1800s for his unethical experiments on African-American female slaves. He conducted invasive gynecological procedures without obtaining consent or providing anesthesia. During this time period, physicians elsewhere in the world used anesthesia to minimize pain and trauma.

Steadfast in their duty to make this injustice visible, these CBOs, such as the Coalition to Remove the Dr. J. Marion Sims Statue, the East Harlem Preservation, and the Black Youth Project 100, maintained a steady drumbeat of agitation that served to amplify community power around a common goal, with other groups including Community Board 11, and cultural institutions, El Museo Del Barrio, The New York Academy of Medicine, and the Museum of the City of New York lending their support to raise awareness to this issue. Several elected officials were also part of this campaign from the beginning including Council Member Charles Barron and continued by Council Member Inez Barron, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, Speaker Melissa Mark Viverito and other local electeds.

With decades of psychological trauma inflicted on the community “being tormented” by an image that represented the ill treatment of women, the time for healing and reconciliation has come. To that end, these organizations and concerned residents have created a coalition with three city agencies – Parks Department, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), and Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA). This coalition, called the Committee to Empower Voices for Healing and Equity, was formed in June of 2018.

The Committee’s immediate goal is to erect a replacement artwork by December 2020, while simultaneously informing the community about the process and facilitating community-engaging activities to ensure their voices are included in the process. The Committee also plans to host programs that support healing and address trauma around the legacy caused by Dr. J. Marion Sims. The coalition will create and suggest opportunities whereby residents of East Harlem, our community at large—including both NYC residents and those outside of NYC—will be afforded the opportunity to make suggestions as to types of artwork that would be best suitable as a replacement. Our work aligns with DCLA’s public artist selection process timeline.

The first event will be held on **Saturday, October 20th, 2018 from 1:00pm to 3:30pm at The New York Academy of Medicine, located at 1216 Fifth Ave (at 103rd Street), New York, NY 10029.** This event will provide residents and participants an opportunity to make recommendations of ideas and themes that they would like to see incorporated into replacement art. For further information please contact: culturalevents@nyam.org.

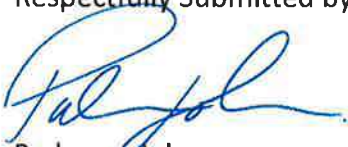
NYC Community Board Leadership forums

The NYC Department of City Planning will host on Oct 9th(TENTATIVE), 19th and 23rd, 2018 at the City Planning Commission’s new public hearing room, located at 120 Broadway Lower Level (see attached flyer). These two-hour, interactive, informational training and discussion sessions are intended to provide NYC community board leaders with knowledge and tools necessary to make them even more effective advocates for their communities and participants within our related planning and land use processes.

At these informative and engaging sessions, DCP leaders will:

1. Present an overview of the Department's planning mission and organization
2. Share how we work with community boards to shape the City, and
3. Deliver live demonstrations of our interactive Planning Tools and Resources

Respectfully Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Padmore John", written over a light blue circular stamp.

Padmore John
Chair