

**Manhattan Community Board 9
General Board Meeting
September 17, 2020**

Meeting called to order via Zoom at 6:42pm. M Dunn moves to adopt agenda, multiple seconds. Adopted unanimously. M Dunn moves to adopt minutes, multiple seconds. Adopted unanimously.

Presentations

Parent Legislative Action Network, on Senate Bill S7553A

Joyce McMillian, ACS Parent & Child Advocate
Jessica Prince, attorney at Bronx Defender Services
Imani Worthy, an impacted parent

Important that parents know their rights when dealing with ACS. Ms. Worthy described experience with ACS being devoid of empathy, and paradox of being seen as either overly emotional or apathetic as a Black woman. Parents under investigation by ACS have no guarantee of legal representation and don't know rights. Bill would require that ACS announce your rights, Miranda-style, when they come to investigate you.

PLAN brings together legal expertise of family law experts and parents with experience in the system. Advocates think of ACS worker knocking at door like moment of arrest because it's when a parent might do or say something that could later be used against them. Currently, ACS workers don't tell parents that they can refuse tests or searches, and implies non-cooperation will lead to removal of their children. Parallels between mass incarceration and foster care.

MAD, Mobilize African Diaspora

Brianna Sturkey, recent Barnard grad

Goal for Columbia to fulfill responsibilities to West Harlem. Demand repayment of debts to community by supporting employment and affordable housing and fighting over-policing. Revised letter incorporates changes requested by Exec committee, specifically changing references from Black to BIPOC people.

Demands sourced from correspondence with Morningside Heights Community Coalition and CB9 members, research into old Spectator articles, and original research. Demands cover employment, education, affordable housing, university expansion, and long-term sustainability of the university-neighborhood relationship. Met with Columbia, and expressed that follow-up meeting should include CB9.

Chair's Report, Barry Weinberg

Focus on budget requests in district needs statements from each committee. Committee co-chairs should review sections of needs statement with specific data about our district's challenges and specific requests. Will require follow up with agency representatives. Priorities due to OMB on October 30.

Additional challenges for the district include rise in street homelessness. People deserve compassion and assistance -- responses require coordination from social services, mental health, and NYPD.

Chair provided additional updates on the fire at 601 West 135th, RKO Hamilton theater renovation plans, street collapse on 12th avenue, upcoming deadlines for voter registration, and efforts to get census responses up before the approaching deadline.

Treasurer's Report, April Tyler

11K from Council Members but 42.5K less from city. Otherwise CB budgets largely intact from city budget cuts. Budget priorities need to be in by Oct 30 -- discuss with committee members. Be specific about locations of requests, realistic, and data-driven. Good turnout at budget education webinars.

DM's Report

Important to participate in the budget process -- please attend public hearing and give input. New graduates from city emergency preparedness program. Assist city agencies to prepare for and respond to emergencies. NY Women's Chamber of Commerce providing one-time small grants to small businesses in CB9 (<10 employees, in business for >1 year, COVID hardship). Celebrate retirement of Ophelia Rodriguez at Broadway Housing Communities, key partner to CB9.

WHDC, Pat Watler-Johnson

P. Watler Johnson called on Ken Miles to talk about ARISE SYEEP. Program this summer was virtual, 104 youth from West Harlem. Success! Partnered with Pop-Up Mentorship (PUMP) and Local Civics. Able to provide stipends to youth. No employment component this year due to COVID. Youth were compensated for participation. Communicated extensively around technical needs; got tablets for some students. Grappled with effective educational techniques under virtual teaching. Diverse guest speakers.

UMEZ (Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone), G. Morgan-Thomas

UMEZ cultural enrichment fund sponsors individuals artists and non-profits. Partnered with Lower Manhattan Cultural Association. Microloans available to small businesses.

Manhattan Borough President, Gale Brewer

Terrible fire at 601 W 135th, but happy that excess food was being sent to displaced families. Street clean-ups a work in progress; still far too many budget cuts to trash pickup. Bottle caps an issue - suggest state provide fee for returning them.

Find learning labs in your neighborhood. Unclear what will happen with food distribution at schools when students are back in session. Hundreds of JCC provided tutors approved by DOE helping fill gaps in students' education. Kids need support to get through this school year.

New 26th Pct CO doing well to meet with CB9 and Osborne Foundation. Should work more closely with Osborne on reentry issues.

Census: sent 280K postcards to lowest-responding census tracts. Ongoing fight on transitional vs permanent housing. Updated 2017 survey of Broadway storefronts. 78% increase in vacancies. Fight rent price gouging. Difficulty getting already-allocated funds paid out from OMB. Required news story to get city to act. Distributing census information and PPE outside schools on Monday.

Public Session

Dominique Jones, Boys & Girls Club of Harlem

Thanks. Planning to give full presentation to the board soon. Organization is going strong, mobilized quickly when COVID started to move after-school programs online. Board and stakeholders mobilized to do emergency food distribution. Lots of guides on website with information on resources families can access. WHDC, Robin Hood, United Way helped fund modified summer day camp. Hopes to be designated remote learning lab by DYCD.

Maria Velez, 134th St. Community Garden

Working on getting garden for two years. Difficulty getting information about ownership of lot and plans for it. Block association is under disputed leadership. Money was allocated but information not being shared.

Lana Orin, resident of 3333 Broadway

Building started installing out-swing windows. Multiple pets have fallen out of windows. No screen or child guard. Pose dangers to children, liable to break under wind or be disabled.

Gricel Ortiz-Thompson, resident of 3333 Broadway

Business owners on Broadway between 135th and 136th have nuisances arising from drug dealing activity. Building has scaffolding that obstructs view, and abandoned phone booth used for public urination. Manhattan Mini-Storage leaving items in dumpsters or on the street, that passersby rifle through.

Elected Official Reports

Porfirio Figueroa, Sen. Jackson's office

Held night run to distribute information on census, PPE, and social distancing. Ongoing Sunday voter registration and census drive. Bill S819 expands family leave for families with students participating in remote learning.

Michelle Booker, Rep. Espaillat's office

Sept. 15 - Oct. 15 is Hispanic Heritage Month. Flu shot and community engagement event. See Facebook page for community events. Voted for bill to require Postal Service to restore Jan. 1, 2020 service levels.

Kyshia Smith, CM Levine's office

Sanitation concern: recent successful second community clean-up event. Advocating for additional funding to sanitation department to restore Saturday pick-ups. Essential for folks to get flu shots this year.

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Action Items (Y-N-A-PNEV)

Item 1: MAD letter of support, 37-0-0-0

Item 2: Reso re: S7553A, rights for parents dealing with child protective services (tabled, no written reso)

Item 3: Legalization of adult marijuana use, 30-5-3

Item 4: Housing Justice for All, 36-1-0

Item 5: Baskerville Hall, 37-0-0

Item 6: 2935 Broadway, 16-13-6-0

Meeting adjourned at 10:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alec Barrett, Secretary

Ted Kovaleff, Asst. Secretary