

DRAFT
HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Monday, September 8, 2025

6:30 pm

Conference Room, District Office, 3295 Broadway, NYC 10027

BOARD COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs: Hon. Cameron Clarke, MPH, Hon. LaQuita Henry **Members:** Hon. Elizabeth Eastman, Hon. Monique Hardin-Cordero, Hon. Heather Jason, Hon. Lenna Nepomnyaschy, Hon. Janaira Ramirez, Hon. Jordan Scherer

General Board Member(s): Hon. Victor Edwards (Chair) (on ZOOM)

Public Members: Monica Dula, Esq., Dr. Edwin Torres (on ZOOM)

Guests: Elizabeth Rodriguez (NMIC) ; DeenaLynn Dockery-Collins (Kota Alliance)

I. Call to Order

- Roll Call Attendance/Sign-in Sheet taken by Chair L. Henry
- 8 members present
- Meeting called to order at 6:45pm by Co-Chair L. Henry

II. Adopt Agenda

- Motion to adopt agenda by M. Hardin-Cordero, seconded by J. Scherer
- Meeting agenda adopted by all members present

III. Adopt Minutes (from June 2025 meeting)

- Minutes not finalized, motion to adopt the minutes tabled

IV. Announcements / Updates

✚ **Meeting began with introductions of new committee members**

✚ **Emma Bowen Community Service Center's (EBCSS) relocation**

Emma Bowen Community Service Center is preparing to temporarily move from its 1727 Amsterdam Avenue address in the district to a nearly completed location on 135th Street. The agency is working through final approvals from one of its government funding sources. Once completed, EBCSS will be at the temporary address for approximately 5 years when 1727 Amsterdam Avenue is anticipated to be renovated for the agency's return.

✚ **NYC Department of Health and Mental Health**

Legionnaires Disease, COVID-19, Measles, Immunizations (Children and Adult)
as presented by CB9's DOHMH liaison Pauline Ferrante

1. **Regarding Legionnaires**, it was difficult to match patient samples with building cooling towers
2. Standard procedure with Health Department not to disclose individual addresses (One of the cooling towers was unregistered.)

3. Edwin Torres commented that many of these are city owned and run facilities - some of which were cooling centers that community members are encouraged to go to
4. DOHMH took samples and immediately asked buildings to clean and remediate even before samples were tested
5. Agency never previously gave out building addresses during prior outbreaks but did so in response to community pressure
 - Victor Edwards asked if there was any thought of changing that policy? Liaison did not indicate awareness of such in answer to this question.
6. C. Clarke commented that Harlem and Bronx neighborhoods have experienced 7 out of 8 recent Legionella outbreaks - and asked if the DOH devotes inspection resources to high risk areas
 - Answer was Department of Health review staffing and resource allocation priorities for Legionella inspections in high-risk areas
7. CB9 member, Jordan Scherer, suggested that DOH explore implementing building grades or transparency system for cooling tower inspections
8. Monica Dula commented that some sources advertised that 10031 was an impacted zip code, but most publications did not
9. Department of Health to investigate communication gaps that led to delayed notification and about 10031 zip code being added to affected areas
10. Department of Health commented that staffing gaps in Legionella inspection program may have contributed to the backlog in inspections
 - Noted that the salary offered for DOH inspectors was not competitive for a role with the required qualifications
11. CB9 suggested that Department of Health review and potentially increase penalties for non-compliant buildings, especially city-owned facilities
12. **Regarding COVID 19**, DOHMH liaison, Pauline Ferrante, also commented on the governor's executive order on COVID vaccine availability - will send information about COVID vaccine availability and governor's executive order to the committee
13. **Regarding exposure to gas fumes from idling parked trucks**, Pauline committed to inspect food trucks at City College after receiving location information from E. Torres about a stationary food truck on site.
 - Edwin to send food truck location information to Pauline via email
14. **Other concerns**: Pauline to send any available flyers or statements about Legionnaires disease to the committee for the upcoming Executive Committee meeting
15. C. Clarke commented that Upper Manhattan Tenants Union and WE ACT are developing and proposing legislation for stricter cooling tower regulations and increased building maintenance regulations

- Cameron did announce a hearing on Legionnaires' Disease at the City Council. Community members interested in testifying live in person or via video conferencing, please register in advance of the hearing at <https://council.nyc.gov/testify/>.
- Community members can also submit testimony by emailing hearings@council.nyc.gov or at <https://council.nyc.gov/testify/>.

New Committee Co-Chair, Cameron Clarke, was also invited to provide his expert opinion on current climate and environmental issues. He focused on Legionnaires and deferred presentation on Legionnaires' and Environmental Justice due to responding in real time to aspects of the topic being discussed in follow up by our DOHMH liaison and committee members.

KOTA Alliance

- Deena Lyn Dockery presented on the upcoming events happening at the KOTA Alliance, including quarterly potlucks, digital yoga classes, and a women's wellness open house event in October.

NMIC Services

- Elizabeth Rodriguez, Outreach Specialist presented on the services offered by the Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation, including Medicaid navigation, community health worker support, and counseling
- services.
- NMIC now serves all New York City residents with a focus on those in Northern Manhattan and the South and West Bronx.

Community Presenters, (Kota Alliance (DeenaLynn) and NMIC (Elizabeth) requested to contact Christopher about participating in the health fair

What True Accountability from the City of New York can mean for our District 9 Communities

- Dr. Edwin Torres spoke on the need for accountability from the City of New York, particularly regarding environmental and health issues in the district. Edwin discussed past improvements at 145th and Saint Nicholas, which addressed the previous vehicular pollution due to community efforts and emphasized the need to hold agencies accountable for environmental health hazards, including truck idling and pollution.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Follow Up on Resolutions

- LaQuita also mentioned the need to evaluate and follow up on previous resolutions - potentially researching whether the resolutions have been implemented or need additional community input.

Graduate Fellow

- First Vice Chair, Monique announced to the committee the potential addition of a graduate fellow to support the General Board. In Executive Committee, a proposal to identify a burning issue that threads through all or most committees was discussed. To date, the Health & Environment and Housing Committees could possibly utilize the Fellow to shine a brighter light on the saturation of our area's supportive housing and its pairing of mental health services. Monique will forward the detailed information to our committee Co-Chairs. They will email committee members hoping for input which will then flow back to Board Chair/Co-Chairs for development.

VI. ADJOURN

- Motion to adjourn made by M. Dula and seconded by Janaira Ramirez
- Meeting was adjourned by Chair Henry at 8:37pm

Respectfully submitted,
Cameron Clarke and LaQuita Henry