

Senior Issues Committee Meeting Minutes for June 1st, 2021

Meeting called to attention at 11:12AM

IN attendance: Anthony Fletcher – Co-Chair; Martin Wallace Co-Chair

Excused Absence – Walter Alexander

Unexcused Absence – Marti Cummings

Irene Zola, William Hamer, Fern Hertzberg, Richard Allman, Lorraine Wilbourne, Marion Sutherland, Iretha Fletcher, Lillian Doctor, Ameenah Muhammad, Bessie Davis, Annie Payne, Eutha Prince

April minutes not sent out –

Anthony calls meeting to order pursuant to agenda at 11:17 AM.

Martin and Lorraine move to adopt May meeting minutes.

William Hamer –

Jazzmobile in-person and virtual workshops - Riverbank Park Hosts in-person gatherings. 2 workshops – AM and PM. Writing and Art. Starts next week. In-person can host 15-20 people. 20-25 people online.

Where to sign up – 347-698-8878 – William Hamer’s number. Call to sign up.

Irene Zola – LiLY - we want to help, especially at 135th street senior center. Is there still overcrowding? Older seniors who speak only Spanish – what happens with this meeting? What outreach is there to Spanish speakers?

Anthony – we’re not sure.

Martin – Spanish translation – may be available in the fall through our new office. Re. outreach, still need to work on this.

Lorraine – move to adopt agenda.

Ms. Doctor moves to adopt agenda.

Anthony seconds.

Agenda adopted and meeting called to order at 11:35 AM.

Fern presents –

Start by offering to translate – can translate into Spanish.

Reopening of Senior Centers:

Not currently open. 28 approved for grab and go across city. 1st group started last week. 100 more in pipeline. Only through June 30th. Fern – we say no if only for 4 weeks. All centers being told to be ready to re-open. Cleanliness and PPE primary concern.

No word from Mayor, Health Dept. DFTA about specifics.

Majority of seniors are asking for Social Svcs.

Obama phones – Lifeline

Staff must mask up but clients are not required to do so

6 feet distance mandated

More pressure needed for getting senior centers re-opened.

Anthony – Not aware of incremental mode of rollout. What is CB10 and its senior centers doing? How does CB9 compare?

Fern – Citywide – no senior centers are open. All are doing virtual services.

Anthony – is there grab and go in CB9 and CB10?

Fern – Some have applied – none approved in Northern Manhattan with pos. exception of CB11.

Anthony – I find this frustrating and disappointing. In 28 approved – what are demographics?

Fern – not done by population but by submissions received and proof of readiness. Limited office staff or none limits ability to meet requirements.

Fern reads e-mail received that DeBlasio announces this AM that Senior Centers will reopen.

Indoor congregate service starting June 14th. Outdoor immediately. Live On NY reporting (senior services membership entity)

Anthony – Now we need to know what to do here in CB9. What to tell our board members?

W Hamer – Wonderful news. Has been a big issue for more than a month.

Irene Z. – request for introductions and introduces L-i-L-Y. 12 years of volunteers serving seniors in Morningside Heights and West Harlem. Offer array of svcs. Need social workers and staff to help older seniors. Since Covid-19 we have had to adapt. Deliver food, phone banking, errands, practical services – connect seniors to help each other. Serve 225 people any given day. Zoom help. 50 tablets and wifi svcs. Plus tech training.

Fern – Exec. Dir. Of ARC XVI Fort Wa.

1970 – Info and referral

1973 Incorporate Senior Center and 2 vehicles

Today – 3 senior centers and WHIST transport. M-F 9AM to 4PM 212-568-5030/5031

Call admin. At 929-431-5128 talk to Marlene Suculanda

Member of HAS

Senior Task Force in CB10 – Richard Allman

Co-chair – Wa Hts Council on Aging

Martin – are there any senior centers open?

Fern - Social Adult Day Programs – for frail, chronic health cond. And otherwise, in the state but not the city. Regulated by Dept of Health – Medicaid related

Lilian Doctor – does WHIST go to Lenox Hill Hosp.?

Fern, only down to 96th on East side and from 110th north to Inwood.

Irene Z. – What does opening up mean? Full services, grab and go?

Fern – 1st thing is social services. Preference for congregate meals. Combo of gran and go and congregate okay. Will ask today what is allowed.

Limited services available: Wa. Hts and Inwoo – 9 centers
Central Harlem – 5 official, 2-3 satellites
East – Similar
CB9 – 3 official sites

Advocacy issue – 5 years to ramp up for next cycle of RFP – find sponsor for new senior center location. Look at 135th to 145th – Space at Religious Institution, Accessible, willing to host program.

Martin – Audit – put on future agenda – 5 yr. plan

Fern – Wa. Hts. Council on Aging – 85% providers 15% older adults. Provider heavy – has dif. Flavor – more geography issue – practical. Dementia – who provides help for this issue? (Only Riverstone- W. Hamer) What are the svcs. Needed, gaps, are the services needed? Riverstone closed during COVID, no alternative. If you don't have access to internet, harder to get help you need. Burden falls on Family or State

Anthony – Lorraine – talk about elevator issue, ADA

Lorraine – made presentation at CB budget hearing – asked for new elevator

Anthony – What would Fern do?

Fern – Start with board of org that sponsors Jackie Robinson – Charles Wohlberg Multservice – Carla Brown – non-responsive. Go to board, not Carla. Alternatively, go to DFTA – have seniors call them on reg. basis and complain. Will require org. come up with solution.

List – Call DFTA asking for money. DFTA van argue with NYCHA. Obligation is there.

Commission of human rights. Go through all of the steps.

Anthony – process. Carla Brown and org. How do they wind up in their positions? Eligibility?

Fern – non-profit. They are in the process of RFP – bidding to reapply to be sponsor of that entity. Prove experience, viable plan.

RFP full of holes

Must say center provides X meals, X activities.

Process has not been thrown wide open. Look it up on public record. You say why and how. Need a 4 year plan to change sponsorship. Can say they are non-responsive. Ex. – the sponsor and run meals-on-wheels program.

Anthony – Meals on Wheels? How is it?

Fern – Colleague of mine who runs kosher site said Kosher meals quality was terrible.

Colleague went to DFTA w/ letters from members. Finally won battle to force sponsor to bid for different contract for Kosher meals.

W. Hamer – Lorraine – is elevator constantly breaking down, doesn't work? What?

Lorraine – needs an operator. Operator is not always available.

Fern – ADA requires that clients can operate an elevator themselves.

Lorraine – Elevator has a gate.

Fern – CB9 – make capital priority in budget – at least \$200K

Anthony - legal question about reasonable accommodation. Don't know

Fern – either push button or hydorlic lift

W. Hamer – where are the directors? Irresponsible not to be connected to the community.

Fern – I don't know other two site directors. Surprised by Hamilton Grange – Church is sponsor. Director is not end all, be all. Board of Directors can help. At PSS Manhattanville, there is a hierarchy above the Dir.

DFTA is sending out guidance for reopening.

Anthony – can you share info?

Fern –

- Self-inspection safety checklist in person
- Set out physical distancing; PPE Hygiene communication of emerg. Prep. Plan, posters, screening, test and trace, vaccinations
- Review staffing plan
- Refresh water system
- Ventilation – position staff away from airflow
- Interim guidance re how to clean

Anthony – What is your view re. testing/vaccination

Fern – concerned about having vaxed and non-vaxed under same roof.

Anthony – you agree needs to be addressed

Fern – legally cannot exclude non-vaxed. All staff will wear masks. Option to use plastic shield. Most protection that we can give to staff. We have assisted 2000 seniors with getting vax.

There are always some who refuse. Can't mandate that seniors wear masks.

Anthony – I don't want my mom in that environment. We must be mindful of this reality of unvaxed people in centers

W. Hamer – Possible strategy – Vaccinated and non-vaccinated sections?

Fern – Truth – it's nonsense. Germs are there. Impossible to setup centers w/so little time

Anthony – Law will not keep unvaccinated out.

W. Hamer – Need to also provide positive, creative outlets. Reminder of JazzMobile. Need to also be careful about how we open up. Lawsuit risk.

Old Business – Book club. Contact George Bruce – Heather Caines

New Business –

Ms. Doctor – when do we meet in person?

Eutha Prince – We will not be open to the public yet. Meetings will continue to be via Zoom until further notice

Ms. Doctor – I got vax via Emblem Health. Others could use health plan to get Vax. I did not know I could do this. From Jan to April, no one said anything.

Anthony – Reason to believe insurers would not be advertising considering cost. Flipside to argument – if more did as you there would be fewer infections. I follow this issue with my work in Business Law.

Meeting adjourns at 1:27 PM