

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES – OCTOBER 2, 2014

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Simon (Chair), Edgard Nau (Asst. Chair), Wanda Garcia, Elizabeth Lehmann, Juan Mejia, Beatrice Hall (Public Member).

ABSENT: Lorenzo McGougan.

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Terriell Peters, Arlene Schulman Ayisha Ogilvie.

GUESTS: Julio Batista, NY-Presbyterian Hospital; Judah Fierstein, Mt. Sinai Urgent Care; Seth Ciabotti, Mt. Sinai Health System; Brad Korn, Continuum Health Partners; Martin Collins, Kimberlee Gonzalez, Andrew Johnson, Casiel Rodriguez.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

1. **Mt. Sinai Hospital's plan to open an Urgent Care Center in Inwood** -- Judah Fierstein, MD, Medical Director, Mount Sinai Urgent Care, and Seth Ciabotti, Senior Director of Operations & Network Practices, Mt. Sinai Hospital, said the new 8,000 square-foot center would be located at 5030 Broadway (between W. 213th – 214th Streets) and should open mid-November. It will be modeled after one now on the Upper West Side on Columbus Avenue at W. 91st Street. It will be open 365 days/year, 8:30 a.m. – 8:30 p.m. on weekdays, 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. on weekend days and holidays for walk-ins, and serve both adults and children. Most insurance plans would be accepted, including Medicaid and Medicare. One doctor will be present at all times; two will be working there. Specialty care may be added later; space could be rented out to other doctors. Staff will be bilingual. An on-site laboratory would be operated by Mt. Sinai. X-ray equipment would be available. Minor injuries and illnesses, chest pain, stomach ailments, etc. are the most common cases they expect to see. People would be referred to the nearby NYPH Allen Hospital in an emergency. Continuity of care (follow-up visits to doctors) could be provided at Mt. Sinai. Behavioral health cases can be referred to a St. Luke's Hospital (now part of Mt. Sinai) program at W. 108th St.

S. Simon welcomed them to the community, pointing out that having a medical facility operated by Mt. Sinai here is a very significant development. He noted that another privately-run urgent care center is located at 521 W. 181st St.

2. **Discussion and Vote on FY16 Expense & Capital Budget Priorities** – After some discussion, the committee agreed that its #1 expense budget priority should be a request to expand mental health services in the community, especially for young people and the elderly. #2 should be hiring additional Sanitation workers, #3 increased funding for the Bureau of Pest Control to deal with rat problems, #4 increased funding for school-based health clinics and #5 increased funding for education and outreach on proper disposal of household garbage and recycling. Motion by Nau/Hall to approve the expense budget priorities passed by the following vote: Committee Members: 6-0-0, Other Board Members 1-0-0, Members of the Public 4-0-0. [The committee also approved requests for funding for the Lead-Safe House and for staff at the Washington Heights Child Health Clinic and the Dyckman Family Health Center, but the Northern Manhattan Improvement Corp. and the Renaissance Health Care Network told the chair afterwards that funds were not needed and these items should be dropped from the list.]

For the capital budget, it was agreed that the #1 priority should continue to be the construction of a new garage for Sanitation District 8 so that its trucks can be relocated from Inwood. In light of the Mayor's initiative to improve energy efficiency in all City buildings and to encourage landlords to do the same, we agreed to add three new priorities calling for these improvements in local schools, NYCHA buildings such as Dyckman Houses, Bethune Houses, Thurgood Marshall Houses and Fort Washington Houses, and residential buildings operated by not-for-profits such as Housing Development Fund Companies (low and moderate-income co-ops). We would continue to request additional Sanitation equipment as our 5th capital priority. The Department of Health informed us that 1,000 students are needed to support a school-based health clinic so the committee agreed to drop our past request for funding such a clinic at Gregorio Luperon H.S., which has only 516 students. Motion by Garcia/Nau to approve the capital budget priorities passed by the following vote: Committee Members: 6-0-0, Other Board Members 1-0-0, Members of the Public 4-0-0.

3. **New York-Presbyterian Hospital Report** – Julio Batista, Director of Community Affairs, reported as follows:
 - Free flu shots will be provided to seniors at Our Savior's Atonement Church on 10/24.
 - Open houses/ dedication ceremonies will be held on Oct. 20 at the school-based health centers at the George Washington Educational Campus and the I.S. 143 Campus, which are part of NYPH's Ambulatory Care Network. They have been renovated and expanded, and made more efficient with updated furniture and equipment.

- In response to State Senator Espaillat's criticism of the "horrendous conditions" in the emergency room at 168th Street at the last CB 12 meeting [S. Simon distributed a Daily News article (9/29/14) about this issue]: the ER is undergoing a major renovation, doubling its capacity from 44 to 88 beds. The children's ER has been moved to a new facility (30 beds), and the old space will be used for adults. The day he visited there was a very high census in the ER – over 200 patients including a few cardiac cases. For the first time ever in a U.S. emergency room, a patient's heart and lungs were connected to an ECMO (Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation) machine at NYPH that day. Mejia (Vice President – Operations, Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital of NY): the ER renovation is costing \$100 million and is being done in six phases. Two phases have been completed. The psychiatric unit has been increased from 12 to 24 beds. The old Energy Court will be used for Rapid Medical Evaluation (RME) and the waiting room. The ER will be named for Morgan Stanley, the largest donor. Barbara Walters made a large donation, and a 15-bed unit is being named for her. The next phase is the RME unit with 22 beds, which should open next May. 50-60% of patients go through RME. The goal is for patients to be taken care of in 2-3 hours. Areas B and A are getting a gut renovation and should be completed by next May and December respectively. The whole project should be completed by December 2017, resulting in a brand new facility.
Batista: ¼ of the patients visiting the ER are non-emergency cases. The hospital plans to initiate an educational campaign on proper ER utilization, advising people to go to primary care physicians or NYPH's ugi-care center instead of to the ER. He said he would organize a tour of the ER for CB 12 members and others soon.
- NYPH is prepared to handle Ebola virus cases. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has established guidelines, which NYPH would follow, placing patients in isolation.
Mejia: we have designated specific rooms for isolating Ebola patients. Staffs are being trained on using protective gear and the treatment of lab specimens. We have had potential cases that turned out to be false positives.

4. **Isabella Geriatric Center Report --** Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications, reported as follows:

- Isabella's 11th annual health fair will be held on Oct. 8. 53 organizations are participating.
- The Institute for Older Adults (50+ Club / Walking Wonders Club) will celebrate its 20th anniversary on Nov. 21.
- A ribbon cutting will be held for the new rehab center on Nov. 19.
- The Senior Resource Center on St. Nicholas Avenue between 168th – 169th Streets has been having a problem with the homeless at Duarte Square.

Schulman: this issue was discussed at the last District Service Cabinet meeting. Deputy Inspector Pichardo (33rd Precinct) said he would send more patrols there.

Simon: Parks has been working with the NYPD and Homeless Services to deal with this problem.

5. **New Business –** M. Collins reported that 19 high school students participated in the Brain Research Apprenticeship Program at Columbia University Medical Center, according to The Record, Columbia's internal newspaper.

S. Simon distributed a NY Post article (9/30/14) about the sudden closing of NY Fashion Braces, 4779 Broadway and another office in The Bronx, in August. Many patients did not receive braces, and as many as 4,000 patients are unable to retrieve their medical records.

S. Simon also referred to another article in the Daily News (9/25/14), which reported that WH-I residents have made 8,294 noise complaints so far this year – about a 40% increase over the 5,912 complaints made last year. The 34th Precinct police "issued summonses to loud, music-thumping drivers and five businesses including Mamajuana Café last weekend on bustling Dyckman St., Inwood's oft-criticized nightlife corridor, a police source said... So far this year, 436 summonses have been doled out to noisy drivers, nightclubs and bars – an increase of 130 citations over the previous year, [Deputy Inspector Chris] Morello said."

A. Ogilvie said that she was present at the Allen Pavilion on Sept. 25 at 9:53 p.m. when her friend's privacy rights were violated. She was asked to divulge personal information while people were standing behind her at the information desk in the lobby. J. Batista said he would look into the matter.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Steve Simon