

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES – January 8, 2015

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

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Osi Kaminer, Richard Lewis, Jay Mazur.

GUESTS: Mary Anderson; Sara Fisher; Kimberlee Gonzalez; Cecil Corbin-Mark, James Burke and Aurash Khawarзад, all from WEACTION; Keldy Ortiz, Daily News..

The first two items on the agenda were part of a joint meeting with the Housing and Human Services Committee. Additional details can be found in the Powerpoint presentations, which accompany these minutes on the Community Board 12 website.

1. **Update on NYC Clean Heat Program** – The following speakers gave presentations and answered questions regarding their efforts to get landlords to convert their buildings' heating systems to less polluting fuel in compliance with City law:

- Madeline Kostic, NYC Clean Heat: The goals of the program are to achieve the cleanest air of any big U.S. city, reduce energy consumption and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30%. They estimate that getting landlords to eliminate the use of No. 6 and No. 4 heavy heating oil's in 2012-13 will annually prevent 780 deaths, 1,600 emergency room visits for asthma and 460 hospitalizations. A lot of progress has been achieved in just the last 2+ years in reducing the number of buildings in the CB 12 area burning #6 oil: in Nov. 2012, there were 393 such buildings, today only 96 – a huge reduction of approximately ¾. Overall 449 buildings have converted, 273 of them to the cleanest fuels. Emissions reductions achieved: 23.65 tons of PM 2.5 (fine particulate matter). The ban on #6 oil in the city takes effect 6/30/15. Most DEP-issued permits for #6 oil boilers have already expired, so those buildings should have stopped burning the worst type of polluting oil. DEP is issuing fines for operating boilers with expired permits and in the second instance shutting down boilers so they would not supply any heat or hot water. Insurance and mortgages also could be affected. #4 oil is still allowed, but those buildings should consider cleaner and more efficient alternatives. NYC Clean Heat staff is available to guide buildings through the conversion process

NYC Clean Heat has been able to reach the owners or agents for all but 19 buildings in our community to discuss converting to less polluting fuel oil or natural gas. The 19 holdouts include the following: 545 Edgecombe Ave., 801 Riverside Dr., 638 W. 160th St., 652 W 163rd St., 664 W 163rd St., 550 W. 171st St., 555 W. 173rd St., 700 W. 178th St., 320 Audubon Ave., 90 Pinehurst Ave., 461 Fort Washington Ave., 220 Cabrini Blvd., 240 Cabrini Blvd., 89 Thayer St., 584 Academy St., 410 W. 205th St., 66 Vermilyea Ave., 514 W. 211th St. and 165 Seaman Ave. She would appreciate our assistance in helping her reach out to the "decision makers" in these buildings: "These buildings are truly the last of the last, and we want to make sure CB 12 doesn't have anyone burning #6 oil after the deadline!" Her phone number is 212-656-9202.

- Posie Constable, Director - Business Development, NYC Energy Efficiency Corp. -- She is willing to work with any of these landlords to provide financing for their boiler/burner conversions. "Not all of them will be eligible but we shall try to find a financial solution to achieve compliance for them."
- Kit Liang, P.E, Director - Air Engineering, NYC Dept. of Environmental Protection -- Boiler owners are required to convert to a cleaner fuel: #4, #2 or Natural Gas before the Certificate of Operation expiration date. As of 7/1/15, DEP will no longer permit the use of #6 oil. As of 1/1/30, #4 oil (the next worst polluting type of oil) will no longer be allowed. She explained the boiler permitting process and the fuel conversion permitting process.
- Christopher A. Carini, Manager - Gas Conversion Program, Con Edison – Con Ed has streamlined the process for requesting oil-to-gas conversions in Manhattan, Bronx and Queens. Now provide "a zero cost option" to more than 85% of customers overall and 95% of participants in the Area Growth Initiative in 2014. CB 12 area is part of the Area Growth Plan. Our area has been divided into 10 zones, where Con Ed is installing gas lines in stages. Areas in Inwood north of Dyckman Street and between W. 173rd - 178th Sts. have been completed. Lines being installed in an area south of Dyckman Street this year. The reduced cost of purchasing gas from Con Ed offsets 0%-100% of landlords' construction costs. More information available from website: www.conED.com/gasconversions.

- Derek Greenbaum, Dual Fuel Corporation – His company is hired by landlords to handle the entire conversion process, including obtaining the necessary permits and the installation of new equipment and piping.

2. **New policy prohibiting disposal of electronics with household trash** – As of January it is illegal to discard electronics such as TVs, monitors, computers, laptops, printers, mobile phones, video game consoles, VCRs/DVD players, cable boxes and keyboards with household trash. Under the new City program, buildings are being provided with three “service options” for disposing of these items:
 - **Room cleanouts** (buildings with 10 or more units) – they store electronics in a secure, enclosed area before they are picked up by Sanitation.
 - **Storage bins** (buildings with 50 or more units) – they store electronics in a locked bin provided by Sanitation.
 - **Outdoor electronics recycling events** (buildings with 250 or more units) – they schedule these events where residents would bring electronics for disposal and pickup by Sanitation.

Committee members, especially R. Lewis and S. Simon, voiced concern that not enough outreach has been done to inform building owners and residents of this new policy and that hardly any buildings have implemented any of these options although the ban is now in effect. The Dept. of Sanitation sent out a mailing to all households in December notifying them that the program would begin in January, but further outreach efforts have not been apparent. It is feared that residents will continue to dispose of electronics as they have been doing all along or leaving them in litter baskets on the street. In addition, there are only two drop-off locations in Washington Heights-Inwood: Staples, 4320 Broadway, and Goodwill, 512 W. 181st St., which are not conveniently located for most residents.

S. Simon reported that he has been in touch with the Lower East Side Ecology Center, which organizes e-waste recycling events around the city and has held one at the RING garden on Dyckman Street in past years. It plans to have another one in Inwood this spring and agreed to do another site in Washington Heights at one of the greenmarkets.

It was agreed that this discussion should be continued next month and that a representative from DSNY would be invited to discuss its outreach efforts.

The Health & Environment Committee then met separately to discuss the rest of its agenda. S. Simon, chair, invited the Housing & Human Services Committee members, who completed their meeting, to remain.

3. **Resolution in support of Intro. 442: Setting nutritional standards for kids' meals with toys or other incentive items at restaurants** – The committee discussed the merits of this City Council bill at its September 2014 meeting, when it agreed that this bill could be an effective means to address childhood obesity and that it should approve a resolution in support of its passage by the City Council and enactment into law. S. Simon e-mailed a draft resolution to the committee members prior to tonight's meeting. It was approved by the following vote:
Committee Members 5-0-0-0 Other Board Members 3-0-0-0 Members of the Public 3-0-0-0
4. **Discussion on Intro. 209: Reducing the use of carry-out bags by charging a 10-cent fee for plastic and paper bags** -- S. Simon distributed copies of this City Council bill beforehand. The committee members and others present discussed its purpose at some length and agreed with the idea of charging a fee for plastic bags to restrict their use since it is much more difficult to recycle them, but they did not think the bill should apply to paper bags, which can be easily recycled. It was agreed that a resolution along those lines should be drafted and presented at the next meeting.
5. **Isabella Geriatric Center Report** -- Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications, said the ribbon cutting for the new rehab center is now planned for the morning of Feb. 5. A cocktail reception might be held in the evening. H&E Committee members will be invited.
6. **Old Business** – S. Simon: The NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation is releasing the draft Remedial Investigation Work Plan (RIWP) for the brownfield cleanup at the former gas station and auto repair shop at 2420-2430 Amsterdam Ave. for public comment tomorrow. The plan calls for the collection of samples from 24 soil borings, 17 groundwater wells and 10 soil vapor survey points over a 4-6 week period later this year. He said he has been in touch with DEC and confirmed that the 14 “sensitive receptors within one-half mile of the site” (primarily local schools and day care

centers) will be notified of this work. The site must be investigated (per the RIWP once it's approved) to determine the nature and extent of existing soil contamination from an oil spill found in 2008 and other causes. Contamination will be removed to meet cleanup objectives consistent with the planned use of the site (a 6-story residential building and an 8-story commercial building with underground parking). The proposed remedy will be presented for public review when the draft Remedial Work Plan is available.

The Community Board 12 office, in addition to the Fort Washington Library, will serve as a repository for the official project documents for members of the public who wish to review them.

7. **New Business** – Cecil Corbin-Mark, Deputy Director, said WEACT has obtained a grant from the Kresge Foundation to develop a “Climate Change Resiliency Plan” for West, Central and East Harlem and Washington Heights-Inwood. WEACT will be working with local residents over the next six months to plan on how people can support one another in case of another disaster like Superstorm Sandy, with a focus on young children and the elderly. “We have to build networks to take care of one another...NYC government can't do everything.” CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) team would be a model. He asked people in attendance to volunteer to work on this project (several people signed up) and said one or two meetings would be held for Washington Heights-Inwood residents. S. Simon recommended that they focus on the Sherman Creek area, which was the part of our community most adversely affected by Sandy, and that a future meeting be held at St. Jude's Church in that area.
8. **Announcements** – K. Gonzalez, an intern in the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit, said volunteers are being sought for two upcoming programs: a phone bank to call NYC residents to let them know they may be entitled to tax refunds under the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Care Tax Credit programs (1/31) and Operation HOPE, an annual survey of streets, subways and parks to count homeless individuals (date to be determined).
M. Anderson: ArchCare is sponsoring an affordable housing workshop at Isabella on 1/21.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Steve Simon