

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - JUNE 4, 2015

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Simon (Chair), Wanda Garcia, Andrea Kornbluth, Elizabeth Lehmann, Juan Mejia, Terriell Peters, Arlene Schulman, Beatrice Hall (Public Member).

ABSENT: Luis Tapia

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mary Anderson

GUESTS: Ignazio Terranova, NYC Department of Sanitation; Jamal West, Mayor's Office of Operations; Alexander Horwitz, The Doe Fund; Cynthia Carrion, Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrants Rights; Giovanni Puello, Manhattan Borough President's Office; Natalie Espino, Council Member Levine's Office; Adrian Allen; Martin Collins; Sarah Fisher; Others.

The meeting was called to order at 7:12 pm.

1. Discussion on Street Cleanliness and the Alternate Side Parking reduction in our community –

S.Simon began by saying CB12-Manhattan fought hard to obtain once a week alternate-side-of-the-street parking (ASP) in the community. But the Mayor's Office of Operations' Scorecard program has been rating the cleanliness of our streets (not sidewalks) below the 90% threshold needed to qualify for the ASP reduction. Unless our ratings improve, the Department of Sanitation (DSNY) has informed CB 12 that ASP may revert to two times a week in our district. CB 12 is broken down into four sectors for DSNY purposes: 121 – southern Washington Heights, 122 - middle Washington Heights, 123 – northern Washington Heights and 124 - Inwood.

Scorecard stats for April 2015 (the most recent month available) indicated that the 124 sector had a 94.1% street cleanliness rating; 123 had 81.9%; 122 had 82.1%; and 121 had 83.9% -- a significant improvement over previous months. In March 2014, sector 124 hit 76.6%; 123 hit 73.3%; 122 hit 70%; and 121 hit 74.5%. In April 2014, ratings for the four sectors ranged from 73% to 79%. In 2012, cleanliness ratings hit a high point of 93.8% and they were 90.5% in 2013.

There were four speakers who addressed this issue.

Iggy Terranova, DSNY's Citywide Community Affairs Officer, noted that CB 12 has a challenge ahead of us and that the DSNY Commissioner reserves the right to reinstate twice-a-week ASP. He noted that Brooklyn's Community Board 7 is also in danger. He would like to see the street cleanliness numbers rise and stressed that the public needs to get involved.

One problem, noted by a neighborhood resident, is that corner litter baskets are often overflowing; People are still dumping household trash into these baskets as well as commercial trash. As a way to deal with this issue, Terranova stressed the Adopt-a-Basket program, which can be used by businesses, community groups and individuals. Interested parties can enroll via the DSNY website. Trash baskets get picked up every day on commercial streets and every other day on residential streets.

A homeowner on W. 157th Street between Broadway and Amsterdam Ave. complained about getting tickets for litter people leave on her sidewalk. She spoke of the difficulty of keeping the block clean, especially when it's windy: As soon as someone drops something, she said they get a ticket. Terranova pointed out that by law properties are inspected only two hours a day, once in the morning 8-9 a.m. and once in the evening, 6-7 p.m. DSNY has two officers who write summonses in our district each day.

In response to a question, Terranova said DSNY does not get directly involved in cleaning parks but does assist in Parks cleanups by lending tools through the Rent a Tool program. In response to another question, he said that DSNY has been able to increase pick-ups in some districts where Council Members allocated

funds to DSNY through the Council's NYC Cleanup Initiative. The extra pickups are generally for three hours using a team of three and are tailored to each neighborhood.

S. Simon read an e-mail from a resident of W. 177th Street complaining about more garbage in gutters and catch basins, overflowing trash cans, garbage from construction work around the George Washington Bridge bus terminal, including Con Edison and Verizon. He asked DSNY to look into this issue.

Terranova said that he conducts door-to-door outreach to merchants and that DSNY will watch for violations by merchants using the litter baskets for their trash. Terranova noted that residents who bring garbage from their homes into the street could receive violations. He noted that mechanical brooms are cleaned every morning. Merchants and property owners are responsible for cleaning 18 inches off the curb.

A resident noted that cars are parked too close to the curb, which makes it difficult to clean 18 inches off the curb, and that one car can ruin the entire block. Terranova noted that his staff can tell whether or not someone makes an attempt to clean.

Terranova stressed the education component and that CB 7-Brooklyn distributed flyers in English and Spanish. S. Simon recommended that CB 12 get the word out through customized email messages, social media and through public officials, along with bilingual flyers. At A. Schulman's suggestion, Terranova said he'll share his cleanup information to "help change the tide" with other city agencies, including the NYPD, FDNY and others. In response to a question, he said trash receptacles cannot be painted different colors.

S. Simon noted that the ASP reduction does not benefit just drivers but the community at large by reducing pollution caused by idling cars and cars being moved to other parking spaces.

Jamal West, Manager – Scorecard program, Mayor's Office for Operations, oversees day-to-day operations of this program. He noted that his unit consists of six inspectors in teams of two in three cars. They inspect one side of the street at a time. They don't review every single street but do review 30 to 40 blocks per CB to get a representative sample of the district. The blocks they inspect are kept confidential from DSNY and the public. Street cleanliness is determined on a scale of 1.0 to 3.0. 1.0 to 1.5 are for cleanest to acceptably clean. Each block is broken into 2-4 segments. Inspections are done between the hours of 9-5, and the inspectors rotate assignments to avoid biases.

The Scorecard teams rate the cleanliness of both sidewalks and streets (only the street ratings affect the ASP reduction). When cars are parked closely together, he said that his inspectors can still measure street cleanliness 18" off the curb as they are driving by. He said they have an average 6-7 years of experience and pretty knowledgeable about the streets.

Alexander Horwitz, Director of External Affairs, The Doe Fund, explained the mission of the Doe Fund and its work in CB 12, the street cleanliness crews are part of a job preparation program. Paid work is the core of the program. The Doe Fund received \$38,000 from Council Member Rodriguez to clean streets in Inwood: Two people clean Broadway from Dyckman Street to Isham Street 3 days a week - Monday, Thursday and Friday, and one person cleans W. 207th Street from Broadway to 10th Avenue Sundays and Fridays. Council Member Levine gave his full \$69,000 allocation to The Doe Fund to work in his district, including Broadway from 157th – 165th Streets. They work eight-hour shifts and clean sidewalks and 18 inches off the curb. Every indication is that the funding will be in place again next fiscal year.

Cynthia Carrion, Deputy Director, Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrants Rights: Council Member Rodriguez allocated \$31,000 to this group. She said its focus is on educating people in the community about keeping streets clean and that this is their civic duty. Her organization plans to do three street cleanups. 30 people volunteered for the one in April in the 168th Street area, and there were 20 volunteers for the cleanup between W. 181st – 186th Streets in May, in which over 20 bags of trash were collected. The third cleanup will be in the Dyckman Street area on June 20. They also make art out of recycled materials, and work with merchants and students to explain why it's important to clean up.

2. NY-Presbyterian Hospital Report – Juan Mejia, VP – Facilities, Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital, substituted for Julio Batista. He reported that NYPH plans to open the new entrance to the adult emergency room on Broadway in July. A 14-bed prenatal ICU opened in June. 12 patients moved in. The old space is being converted to a cardiac ICU. The hospital is organizing a “prom” for its patients so they won't miss out on that experience and is participating in LGBT Pride Month and Harlem Pride events. S. Fisher praised the hospital for its large turnout at the recent AIDS march.

3. Isabella Geriatric Center Report – Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications, reported that construction began on the 13th floor for a brand new rehab center and that Isabella is preparing for its 140th anniversary festivities, its annual summer festival and annual health fair in the fall. S. Simon asked whether CB 12 could co-sponsor the health fair. B. Lehmann agreed.

4. New Business – S. Simon reported that the TEP Charter School is building a new school at 153-157 Sherman Ave. and has entered the site into the city's Voluntary Cleanup Program because of soil contamination apparently caused by a dry cleaning establishment previously located there. He said he will ask the Mayor's Office of Environmental Remediation to keep the board fully abreast of the remediation measures that are undertaken there and the subsequent monitoring of possible emissions.

B. Hall reported that her neighbors at the River Terrace co-op have complained about “toxic emissions” from 156-08 Riverside Drive West smokestack, drifting into their windows, terrace doors and air conditioner vents. S. Simon said he is giving the complaint to District Manager Ebenezer Smith to follow up with DEP.

5. July Meeting -- The committee discussed meeting in July to hear a presentation by NYC Transit on wetland mitigation at North Cove (Harlem River at 207th Street) and possibly the NYPH task force recommendations on improving mental health services for youth. The committee also discussed considering a resolution to push the Port Authority to expedite the installation of a “suicide prevention” fence on the George Washington Bridge. Most members said they would be available to meet on July 9. S. Fisher asked the committee to revisit the resolution requiring New Yorkers to pay for plastic grocery bags, to follow up with Council Member Rodriguez's office regarding the status of his bill to ban hookahs in certain establishments and to consider a resolution to ban smoking in bus shelters.

Respectfully submitted,
Arlene Schulman