

## HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – October 1, 2015

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Steve Simon (Chair), Wanda Garcia, Andrea Kornbluth, Elizabeth Lehmann, Juan Mejia, Alyce Smith, Beatrice Hall (Public Member).

**ABSENT:** Terriell Peters, Arlene Schulman, Luis Tapia.

**GUEST:** Kathy Kim.

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The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:15 pm. Representatives from the N.Y. State Nurses Assn. were scheduled to make a presentation but did not appear.

1. **Report from City Harvest --** Kathy Kim, Associate Director, Community Partnerships, gave the following report:
  - Giselle Mejia left City Harvest at the end of June to return to school. A replacement is being sought as Manager, Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative in Washington Heights-Inwood.
  - A Community Food Assessment of Washington Heights & Inwood compiled by Giselle will be made available to the H&E Committee.
  - City Harvest will continue to offer free nutrition education and counseling to the community.
  - City Harvest is distributing food to low-income residents on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of every month from 9:30am to 11:30am outside Prince Hall Plaza on West 155<sup>th</sup> Street between Amsterdam & St. Nicholas Aves. It is set up similar to a farmers market. Each family receives 4-5 items of produce. On-site cooking demonstrations and nutrition counseling are provided. Recipients must live in 10032 and complete an application or be referred by an appropriate agency. There is some confusion with the Greenmarket operated by GrowNYC outside the new Sugar Hill Development ½ block away on St. Nicholas Ave. & W. 155<sup>th</sup> St. on Saturdays until November 21. People buy food directly from farmers there.
  - City Harvest also has a free food distribution program at the Dyckman Houses.

S. Simon told Ms. Kim that the committee is very supportive of the work being done by City Harvest in the community and would be happy to continue to work with the organization and with Ms. Mejia's successor.
2. **Ranking of FY 17 Expense and Capital Budget Priorities –** The committee once again reviewed its FY 16 budget priorities. Based on last month's discussion, it agreed to add three new expense budget requests – assign additional noise control code enforcement inspectors to our community, especially at night; restore HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services in our community, and allocate funds for supplemental street cleaning services by non-profit agencies – and one capital budget request – construct a permanent EMS base station in Washington Heights-Inwood. The committee discussed how the eight expense and six capital items should be ranked. It agreed that "Expand mental health services in our community, especially for youths and the elderly" should be the #1 expense priority and "Provide additional Sanitation equipment, including collection trucks and street sweepers with snow-removal equipment" should be the #1 capital priority. "Construct a new District 8M Sanitation garage and relocate its trucks from District 12M," our previous #1 capital priority, should be listed as CS (Continued Support) since it has been funded and the design contract has been let. Motion by Mejia/Garcia to approve the list of FY 17 budget priorities as discussed was passed, 7-0-0.
3. **Resolution regarding City Council bill to reduce the use of carryout bags in retail stores, groceries and supermarkets (Intro. 209) –** The committee discussed the draft resolution as revised by Ms. Schuilman, which made it clear that food-stamp and WIC clients would be exempt from paying any fees for plastic and paper bags, that the city would be required to distribute free reusable bags in communities such as Washington Heights-Inwood, that plastic bags can only be recycled when returned to a limited number of stores and are not included in the city's curbside recycling program, and that fee for plastic bags should not exceed 109 cents per bag. Motion by Mejia/Garcia to approve resolution as amended was approved, 6-1-0.
4. **NY-Presbyterian Hospital Report –** Juan Mejia, VP for Facilities, Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital, reported that a new 16-bed post-partum unit for women experiencing complications after delivery is opening beginning on

October 13. This unit will contain private beds, replacing double-bedded rooms now in use. The bed count remains the same.

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

- The 12<sup>th</sup> annual health fair will be held next Wednesday, October 7. 45 organizations are participating – screenings, education, giveaways, food. Usually 200-300 people attend.
- The 14<sup>th</sup> annual fundraising gala will be held October 15 at the Tribeca Rooftop.
- The third short-stay rehab floor will be open by the holidays.

6. **Old Business**

- **Update on Street Cleanliness ratings** – The street cleanliness rating for District 12 in September was 81.6%, a drop from 89.4% in August and 88.5% a year ago. The district's rating for the First Quarter of FY 16 (July-September) also was much better: 88.2%. Sections MN 121 (between W. 155<sup>th</sup> St. – W. 171<sup>st</sup> St.) and MN 123 (roughly W. 183<sup>rd</sup> St. east of Fort Washington Ave. – Dyckman St./Riverside Drive) were tied for the highest rating in the district in September at 85.7%. Section MN 122 (W. 171<sup>st</sup> St. – roughly W. 183<sup>rd</sup> St. east of Broadway and north of W. 181<sup>st</sup> St. to Fort Tryon Park) was rated at 82%. Section MN 124 (north of Dyckman St./Riverside Drive) was rated at 74%.
- **Remediation at 153-157 Sherman Avenue (site for The Equity Project charter school)** – The city's Office of Environmental Remediation reported to the chair of the committee: "Although the work plans have been approved by OER, remedial work has yet to begin on the site due to financing issues. Construction is currently scheduled to begin in late 2015 or early 2016."
- **George Washington Bridge** – The Port Authority has agreed to come to our meeting in December (or maybe January) to discuss the timetable for the installation of the "suicide prevention" fence. The plan has not yet been determined and still has to be presented to the Port Authority's board.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Steve Simon, with help from Betty Lehmann