

DRAFT

**SENIOR ISSUES COMMITTEE
MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 4, 2010**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Ernestine Welch, Chair, **Present**
Cora Gilmore, **Present**
Georgiette Morgan-Thomas, **Present**
Sherri Anne Oustalet, **Present**

OTHER ATTENDEES PRESENT

Barry Jamison, Human Right's Commission
Verna Arthur, Dept. For The Aging
Shirley Saxton, Social Security Administration
Florence M. Rice, Tenants' & Landlord Rec.
Sarah Martin, Grant House's Tenants Assoc.
Miranda Murray, George Bruce Librarian
Natalie Bailey, Jackie Robinson Senior Ctr.
Cathleen McCadden, Assembly Wrights' Office
Zora Bucknoz, Hamilton Grange Senior Ctr.
Carmen Perez, U.S. Census 2010
Anita Ross
Kenneth Boyd
Yvonne Hazel
Pat Cunningham

PUBLIC MEMBERS:

G. Marilyn Alexander, **Excused**
Wanda Capan, **Present**
Laenoria Conyers, **Present**
Bessie Davis, **Present**
Ruther Miller, **Present**
Sophie Johnson, **Excused**
Virginia Lee, **Absent**
Ruth Lewis, **Present**
Dothe Rudolph, **Absent**
Inez Woodhouse, **Present**
Vannisha Taylor, **Excused**

The meeting was held on Tuesday, May 4, 2010 at the George Bruce Library, 518 West 125th Street, New York, NY 10027

Chair Ernestine Welch called the meeting to order at 10:15 A.M.

Agenda and minutes were adopted with any necessary corrections or additions.

Commentary:

Reverend Georgiette Morgan-Thomas reported that she attended the National Council of Negro Women in Washington, D.C. in celebrating the home going of a civil rights' activist Dorothy Heights. She read a poem "**I'm living now to live again**" in celebration of Mother's Day, Dorothy Heights and all other women around the world.

Presentation:

New York City Human Rights Commission

- Barry Jamison, Director of Manhattan Community Service Center reported that his agency enforces the civil rights laws of New York City – employment; housing and access to public accommodations/public places.
- NYC has the most comprehensive human and civil rights laws in the country and stated that housing discrimination is a violation of the human rights law.

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- Building owners are required by law to provide achievable independence access to accommodation e.g. install ramps, assign lower floors to the frail and disable.
- Building owners can be exempted from providing achievable independence access if they can demonstrate financial hardship **ONLY**.
- Doctor's verification letter is needed in order for building owners to provide achievable independence access to accommodation;
- The letter does not have to reveal the person's disability.
- Commissioner Patricia Gatling is dedicated to resolving discrimination cases within a year.
- Encourage elders and others to open a formal complaint individually as needed.
- For further assistance please call Mr. Barry Jamison at (212) 306-5076.

Department For the Aging

- Verna Arthur, Manhattan Community Outreach Director gave an update on Senior Centers scheduled to be closed. The criteria will be based on:
- Fewer than 30 meals being served.
- Part-time hours of Center's operation.
- Centers that have poor vendex or chronic issues (e.g. management, maintenance, etc)
- Those seniors affected by the closing of the senior center will be transported to an open center located nearby the closed center.

Assembly Keith Wright's Office

- Cathleen McCadden, Community Liaison described briefly State Assembly functions, gave update on status of the NYS Budget crisis and differences between the State Assembly and the Senate resulting in the lack of a State Budget which is legally overdue. The Assemblyman continues to advocate for the Community's Budget requests to finance Senior Centers and services.

Suggestions:

- CB9 Public Membership Applications are available for those who are interested in becoming a member.

Announcements:

- Evelyn Cunningham an advocate of the community and a civil rights activist passed away; Memorial Service is on Tuesday, April 6, 2010, 2:00 P.M. at St. Phillips Church. Also we had two other civil rights activists who passed away – Robert Hooks, NAACP and Dorothy Heights.
- Saturday, April 8, 2010 Community Board #9 M and West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc. will be holding a community forum on proposed plans for the 135th Street Marine Transfer Station – 9:30 A.M. – 5:30 P.M. at City College.
- The Committee congratulated L. Ann Rucker, Chairperson of the North River Community Environmental Review Board, Inc. (NRCERB) on receiving several Community Awards for her community work.
- Councilmember Jessica Lappin informed at the Borough President's Senior Advisory Group 4/21/10 monthly meeting that the City plans to close 40-50 Senior Centers due to the current Budget Crisis. She will continue to advocate for the community's request for no closing of Senior Centers and services.

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- All urged to continue contact with elected officials, urging no senior Budget cuts. (see flyers)
- Congratulations to Florence Rice - the new 22 East 128th Street building was named the Florence Rice Center in her Honor.

Old Business:

- Sarah Martin, President of Tenants Association, Grant Houses NYCHA reported that she is still awaiting further directions regarding the planned Senior Garden verbally approved by Commissioner Lopez, NYCHA, Garden and Greening program.

Action Items:

- Committee voted to request CB#9 to send follow-up letters as follows:
 1. To Elected Official to prevent budget cuts for Senior Centers and other Social Services.
 2. To Commission M. Lopez, NYCHA, Garden and Greening program requesting the written new procedures to file for the establishment of the requested Senior Memorial Garden next to the George Bruce, 125th Street Library.

Adjournment: 12:30 P.M.

Note: The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 1, 2010 at the George Bruce Library

Prepared by: Hleziphi Zita, Community Assistant