



Eric Adams
Borough President

THE CITY OF NEW YORK COMMUNITY BOARD 12

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Yidel Perlstein
Chairperson



Barry Spitzer
District Manager

COMMUNITY BOARD 12 MINUTES

HELD ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2020

VIA ZOOM

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

ADAM COHEN
AVROHOM WOLFSON
CHESKY BLAU
BERNARD FREILICH
DAVID FRIEDLANDER
DAVID SHLOMOVICH
ELLIE KASTEL
JACOB ASKAL
JACOB EISDORFER
JACQUE FRIEDMAN
JEFFREY DWECK
JOHN TALMADGE
JOSEPH GROSS
JULES FLEISCHER
LILY MARINELLI
MAMNUNUL HAQ
MIRIAM HERSKO
MORTON PUPKO
MORRIS SENDEROVICH
PETER REBENWURZEL
ROCHELLE ZAMI
SHARON FUCHS
SHLOMIE RIEGER
SOL WAHBA
YAAKOV KAPLAN
YERUCHIM SILBER
YIDEL PERLSTEIN
YITZCHOK ITZKOWITS
YONAH MOSES

STAFF PRESENT

BARRY SPITZER – DISTRICT MANAGER
GITTEL FEKETE- COMMUNITY
COORDINATOR
ANN MARIE HONAN- COMMUNITY
ASSISTANT

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

ALAN DUBROW
ANNA CALI
AVI GREENSTEIN
DOUGLAS JABLON
EDGAR GLUCK
JACOB HASS
LARRY JASON
MONIQUE WALLACE
NAFTALI TESSLER
SAM STOBBER
SAHIBZADA SHABIR AHMAD
YAAKOV SCHAPIRO
YECHIEL MALIK
YITZCHOK MOSKOWITS

COMMUNITY RESIDENTS

APPROXIMATELY 50 RESIDENTS PRESENT

ELECTED OFFICIALS AND REPRESENTATIVES

COUNCILMAN KALMAN YEGER
TONYA CANTLO, REP. BP ERIC ADAMS
PINNY RINGEL REP. MAYOR DE BLASIO
PINNY HIKIND REP. COMPTROLLER
STRINGER
SENATOR FELDER
SHARON FUCHS, REP. SENATOR FELDER
SOL REIGER, REP. AM EICHENSTEIN
ANTHONY LOUM, REP. BROOKLYN PUBLIC
LIBRARY
ORLANDO ROSS, REP. CONGRESSWOMAN
YVETTE CLARKE
DISTRICT LEADER DOUG SCHNEIDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL BY DM BARRY SPITZER

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS:

Yidel Perlstein- Chairman

- The Chairman hoped everyone who celebrated had a Happy & Healthy Sukkot.
- He sent sincere condolences to former councilman and the current CEO of Met Council, David Greenfield, on the passing of his mother.
- He reminded everyone not to forget to vote on or before Tuesday, November 3rd as it is what makes the voice of our community heard. The Community Board office is a polling site on Election Day.
- Daylight Savings time would begin November 1st when clocks go back one hour. Don't forget to change your batteries in your smoke detectors, batteries are available at CB12 office.
- The next board meeting would be Tuesday, November 24th by zoom.
- Community Board 12 has been designated a red zone as part of the Governor's Micro-Cluster strategy. Due to all the rampant information and disinformation, the Chairman clarified the position of the board:

The Board does not minimize the very real and actual danger of the Coronavirus. This community has been hit hard and early. Because of the communal nature of the community we reside in, we were by and large infected before the shut-down was even in effect. We all have lost friends or family to this disease. We all know someone who was hospitalized and on ventilators. So we are not minimizing the dangers. The issue with the red zone designation is that it is an abstract boundary that seems to have been defined simply by one barometer - a religious boundary. The board has been requesting the data that went into this designation decision to see that all premises that are required to come to this conclusion were considered. The only determinant seems to be the percentage of positive tests out of tests that were taken. But what's the percentage of residents who are tested, therefore; what is the positive testing as a percentage of total population, both within CB12 and when done in comparison to the same data in other districts. In this district, by and large, tests are done because of feeling ill or exposure. In other areas testing may be done for informational purposes. This is why there has been a major push to have more testing done - not to manipulate the data - but to have the same data input as in other areas.

Furthermore, this red zone cluster grouping was a switch from the prior grouping by zip code. There is no data to support this grouping. It is an arbitrarily created artificial boundary that allows the government to manipulate the data to get the results they seek, rather than following the data alone. It is dishonest to start at a conclusion and search for data to support that. And the results of this dishonesty impacts the lives and livelihoods of our residents. The effects of this shutdown are so vast and all-encompassing, and that is why we are frustrated. We need to return to daily numbers by zip codes. The government should not be allowed to hold us hostage based on fear rather than science. The real fear is what we are seeing happening when children aren't being educated and businesses are being shuttered.

Children staying home from school impacts all the parents who have to scramble for childcare. These same parents are unable to work properly, whether they are essential workers, city staff or anything else.

This disease doesn't differentiate between gatherings for religious reasons and gatherings for social reasons. Yet that is what the government seems to be assuming. It seems to be that getting on with your life amidst the COVID pandemic is ok *unless* you live within the abstract boundary determined by an ethnic factor.

Coronavirus numbers released by Governor Cuomo as of October 26th.

- Of the 82,117 tests reported, 1,191 were positive (1.45% of total)
- Total hospitalizations are at 1,059.
- Sadly, there were 12 COVID fatalities yesterday.
- The test positivity rate in the focus areas under NY's Micro-Cluster strategy is 3.25%.
The statewide positivity rate excluding these focus areas is 1.18%.
- Our community has been unjustly designated a red zone. We are vehemently against this targeted lockdown and we can't stand seeing our businesses going broke, our children's education laid to waste and our community barred from practicing their centuries old religious. We are doing everything we can to work with the City and State governments and our elected officials to bring this crisis to a satisfactory conclusion.
- The Board is asking for more cooperation and transparency. The Board tasked with delivering services to our district. But cannot do that without cooperation and information. Even the mayor noted that he doesn't know the Governor's plans for reopening. We are being sacrificed in this feud.

PUBLIC SESSION:

Sarah Hogler- Resident:

- Ms. Hogler could not be found on the zoom meeting.

Idrisal Salmi- Resident:

- Ms. Salmi is a resident on Minna Street. She came to the board with a concern regarding her neighbor. The owner of the property died and there are people squatting and causing a lot of noise and doing drugs. She has made numerous complaints to 311 with no resolution. She wanted advice on how to proceed.

Zev Reisman-Resident

- Mr. Reisman could not be found on the zoom meeting.

DISTRICT MANAGER REPORT:

Barry Spitzer- District Manager:

- Mr. Spitzer thanked everyone for participating.
- Mr. Spitzer reported that he met with the new sanitation super at BK12 as well as with the Deputy Chief. He thanked them for the extra help over the holidays. The DM also spoke to the new Acting Commissioner, Edward Grayson. The commissioner pledged to work with the board on a number of issues raised.
- Mr. Spitzer further thanked the DSNY for the cleanup they did at Ave J.
- The District Manager added on to the chairman's remarks: COVID is not being downplayed by the board. Many within the district have seen it up close. But the community is being singled out unfairly and unjustly.

The frustration is seeing that the decision to have our children stay home is not supported by research. The New York Times reported on studies done that concluded that “The bulk of evidence now suggests only limited transmission from young children to adults.” Schools aren’t the super spreaders they were thought to be. Even the mayor, in his announcement said that there are no issues at the schools. The children that are learning remotely aren’t doing well, they need stability and structure.

The actions taken aren’t containing the virus. They are not releasing the 7 day data the decision is based on. The 28 day average is not the data the government is using. The clusters are not based on anything substantive, the information on who is drawing it and how it’s determined isn’t being shared. It’s outrageous and it’s criminal to do this to a community. Parents can’t work. Children can’t learn and there is damage being done to them. There are businesses that are never coming back. The government is supposed to be here to help not hinder. This was a top down shutdown where the elected officials and community leaders were not consulted or involved. We are trying to work with them but they are not listening to anyone. This shutdown was done during the holidays when the community was already masking up and doing what they were supposed to do.

This is frustrating it needs to end and it needs to end now.

There is no excuse as it is not based on science or data.

There are grassroots efforts to increase testing. These grassroots efforts are from people who are fed up with what they see and know the numbers are wrong. We are doing everything we can that is possible to get help to our district. Right now the best thing we can do its test. Up till now only symptomatic people were testing, but we need to expand it so we can get a clearer picture.

ELECTED OFFICIALS AND REPRESENTATIVES

- **Boro President Eric Adams was represented by Tonya Cantlo.**

Ms. Cantlo- Counsel to Boro President Eric Adams:

Ms. Cantlo advised of a few upcoming events hosted by the Boro President

- Thursday, October 29 from 12-2 there will be a free flu shot even at Boro Hall.
- On November 13 from 2:30 to 4, there will be conflict resolution webinar co-hosted by the Center for Creative Conflict Resolution.
- On December 15th there will be a zoom informational meeting for nonprofits wanting to apply for capital funding for FY 2022.
- On November 10 at 6pm there will be the ULURP hearing via WebEx. One item on the agenda, 5802 16th Ave, affects the district.
- The Governor’s executive order affecting open meeting laws to web based meetings was extended until November 4th.

Mayor Bill deBlasio was represented by Pinny Ringel.

Pinny Ringel

- Mr. Ringel acknowledges complaints heard regarding enforcement and will give them over to the enforcement unit.
- He further states that all agents are working under one director, they are pulled out of different agencies and put under one task force.

Mr. Spitzer- District Manager:

- Mr. Spitzer advised that residents with complaints regarding enforcement agents can call the community board office. Additionally, some of the enforcement is from state agencies as well.
- He further states that Mr. Ringel has been instrumental in getting essential businesses reopened quickly.

- He commented that the agents pulled from all over don't seem to know what they are doing. Some are misstating the law and the orders and insisting that they must be allowed in. Sometimes they do the right thing and sometimes they don't. DEP and DOB came into the community board office to check for COVID 19 compliance.

Councilman Kalman Yeger representing the 44th Council District.

The councilman wanted to defer to Senator Simcha Felder. But the Senator said he concurs in advance with whatever the Councilman will say.

- The councilman acknowledged the presence of elected officials who represent the community including Senator Felder. The elected officials work tirelessly for the benefit of the people they represent despite uncaring administrations in both city and state.
- The Councilman acknowledged the incredible work of Mr. Ringel who serves as liaison to the mayor's office and represents the community to city hall. Unfortunately, sometimes his requests fall on deaf ears, but he has successfully resolved many issues of our community.
- The Councilman tweeted a video prior to the board meeting of an encounter where a DOB agent issued a summons to a business owner from a state agency that he himself did not observe. The store was closed to public and they were only doing orders. The agent insisted he was just following orders. Perhaps there should be history lessons provided as this specific phrase is extremely offensive. Many atrocities were committed under the guise of just following orders. These tickets aren't small fines like parking tickets, they are large fines that can cripple a business.
- Right before the holiday the Councilman distributed 400,000 donated masks donated by private citizens and 18,000 masks donated by the city. People were taking them and wearing them, all this before the attacks by the Mayor and the Governor.
- The punitive tactics are not designed to assist. Issuing fines does not promote good healthcare or any workable plan. Houses of worship, regardless of size, are limited to 10 people. Synagogues the size of St, Patrick's Cathedral, and those the size of a small dining room are both limited to the same number. This is irresponsible and not science based.
- The councilman noted that the residents notice which elected officials are speaking up.
- He further states that it is essential to drive up the testing numbers the District Manager spoke of. Healthy people aren't getting tested therefore it's not an accurate polling field. DOH is basing decisions on percentages only not raw numbers. This means they are giving only half the story, and this drives the helicopters and journalists into the district and leads to a rise in anti-Semitism.
- Vile disgusting words were scrawled on the door of a local store. This is a direct result of the venom spewed by the higher ups. Combined with the media circus and the quota agencies in the district, things haven't been so bad. Right before the pandemic there was increased instances of everyday attacks against yarmulke wearing Jews. When people were locked down that went down, and now with the reopening its starting again. If the government were really concerned about the numbers, they wouldn't offer testing only Monday to Friday from 10-4 when it is inaccessible to many. Therefore, private organizations have put together weekend and after hours testing to accommodate the scheduling conflicts. But the government doesn't care, they are shutting down anyways. The community has complied for the most part. We are being treated by our own government as outcast. This is not the first time a government has done this to the Jewish people. It is simply the first time here.
- If anyone is issued a summons, respectfully take video from encounter if possible as it has been helpful. Get whatever photo evidence you can. Pick one representative in local government to work with - either the councilman, community board, assemblyman or senator.
- The councilman was working on bill in city council to administratively vacate summonses. Hopefully, we will know in the next couple of weeks if it can work. State legislators are also working hard to tackle this from the state angle.

- It is important to note that none of the elected officials are passing the buck. Everyone is working overtime on this issue. But elected officials cannot override the governor or mayor, it's not how it works. Our job is to be advocates for the residents represented.

Yidel Perlstein- Chairman:

- Interjected that the number one question he gets is where the elected officials are when our community is being targeted. Are our elected officials sleeping? So, it is important to elaborate on this point.
- The councilman emphasized the work done by all elected officials on the local level. He was with the senator at 8 in the morning at a press conference. Anyone who thinks I'm sleeping has never met me. This is taking a toll on everyone. There are countless complaints landing on our doorstep and we are doing the best we can. All board members are doing advocacy for the community.

Yeruchim Silber - Director of NY Gov. Relations for Agudas Yisroel and 2nd Vice Chair:

- He thanked the elected officials for all they do, he knows this because he has been in touch with them. The Agudah is a national organization that is working for the same thing and they too are being asked where they are.
- Agudas Yisroel filed suit against the governor. It went to court Sukkos time and they lost, but they filed an appeal to be heard on November 3rd. The Agudah is thankful for the Amici Briefs received from the Becket Fund and from Muslim and Christian groups.
- Last week the mayor announced essential services may resume, why is a synagogue not an essential service? It's essential to worshippers. It is Rabbi Silber's hope that the issue will be moot by November 3. But if the orders are not rescinded than it will be fought in appeals court.

Senator Felder representing the Senate District:

- When he said he agrees in advance with councilman Yeger's remarks he is certain now that it was the right call.

Comptroller Scott Stringer was represented by Pinny Hikind.

Congresswoman Yvette Clarke was represented by Mr. Orlando Ross:

- He indicated that this was his first meeting, and he is glad to see the fiery passions. A lot of stuff with COVID-19 seems to be controversial.
- He extends the condolences from Clarke. She would like to make sure that everyone is doing well.
- The Congresswoman is doing a symposium on zoom 'Winter is Coming' on America's inadequate response to the pandemic. He will send a link to the district manager to distribute.
- There will also be a symposium on expanding education equity on October 28th and 30th.
- The Congresswoman is co-sponsoring, with Councilwomen Farah Louis and Inez Barron, a zoom event on Thursday from 5:30-7:30
- Mr. Ross advised that many of the issues brought up throughout the board meeting with regards to COVID could be addressed by the HEROES Act legislation that needs to get passed through the Senate. He will send a link to the district manager for this bill.

Assemblyman Simcha Eichenstein was represented by Shlomie Reiger:

- Mr. Reiger indicated that he intended to give a long speech how the elected officials work hard but Councilman Yeger said it all already. He knows from sitting in the office with the assemblyman how hard he works night and day.

Barry Spitzer- District Manager:

Mr. Spitzer thanked Mr. Reiger for all his work and commented that he was being modest regarding his involvement. He has been spearheading the grassroots efforts to increase testing in the community.

Doug Schneider- Democratic District Leader for the 44th Assembly District:

- The District Leader agreed with everything Councilman Yeger said. The leadership seen during this pandemic is irresponsible. Particularly the reckless, outrageous, and offensive comments heard from the Governor and the Mayor explicitly targeting the orthodox Jewish community. A few days prior to the meeting there was a party in Queens with over 200 mask-less participants and there was silence from the leadership and media. This environment has been made dangerous by the people who are supposed to bring us together instead they are driving us apart.
- He iterated that his community in Park Slope recognizes this lack of communication and the scapegoating. Mr. Schneider committed to working to stop it.
- Earlier today the early voting hours were expanded until Sunday - which is 2 days before Election Day. Early voting locations are often different than Election Day polling sites.

September Minutes adopted.

June Minutes Adopted.

OLD BUSINESS:

No old Business.

NEW BUSINESS:

David Friedlander- Board Member:

- Asked if there was any information as to the plastic ban effect that came into effect during the pandemic. He commented that the last thing businesses need with all that is going on is to start getting more citations.

Councilman Kalman Yeger:

- Clarified that the ban went into effect as of October 19.

Ann Marie Honan- Community Assistant:

- Advised that the community board office has reusable bags for anyone interested.

Yaakov Kaplan- 1st Vice Chair:

- Mr. Kaplan pointed out that while the local elected officials are vocal in working on the issues arising from the pandemic, the citywide, statewide and federal offices are noticeably silent. These representatives come around campaigning before elections, but now is when the community wants to hear from them, when we are hurting. When election time comes around we will remember the silence and where they stand right now.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Respectfully submitted by: Gittel Fekete