

NYC Civic Engagement Commission Meeting

January 24, 2023

2:00 p.m.

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>> Sarah Sayeed: Good afternoon, everyone.

How are we doing on a quorum, Abby?

>> Not quite as quorum. Including you there's six commissioners.

>> Sarah Sayeed: Okay, thank you.

>> Stand by then.

>> Sarah Sayeed: Just wait for 5 minutes as you recommended. Thanks.

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: I'm going to go ahead and get started. I now call to order the Civic Engagement Commission's public meeting and we are live streaming as part of the open guidelines. So welcome to anybody who is following us via the live stream. And anyone who is participating in the WebEx, thank you also for taking the time to be with us. And also to the full time at CEC, helping to coordinate and prepare for today. As per usual, we're going to go through some technical information today in case there are folks who are new to today and just want to remind them how they're doing things. So Abby, do you want to go to the next slide?

So the audio is enabled for commissioners and we ask you to mute yourself if you're not speaking and cameras on if possible. And to all participants, non-commissioners, this is a public meeting, so we are muting participants on entry so that you can follow along with the business of the commission.

And the moderator will enable audio for participants during the public comment period of the meeting, which usually happens the last half hour.

We will be calling participants in the order they've registered for public comments

prior to the meeting. And then if you want to still sign up to comment during the last half hour, you may do so until 1:00 p.m. And when we're assessing the order of speakers, we'll take first the people who signed up before, and then following that the people who signed up during the meeting.

And if you're dialing in using a phone and you don't have access to a computer monitor, text your name and affiliation to 917-587-9103 if you would like to offer a comment.

We will call on dial-in participants in the order that the text was received.

For closed caption there is a link that we have put into the chat box. So if you need closed captioning, please click on that link, and you will be able to follow along in the meeting. Abby, did you receive any sign-ups for the comment period?

>> Abby: No, we did not.

>> Okay. We can go to the next slide then.

Everyone received an agenda for today's meeting. We will take attendance, approve minutes, and then really excited to have some presenters for today as well as give you some more updates on what we've been doing. The team will provide those updates.

So moving right along to the part of the meeting where we're taking attendance. I will call your name and if you could just say whether you're here and then we can mark you down. Murad Awawdeh? Eve Baron?

>> Good afternoon, here.

>> Holly Bonner?

>> Afternoon, here.

>> Amy Breedlove?

>> Here.

>> Natalie DeVito?

>> Here.

>> Mark Diller?

>> Here, good morning.

>> Donna Gill?

>> Here. Good afternoon.

>> Anthony Harmon?

>> Here.

>> Jose Hernandez?

>> Here.

>> Michael Nussbaum?

>> Here.

>> Lilliam Perez?

>> Here.

>> Annetta Seecharran? Annetta is out today. She had a death in her family so we wish her family condolences. Anastasia?

>> Hi, good afternoon, here.

>> Sarah Sayeed: Mitchell Wu?

>> Happy new year, here.

>> Happy new year on that note. And for the record, my name is Dr. Sarah Sayeed and one of the 15 commissioners who make up the Civic Engagement Commission and it's also my honor to serve as the chair and executive director of the commission.

So the first item on the agenda today is approving our minutes from the last meeting. So are there any additions or corrections to the meeting minutes that we presented?

>> Seeing none I move to approve.

>> Second.

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: All in favor of approving the minutes say aye.

[Ayes]

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: Any opposed say Nay. Hearing no one say nay, the minutes are approved.

So we're going to turn to our guest speakers. And as part of the meeting and there have been some really great developments on the city side and CEC specifically that we wanted to make sure we share with you.

So first our first speaker will be Betsy MacLean, who is New York City first ever Chief Engagement Officer. And she has been engaged in groundbreaking community development work for more than 20 years. I met Betsy actually at the beginning

stages of when we first launched the CEC and we were looking into doing listening sessions, if you remember, and had started talking to Betsy about that. And before she came to city hall, she served as the executive director of Hester Street which is a national leader in participatory planning. She's an urban planner and served as director of community development where she planned and download hundreds of affordable homes and spearheaded the community-led design and construction of Brooklyn's first green public school PS 89 in East New York. And she also created and led a community development program in Cuba. Before that she worked as a carpenter. Betsy holds a master's degree in urban planning and international affairs from Columbia University. And so I am going to turn the floor over to Betsy.

Welcome.

>> Is I shared capability so you should be able to share your screen so I'll stop sharing for a minute. Did Michael have his hand up?

>> Sarah Sayeed: Michael, did you have your hand up? Okay.

>> Betsy MacLean: Hi, everybody. Thanks Dr. Sayeed. It's great to see everyone. A lot of familiar faces. Really super happy to be here with you guys today. And even more happy to talk about the kind of the Mayor's Office of Engagement which has been a real labor of love for many years, and really built on the work of many of you, kind of in all the squares. And the work of like remarkable community planners and folks who have been involved in the civic engagement space for a long time.

So I have huge, high aspirations for all that we can do with this office. And I'm excited to share with you kind of what our thinking is. And really more importantly to really hear from you, and I know we have there's lots on the agenda, so we'll be really thrilled to follow up with the commissioners afterwards to kind of hear your ideas about what you would like to see in terms of engagement, civic engagement, and overall kind of the structure of government, kind of vis-a-vis engagement as we move forward.

So I will share my screen. Can you guys see that?

>> Not yet.

>> Betsy MacLean: How about that?

>> Starting, yes.

>> Betsy MacLean: Lots of pictures, yeah?

>> That's right. We see them.

>> Betsy MacLean: Fabulous.

Okay. So just by way of background, one of the reasons why we kind of cooked up this thing in the first place was just given lots of experience doing community engagement and really exciting kind of partnerships with community and government to advance policy change, to advance really important critical kind of community programs, to really ensure that communities aren't an afterthought in policy making and in program design and shaping.

But in fact the first stop. And that communities, particularly communities that have been left out of the decision-making process, Black and Brown communities, low-income communities, are really at the center of all that government does.

Here are a bunch of examples of stuff that I've been lucky enough to be engaged in both in the city and nationally, and many of you have been involved in these too. So that's kind of where I come from.

I will share this -- this is like my favorite kind of civic engagement democracy quote there is, and apologies to Dr. Sayeed and Kathleen because I always pull out this quote because I really do love it. But I think it really captures what we're looking -- the way that we're thinking about engagement and community engagement. It's much more than kind of consultation, it's much more than informing, but it really is about kind of partnership. It's about power sharing, it's about communities. Really kind of getting into that place of like where democracy is a spiritual idea. This seek red worth of all human beings, the notion that we all have within us a spark of the divine and a right to participate the shaping of our destiny. That's kind of my perspective going into all this stuff.

I'll say I led a Civic Engagement Commission committee for the transition, for the new administration. Dr. Sayeed was on that committee with me, lucky for me. And during that time what we tried to do is like a really landscape scan of community engagement across agencies in the administration. And this will come kind of no surprise to many of you, that community engagement happens across government, but it's not coordinated among agencies. We did a pretty interesting kind of exercise of

like typologizing community engagement, thinking through, the kind I'm most familiar with is the community planning style of engagement, shout-out to Eve Baron, but kind of master planning working with communities over periods of time to dive in deep on both a built environment or a particular policy issue. But then we also really realized that there are so many kinds of ways that government engages communities from community advisory roles to community action to just service delivery. And when I say "just," I mean that is the foundation of delivering for communities.

So when we started to kind of map out where all the stuff was happening, we were like -- it's challenging, I think, for government to have a real handle on what engagement is happening, what messages are going out, how that engagement is coordinated, when it's happening in so many different places without kind of a central place for it to kind of ladder up to.

So as a result of this, of kind of community not being coordinated across government, the result is all the things that I know all of you have experienced, and I've certainly experienced working in communities, that community engagement is fractured, siloed and unaligned. Often times it will happen that you'll be in that particular neighborhood, you'll say in Brownsville that NYCHA will come in and someone else will come in and say something different. This leads to duplicate and overlapping and contradictory efforts often, that community engagement isn't valued often in agencies. And as a result, the community government engagement teams are underprepared and understaffed. We did, during the transition we did a survey of many of agency outreach teams so we heard overwhelmingly, we don't have the teams we need to do it, we don't have the right people, the teams with the right training to do the work. And so oftentimes they become kind of last on the list of things to do, sending the most junior staff out into neighborhoods, and engagement suffers as a result. It becomes kind of a check-the-box activity, not someplace where you find the most activity or focus.

The result is that New Yorkers then really feel that community engagement, that their opinion doesn't actually matter. That their ideas, that their challenges, that their priorities aren't central to what government is doing, or valued.

And then, as we know, because -- because many agencies don't proactively but

reactively reach out to hard-to-reach communities in particular, it leads to a power imbalance in which only the loudest voices with easy access are heard.

So what we proposed kind of at the beginning of the administration was this kind of chief engagement office. The vision of which is being able to be kind of the umbrella entity for both the kind of primary engagement offices, which includes the Civic Engagement Commission, but also as the kind of the hub, kind of HQ for all agency teams. The idea kind of our big vision is to transform New York City government into a national model of collaborative, inclusive, and accountable governance that strengthens democracy, expands civic engagement and enhances civic trust. And the way we think we can get there from here is by building out civic infrastructure. The practice, importantly the practice, kind of the culture of community engagement, what kind of true, inclusive, accessible, and accountable community engagement looks like, the process, the supports, the data that facilitate the kind of community engagement and government community collaboration that will really lead to a city that's more equitable, more deeply democratic, more just for all New Yorkers.

So the way -- we have kind of three strategies that we've laid out to help us make that vision come to life. One is coordination and collaboration. Really working with the primary engagement offices closely to ensure that we're really kind of maximizing our impact. Also regularly convening all agency engagement teams so we can kind of connect the dots. We can encourage folks to -- like partnerships, identify synergies, be able to coordinate while people are going into particular neighborhoods or working on particular issues. Also just building that culture of when we talk about engagement, it's important stuff so we all need to be talking to each other. Setting goals together for engagement, and then holding each other accountable.

We'll also, in addition to -- we'll also offer carrots, in terms of technical assistance. I often like to say we want to build out a Hester Street or Pratt Center for government agencies. So being able to provide engagement support, technical assistance and resources to all outreach -- team agency outreach teams, and really building out those kind of tools, templates, best practices, and kind of guidance. Like kind of on-call guidance for folks who are going out into neighborhoods.

And then importantly, one of the things that we really want to make sure that we do

is really be able to make the case for what we're trying to do to be able to track the impact of this kind of concentrated effort to expand community engagement, civic engagement opportunities. And to do that we know we need both quantitative and qualitative data. So we're really excited to really gather community-generated data to regularly inform policies and programs. We did that at the beginning of the administration, threw NYC Speaks. Again, many of you are involved in that kind of massive civic engagement effort. But then we want to develop metrics of success. We know that civic engagement, all of you know that civic engagement has remarkable rip will effects on communities, everything from community or social cohesion to educational attainment, to kind of what I like to think about like that kind of reliance on Dr. King's inescapable network of mutuality, that that has incredible social benefits. And so being able to see what those metrics look like, what are the uncommon metrics, in addition to how many people showed up for public meetings, but we want to know what else -- like in what way did your participation really impact your -- the feeling of kind of agency you have over like kind of Raphael Warnock says over your destiny. Wanting to be able to track that over time. Also really having the data to hold agencies accountable, not just to -- as many of you have looked at the mayor's management report, those more quantitative metrics by which agencies are evaluated, but also like community sentiment. Making sure we know how did this policy land with communities. It may have been wildly successful, vis-a-vis according to the agency, how did that land with communities. Those stores of qualitative data, community-generated data, to be able to kind of refer back to is critically important, and something that's been largely missing.

So our goals kind of in this first year are to maximize community engagement across government. The last thing we want to be is a bottleneck to agencies engaging communities. If anything we want agencies to be engaging communities more. More often, more everything. So we want to make sure that that's happening, encouraging agencies to do that, given the tools they need to be able to do that, improving the quality of community engagement through coordination but also through the technical assistance we talked about. Increasing the stores of community-generated data for all those reasons. I think another piece of the community-generated puzzle for me, and

as a community planner, I often found -- and again, I often found that if I were to just look at a combination of census data, city planning community profiles, department of health health profiles for neighborhoods, that would tell one particular story. I worked in East New York for many years, so I would like read the story, the data story of East New York. But I knew from working there that the kind of lived experience of folks who lived in East New York is different than the data picture. So really wanting to round out what that experience is for New Yorkers. I'm really convinced that will help us more effectively direct investment. And finally strengthening social infrastructure. CBOs, as someone who's worked in CBOs for almost 20 years, they are really the lifeline of New York City and kind of the coordination and collaboration with and support from government is essential to ensuring that those community-based organizations have what they need to do the essential work that they do in our neighborhoods every sing the day. So figuring out all the opportunities that we can government to really direct resources, to really lean on the expertise of community-based organizations, both as trusted messengers but also as our go-tos. Both in really good times and in bad.

So then we have some example measures of success. I think importantly here's kind of a quick org chart. So the chief engagement office reports to the chief of staff, to the mayor's chief of staff. This is really important to me, because I feel like this is where we're getting to the inner workings of government that we're trying to shift. This is structural change. Where engagement becomes a central part, just like kind of the intergovernmental office, just like the communications office. That it's part of like the checkbox that everyone has to pass through as agencies are implementing programs. So I think that's a critical piece.

Then under this office I have the great pleasure and honor of working with really dedicated, remarkable professionals at the community affairs university, the public engagement unit, NYC service, and of course the Civic Engagement Commission and Democracy NYC. And again importantly all outreach and teams will be convening regularly and ladder up through us.

So that's all I have from now, but again I would be happy to take any questions and would love to hear from you. I'm happy to follow up with anyone with questions, ideas,

inspirations, all the things. Thank you.

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: Thank you so much Betsy for that presentation. Do commissioners have any -- we have time for a few, if you want to ask Betsy any questions. I can't see everyone's face so if you want to drop your name into the chat or someone can help me with that piece.

>> Natalie DeVito: I just want to welcome you. Betsy thank you for all of your experience that you bring.

>> Betsy MacLean: Thank you.

>> Dr. Sayeed: Thanks Natalie.

>> Eve Baron: It's Eve. Betsy also want to welcome you. Thanks for the shout-out. I'm thrilled to be working in this satellite with you. Lots to talk about, I think going into the future. But I think your passion is coming threw so clearly and it's going to make a difference.

>> Betsy MacLean: Thanks, Eve.

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: Does anyone else have their hand up? Can't see everyone on my screen.

>> I don't believe so.

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: Okay. So Betsy we will stay in touch with you and make sure we bring you back as we move the work forward to share more and commissioner -- do you know some of our commissioners, and I'm sure everyone is welcome to reach out to you as well.

So thank you so much.

>> Betsy MacLean: Thanks everybody. Take care. Bye.

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: Okay. So next on the speaker's list we are going to be hearing from the redistricting commission, specifically Grace Pyun who is the general counsel. As you know counsel has gone through redistricting. I thought it would be important to hear from them. So grace, I hope I didn't mispronounce your name, but feel free to correct me if I did.

>> Grace Pyun: You did great. Thank you. Hi, everyone. I am general counsel of the New York City districting commission. As you know redistricting is a once-in-a-decade event. So we were in charge, this commission was set up earlier

last year pursuant to the New York City charter, to redraw the New York City council lines. So I thought it would be helpful to kind of just give you the background of the work we did, and how we kind of fulfilled our mandate to redraw the lines. The final maps were approved back in November, and they were filed with the city clerk. So right now we're in the process of implementing those lines in preparation for the 2023 City Council elections that are coming up. And so that means we're working with other agencies, including you, to kind of spread what the maps are and how they're going to apply to the 2023 elections for city council.

So I'll just share my screen.

So I'll just run through this primer. This is the deck we used for many of our public engagement and outreach presentations to the public and to various members in our community, to just talk about what we do. And then I'll go through in the end kind of a little bit more about kind of the outreach efforts that we engaged in.

So as you know, the U.S. Constitution requires a census every year, and that triggers the redistricting of all federal, state, and local legislative districts based on the Constitution's equal protection clause mandate of one person, one vote.

So in New York City, the city charter mandates the task of drawing the 51 city council districts. The commission has 15 members, seven are appointed by the mayor, and eight were appointed by city council.

And these are our commissioners. They reflect many community leaders across the five boroughs, as well as we have our senior staff here.

So the New York City -- New York City in the last 10 years grew about 630,000 people. This is roughly the equivalent of, like we say, the population of Memphis. So it's like adding a city on to an existing city. So we had to adjust the districts to make sure that the average population of residents in each city council district would be approximately 172,882.

And why it matters is of course City Council is a co-equal branch of government, incredibly important. So this is local politics at the very local level, and so we want to make sure that the districts reflected the changed demographics and the changed populations of each district.

And here are some population trends that we highlight. Hispanics grew by

154,000 people. Asians represented the largest population growth of 345,000 people. Meanwhile the Black and white populations shrunk by a little bit.

So that's also important when we take into consideration the different growth in populations, because redistricting, we're governed by several legal mandates and legal criteria in drawing the districts. And one of the federal laws that applied was the Voting Rights Act of 1965. So we had to draw each district so we were in compliance with this act so we wouldn't be denying or diluting the voting power of racial and language minorities which include Black, Asian, Latino, native American.

As well we had to draw the maps again in accordance with the one-person, one-vote principle. Of course this is incredibly challenging so the law provides for a 5% deviation, which means basically the difference between the least populous district and the most populous district couldn't exceed 5% from that average of 172.

In addition to the federal laws, we also have the city charter. And the city charter also mandated several criteria that also had to be considered in redistricting, in drawing the lines. And they had a specific order of importance. So in addition to the federal laws and the Voting Rights Act, we had to keep neighborhoods and communities intact, we had to keep the districts compact. Limit crossover districts. Meaning limiting cross-borough districts, avoid political gerrymandering so to speak and avoid oddly shaped districts.

This goes into more of the districting requirements under the city charter.

So public input was incredibly important in the redistricting process. And I can actually skip through to the next slides here about the process. Because the process under the charter was very specific, and there were specific time frames or deadlines in which we had to achieve each mile stone. And we were working with a very compressed timeline. The commission was officially convened approximately late March, April of last year. So April of 2022. And because the commission didn't exist, it's a once-in a-a decade commission, we had to build from the ground up as an agency and become operational. And then had to follow the charter process and produce the final plan by December of 2022. So last month. So we were working with the charter mandated process here, and what we first started off with was a first round of public hearings. Because again, public input was very important to our commission. This

was a process about people talking about their neighborhoods and communities. And charter mandated that we needed to keep the communities and neighborhoods, communities of interest intact, we wanted to hear directly from the public. The people, the residents who lived in each of these neighborhoods, to have a direct input and say into how -- sorry. The lights went off -- the lines were being drawn.

And so while the charter first starts off with that the commissioners must release a preliminary plan, what we did was we went ahead with a first round of discretionary public hearings across the five boroughs in May and July to hear from the public and what they wanted to see in the new maps. And so each hearing was a couple hours long. They were held in person, and also hybrid online. So we gave the opportunity for both people to testify both via Zoom and to also attend the public hearings. And we had about almost 200 people in all testify.

And in addition to these public hearings, the commission opened up a portal for public testimony, where people could email and submit written public testimony about their neighborhoods to provide input that way.

So during this entire process we were receiving emails, we were receiving physical mail. We also made available eventually later on in the process an online mapping tool where the public could draw their own maps and submit them to us, to provide their input in what their line should look like.

So we did the first round of public hearings. Then, the commission held a public meeting in July 15th with a preliminary draft plan and under the charter we made it available to the public and provided them sufficient time to review the maps. We made the maps available on our website, and then we also made them available to physically be looked at across the five boroughs. We placed it in the different borough halls. I believe the public library as well as the surrogate's public bulletin board, where people could view the maps physically.

So after we -- during that time of notice and review and comment, we were reviewing the public testimony that was coming in. We were reviewing the emails and the mails that were coming in, and then we had another round of public hearings. This is the second round of public hearings. So that comment on the preliminary draft plan. And so we also held those across the five boroughs. Both in person and over Zoom.

We faced incredible, incredible demand. We had to -- I mean, the meetings were scheduled for three hours, and I believe some ran into five, six hours of public testimony. We received 10,000 pieces of public testimony during the span of like this 3-month period of review and comments of the preliminary draft plan. And we had over 300 people testify. So we definitely took a lot of the public's comment into consideration. The commissioners put incredible work in putting together the plan. And mapping the districts, trying to respect the community's input and what they thought their communities of interest were.

So after the public hearing, the commission met and they mapped -- they created a revised map that we needed to submit to city council. So under the charter what happens is you revise the plan, you create a revised plan, and the commission must submit that, approve of it to submit it to city council, and then city council has three weeks to consider it. To review it. And if city council decides that there needs to be more work that has to be done on the maps, they would have issued a formal resolution objecting to the revised plan. So that would have given them a three-week period.

Did not object at the end of the 3-week plan or meaning did not return the resolution, then that plan that was submitted to council could be deemed adopted.

So the commission came up with a revised plan, based on all the testimony. And we submitted it to city council on October 6th. City council reviewed those maps for three weeks, and they did not return a resolution objecting to the plan. So the commission then moved forward to deem the revised 51 districts final, and we went through the process of finalizing that and filing it with the city clerk.

So that was a lot of activity in just the span of 6, 7 months, but the commission is proud that we took all the public testimony, we reviewed every single piece. In total I believe we received over 13,000 pieces of public testimony, over 35 hours of public hearings and we really carefully review them to carefully understand what the community and what the public want to see in their district lines.

So as of now, the final maps are up on the website, on our website, nyc.gov/districting, my colleague Jabron who's also on this meeting, he can send the link through I guess the chat, where you can review our final plans, as well the New

York City Board of Elections has also taken our maps and they have prepared their own maps outlining the different election precincts as well on their website. So those reflect the new city council lines that will take into effect for the 2023 elections.

As well, we are preparing the commission is preparing a series of reports. We're including a final agency report summarizing all of the work that we've done so far, along with all the materials such as this primer, such as our maps, our public meeting on documents. All of our commission-produced material as well for the public as well.

So that's the work in a nutshell that the Commission has done so far. Thank you for your time. And I'll take any questions.

>> Sarah Sayeed: Thank you so much, Grace. Does anyone have any questions? I can't see anyone's face. Natalie?

>> Natalie DeVito: Yes, thank you for your work, by the way. You spoke a lot in the past tense. Is it understood that the commission is now coming to a close or it has come to a close?

>> Grace Pyun: So the charter states that the commission is, term ends in January of 2024. 60 days after the general election of City Council. After the plans were drawn, we as an agency still are partnering with other agencies, including, for example, the New York City board of elections to effectuate and implement. So that's what the charter language says.

>> Natalie DeVito: Thank you.

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: Any other commissioners have questions? Mark?

>> Mark Diller: Thank you, and thank you for the detailed presentation. I'm curious about how the plan to ensure -- let me get this down, sorry. In terms of making sure that folks know the new zone lines, and how folks know where to go to vote, for example. Is there a formalized process with the board of elections or with -- I'm a member of a community board, so I'm wondering what the roll-out is ideally, and how to add on to it effectively.

>> Grace Pyun: Yes, thank you. We are working with -- so, I guess it's not like we have a formalized relationship, but we work with the agencies to help advise the public as much as possible in ways that are useful to them, including fielding any questions about how the new lines will affect them. Specifically for your election precincts, the

New York City Board of Elections website, I think Jabron can also put up the link there, those precincts have been drawn according to the new lines, for example. So you'll be able to see that there.

And as part of our roll-out in terms of the finalized maps, we are still actively engaging in an outreach campaign once these reports are finalized and we'll be reaching out -- we've been partnering with other agencies and we really appreciate those agencies, the mayor's offices for assisting us. Because we were somewhat a lean agency. So we relied on them to kind of spread the word of the work we did. And so, for example, the newsletters from MOYA and CAU and SBS, as well as the community boards to let them know hey, for each step of the process, this is what the commission was doing, and we plan to do the same in terms of finalizing our reports and our maps.

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: Thank you. Anyone else? Amy?

>> Amy Breedlove: Thank you for the presentation. I just have a quick question because we didn't see a lot of changes in and around my district in Brooklyn. I was wondering if you could quickly tell us where the most significant changes were?

>> Grace Pyun: Okay. So I guess the significant -- I mean, I guess it's hard to kind of illustrate what was significant and what was not significant. But I guess one of the pieces that the public was keen on was in south Brooklyn, with the creation of a new Asian majority district, down in 43, to be in compliance with the Voting Rights Act. Again, going back to the demographics and the population changes that have occurred and the shifting -- the 5% deviation that we work with, we had to -- we provided an opportunity district for Asians to elect a candidate of their choice, under what is considered a Voting Rights Act analysis. So by creating a kind of 43 district down there, it kind of changed the landscape of the district lines down in southern Brooklyn. So that's kind of an example of one of the significant I guess geographical changes that occurred. And it's part of the population demographics change.

>> Amy Breedlove: Thank you very much. That clarifies a lot. Thank you.

>> Natalie?

>> Natalie DeVito: Just follow-up to that just for clarification. The work of the commission was specifically for city council, correct? It doesn't affect any other

levels?

>> Correct. This is the New York City districting commission. The state and senate districts were drawn by the New York State independent redistricting commission. So that's a separate commission.

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: Are there any other questions from commissioners? I notice someone else has their hand up. Just we'll need to reserve public comments until the end. So I'm not sure, grace, if you can stay, but there might be someone else who has a question. And if you can't, perhaps there's a way for them to follow up with you one on one. Because we do need to get through the rest of the meeting.

>> Grace Pyun: Sure. We can be reached -- we have several email inboxes, but I think Jabron -- okay.

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: I'm referring to someone named Mark who has their hand up. Yeah, thank you. I'm sorry but we could take your question but towards the end of the last half hour.

Are any other commissioners -- I can't see everyone's face all together. So does anyone else have their hand raised? Just speak up so I can hear your voice. Okay.

If there are no other questions from the commissioners, we will move on to the next item on our agenda. Which is to hear from our Chief Democracy Officer. So Grace, thank you so much, and Jabron thank you so much for sharing this information and this obviously is relevant to us not only as a -- because we're doing community engagement, also because we are now more than ever, including with our language assistance program, and now with the Chief Democracy Officer on board, and the integration of Democracy NYC into the Civic Engagement Commission towards the end of 2022, we are now going to be working quite actively in promoting awareness about voting, elections and all the stuff. So we just want to thank you again for giving us the information.

Someone had also put into the chat whether this meeting recording will be available, and it will be available on our site after the meeting. So we can also circulate the numbers to the public as well who may be curious and we may think would benefit from this information.

So I'm going to turn now to introducing our Chief Democracy Officer. And

Kathleen Daniel has served the city of New York for nearly a decade, and most recently Kathleen was the director of community engagement for New York City test and trace through the pandemic. And this was as you all probably know, the largest citywide contact tracing operation in the nation. And she led a team of 700 tracers visiting the sick and their close contacts daily to stop the spread of COVID-19. She has a track record of success in leading very large scale operations in teams through crisis to high performance. Brings her expertise as a grassroots organizer and a marketing communications professional to develop strategies to reach underserved communities. She joined the DeBlasio administration for census 2020 which was then the largest outreach initiative ever conducted by the city and the most robust census-related campaign led by a city relative to other cities in the country. And before taking on this role for census, she served for several years as the first-ever outreach director in the office of Brooklyn borough president under the former Brooklyn president Eric Adams. I apologize for the clanking in the background. That is the radiator. Recognizing the inaugural community engagement power 50 list by city and state New York, Kathleen gives back to the community. She's a veteran of multiple Congressional, state, and local issue-based campaigns, and a highly sought-after multilingual speaker. She's been an advocate on domestic violence and has led protests for school choice, affordable housing, voting rights and union representation for fast food and retail workers. A lifelong Brooklyn resident and mother of two, Kathleen is passionate about educating, informing and organizing to effect change that positively impacts New Yorkers and amplifies the voices of those who have traditionally not been heard. So we're all really excited to welcome Kathleen to CEC. And we're excited to be working with her as we get ready to roll out participation -- citywide participatory voting and budgeting and also the next round of rank choice voter education. Thank you, Kathleen. The floor is yours

>> Kathleen Daniel: Thank you, Dr. Sayeed and thank you to the Commission and the entire team at the civic engagement unit. This has been an exciting onboarding process. I'm here now I think five weeks so my comments will be brief because we are just wrapping up strategic planning. But again very excited to be here on this team and join a group of New York City heroes that every day come in and do this

tremendous work.

So we have a challenge with voter turnout in New York City, right? Talk about understatement. And DNYC, Democracy NYC is charged with strengthening voter participation through a research and data-driven direct voter engagement plan that addresses the drop in voting participation and reduces barriers to voting through education, voter registration and language assistance, as well as provide policy and legislative reform and speak into those processes.

So what does it look like right now? What is the landscape in New York City? Despite record high participation in the June primaries, the best we've done in over a decade, only 26.5% of New Yorkers eligible to vote cast a ballot. In the first-ever citywide rank choice voting that we had.

New Yorkers also in 2021 set a record for low voter turnout in the general election with only 23.3% of New Yorkers eligible to vote going to the polls. So even with abysmal turnout, voters overwhelmingly chose in the primaries of 21 to rank their ballots and they rated the experience favorably. So rank choice voting didn't fail. Those that voted did rank their vote.

Over 5.5 million New Yorkers are registered to vote, however. And in 2022, 61,000 more New Yorkers registered in the city. So despite a myriad of reforms to voting, and the introduction of rank choice voting, New York City continues to see a dramatic drop of voter turnout in the elections. So what are we going to do?

So Democracy NYC has an opportunity. And using grassroots tactics, much as we did with the census, much as we did to educate and inform New Yorkers during the pandemic with test and trace, we'll develop a multilingual grassroots organizing strategy to engage voters by building a movement to stem the dramatic drop in voter turnout. Basically we're going to work to stop the drop. And the tactics that we'll incorporate to build a movement are teach-ins. So that we educate and inform. Partnering with CBOs, the people who are actually in communities, speaking the languages of community and on the ground. The people that people trust. Creating a CUNY civic corps so that we are engaging the young people and they are then going out into communities and empowering themselves and their families and friends. Community canvassing. In specific communities where language is a barrier, we'll be

going to knock on doors and speaking the same language as those who open the door on the other side. And any of you -- you native New Yorkers, we all know when you knock on a door in this town, you have no idea what country the door is going to up into from the cooking to the music to the language. And so culturally competent community canvassing is one of the methodologies we will employ.

We are creating with our outreach team the people power coalitions. Much like the census count committee one in every borough, we will be partnering with our borough presidents to create our people power coalitions. You can hear our radiator with this clanking clearly agrees with this plan. Apologies for the noise. We will also be expanding our translation services and increasing our access and voter access to us, and their knowledge of our services. Because it is the law. New Yorkers have the right to vote in their language and we're going to double down our efforts to make sure that they know and can take advantage of those services. And creating a volunteer program. Much like we did with the census campaign, where we amassed thousands of New Yorkers that came out and helped us to get out the count, we're going to engage New Yorkers to help us get out the vote, and have citywide days of action. We will leverage our relationship with city government, with city agencies, our houses of worship, our community-based organizations, and our boots-on-the-ground residents to get out and vote en mass while teaching all New Yorkers about rank choice voting. We have some challenges here. In the June primary of the 51 members of city council, it is likely 27 of them, more than half, will not have a primary. So we will spend the next few weeks researching and identifying the communities where there will be a primary, where there will be contention. What are the languages that we will need to be communicating in in order to educate New Yorkers about rank choice voting? And we will be spending quite eye bit of time in Sunset Park and the communities in Brooklyn's newly redrawn district 43, where currently there are multiple Asian candidates running for office. And so we are preparing our troops to be boots on the ground and have direct voter contact in those languages as well. Next slide?

So how are we going to stop the drop? To stop the drop in voting turnout, we'll identify of the over 5.5 million registered voters, which of them voted only once or twice

in the last six years? Most campaigns, the strategy is to speak to the smallest number of voters possible, to agree with voting for your candidate, and then go out to vote. And so what we will do is speak to the voters that started to vote, that did so once or twice, and have literally dropped out of going to the polls. And these are the people that most campaigns are not speaking to. Or rarely speak to.

And so by engaging these New Yorkers, we can help identify, through focus groups, surveys, and working with academic institutions, to identify the psychographics and demographics of these voters that are dropping in order to develop engagement strategies that foster a culture of voting amongst New Yorkers and stop the drop.

And so our mission is hope that you join us. So we will be following up with each and every one of you. And asking you to engage your network. It's to stop the drop, and speak to New Yorkers that have been become disconnected with the process of voting and have stopped going to the polls and we are very excited about that journey. So looking forward to sharing more details of the plan in the weeks to come.

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: Thank you, Kathleen. Go for it, Amy.

>> Amy Breedlove: Kathleen, thank you so much from the great borough of Brooklyn. We appreciate your work.

I'm just wondering you know part of the problem too is not just the voters themselves, but a lot of the laws and ways it is set up to vote in New York State and New York City. So a few of the commissioners, we do work as poll workers as well. And you know, part of the issue, especially for primaries, is in New York State you have to be affiliated with a party. And I'm wondering if you are doing anything to work on that? Because a lot of people have this reaction that they don't want to affiliate with a party, but then they don't go to the general because they feel like well, it was already decided in the primary. So it's this catch-22 in a way. So I was just wondering if you're looking at that, and if there is a way to address that issue.

>> Kathleen Daniel: Thank you so much, Amy, and always loving beloved Brooklyn. The mighty BK. And what you pose is a great question, and this is something that a number of people that are active in the space around voter engagement, registration, activation, registration are discussing, should there be open primaries. We know that

studies show in any organization is the 80/20 rule. 20% of the body does 100% of the work. And so New Yorkers fall in line with the 80/20 rule that you know what? Somebody is going to do it. Somebody is going to take care of it. And in the time of such tremendous civic distrust, this is a real challenge. What I can say that I'm hopeful about, because I can't answer that question yet. There are tons of people still working on that, people crafting legislation that we continue to track. I am very hopeful that the New York State assembly, the New York State Senate opened their season this year with a number of voting reforms and as poll site workers you'll be happy to know that one of the things proposed is to stop penalizing senior citizens who work at the polls and therefore that funding gets detracted from other help in other financial assistance that they receive. I'm very hopeful about this package that was introduced in the senate just this month.

I am also very hopeful that with approximately 24 council members in primaries in June, and most of them new, as well as half of those races being contentious or in new districts, that we have an opportunity that we don't often see, where we may have Republican and democratic primaries in this June primary season and nothing is sexier and gets people to the polls than a good fight. So I'm very hopeful as we continue to watch and continue to examine the possibility. Because it is being discussed widely, of open primaries in New York.

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: Thank you. Natalie?

>> Natalie DeVito: Sorry about that. Just saying I do this because I've got some construction going on that you don't need to hear clanking. It's not as enthusiastic as your radiator is, and sometimes we get the stray cat meow sounds throughout the house which maybe you would all love, I don't know.

So thank you and welcome. I have a question. I have sort of like a hypothetical, but it could be real.

Let's suppose we've got -- oh, pardon me. Alexa, cancel. See how this goes.

Let's suppose we've got two scenarios. We've got two city council districts, one where there's a primary, one where there isn't. And in each of those districts, the city council member is really excited about this initiative and really excited about just engagement in general. This is where things could get a little funky. I would love to

see our representatives engage with our commission regularly so that we can, you know -- I mean, what's the point of voting if we don't have representation, right? So I think it's in the interest of all the elected officials to engage with us, ask us what we need, tell us what they need, and so on. There's this synergy.

And when you've got a situation where let's say you've got a city council representative who may be in a race, whether they were or they weren't, it's in the best interest of the constituency to know about what we do, to know about what you do, to help engage neighbors and so on for voting. Is there a funky line where a candidate for council or a current city council representative shouldn't engage with the commission or shouldn't get involved with this particular effort? Again, it's a hypothetical, and I don't know that it won't come up. I just want to make sure that we don't have any discouragement from representatives to partner with us.

>> Kathleen Daniel: Absolutely. And so Natalie, there is never a time when an elected official should not engage or should disengage. Never, ever. Never happened.

That said, we do have to be cautious about maintaining our absolute nonpartisan engagement of New Yorkers. So that said, we have some opportunities. We do have almost half the city council may be primaried. We may also have Republican and democratic primaries at the same time in the primary season. And for that elected official who is not being primaried, that does not mean because of redistricting that there won't be a contentious race in the general. So we've got a lot of opportunities. But even if there was not, and they were uncontested, let's say, which is difficult in New York City, because we all have our opinions in New York, don't we? It's part of being a New Yorker. We love a good fight. So that said, we can partner with elected officials to continue to educate and inform New Yorkers at all times, not only about voting, but by colleague Wendy is going to speak to you more about participatory voting, which is going to be happening while the primaries are happening. While we're talking about rank choice voting, and we're preparing people to get out the vote, they have an opportunity to vote on participatory budgeting. So those who are not going to be involved in races or primaries or conscientious races, absolutely have -- contentious races absolutely have a good-guy effort to talk to their communities and engage with

this commission and the different programmatic lanes that we have.

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: Thank you so much. Michigan and Donna. Before we go to your questions, I want to check on whether we received any texts or emails to do public comment, because that will help me figure out the timing for the remainder of the updates.

>> No texts. Let me go back to email.

>> Sarah Sayeed: Mitch you're up next.

>> Can folks hear me okay?

>> Sarah Sayeed: A little bit low. You might need to fix your mic or something.

>> There was a topic about a particular policy and legislative changes like open primaries and so forth. I know there have been discussions in the past about having municipal elections open to all New York City residents regardless of status. I just want to know if there has been any discussions about that within your office.

>> Kathleen Daniel: There have been. So the status of that legislation is that it is in the appellate division at this time. And that is a -- how would I say -- it is not a swift process. It is an arduous process that will take some time. And because there have been statements to the court on behalf of the city, as well as on behalf of those that challenge it and brought it to the appellate court, and now it is in the hands of the court to review the information that they have, to review the arguments and make a decision. But this is a process and it takes some time. But we will be keeping you abreast of that as things develop.

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: We're waiting to hear about the results before we move forward on our end.

Donna?

>> Donna Gill: Thank you, miss Daniel. Welcome. Good presentation.

My question is actually about all of the things that everyone was just speaking about, which is the voting in the primaries regardless of party affiliations. My main question is -- and what the city council passed, what my colleague just spoke about that is now in court, that is being challenged. However, my question, my main question is about language access. I know as civic engagement, we've done a lot with language access. But I feel that the information about who can go into the polls and

things like that is not being widely disseminated by the Board of Elections. And I'm wondering what we can do with our teachings, because you realize that for our primaries this time, for 2023, we have rank choice voting, we have redistricting. There is a number of moving parts that are happening that could be very confusing to voters. So the teachings and things like that, are we going to keep these things in mind as well as keeping the Board of Elections to task with informing non-English language speakers about their rights to have someone, family member or whatever of their choosing, in the ballot, to go to the polls with them. Because I know that, as a poll worker, that it becomes a very contentious issue for people that come in. And that is a big deterrent to voting. For people that are not -- their first language is not English

>> Kathleen Daniel: Donna, you are absolutely correct. And my colleague Anila is going to speak more about our language access program shortly. But what you are saying is exactly true. We've got redistricting, we've got rank choice voting, we've got primaries in some places and not in others, and then we have the absolute right, sacrosanct right that we can vote in lank wage. What we will be doing in teach-ins people will be informed of their rights, and we're going to be having teach-ins in multiple languages, translating our materials into multiple languages as we always have, but we're going to be expanding that this year and adding our community canvassing in multiple languages again. How does one access what they are not aware can happen. I will be meeting with members of the board of election very soon, and this is one of the things that we will be talking about is making sure that we're cross-educating, cross-pollinating this information. Because as a poll site worker, you should not feel in the middle when someone is asking you for assistance. My parents are retired, but they speak multiple languages and are poll site workers. And they have to do their job and be the interpreters. So making sure that everyone is aware of that access and Anila and I have shared some great ideas that we're looking forward to rolling out to you in the coming weeks.

>> Thank you.

>> Sarah Sayeed: Natalie was your hand up from before or is that a new question?

>> Natalie DeVito: It's from before. I'll take it down.

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: No worries. I'm paging through, I don't see I see any other

hands up from commissioners. Great. So with no further questions, Abby, I think you noted something about whether you got -- no comments from the info at in box and no texts.

So we don't have anyone looking to make comments during the last half hour. So I think it's fine for us to move on to the next item on the agenda. I was just concerned that we would run into the public comment period and it sounds like I don't need to be as concerned about that so that we can just go through the program updates right now.

So next with the program updates, we'll have members of the team talk about different things that we've been working on, and we'll start with Anila and move into Wendy and then Benjamin, is that correct order? Is Daniella here as well? I'm not sure about the order.

>> Poll sites first.

>> Sarah Sayeed: Anila first.

>> Hi, everyone. For those of you who aren't seen me in the last public meeting my name is Anila and I'm the poll site language services director. I will just give a brief overview of the November 2022 general election. The poll site program.

What you're seeing on the screen now is the map of our poll site, all the poll sites we serviced in November 2022 on the last two days of early voting, as well as election day as I reported back in October we were able to deliver 100% of services as scheduled. 135 poll site language services, and 100 unique poll sites or locations, 25 early voting sites and 75 election day sites.

In terms of utilization, we assisted with language services a total of 1320 voters which is a 13% increase over November 2020 utilization records. In terms of changes, are if compared to utilization data from November 2020, we see the sharpest increase in Yiddish. We only assisted four voters, four Yiddish speakers in November 2022. -- 2020, sorry. And we assisted 116 this past election, which is a 25-fold increase. Chinese-speaking voters were four, back in November 2020. We assisted a total of 31 this time, almost an eightfold increase.

Haitian-speaking voters almost doubled to 207 from 100. And Bengali-speaking voters assisted almost tripled. We saw a drop in voters assisted for Urdu from 22 as well as Arabic speaking voters from 59 to 20 back in November 2020.

That is all in terms of utilization. Next slide, please. Our focus is right now the language assistance program team is short listing the 2023 cohort of the language access advisory committee or language assistance advisory committee. About a third of the 2022 members will stay on this year. We are doing very well with recruitment. We have very solid candidates for the 2023 cohort. And the goal is to launch this new cohort in February.

And that's about it.

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: Any questions for Anila? Donna?

>> Donna Gill: Hi, Anila. Thank you.

I was just wondering -- I saw the graphics and I was wondering, I know we were looking for some Italian, someone with Italian language. Did we have any success with that or --?

>> Anila: Yeah. So I'm happy to inform you that the executive director of the Italian American Federation organization is going to be on LAAC. And we also have an Italian community member who is a teacher of Italian in a school. I've tapped these two people into joining LAAC this year. But if you have any other candidates, please feel free to send them our way.

>> Donna Gill: No no, I was just wondering if we had them if I had to reach out.

>> Anila: Yes. We have those two in the bag, so to speak.

>> Sarah Sayeed: Thank you, Donna. Natalie?

>> Natalie DeVito: I'm sorry to be off camera for a moment. A question about LAAC participants? Are these volunteers? What's their time commitment, et cetera? I just want to know, I have been asked to do some outreach to a couple of people with certain language skills and I want to know what to expect of them.

>> Anila: Okay, sure. I can update you via email, but just very high level overview. The time commitment is attending a monthly meeting about an hour. It's usually online for this year. I want to also organize one or two in-person meetings, bring together in person all of the current LAAC members and past LAAC members. And our team members and possibly the commission, some of the commissioners or all of the commissioners. So it's not a huge time commitment. At the most regular kind of

event we expect them to attend, they have to attend 75% of meetings. And occasionally every time we have -- well, every time we have an election we actually ask them to come up with a plan, execute an outreach plan. We come up, the communications director comes up with a social media toolkit, plus we have the palm cards printed. We are going to have more materials printed come June, and we ask them to come up with a plan and disseminate those assets amongst their community. So they have to plan for some extra time around elections.

>> Thank you and just a follow-up to that. Do we have provisions for -- let's say we've got a poll site which regularly needs Cantonese access and we're able to provide that because we've planned for that. But on one particular voting day, a person shows up who speaks Yiddish and we haven't provided for that. Is there a situation that we've got where our volunteers are able to be connected by phone with a voter from the polling site like in a hospital when someone needs an interpreter? I don't even know if we're allowed to do that but it's just a question.

>> Anila: Sure. The way things stand right now, we are not allowed to help speakers of other languages if that site is not scheduled to provide services. In that particular language. We have had cases, a few cases in every election where someone has approached our interpreters. Let's say I don't know a Ukrainian speaker has approached our polish interpreter and asked for assistance. And we have had a couple of those cases. Where they have tried to help them and they've used their language skills to provide that assistance. But we should stick the guidelines are that our interpreters should stick to the languages that they've been assigned and to the services that we have been assigned.

As to phone interpretation, that's something that we have started thinking about. It's something that could be possible in the future, but we are not sure. We have to coordinate with the board of election and it would have to be a totally separate process that we have to set up for that, if we decide at some point that yes, we can do that. And the BOE agrees to it and that we have resources in place to do that.

>> Sarah Sayeed: We need to go through another methodology as well. Donna is your hand up from before or is it another question?

>> Donna Gill: That's from before. Sorry.

>> Sarah Sayeed: No worries. If no other questions on this piece, we can move to the next slide and go to the next I think it's community boards. Benjamin, the floor is yours.

>> Benjamin: Yes. Hi, everybody. Benjamin solitaire community board advisor. Go to the next slide.

This is just a summary of what we did in the fall sessions. As we've talked about before, but we did have the two intro to city budget workshops, the five how to use the open data portal, and then five by the power of youth. The attendee and administration numbers. Overall we hit 166 who attended these sessions, unfortunately many more registering but that's an issue we're trying to figure out.

So you know, it's a good start, we're going to continue as we move into the next -- into the coming months, we're going to have a few more workshops. About five from land use and equity decisions, disability access, are parliamentarian training, fair and affordable housing and program analysis, we're going to experiment with a few other time slots. We've mostly been doing evenings. We've only done evenings, but there are some that are held early morning or midday like around lunch, during lunchtime and see how those time slots help people and if that helps people access. And different times and days of the week. So we really look forward to seeing -- releasing all the dates and the exact topics in the next couple of weeks.

And we're working a lot -- working with Anila on language access. We're going to be meeting with district managers and chairs from different boards about their needs and how we can develop a language access plan. It's a very large topic of course. It's very important to community boards. But to get a clear handle of what would be most beneficial and how we could answer those needs. So looking forward to upcoming workshops and that work with our boards.

I think that's it for that.

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: Any questions on the community board work? Donna?

>> Donna Gill: Benjamin, I'm sorry. I just wanted to know if you were able to have more interactions with a lot more community boards and be able to get in touch with a lot of them? I know I tried to help you with some of them. I don't know if that was really helpful, and I'm wondering if for us as commissioners, or people that are on

community boards, to help you get the word out and get access to these different community boards. That's my question.

>> Benjamin: Yeah. We did -- we did ask for updated contact information for all the district managers and board chairs, which we've got most of them. We are working our way through the last few people who haven't given that yet. Those are also communication, I've certainly talked to a couple of the boards out in Staten Island as well as continuing to reach out to them across the city. Right now scheduling time to get all the borough board meetings so we can have a presentation to the chairs directly. That's actually a question I had for Staten Island if they do borough boards. I just asked the borough president's office about meeting with them. But I'm not sure what their format is.

>> Donna Gill. . Actually that's what I was going to suggest was to go to the borough board meetings because all the communities boards are there. I know the one in Manhattan I'm not sure about the other boroughs. But all the board chairs, usually chairs or vice chairs are usually at that meeting, so that helps. And we have to keep in mind also there were elections so there may be new chairs that are on community boards.

>> Benjamin: That's a good point. We did most of the contact in late November-December. So we do have to update those too which we can hopefully do on the websites. Queens just responded, I'll be going to their borough board I did request time on the next available slot on all the borough board meetings.

>> Donna Gill: Thank you.

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: Anyone else have a question? Eve I see your hand up.

>> Eve Baron: I do. Thanks Benjamin for that report. Just a reminder is that there will be a new slate of community board members coming up this spring so that's probably an opportunity to catch some more people on the training.

I know that there was a kind of self-organized community board report that came out recently.

>> Benjamin: The future of community boards?

>> Eve Baron: Yeah. I haven't seen the final but I thought that was probably a good place for some reference points about the types of trainings that community boards

would like to have.

>> Benjamin: That came out in I think January last year. I talked to the conveners of that group pretty regularly. So I've read it and family with what they need and they're helping me with the language access questions. So yeah. We are definitely in communication with Celeste and Susan are the two district managers. Thank you for that. It's a report and we're trying to help out on different areas recommended there.

Yeah, and one of the questions we're going to look at is how many of these that we've done, do we want to repeat for the new members. Certainly the budget changes all the time, open data is there all the time. So we'll be doing -- looking at doing a needs assessment again, which probably would be good with the new way of coming in.

>> Sarah Sayeed: Thank you. Anyone else communications on your community board work? Don't see any other hands. So we can move to the next topic, I think.

>> Wendy Trull, senior advisor with the Civic Engagement Commission. I want to share an overview, road map of where we are with our citywide participatory budgeting process and have Benjamin talk more about our borough assembly process which is new to our process and I think an exciting development. And then I'm going to have Daniella give you an update on where we are with our tree work. Some updates, deliverables, the voter engagement work that they provided in the last election. And kind of looking forward.

So just a recap on what we've been working on for the past two months. In September we selected our borough assembly committees, who will -- are again sort of representative members of the boroughs who we're bringing together to help us narrow down a project idea so we're ensuring that residents are involved in each phase of our process. We selected 20 members per borough, meeting for a total, we asked them to commit a total of 14 hours over a 2-month period. In December we convened the first get to know you for our back meetings, trying to get started, it's a lot to cover in a short period of time, and also trying to get that in before the holidays, so we had an opportunity to pull folks together and get them oriented and we also onboarded our tree organizations who we had brought on as part of phase one to help us with our idea generation sessions, and to do some of that voter engagement work. And they also

are going to be supporting phase 2 of the TRIE process. As you may recall in previous meetings, we spoke about the citywide process being both a borough-wide process but also the local process in the TRIE neighborhoods from last year.

This month we are busily running these borough assembly committees. There are several of them for each borough so it's a lot of work designing the agendas for that, and staffing them. But it's been I think a really exciting initiative, getting good feedback from folks and people are just excited to see this sort of manifest itself and be a part of this democratic process and the TRIE coalitions are starting their meetings where they are working a little bit differently, but with their coalitions that we've asked them to convene to help vet the ballots.

Next month we are going to finish those meetings, we're going to ask our coalition meetings to wrap it up with coalitions and wrap up our, the borough assembly committees that we're hosting in each of the boroughs. We're also documenting the process which we think is important. Do something new and we're adding kind of a very more deep deliberative process to the city process. We've brought on a production company of independent artists and they're going to help us do a little bit of storytelling to again, be able to talk about what happened, what are people's experiences and also use it as a way to kick it off for the get out the vote, the PB vote period and get people excited to hear directly from other residents about what we're doing.

And then we will be finalizing, we've got to get those ballots finalized because there's a lot of operational work, in addition to thinking about of course what will our outreach strategy be for the voting phase March and April. Busy months on the operational side we have to prep for ballots, translations takes a fair amount of time, printing them, figuring out how we're going to disseminate them, programming the online ballot to make sure we have an online -- all of the messaging that needs to happen, developing our social media campaign. Again, finalizing that outreach strategy. Because we're allowing -- and we want to make sure that paper ballots are available in addition to online, it's important that we figure out where those ballot sites, where people can find out where they can go to cast their paper ballot. Noting that we're also simplifying the online voting process which was I think more complicated

than the TRIE process, and we're using a different vendor this year, so that it's just simple. It's an SMS text and it avoids a lot of the account creation problems that we had with our previous solution so we're excited about that.

And then there's also a number of sort of arts programming and events that we're going to be planning that we're excited about, which we think will be fun about how we use our people's bus and how we get people excited about this phase.

Implementation wise we also have to find organizations who are going to implement these projects once they're selected for the ballot, so that also has to happen in parallel to get ready for the vote phase, putting out a call to make sure that's a fair process and that people have the opportunity to submit a proposal to actually implement these projects. So we'll be able to come back and give folks a heads up to make sure that we're getting the word out to community-based organizations, that they could apply as part of that process and of course our evaluation is ongoing. Finalizing the framework, we're doing what we can to make sure there's sort of a participatory aspect to the research and ensuring that our staff are also documenting our own process so that we can assess our implementation strategy and our instruments. Which leads us to our voting period between May and June. We are envisioning it's a very long process or time period, because it does take a while for word of mouth and all of the different strategies that we're trying to employ. We're thinking about having theme weeks to making sure we're really reaching groups that are often don't find out about it in time, so language communities, perhaps public housing residents, et cetera. So we're working it out through, and making sure we get to schools, very important, 11 and older, how do we get to middle schools, how do we get ballots into high schools, et cetera. And then we also will be selecting and evaluating the organizations who would be implementing so we can announce the winning projects and the organizations.

That's kind of big picture high level, but I want to turn it over to Benjamin unless there are questions to talk in a little more detail about the borough assembly committees. Amy?

>> Amy Breedlove: Thanks so much, Wendy. Your presentations are always so great. One thing is I just went through the agonizing process of looking at middle

schools for my son. And.

>> Been there, done that.

>> Amy Breedlove: So what came to mind when you were just talking about that is the principals themselves. In reaching middle schools. Because the DOE doesn't seem to be the most efficient way to reach the middle schools. So I just wanted to put that out there that going directly to the principals would be a great thing and I can of course talk to you about Brooklyn district, what am I in, 15? So anyway, just wanted to get that out there.

>> Yeah, yeah a hundred percent. We feel like it has to be yes and sort of a direct strategy, which is what we found in the first phase when we were trying to get into schools. I there I we have two strong inroads at the DOE which doesn't mean it's going to be comprehensive. It's a massive, massive agency as we all know. So it is hard to get to all 1800 schools in just one pathway. But I will say that we do want to work with the civics for all folks at the department of education. There are schools that already have PB in schools and that feels like a natural alliance. And we've got some folks in the DOE who's been working with us to work with young people who were a part of NYC Speaks and helped facilitate we've kept them on board and now they're doing small group facilitation so we're keeping them with us. And see them as this incredible cohort of young people who are just really amazing and helping us think about what our strategies should be for reaching youth. In general, but also in schools. What are the tactics they think would be effective, because I think it's important to partner with young people in the messaging and the strategy for how we reach young people, but yes. And if any of the commissioners have in roads into the department of education or specific schools, that would be fantastic and we would love to brainstorm together.

>> Amy Breedlove: And also I would just like to put out there for the NEST program, I think this would be a great way to gauge the NEST program, and I can set you up with someone there as well.

>> Wendy: Great, awesome. I think Benjamin had been trying to make the connections in the first phase, that's great. I appreciate you naming that as an important group of schools that we need to reach. There's one in my son's school, in

fact. Awesome.

Any other questions? Anthony?

>> Anthony Harmon: I wanted to put myself out there from the United Federation of Teachers we have a whole middle school department here. I would be more than happy to set up a meeting to meet with our vice president of the middle schools and make something happen.

>> Wendy: Sold. Yes, please. We will take you up on that. Thank you so much for offering that. Amazing.

>> Sarah Sayeed: I think this is going to be a real opportunity to work with commissioners on getting out the vote for PB. So we should definitely have additional conversations about this for sure.

>> Wendy: The last thing I will say I would be remiss to not mention the types of collaborations we're looking to build to support voter engagement generally for just getting out the vote for the primary, and so we're working as a team to think through the different ways that we can leverage all of our work and outreach strategies to make sure that we're thinking of both of those different ways in which people can engage.

>> Sarah Sayeed: Thanks, Wendy. I'm doing a time check, we have about 10 minutes left so let's move through the next part.

>> Benjamin. . I'll be quick. We are in the borough assembly committee process. It's sort of the same as a bunch of delegates for the city council process, they are volunteers in the community though we are giving our folks a stipend to come together in each borough to review the hundreds of ideas that have been suggested and end up -- deliberated, discuss those ideas to end up with a ballot for people to vote on.

We are employing as Wendy said a more deliberative process that has been done in the past. We're spending time talk about their districts, sharing their lived experiences, getting data, really having in-depth conversations. Every borough last Sunday had a four-hour meeting to really begin the process of reviewing after they had their meeting. So you can see the number of applicants we had across the city. We were looking for 20 per borough. 20 people accepted. We did have that happen. We talked to 20 people they said yes, but I think things come up in people's lives and maybe they end up not being able to attend. So the number serving is after the first

two meetings what every group has ended up with. We did make some replacements, but we feel that the people have been to Manhattan and Brooklyn meetings, they've been very engaged and very excited and very interested in this process. We do use the Sortition Group to make randomized selections so there was no bias on our part. Anybody could apply to be one of these committee members and we put them into this algorithm that ended up with the 20 selected. And you can see the bottom the TRIE partners are doing neighborhood coalitions as their committees. The neighborhood assembly committees and they're smaller and fewer projects to review. So their committees are about 8-10 people. Those were chosen more along coalition building side. Those were recruited more than applied, but that was in the effort to bring in -- we gave them guidelines as far as organizations and people to look for so they also were represented in their neighborhoods.

We had our first meeting, it was a fun time, get to know each other, meet and greet, we had dinner served, will have food at all of them. Meeting 2 which was last Sunday for everybody. It's the only day that all five boroughs will meet at the same time. We broke the members up into subcommittees based on some of our topic areas, and they really began to have conversations with each other about the questions they might have, which projects seemed interesting, maybe they could combine projects. But all experiences they all brought to be able to answer questions, if they had expertise in a particular area. There will be another meeting coming up where we are going to come back to them with answers to their questions. Reviewing them all day. Yesterday and today. Seeing what agencies, what committees, CBOs might be answer where services occur, where maybe there might be lack of community gardens or food access or maybe after school programs. Maybe there's no arts programs in a particular community. So there's a lot of questions they have, we're going to be answering those.

And in the last meeting I say 4 of 5. Three boroughs have four meetings and two of us have five. It depends on the preferences of the members. So we're going to spend more time at the third meeting we're going to come up with a smaller group of projects. We're going to go back, we're going to work with CBOs and talk to them about what's feasible with their expertise to make sure they have people that can be

lined up to implement these projects and we'll go back to the member committees and work with them to sort of come up really with the final list of projects for the ballots. So it's been real exciting to watch the residents talking about their communities and what they need. And I'm sure they're getting really interesting. So that's quick. Sorry if that was too quick

>> Sarah Sayeed: I think it's good. I don't know what else is coming after this. I don't recall.

>> Benjamin: Sorry.

>> Sarah Sayeed: This might be repeated.

>> Benjamin: We are giving them criterias -- criteria to evaluate for both. So we talked -- we searched resources, data sources so they can look it up on their own. We are wanting them to really make sure that these projects meet unmet needs and serve underserved communities. So there are some technical things like it has to be done within the fiscal year, but does the project itself survey large number of people with maybe a light touch or a small number of people with a deeper touch. And does it want to serve one school, a district, there's a lot of considerations that we're talking about to help them with the final ballot.

>> Dr. Sarah Sayeed: Thank you.

>> Benjamin: Oh, the TRIE update.

>> Sarah Sayeed: Yes that's next.

>> Daniella: I want to make sure we leave enough time for public comment, so I'm going to go threw this quickly.

>> Sarah Sayeed: There's no comment. We took down the comment period.

>> Daniella: Thank you. So just to recap, I'm going to give an update on where we are. Next slide, please.

So as Wendy mentioned, we're continuing our work with the organizations in the 33 TRIE communities. We've divided the deliverables that they have to complete into two phases. So the first phase is really focused on the first phase of participatory budgeting, idea generation sessions. They were tasked with engaging certain number of residents in these facilitation sessions. And also doing -- and conducting voter education and voter outreach activities between September and gearing up to the

November election.

The other deliverables that the organizations have to complete for a citywide participatory budgeting will be vetting projects to create the TRIE the local ballot, and will also be tasked with getting out the vote in their communities.

The organizations also will be attending capacity-building workshops and trainings, which I'll talk about in the next slide, and they're also going to do coalition building. So using the coalitions that they are working with at the moment to assemble the ballots, they will continue that working relationship into June of this year, until the end of the initiative. Next slide.

So what are the capacity building workshops that they have to attend? So at the end of the first year, we had -- the partners at the time what kind of capacity and trainings they would want the city, the CEC to provide going into the next year, going into year two of this initiative. So we took that survey data and we came up with four capacity building workshops. That we will be providing and leading between December and June of this year. So the first one is around data literacy and data management. The next capacity workshop training that will take place in February will be around project management tools and strategies for community-based organizations. The next training will be around youth engagement and social media strategies, and the last training that we will offer will be for strategies for future coalition building and activation. So how to sustain the work that we've been doing for almost two years now, and to the future.

So just to talk about some of the metrics collected from the voter education deliverables. We had asked organizations to host voting 101 workshops with their community members and hosting relational organizing events related to voting and participatory budgeting. So the voting 101 workshop could cover one of the following topics or every single one of these topics. We gave the organizations control over the content because they know their communities the best. Covered in these events were general voter registration information, gearing up for the November general election. Where to find their poll site, language interpretation services offered by the CEC, and then to participate or amplify the efforts for a national voter registration day. That was September 22nd.

So in total the organizations conducted 56 -- I'm sorry. Yeah. 56 events for voting 101 workshop. A total of over 1,100 participants attended these workshops. And then for relational organizing events, the organizations did a total of 19 across all five boroughs, and over a thousand participants attended these relational organizing meetings that are led by the TRIE organizations.

Aside from these events, we also asked them to conduct weekly outreach activities that could have direct reach to community members or indirect reach. Direct reach meaning if they're doing text banking events, if they're doing street canvassing, if they're doing phone calls, or if they're actually executing community events, and informing people on all the topics that I just listed. We also wanted them to tally how many people they're actually engaging with and reaching.

And in terms of indirect reach, a lot of the organizations have communication app that they are reaching their networks and their lists. We wanted also for them to use social media and use digital tools to reach more people and we had asked them to keep track of the total impressions on social media platforms. And also if they have a website to also keep track of traffic numbers. And we asked in between September and November of last year, you'll see how many people, all 33 organizations were able to. So a total of 160,000 New Yorkers received information from the TRIE organizations, which is great. Because it's higher than what we did last year.

The next slide is just a breakdown of the numbers by borough. As you can see Queens had the most successful voter education outreach strategies.

Any questions around that? Sorry if I went a little too fast. Wanted to keep us on track.

>> Sarah Sayeed: Thank you so much, Daniella, for that. Does anyone have any questions? I'm just checking to see if commissioners have their hands raised.

It looks like no one has their hand raised and we are at 4:00. So I just want to thank everybody for attending the meeting. And in this last slide we have like all the different ways that we can encourage community members to stay connected with CEC. One thought I had was we could also, once the meeting recording is posted, encouraging you all to share it with your networks or even just like one person and invite them to come to the next meeting. I think we have an opportunity here to build

attendance. And as I said to the team earlier, we're doing this work with the open meetings law and being more transparent, and we want to have more people here to benefit from transparency.

So encourage you to help us with that as well.

So since we're at the end of the meeting --

>> I don't mean to cut you off. I just hand my hand raised. All of this work that we're doing, I just need to know if you have enough to manage all of this tremendous, wonderful work, that's my question.

>> Sarah Sayeed: To answer your question in the best way possible. The short answer is we always can benefit from more staff. The work of community, deep community engagement, not just performative check-the-box engagement, the deep work takes time and effort and energy and the more people that we have to do it, the more we'll be able to do it well.

Right now for CEC, we just went threw a tremendous growth spurt. We went from 7 to 22 in like a short amount of time. So we're also like sort of managing the growing pains around that, because we're really excited that more people are here to do the work. It also takes time for people to get acclimated, learn the work streams, build up the program. So that's all in process.

So I think we look forward to the CEC growing, continuing to grow to really serve all the communities we're working with. And I think right at this moment, if you asked me whether I wanted 10 more people, I would probably say I would like to wait a few more months or a year. We always can use more hands, and I think it's doing a process like citywide PB is really huge, and then also just voter engagement is huge. That division Kathleen has. Definitely -- I don't know if that answers your question, Donna.

>> Donna Gill: It actually does. It's just so much. I just want you to have as much support as possible.

>> To get these things done. So you know, my point for that question is, if you guys need to reach out, I can only speak for myself to the commissioners, to assist you in any way, we are here. I am here. I can't speak for everyone, but I am here to help you and I'm sure a lot of my colleagues feel the same way and I just wanted you to know that you're not alone with this. We'll also be very intentional about helping you.

>> Sarah Sayeed: Thank you. Thank you so much. Really really appreciate you and all the other commissioners and also really appreciate the team for all that they're holding and pulling off. And yeah, we're excited to continue this journey with you all.

So on that note, I am going to just ask for a motion to adjourn the meeting so we can be respectful of everyone's time

>> I make a motion to adjourn.

>> Second anyone?

>> Second.

>> Sarah Sayeed: Okay. The motion to adjourn was seconded and is there any discussion? If not, all in favor say aye.

[Ayes]

>> Sarah Sayeed: Any opposed?

Okay. The motion to adjourn passes and so I'm calling this meeting to adjourn and I will see you all the next meeting. Thank you so much, everybody. Take good care.

Bye.