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2/6/2025

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Civic Engagement Commission Meeting

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- All right. Good morning, everyone.

I'm going to call to order the Civic Engagement Commission's public meeting. Welcome to everyone here today as well as joining through the live stream. Thank you for taking the time to be with us and also thank you to Abbi, and our vendors, and the team for getting us together here and able to communicate with the public. Thank you to the Commissioners for being here. I know today was a bit of a rocky community for some of us. So great seeing you all.

I'd like to explain just at the beginning of the meeting within every time, just in case there are people joining us for the first time, that we are live streaming today and part of the reason why we are holding a public meeting and live-streaming — oh, for the folks who are on virtually, would you be kind enough to mute your mics? All good?

Okay. So we are live-streaming as part of our —

[ Microphone Interference ]

As part of our open-meeting guideline. And for those of you who don't know, it's to increase transparency and. And we are working, and topic commissioner and residents partners in how we make decisions to do community engagement. And that's, you know, designing our programs and delivering our programs. And you'll be hearing more about that in the meeting.

And public meetings, not just this commission, but there are other commissions, you know, for city government and we welcome you to attend these kinds of meetings to promote more inclusive participation. And our work is really to try to strengthen trust between communities and government, and communities -- community's a very important partner in that. And in September, I said something, which I'm going to repeat, because I can't say enough, that democracy is very becoming. And I'm acutely aware of this because we are in this political moment and also we have histories and understandings of how democracies change over time. We are not done with our work. When I was studying in college, it was — I was thinking about how we often talk about democracy as if it's a completed project, right?

We live in a democracy.

It's a now in that sentence and it's not a completed project. It's an evolving project and it's a project in which everyone has a very important role.

And we are part of creating change by participating in forums like this. We can have — we can imagine the future of democracy. We can think about how we can make it participatory. And yet, as I said last time, the present is what we have. The present moment is the only moment that we have that is guaranteed. So I'm very grateful to everyone here who's helping to co-create a more inclusive participatory democracy and everyone here in this room who are joining us on the livestream, you are all passionate about democratic participation and we want to see more people passionate and joyful. We also like to use the word, "Joy" in talking about democracy. So thank you again. So for those of you who are new, we do have a sign-up sheet going around. So if you're here for the first time, please sign in, put your name on the list. And then for those who are online, you can go onto the website nyc.gov/civic-engagement. And on the left side of the page there's a tab that says, "Get involved." And you can sign up for our newsletter, as well. So welcome to everyone, the commissioners who are NFT members online, as well. So the way this public meeting usually works is we have reserved the last 30 minutes for public comment. You can sign up for public comment before the meeting or during the meeting and if you'd like to sign up, you can do so up until noon.

And I'm going to start us off by just taking attendance. And for those who don't know, a quorum requires us to have eight commissioners present. So we do have a quorum today. Yay. So I'll just take attendance. Murad Awawdeh? Holly on the...? Holly? Are you here? Okay. Maybe on there. On the phone. Amy? Natalie?

- Present.

- Mark Diller?

- I'm here.

- Donna Gill?

- Here.

- Anthony Harmon?

- Here.

- Ishra Jahan?

- Here.

- Lillian Pérez?

- Good morning. Here.

- Okay. And I'm Dr. Sarah Saint and I'm one of the one of the 15 commissioners who are appointed to the Civic Engagement Commission and it's my honor to be Chair and Executive Director of the Commission. So in our last meeting, we voted on an update to our voter language assistance methodology as well as a resolution for the Civic Engagement Commission to engage in racial equity planning.

So we're going to do is just approve the minutes of the meeting from December.

We emailed these and you have these in your folder, if you're here in person. So are they — is there a motion to approve the minutes?

- So moved.

- Second.

- All in favor, please say, aye?

- Aye.

- Any opposed, please say, nay. All right. So we will be — the motion to approve the minutes is unanimously approved.

Next week, we have a lot of program updates for you. We do not have any resolutions for voting today so the whole of the time will be focusing on the programs and what the CEC has been up to and what we'll be doing in the future. So we'll be having updates on the voter language assistance program. We have two specials coming up. We'll be talking about community boards. And Benjamin Solitaire will be talking about community boards. And we'll be talking about the taskforce, community neighborhood initiative. We'll also be hearing all Alexis Spencer, Lauren, and Professor Mark Johnson about the participatory budget project implementation that's going on and the training of our community partners.

So I am going to begin by just inviting, I'd like to just invite the staff to come up. When each staff member is done presenting their section of the program, let's take a question and answer and then the next person can come up. So Amelia, do you want to come up?

- Good morning, everyone.

- Hey.

- For those who don't know me, I'm Anita and I'm part of civic services at the commission. We have two special elections coming up. District 44 in late March in District 51 in April. We just wrote out the plan for the next six months including the specials and the rank-choice voting outreach for the June primary. We're currently working on developing educational materials related to the June primary outreach efforts and marketing.

In terms of Council District 44 special election, we will be providing services on election day, March 25th and for early voting, we'll be providing services at four poll sites with a total of seven language services on March 21st, March 2 2nd and March 23rd. In terms of the council special election, we know the date, election day is April 29, I believe. But we don't have a list of poll sites from the Board of Election yet. But by the list of maps, we think we will be serving one or two poll sites in the district.

- Yeah, do commissioners have any questions?

- Can you just say the date again?

- March 25th is election day and the three days, the last three days of the early-voting period.

- Yup, got it.

- Do we have any questions? Just as a reminder and an assurance, we don't serve in every special election, right? So we are going to be only serving where we have served in the past general.

- Right. That's right. Whenever the poll sites selected by in Board of Election to reserve in the special election will match the poll site reserved in the general election.

- Thank you.

- Thank you so much.

- I have a question. I'm sorry. I had my hand up.

- Sorry, Donna.

- No worries. I was just wondering about the information going out to people for the June primary because it is a rank-choice voting election. And I was just wondering what — how are we going to be advertising that to the public and in what languages are we going to be sending over that information?

- Of course. So we will be utilizing a number of tactics to get the word out and educate the public. Specifically, being limited English proficient voters that are covered by the voter language assistance program. In all of the languages, 11, 12 languages, and we consider two separate Chinese dialects as separate languages. We have a free media placement LinkNYC kiosks. In terms of paid ads, we have about 60K — $60,000 set aside for ads. They will be spent on community and ethnic media and geotargeted ads. By developing a multi-language digital toolkit which we do in every election and they amplify through theirs channels whether through social media or newsletters.

We also do have distribution lists of community-based organizations. So that information is going to go out to over 100 community-based organizations.

- Thank you.

- Of course.

- Yeah, and commissioners are welcome to suggest, you know, networks for us to distribute information to and also help us to amplify through your networks, as well. I also want to say that we are beginning conversations with our partners, Campaign Finance Board, Board of elections, non-profit partners. There has been concern about the importance of sharing, you know, the same message or the unified message, or we're collaborating on what the message is particularly to language communities... translation becomes complicated because there's dialects. You know, so we're trying to be better coordinated. Our intention is to do that. As Melissa said, we don't have a ton of money invested into this messaging but we will make an effort to be collaborative and coordinating with partners. Yeah?

- I assume the community Board and maybe even borough boards and service cabinets would be among those in effect, free media options that could be taken advantage of. Those — the borough board which is the chairs of all the boards at each of the boroughs and the borough service cabinet is the manager of each borough. It's a free weight. And on city websites including community board websites, or some of them anyway, there are boxes reserved in the bottom for city agency notes. I think that it's appropriate that we co-opt that for this message. Maybe in unison with the Board of Elections which I assume they'll have their materials ready in time. Those will be interesting ways in order to get free media exposure to these language interpretation services.

- Thank you, that's really helpful. Donna, do you have any? I know you often ask about this. So I want to make sure that you also have the opportunity to add any other suggestions.

- Okay. So my suggestion — Ron, if you can actually get away from me. Because Ron and I — we are on community boards and we know we have the ability to share that information for free. That's why I was thinking, you know, that would be a way to get it out.

And basically to our own networks once that information is shared with us. You can also share it out with other networks. Thank you.

- One thing we did do. I mean, Benjamin has been sharing information with district managers and we try to be mindful of the geography of where we're serving, make sure that we're connecting with them. What we started to do in the fall is actually have our team members actually go out to those geographies and make announcements at the community board meetings. So we'll be continuing to do that just to show up more in person in these spaces.

- I also wanted to add that we are trying to develop — work out something new this time around where we are working with community-based organizations to develop our CBE rank-choice voting workshops for community members. But this is entirely new and it requires some resources so we're trying to work through what it entails and we're looking at, you know, making that happen with support from community-based organizations that operate in both side geographies and already work with the language communities with the poll site program.

- This would be like a train the trainer kind of workshop model where we give people information they can share.

- If I can add another — community education council, especially in districts that have dual immersion and dual language programs, that seems to be a good close fit. The Upper West Side where I live has a number of different dual language models. There's, of course, Spanish, there's Russian, and then there's Haitian Creole. And these are right down the Main Street of some of the languages that this commission supports. And further, others in other districts. And it was put in front of the community education council folks and on their websites and to distribution. Then you've got exposure to folks in the community.

- That's really great. Thank you. Okay. Any other questions regarding voter language assistance? Great. Hearing none. We will move to the next section. Benjamin, do you want to come and talk about community boards?

- BENJAMIN: Always. How you doing? Thank you for having me. Benjamin Solitaire, senior adviser. Next slide. So we hit the ground this year in 2025 running with a bunch of HPD-focused workshops part of their public education workshops offering them to our community board members. You can see the names up there, they've coordinated with DOB, and CCHR to hold some of these workshops. They were well appreciated. So it was attended by about 100 total members but I always had an issue with online. You get a lot of people sign up for it and then not all of them show up. So we're trying to work on that to get people to sign up and show up to our meetings.

Then we started scheduling — one of the things we heard last year after holding the conflict resolution workshops, was that de-escalation was important at these meetings. As some of you know that sometimes there are some raised feelings. But the trainer who did the conflict resolution thought that it would be best served in person. So we're working with the borough president's office to schedule them in-person at the VP's offices, or wherever they think is most useful to hold in person for a limited number — 25-30 people to bring down the temperature, bring the temperature down with deescalating workshops. So that'll hopeful be rolled out in the next couple of weeks. We heard in the last year in the future community meetings board, working with members and presidents, that while people might be able to apply to be on a community board, they don't really understand what it means to be on a community board. So we have developed a video called day in the life of a community board member. Shout out to the district office up in The Bronx. We just, minutes ago saw the rough draft. It looks it's on its way so we'll be sharing that just to give people, just as a PSA, what it means. So it's a three-minute video so it's not going to go in detail. But it'll give people an why of what it will entail, to be a board member, not just apply. You're going to hear from Mark Johnson a little later but we're also going to be offering some moderator review workshops. Last year, the Brooklyn borough president asked for one in Brooklyn. And it was successful. So we are going to be offering it to them and we're continuing our partnership with the community boards to how to prepare for terms coming up soon. So Senator Pedagogy made a report and then we're meeting with the borough president's office to see how we're going to continue that work on a coordinated basis. So I think that'll be exciting.

I think that's it. Then we had some other to be announced workshops coming up in the spring.

- Any questions?

- The video that you see here, will you be sharing that with the Commission, as well?

- Oh, yeah. We hope you share it. Mark.

- Either in the video or the end — one of the things that I think we've noticed is that the folks who apply in the Kent term for appointment in — current term for — when most of if not all meetings were virtual. And with the, in quotes, end of Covid, the open meetings law requires that those meetings like this meeting be — have a quorum in person.

- Yup.

- I'm hoping that the video emphasizes that point because we had a lot — I've spoken with folks in my own board where I work, the board where I used to serve on uptown and others, and there are a lot of folks who are surprised to learn what the open meetings law really means. So I'm hoping that that point can be driven home, gently, but perhaps still firmly so that folks know what they're getting into. It's a shame to attract new talent only to have them walk away after a term or even less.

- Right.

- Especially when we go through all this trouble of recruiting in the first place.

- Sure. I can say that the video does mention the importance of quorum and how hard it is to get that sometimes. It doesn't specifically relate — refer to the open meeting law. But maybe we could put a — we'll look at that.

- The open meetings law doesn't have — you know, I live in the weeds so, of course, I see it that way. But just the words, "In-person" the part that folks perhaps understand it perfectly or especially given that there are two different ways that you can appear virtually, one of which is council quorum and one of which is not. And so this legislature has anybody would around the edges without actually making a meaningful change to that.

- Thank you. We'll keep that in mind.

- Just a request again for folks who are on virtually to please mute yourself. There's a hand. Thank you. Donna?

- Benjamin? Hi, Benjamin. Thank you for that information. Being on the community board as I said, the distinction between in-person and on video, virtually, is a distinction that people, when they join the community board is not fully aware of. So to have that sentence to say that it's in person. And if you have to do it virtually, you have to get an excuse. Or you have to notify the district manager and the Chair. I mean, it's a whole lot of language. But I think that part of it may help people understand that they have to be physically in the room. See, I'm not physically in the room right now, so I can't have that conversation. But, however, there are some borough presidents that are trying to overturn or pull back the term limits that the community board that was voted in by Emanae (phonetic) by voting. And I was wondering if you know anything about that conversation happening? Because I know Mark Levine, and Ken Bru is also going to — what you're going to probably end up having is all the institutional knowledge is going to go away because of term limits and when the new people come in, they may not. So everyone's thinking about how they gonna work that out. So that's my question.

- Yeah, I haven't heard about any concerted effort. I literally have talked to Gail about her opposition to that. The report doesn't take a position on whether they're positive or negative and, actually, [Inaudible] hasn't responded with a request to talk about it so maybe that's why. So but I think either way, the work of the BTs, and the future of the work in the community working group, right now, it is in law, and it is in effect, and they're working towards that, but I don't think they're going completely for it. We have to leave that to them, for the work of the Board.

- Not to put a point on it, the people who would be appointed — the people who would be reappointed this spring and the application is open, by the way, on the Manhattan side, will be the last full term that those folks are eligible for before the — before term limits kick in. So this is it. This is the last trench for the brain drain.

- Are we going with the participatory budget? Next slide.

So we are in — as you all know, the third year of participatory budget and the people's money. Lots of completes up there. Year one, obviously, year two implementation, you'll hear about, that is in process. We completed the idea-generation phase of, you know, three last voted in November and now we're in the borough assembly phase which is a really exciting part. I mean, not that they're not all exciting but it's a great process.

I think we have a few numbers. We'll go to the next slide just to talk about what was accomplished in the idea-generation phase. You can see 9700, a little 9700 participants, and 480 workshops held around the city. With 3591 ideas. That was pretty incredible. Lots of people have ideas about what our communities need. They are based in part at entry ports. So we asked our partners at all those 480 sessions to give us ideas. You can see a per-borough breakdown, which I think is pretty self-explanatory. But that's a lot of people, a lot of special things that happened. Now as we go to the next slide. Oh, we're going to watch a video. I forgot about that. We're going to watch a video and we're going to talk about to you about the assembly video — the assembly process. So if we can just play that. This is from last year's assembly.

- Come with me today as we journey into the heart of deliberative democracy and participatory budgeting in New York City.

The borough assembly committee and the machine within, that special place where ideas are expressed, opinions collide, agreements and disagreements are hashed out. The mosh pit of public discourse. The people, the individuals assembled here through the deliberation on and investigate of expense project ideas submitted by the public will essentially pass through the beginning zone to reach the end zone.

- Everyday New Yorkers get to decide which projects will receive funding through as part of the city project. That means that everything that wins in the this process will be funded and implemented in the borough they live in.

- When you vote, you have a voice. When you don't vote, you're not heard. It's not that they don't care about you, they don't know you're there. So if you vote, they know you're there.

- It's important to get involved in your community in any way you can. You can ask for change and not ask questions and participate and show up. It allows our voice to be heard and and listen to other people's ideas and opinions and be able to share that with the rest of the city's residents.

- It gives all of us an opportunity to engage and grow as individuals as we grow go as a community. I would like to acknowledge barriers for our community members and to build a bridge for people to grow.

- If you know someone who does not understand the people's money, educate them, empower them, and bring awareness to the importance of casting your vote in the people's money.

- I think it's really important and a really great way for community members to get engaged and get involved and address concerns that we all have in our city. Is

- I think you can see from that, the participants really enjoyed the process. They get to know each other, and really share their thoughts and learn from each other as they go through I'm trying to decide what are those, in this case, in this year, 3700 ideas that are going to end up on a ballot. But next slide?

Like last year, we have a little journey map so we can just keep track of what's happening throughout the six weeks — I'm going to correct myself — six sessions over about eight weeks for the assembly members to follow along and I don't know if I have to go through all of those right now, but they meet, and kick off, there's a city-wide collaboration effort where all the boroughs come together at once and then they start learning about community insights from our TRIE partners and then they get to meet with the TRIE partners to hear about what's happening on a local level and then they spend the last two sessions refining those ideas, and defining what the battle projects will be.

That's the idea. We have last of last night, completed three of those six sessions. Every borough, two boroughs on Tuesday, and three boroughs last night, meeting for three hours. Schools in each borough except for Staten Island which has a church but they meet in school libraries, with 20-25 members. They submit an application, and then they were randomly submitted based on the borough demographics. We had about 1354 applicants for what was about one hundred total members. Again, the first two sessions were exercises to get to know each other. Most of them I haven't met before. They're coming together for the first time. They don't even know each other. So we have exercises to get them to know each other about how to think about react to solving problems and then a little video about critical thinking.

And, again, next slide? At Columbia University, at the forum, which is a little off campus but on West 125th Street, but we brought all the borough members to meet each other and also hear from the city agencies on the programs and the policies that they have. So you can see the agencies there. They really loved being there. They loved talking to the members. They really loved hearing from them. We shared all the information that they shared.

And they kind of — a nice private conversation. Next week, as I said, the TRIE partners themselves will come to each borough and present some of their need assessments for the — they say, on the ground. And just a — well, last note is we have recruited a number of discipline two students. One of them dropped out last night. But two students from Columbia, one in The Bronx, in this case, and one in Brooklyn, to come back with a research report as a neutral observer of how the process went and hopefully, they can make improvements. But there are students interested in deliberative democracy, which is the model we used. Yeah, I think that's it. Is that it? Yes.

- I'm going to go into some of these things a little more because I think it's important to —

- Sure.

- To flesh out a little bit more. On the process and how it's working, we have to remember, this is a two-year process. ≈ Each cycle. So participatory budgeting city-wide began in 2022. Am I right on that?

- Yes.

- 2022, right? We started in 2022 in the fall and the borough assembly committees that looked at all the ideas happened in 2023 for the first year. And then voting happened in 2023 in the spring. Project started getting implemented in 2023 through 2024. So 2024 was marked the first year of a full cycle where we actually have projects that have been completed and we're working on creating a report of the impact of those projects and how, you know, how successful they were and who they reached, and what they accomplished.

So it's important for people to remember, this goes to your process, we don't have a lot of years that we're reporting on. It's just the first year. And then the second year, 2023 was when we started the second cycle and we are currently in process with the implementation of the projects that were selected from that year. And that's what you'll be hearing about a little bit later.

- Started in 2024.

- Completed — they started in 2024, but they'll be completed in 2025. So I just wanted to lift that up a little bit more in terms of being able to talk about results. That's important to understand that we're just at the beginning.

And then I wanted to lift up a little bit more on the thinking, skills, and work that's happening in the borough assemblies. I actually have the fortune — I'm excited — to actually be facilitating, helping to co-facilitate with JP, another member of the Queens Facility. And one of the things that's very, very important, I think, for us as a Commission to be aware of, as Benjamin said — well, most of them don't know each other. They're coming together. It's a group of 20, 25 people who are sitting together at small tables, talking deeply about what the ideas that came through — like, what they mean, how do we, like, select these, what issues are important to us, right?

I mean, these are all people who have lived experience. With all the issues whether it's youth engagement or youth job career paths or surveying people who are struggling with food insecurity. There's a wide variety of ideas that come through and part of what we're really trying to do in these assemblies is to help people use their critical thinking skills as well as hone their critical thinking skills. And that is another tool that we all need to have in democratic participation. Is how do we think, not just for ourselves, but, at the same time, how do we think together. And, again, for example, Benjamin talked about, and if you could just go back to that slide that was about the borough assemblies, the links to critical thinking video. If we can pull up, and show it, that would be great. I want to explain people more of the people task and listen act exercise. We all have default ways that we generally tend to think. So there was one exercise where we, like, put cards on the floor and one card said, "People." And the other card said, "Task." So in the way that you approach your work usually or in these conversations generally, do you tend to focus on people, what's important to them, how they feel? Or do you tend to focus on, let's get the task done. Here's what we need to do. And people generally have default ways of operating. And they were asked to separate into groups. Similarly, we had them added a listen/act kind of cards. And then we asked people to think about where they would fit on those. So what that activity did is really helps people kind of make salient, in their own minds, how they think about problems generally.

And then start to appreciate that people in the room may not think, or have default ways of operating that are like theirs. And how do we think together, you know, in this kind of situation where we all are coming from different lived experiences and we all have different ways of thinking about social problems. Different ways of solving social problems and there's also certain skills that we'd want people to acquire for this process. For example, Benjamin talked about the large session where we had city agencies come and present. Why is that important? Because it's a layer of information, of a certain kind of information that's helpful to the assembly members as they're sifting through the ideas, right?

The agency-level information is generally at, like, a city-wide perspective, right? And they're working at the borough level. And then we have our neighborhood profiles which Kane will talk about more, which are at the neighborhood level. So different levels of information that goes into their decision-making. And so we're trying to lift up these themes as we're doing the work. So it's not just like, oh, make a ballot for your borough. It's also, like, equipping people and honing their skills on how to have deliberative conversations and think together about problems that we all face in common in a democratic context.

So does — can we show the video on critical thinking? This is, like, an example of a tool that we showed. It's linked in the deck. I don't know if we can lift it.

- I thought it was in the video.

- Well, we can send you the deck. We can look at it. I think it's important to look at. And finding tools, you know, for the assembly members to learn — figure out how to explain what we're doing is a challenge. We had to find short clips and I think this was a good find so we'll definitely share it with you.

- Sorry — if I —

- Yeah, no please add.

- We could go on forever about some of these.

- Yeah, and I'm happy.

- But one of the things that has been, you know, this is the third year that we've done this process. The first year we gave them, we debated how much time these community members you been want to spend together and talk about this. And there was the four hours side, and the 24-hour side, and first year, we ended up on 12. So last year, we went to 16 hours. This year, we're at 20 hours over the course of the section sessions. It's a lot of learning,. A lot of time to get together. We provide them food. So they don't have to look at that to extend for that because that time to deliberate is important — we give them so much information, the city information, the local information, the community district information. There's so much to absorb and they're also relying on their lived experience to final eyes those decisions. We don't give them 5,000 ideas. We narrow it down to 80 or 90 per borough based on various criteria that we have. But they still have an ideas as a group to end up with ten.

- Questions?

- This is just like — it's such a beautiful and fascinating process to see community members kind of come together and pick the top ideas for their borough or to put them on the ballot.

I wonder, I know that they were randomly selected but when they applied, is there criteria around having, like, some basic or base knowledge on, like, critical thinking or, you know, anything like that or is it just a random selection?

- It is not — yeah, there's not. It's just a random selection. We ask demographic questions. I think we asked, what is your interest, but that didn't play into the decision so we didn't ask it. We just think that residents out there know what their communities need. And we try to provide those tools, the exercise — the listen/ask exercise came from a facilitation group in Australia that I met — cited critical thinking is important. So we give them those tools but we rely on their experience.

- Gotcha.

- And we have people who are from all walks of life, I would say, in these sessions even though it's only 20 or so people.

- I think it's a beautiful process.

- I do too. We have people from Columbia and Fordham interested and other national organizations so...

- And if you remember, we had taken this assembly idea. It's really an adaptation of the citizen's assembly model where people are randomly selected in order to deliberate on a policy and make a recommendation to government and we took that model and we're applying it to this assembly process for participatory budgeting projects.

- So I'm — I do appreciate — how — I'll call it team building. But how the onboarding process of getting to a place where folks would be empowered and able to make the whittling decisions that are part and parcel of our work... is there an aspect either in the selection process or the onboarding process that highlights the unusual nature of this being funding on the expense side instead of on the capital side? Because a long-term fulfillment of need often revolves around capital dollars which is what council PD deals with. And the unique issue here is that a lot of the needs that are being addressed in one year may very well occur year after year, but the funding would not. So we've talked about that before. I'm wondering if there's a role or an aspect for building the team that makes these decisions to be aware of that, rather, challenging difference in how the money works. The money part of the of the people's money.

- Yeah, we do talk about the expense of programs and services and that it is a one-year funding limit. I don't think we go into detail a lot about it there are jobs of sustainability to the process, not particularly theirs. They have immediate respect. We do emphasize that these projects will get implemented fairly quickly as opposed to what they might be used to in the council process. So we do talk about that. So yeah, it is touched on. But we really want them, there's so much information. We could do 30 hours, of course, on this whole process or more. But I think there's so much information to give them that it's not, like, a major focus but we do talk about the —

- The ideas that come in are also expense — you know, so they're not necessarily trying to sift through capital or expense.

- Yeah, they don't have any capital.

- For this exercise because for the idea to come in at all, it has to be an expense idea, and then the team goes through the 3,000 ideas to double check that there's no capital in there. Yeah.

- I guess it's a positive that they're asking for more and not less time to be brought aboard.

- Maybe one or two people have been chosen twice because it's the same group that's applying. But we do draw on past people, past members for other aspects of the CEC, as facilitates to be involved in the voting. So they're very interested once they continue to be the process.

- I'm sorry. I'm not sure if I'm understanding you.

- Sorry.

- Are we bringing in grant recipients from a previous cycle?

- No, no.

- To be — because that might be an interesting.

- Well, there is a whole discussion about how they should be involved. How the people in the implementation project should be involved. The TRIE project, some of them might be implementing, too, but nobody's ever calling or advocating for a project. But no, what I'm just saying is that once they've gone through this process as a forum member, they are interested in being involved in the CEC in other ways also. And we try to keep them on ListServs about what we're doing, and make sure that they know about other opportunities.

- I mean, these are all positives.

- Thank you.

- Would you find the video that you were talking about? The critical thinking?

- Yeah, if we would show it, that's great.

- Critical thinking is all about asking questions. The right questions. Questions that help you assess both the meaning and the significance of claims and arguments. Building these skills and applying them in your life makes it easier for you to assess evidence, evaluate arguments, and adapt your thinking so you stay switched on and engaged in different situations. Critical thinking involves stepping back from a situation to enable you to see all the angles before making judgments or taking decisions. It means identifying the key points, analyzing the sources of information, weighing up different types of evidence. Just as a judge and jury would do in a Court of Law and putting it all together into your own, independent thought-through point of view. One thing that it's very important to realize is that critical thinking isn't about, "Being critical." And it's much more than just about finding flaws in other people's claims. By itself, that isn't enough to give you an edge.

To be a true critical thinker means being creative, reflective, and adaptable. Evaluating the evidence to decide for yourself what is accurate, what is relevant, and do I have sufficient information to take a decision on this topic?

Thinking critically means taking a stand for yourself. It can be difficult not to be swayed by close family or friends' views on things or certain beliefs that just feel right. But learning how toees these higher-order thinking skills can help you feel much more confident in your own opinions and conclusions.

Critical thinking is also about a sense of discovery and excitement. Not only about learning, but evaluating arguments to see how they stand up. And filtering for yourself what resonates as right or wrong. By using these techniques, you'll find yourself becoming a clearer, better thinker. MACAT, learn better, think smarter. Aim higher.

- Thank you. You're up.

- Hello, good afternoon. I'm Hayden, and I'm the special projects manager at CEC and I run the trade or the taskforce for neighborhood racial equity initiative where we partner with community-based organizations across negotiation neighborhood to build or sustain local colleges and engage their residents in community engagement in the people's money. So since the commissions last convened, we have hosted two additional TRIE monthly meetings. So as part of this program, we met with all the TRIE partners virtually on a monthly basis to provide a combination of capacity-building trainings, check in on the status of their deliverables. Space to reflect on the experience of doing deliverables and, you know, their other program work. So folks can kind of group-share and problem-solve a solution together.

In the December training meeting, we introduced in up— then, an upcoming deliverable, the community needs assessment and resource mapping exercise. So we talked about what are the steps they could take to complete this worksheet, which we'll talk about in just a moment. And we also teed up the Civic Engagement Workshop, which is a deliverable that they'll be completing in the spring. And as part of that conversation, we built up definitions of power, love, and justice that were core concepts of the workshop itself. In January, just a few weeks ago, we reflected on the experience of completing the needs assessment. So they submitted their needs assessment and resource mapping exercises earlier this month to be submitted to the borough assemblies, which are, as Benjamin and Sarah shared, our borough assemblies took a look at those last night and before. We talked about the upcoming logistics for the borough assemblies. So partners will be attending next week's session. They'll have a chance to speak to borough members themselves, and we also talked about Civic Engagement workshop, different logistics for planning, for customizing the deck, and reporting once the workshop is completed. Next slide, please.

So the community needs assessment and resource mapping exercise is a relatively new deliverable in the program where we asked our TRIE partners in partnership with their coalitions to identify a top community issue in their neighborhood that would be presented to the borough assemblies. And they did this through a couple of meetings. So you -- our TRIE partners hosted idea-generation sessions in the fall. Each of them, a minimum of five. And they took a look at all the ideas that they had generated in their own sessions and parsed out the themes that kept resurfacing across their different sessions. ≈ They had meetings with their coalition members and did an exercise that was a truncated version of the borough assembly. They deliberated on what are the ideas that we think we should focus on. Are they different from the issues that were given in the idea generation sessions by the participants. And they also did some of their own research using the NYC Equity mapping tool. And using other city datasets in New York City OpenData.

They then mapped the local resources in the neighborhood that focus on the needs they chose. So the goal with mapping the resources and the service providers was to say, you know, what is the current landscape of services that are happening in our neighborhood right now, and what are the gaps or the limitations to those services that contribute to why this need still persists. Or this need is still unmet. So that is their mapping — or their resource maps. And then we asked them to create a challenge statement that included the top community priority, the population or communities within the neighborhood they think are directly impacted by this issue, and their assessment of why the issue persists. And following that, we asked them to prepare a list of recommendations of ideas or program components that might address the issue. And this needs assessment was presented to borough assemblies to use as part of a critical-thinking activity where they took a look at the top three priorities in each of the neighborhoods. They completed community data profiles when were tools created by a member of our team that broke down demographic data at the community district level that overlap with community neighborhoods. So if they saw if there was anything that he could they could relate to one another, they looked at the priorities in comparison to the ideas they were reviewing in subcommittees and they came up with questions. So as doctor Sayeed said, there's different levels of information, that each was receiving. The TRIE neighborhood in perspective was just one of them and although the resource maps and the needs assessments were prepared in coalition incorporating diverse perspectives to put fort top issues for the neighborhood, it's just one level and we encouraged all of our assembly members to be curious to ask questions to see if it resonated with their own lived experience to help determine where in the borough or in the neighborhood that an idea should be implemented.

Next slide, please. So the Civic Engagement meeting workshop is at the Civic Engagement People Power. And it's designed to help participants understand the different meanings of civic engagement and the different forms it can take reflecting on the importance of leading with love and working together and create meaningful change and consider ways to get involved in the community including with the TRIE organizations themselves. So pass part of the TRIE program deliverable, each program will be hosting a minimum of one workshop between March and June. Though, we have heard from partners they're interested in doing more than one workshop because of how well they went last year which is really exciting.

And the focus this year is on customization of these workshops. So last year, we presented a standard civic engagement 101 deck that we asked everyone to familiarize themselves with and do. This year, based on the feedback from partners who posted workshops last year, and started to integrate their own examples of SEUFPBG engagement or tailor them to specific audiences or requested more information on specific civic engagement topics, we went back to the drawing board, we created some modules of different civic engagement topics for voting, volunteering, advocacy, and organizing, and community boards. And we also worked with our community facilitators to create a short video testimony about people's experiences with each of those things to include.

And we asked our TRIE partners to take the core deck which is the discussion of power, love, and justice, and definition of civic engagement with me, and choosing a module or a combination of modules to incorporate. And offered different invitations to customize calls to action, or their own examples of movement-building within their community. So each civic engagement workshop this year will be slightly different and I'm really excited to see how those will shape up.

And yes, the workshops will be hosted from now 'til June which is really exciting and that's all that is new from the last time you guys met. So I'm happy to take any questions.

- Thank you, Hayden. We did at least 33 last year.

- Yeah.

- Because did they have to do more than one last year? I can't remember?

- They had to do at least one. But I think they did at least 45 in the end.

- And this — I mean, we're really excited about this workshop and I think it's a really wonderful opportunity to deliver at different neighborhoods and we also have translated —

- Yes.

- The materials, as well.

- So we have in the workshop, so far confirmed, English, Spanish, Arabic, and Mandarin.

- Thank you. Did you have a question?

- Yeah, I just wanted to make sure I understand. So here's the theory is that there's an overlap between participatory budgeting and the TRIE exercises. But that it transcends that and goes into a deeper dive into what the communities are experiencing. First of all, is that a correct impression?

- Yes, yeah.

- Okay. Great. I would be remiss if I didn't take this moment in time when diversity, equity, and inclusion are dirty words in the federal system that we have to apologize for using, apparently. Is there a means by which this process can be — I guess empowerment is too much to hope for. So maybe just reassurance of the value of our neighbors and their experiences. Can that be a part of these processes or do we need a different process to respond to what it is that we're experiencing from Washington, I guess. That's the kindest way I can sum that up.

- Thank you for your question. I believe it is. The TRIE coalition-building is something that we're committed to and unique as a city agency in funding coalition building at perhaps the community level.

It is a great framework of the people's money process. So in the first year — in the pilot year — the People's Money Process was, it's our money and it was hosted in TRIE neighborhoods the first year of the People's Money City-wide included a borough process and a city-wide process. All of the borough-wide projects are being implemented across our TRIE neighborhoods at minimum. And this is a point that we emphasize and just made super clear to our borough assemblies who were presenting information of specific neighborhoods for them to consider as part of their deliberation to connect and potentially move forward ideas that are aligned with the priorities of our TRIE neighborhoods. Hopefully demonstrating our commitment as an agency to serve communities who have been historically under-represented, underinvested in. And I hope that it continues. I know from testimony from our partners themselves that they find this work super important and that there are not many spaces that they have to be able to be with connected with other organizations or be encouraged or incentivized to partner.

And just as we said, community's the most important thing at this time. It's all we have. It's how we work with each other. And how we build was she was to make sure that the folks who need the resources the most are able to access them.

So yes, I hope so. It's a commitment of our — of my work and then the work of the agency.

- Thank you.

- Thank you.

- Thank you, anyone on the phone have a question?

- I have a quick question.

- Yeah?

- Is this... people's power workshop open to the public? I think this would be cool? I know this is at the neighborhood level but I feel like for folks who might be interested in this process and seeing it, can they attend, too?

- That's a great question. For the ones being hosted by our TRIE partners, that's up to the TRIE partners themselves. However, the TRIE deliverable of the Civic Engagement Workshop is an evolution of workshop curriculum that originated within our outreach and engagement team who've been hosting workshops for folks who are interested in a sort of one-off way. So there are organizations or groups that are interested in having a workshop themselves, they can be in touch. Because we're definitely interested in building out this curriculum so it's more publicly accessible and there's also plans to incorporate our civic — as we build out our civic ambassadors to think through how we can continue this train the trainer outside of our organizational partnership model. Thank you.

- Did we have anyone sign up for public comment, Abbi? I'm just asking because I know we are a little bit not where we — so we'll move to — not where we would want to be agenda-wise. So we have a lot to cover still, just in terms of updating you on the — so for participatory budgeting, Lexi, if you can come up and start us off on that. That would be that would be great.

- Good afternoon. Or morning, still, maybe? I'm joined by Lauren, my colleague.

- Can you hear me? I'm Lauren, and I'm an impact consultant here at the CEC.

- So we're going to be talking a little bit more about the project. In the past, we gave some updates on what the projects were, where they were going to be implemented so now we're going to show you what we're doing with that programming. What we're doing with the organizations that were selected and who are currently working on implementing the projects. Lauren will start out by laying out the timeline for this programming.

- So as you see we are here, we've broken it down into three phases, the first phase, the planning phase, this is often neglected in project funding, so we really wanted to spend some time on this and let organizing get in touch with community needs. Is this better? Put adequate time into the planning phase. So the goal was to determine the desired impact of the project, and the outcomes. The deliverable, being a needs assessment, a stakeholder analysis, a project logical framework and a final project plan. The second phase being implementation running from January to October. The goal here to successfully implement an impactful project. The deliverables are project implementation, and their assigned TRIE neighborhoods. Completion of their project timeline, reaching their project targets and goals. And then the third phase being evaluation, this also overlaps with implementation but it runs from roughly April to October. The goal here is to evaluate and report out back to their shareholders and the funders being listed as in New York on the impact of the project in their community and the deliverable being capacity-building workshops which you'll hear more about later. Monthly progress reporting. A mid-project report and a final report. Next slide? So a recap of the deliverables that have been completed by our implementing partners so far. We've conducted an onboarding training. We've held monthly meetings with our implementing partners. We've had six in-person, capacity building workshops. We've held multiple one-on-one check-ins with our implementing partners. My, myself, and Lexi conducting those. A needs assessment and stakeholder analysis. Logical framework. Final project plan, pre and post-surveys. And now they're in process of collecting their baseline data.

- And just a note, we didn't include it on the slide. But the project plan, that includes a timeline, a project, and a scope of work for that specific project. So after having some time for planning, then they finalize all the details that were in their original proposal into their plan. So that's what it means by final project plan just to give a little more detail on that.

- Great. Next slide. And then snapshot of some upcoming deliverables. We have on the CEC partnership side, monthly progress reporting continues. More one-on-one check-ins and we are soon conducting site visits to see the projects in action. And then you'll hear a little bit more from Professor Johnson about the new school partnership. But in the capacity building side with project management workshops. The next one will be a review session and implementation of the organizations — is this better?

They're finalizing their surveys and, again, conducting their baseline data.

- Great. Thank you. So next I'm going to go into little bit about this monthly progress reporting, kind of what our goals are, what we're working on, and how we plan to use this because I think in the future I think this is going to be a lot of the information that we report out will come from this and also in the future I think we're also looking forward to bringing some of our barns back to these meetings to talk to them about their work and what they're doing and all that. But just to give you a sense of what this deliverable is how we're thinking about this, the monthly progress reporting is a monthly progress report form that the organizations will fill out when they begin implementing their projects so that's really when they start working with community members, engaging them, in the activities -FPBLS project, having workshops, having events, hosting skills training sessions, whatever it is that the main activity for that project is.

That, as you saw in the timeline will begin either in January or February depending on that individual project's timeline and the implementation plan for that project. So we have some organizations who have begun implementing, hosting workshops, who have had launches for their projects and we have some that are going to be launching them in the next couple of weeks. And overall, the goals and objectives of this monthly progress reporting is for us to be able to track and highlight, and the success of each of these projects. And, you know, to the public, to our stakeholders, to the other partners that we work with who are engaged in this process. And to everybody who might be interested in what is the result of the people's money and what's going on with the projects. It's also helped us work with the partners and to strengthen their project delivery. As you see, we're very hands-on with the partners. So we have a lot of individual meetings. We have a lot of group meetings. We do capacity building and we really work directly with the folks who are at the organizations to build the projects and to implement them, and to monitor and report on them. So this is another piece where we can be collude into what's going on and help support where needed with the resources and the assets. And we can actually make connections and networks we have at the CEC. And, finally, one of our goals with this, and this is kind of through the other two goals and objectives is to promote project sustainability. So by being able to understand what are the successes of these projects, why are they important in communities? How are they being received in communities? And what do they mean to people? Why do they matter? Then we can better advocate for them. We can better showcase their work, and we can also help them to be able to have the tools to the networks they're interested in reaching and to the folks they might be able to continue this work with, or just to be able to showcase and say, why it's so important to be able to design programming that is more aligned or can — even if it's not, the same project can continue to help meet the need as was seen successful through the project.

So on the next side, I'm going to just go through some of the things that we're going to be collecting through this forum and some of the datapoints that we're doing at from a quantitative and a qualitative standpoint to get a sense of what's going on with the projects. So it's broken into different sections where organizations will report out on what they've done relating to the items in the section. So it starts with the activities and outputs. These are broad, quantitative metrics, how many people did you serve during that period? How many workshops did you have? How many different reports did you conduct? All of those numbers related to what did you do. The next thing is related to outcomes. So this is more of a qualitative piece relating to descriptions or observations around outcomes at, you know, on a continuous level. So things they can see that they're able to identify are making are difference in somebody's community and are story-based and can give you a sense of what is happening, what is changing as a result of the project, or what is changing as a result of the project. The next piece is around the outreach and sustainability methods. So this is around what populations they serve through the project. The language access. So what language certain parts of the project were accessible in. How they approached language accessibility and also accessibility more generally. It also includes information around types of supports or incentives that was provided to participants so we can understand what people who are participating in the program are getting out of it on the different levels. What are they attending? What are they receiving as an attendant and what is the change? So then the next slide. We're also asking for some information to check in with them about challenges. So this piece is about identifying and documenting any difficulties that were encountered during implementation. This might include difficulties are participant turnout, staffing shortages, desiring new partnerships. But they could also include policy or nutritional barriers that may get difficult to implement certain types of programming and that can help us learn and advocate for those types of things within our network of city agencies and as a partner that is funding and managing service delivery. So then the next piece of that challenge piece is also for them to identify steps that we might be able to take or they might be able to take to help address or support those challenges. So this could include ideas around tapping into our networks. Often I know one thing that programs are curious about is how we can help them connect with language access so that's something we're able to do. Another thing might be through types of outreach like if we are connecting with partners and neighborhoods where they are working, there's a lot of overlap as you have all known between the partnerships that we're doing for implementation and the TRIE partnerships. So that's another great way and kind of asset for us to have to connect folks who are working in the same communities who might have aligning work or complementary work. So by, you know, addressing those challenges and getting solutions, we can design solutions to support. Next up are events and flyers, on the ground what happened in those events, what were the highlights. This can also help us with all of the kind of communications and social media and public outreach campaigns that we're working on related to this project. So this will all tie in to those ways of getting out the word about what's happening with the projects and showcasing the events. And then we also just have a section of what's coming up next, so organizations can flag to us, what they're working on, any important deadlines, any concerns, and flyers for activities so we can share them and promote them ahead of time. And this isn't on a slide but I also just wanted to give a brief recap of some of the events that have been held so far because I know going forward, that's going to be, I think, more of the focus for these meetings on giving updates but we've had couple of organizations who have had events so I wanted to go over kind of like what the results of this reporting are, and what kinds of information we'll be able to share out in the future. So as a result of this reporting, which we have one month's worth of reporting so far, about half the organizations have started implementing. We know that so far, we've had 24 workshops, we've had six events, and organizations have distributed resources to more than 100 people in TRIE neighborhoods across the city. And in terms of, like, what these workshops and events focused on, I just wanted to pull out and highlight some of the ones, you know, were related to the topics that we see a lot and I think are representative of the types of programming that we're doing. So some of these have focused on college prep for high school students. That includes helping students build out FAPSPA, and through the fall, we had an organization that was conducting a series of workshops focused on that. This also includes, ≈ some workshops focused on self-care and management for mother. And resource management for new mothers in Harlem. That's prying diapers, and baby food, and sociomental support in a peer mentorship program. So, so just to get a sense of what are those workshops and we'll hear more about it going forward, as a brief note at the end and I'll open it up to any questions.

If not, next up, we're actually going to hear from Professor Mark Johnson, and his student, who he's working as a consultant to how we're doing project cycle management and monitoring, and evaluation.

- And as they come, we really want to thank the New School. This has been, you know, as a Commission, as a new office, we are trying to do a lot and we need to not only leverage — obviously, we have staff. Our staff does amazing work and they do our all-overwork. We're also trying to develop partnerships to develop capacity. And training the organizations on how to monitor and evaluate their work was something that was very, very important to us because we need to be able to document the impact of participatory budgeting. So Professor Mark Johnson and the students in his course are supports to the organization. So thank you for the service you're offering to the City of New York and the floor is yours.

- MARK: Thank you very much. Is this on? Thank you very much for inviting us. It's a pleasure to speak about this program. Next slide, please. Next. Yes, I am Mark Johnson. I'm a professor of practice in the New School's graduate international affairs program. And these are the courses that I teach. Next slide, please. This is the second year that we've been running this program. As Lexi said, it's been very hands on. It's been a really great collaboration for us. Last year, I thought we ran a very good program. Part of that hands on was meeting constantly, debriefing afterwards. And we took at the finish of the workshops, I believe we did six or seven last year. We took those lessons learned into this new cycle. This year, we have a more extensive curriculum. We're offering 11 workshops this round. Tomorrow, we will complete the seventh workshop. We have two cohorts comprised of ten community-based organizations in each cohort. The selection process was a little bit different for inclusion into the cohorts particularly that the community-based organizations were really briefed in a better way about what they'd be doing in the workshops. So it's gone in a much smoother way, I would say, this round. Next slide, please?

And I wanted to fill in on the goals and objectives that Lexi already talked about. The first being tracking and highlighting progress and success was I suppose, the most obvious one when we're talking about training and evaluation. And the next set is strengthen project delivery and I wanted to highlight that. What that means on the ground is that the key stakeholders, which are the community residents are receiving better services. If we're strengthening project delivery through this expanded planning and methodological planning, that translates into better services received by the key stakeholders who are also underserved, right? So I think that's really an important part of this process. One of the early workshops was on needs assessment where we talked a lot about the stakeholders involved. We wanted in this in the planning process because implementation and planning can become inward focused. And we want to focus on the key stakeholders, which are the New York City residents, particularly underserved residents. And the secondary being the New York City stakeholders being the community-based organizations. And the tertiary stakeholders being the city government agencies, but let's not forget the taxpayers that are funding this also need reporting back to them. And one of our workshops is going to be on media — or two workshops — will be on media production by Asavari shaman here. And part of that process is to report back externally to the New York City taxpayer residents about where people's money actually went.

Next, please? And then the third goal and objective that Lexi mentioned was promoting project sustainability and I wanted to add that it's also — maybe this is a separate objective, it's really promoting organizational sustainability and that's through this deep capacity building that's going on through our workshops with the community-based organizations.

So, and this leads really to, not only better services delivered to the stakeholders, but — the community-based organizations are strengthened through this capacity building which actually can lead them in an indirect way to get a better funding. Next, please?

And this issue has an echo in the international arena. I teach in an international affairs program and one of the things we talk about a lot is this localization subject which you may be familiar with, which has many demands.

Basically, sending more power through project implementation to local community grassroots types, type of organizations.

And I believe strongly the most important demand in that is that they receive the direct funding because funding... money is power in these situations, right? And this is a big discussion point in the international arena. But the fact is it's really not happening. It's kind of a smoke screen to talk about. But the fact is that most of the large donors want to keep control of that money. So they use the excuse that the small organizations, the community-based grassroots organizations don't have capacity. That's an excuse so that they can keep having control of the money and a simpler process which involves hiring a high-level external consultant to implement the project.

Next?

So this I would like here to commend the Civic Engagement Commission for doing the project in the right way, which is taking the right step which is rarely done in the field, in the industry of doing that capacity building which is not easy but in the long-term, is a much better solution than keeping that — the funding resources with those kind of high-powered external consultants. This is a real investment in the community. These community-based organizations really rise out of the community. Typically, they deliver excellent services to these underserved populations. What they don't do well is this kind of administration. So if we can give them that capacity, they not only become stronger organizations but this is also what donors want to see in these organizations. Donors typically have a favorable impression of community-based organizations as far as their implementation but worry about whether they can make the commitments of reporting and other administration.

And monitoring and evaluation is actually kind of a, I think, a stronger gateway into sustainable funding and, therefore, a sustainable organization. Because donors, after all, want to see that an organization knows how to report its results and successes in a tangible way, in a real way. And what they really want to see is that they have a methodology to do that. So they're not just kind of winging it, which is what a lot of organizations do with reporting. They sit down and write a report. They talk to a few people. But this sets up an entire methodology in advance that they follow, which delivers clear products at the end of it. Next, please? So I think in this environment of scarce resources which we all operate in. And you mentioned leveraging and that's exactly what I was going to say. I feel like investing in this local capacity is really leveraging the resources we have which produces multiple wins for everybody and the stakeholders at every level. First, as I said, the key stakeholders, the underserved residents of New York City are receiving better programming. They're receiving better services. Second, the community-based organizations are improving their own programming. They're building their organizational capacity. We feel a lot of enthusiasm from the organizations that are in the workshops because they themselves feel this. And individually, they know they're receiving professional development which they all like and appreciate. And from our end, the — our students have a lot of knowledge, they have skills but they need exactly this kind of experiential learning. They work with these organizations that are experiencing real-world problems in their communities and so our students have really also gotten a lot of this process and she'll talk more about that. And then, finally, the Civic Engagement Commission will get — our hope being — or expect being, better reporting from the community-based organizations to report back to everyone, again, including the New York City taxpayers. And —

- Hi, everyone. My name is Ashani Dosan (phonetic) and I'm one of the two consultants for the CEOs. My colleague and Habia, who, unfortunately, wasn't able to make it today were in charge with the two cohorts. I'm a graduate of the New School and I took international affairs and or professional development. And I took two classes on project management, and monitoring evaluation. Which makes me qualified for the position of a student consultant because I've studied what students are currently doing before by implementing my skills to an NGO that we worked with in Kenya with Professor Mark Johnson. And I was interested in furthering my skills in the area. So my duties as a student consultant are to assist every workshop, take attendance, participation, and make sure that the performance metrics which I will show you after, are — for each workshop is correct. But most importantly, I help every organization with their assignments. I make sure that they are on track and that they're doing well. I assist with questions that they may have regarding workshops and different assignments while Mark teaches the content, I help them with different areas of struggle that they may have. And I also make sure that different CEOs are attentive and on track by sending reminder emails on their assignments and how they should prepare for different workshops and when they have questions, I organize one-to-one meetings with them and feedback on their assignments. Next, please?

I also conduct different site visits for my cohort where I visit each organization and I personally think this is very useful because this is where I'm able to get an insight on how each organization works and it's where I'm able to build better relationships with each person of each organization. And I'm able to engage with stakeholders, therefore, enhancing the engagement between the organization and us.

And I think it's helpful to go to organizational visits because I automatically am able to evaluate the impact of the community in my head and I'm able to look at different gaps and opportunities and it's also where I'm able to help them further with their projects. So ultimately, I think, organizational visits create an environment of better trust and engagement which improves collaboration. So this is just an example of performance metrics that we have.

I'm not sure if you're able to see properly but on the far left are the different organizations that are in my cohort. And this is a point-based system. So we score them after each workshop based on attendance, engagement, completion of the assignment. So as previously mentioned, the stakeholder analysis, the log frame. And we keep track of different Zoom meetings that we have with them at different site visits. Which totals to, like, a total score at the end on the right.

So I help with scoring and yeah. I also helped with different scoring sheets at the beginning of the whole program which was able to place me into what they're able to — sorry, what level they're on at the moment.

And next, please? So I think what CEOs have learned from me is how to improve their work and how to ensure their voices are heard in the implementation section. I also learned a lot from the different CEOs. I was able to see how to apply city-level budgets to different real projects. I was also able to look at the power of CEOs and in strengthening the community ultimately shaping the development. Because the current project seemed very impactful to me. And now I understand that in these projects, in these project-planning stages, there can be lots of different bureaucratic challenges and hurdles having spoken to different CEO leaders. And I was able to see how projects are really executed from the design phase onwards. And lastly, advocacy and storytelling, I was able to see how CEOs use narratives and data to push for systemic change and funding opportunities in their own communities. And lastly, I want to talk about SWOT analysis. So one recent addition to my role is we will be suggesting SWOT analysis for CBOs that are interested in them because we think it's useful because it helps give them a clear overview of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in order to support them in their future strategic planning and their long-term success ultimately. So yeah. If you have any questions.

- Any questions?

- Thank you. The mention of the international examples is beyond the scope of this meeting so I'll do my best to stay away from that although that is a fertile ground especially with the news from Washington. One of the things — I do serve on not-for-profit boards and one of the things that's been brought to us is the importance of donors and funders of having ≈ an acceptable ratio of funding that goes directly to the services versus the funding for overhead and so forth. And I understood you to talk about the importance of methodology and administrative reporting in that context, as well. And they seem to be pulling in opposite directions.

- Yes.

- Can you speak a little bit more on what the right balance is, and how do we achieve it, and how do we implement it.

- This is a big tension with funders. Which is that funders only want to fund implementation. But what you do that, you're ignoring planning, which is pre-implementation, and is an investment in success of implementation. So funders need to recognize that administration and overhead is an essential part of the project. It's not just implementation. So the correct balance... that's a deeper question. But, you know, when donors want to pay for it, they'll say, "I think 15% is kind of the line that's drawn" for what's -- what's considerable admin. I think in reality, it's more like 20 or 25%. But more than that, you also don't want. So it really does need to be a balance, and you definitely want the vast proportion of the money to be going into deliverables to stakeholders.

- Okay. That's helpful. Thank you.

- Lexi, what's the total percentage of budget that we're asking our partners to dedicate to —

- And then we have a cap for admin overhead, that's 12%.

- So we are making it a point to ask our organizations to set aside budget that we are giving them, that the city is giving them for admin. And there is a cap. But — but I think that's the really important piece that I want to underscore is in embarking on a process like city-wide participatory budgeting, there are a lot of people that we will have to convince that this is a value. And if we don't have a systematic way of recording that impact, then you can be sure that anything that we put out is going to be thrown out. So we want to make sure that we're documenting, in a systematic fashion, giving the organizations the tools to document, to plan so that when we all talk about it, when we talk about how it's shaping and helping people get engaged in budgetary decision-making in the city, that's credibility to the process.

- That's different from the private funders that respect. But the only difference is that they want — but it's still the same sort of thing if you want to see the services, you want to see the implementation. So it's great that we've actually got a number that we're targeting whether it be hidden or not is almost irrelevant to me. The idea that we're creating a mindset that there is a number to hit is more than half the battle.

- Thank you for the work that you're doing to quantify, we hear these wonderful, wonderful programs, like, all the time. Like, this is happening, that's happening. But oftentimes people have difficulties quantifying it, right? So thank you for the work that you're doing in helping to achieve that goal. Again, working with a lot of community-based organizations and, you know, community groups — there's these outstanding, beautiful things that are happening but when it comes to pen and paper or and someone told me that if it ain't printed, it don't exist. Or it didn't happen. So to have people to do that, and learn how to do that is noteworthy. Thank you.

- Can I say one more thing?

- Yeah, of course.

- It's a real privilege and pleasure to be involved in this because it's being done in the right way. It's what's done on better practices. On — I see a lot of worse practice. And this investment in local capacity building and the fact that you are funding administration directly is better practice and should be praised, should be, really, I think, shouted from the rooftops because it's rare.

- Thank you, Mark. Anyone on the phone have a question?

- It's just Donna. I have a comment, actually.

- Yeah.

- Thank you very much for this work. I really appreciate this collaboration with us. We, as a Civic Engagement Commission, were very concerned when we started this as to how do we measure the matrices of the programs that we're funding. And you have — and your students — have gave us some comfort because we realized that the — all of the things that we were concerned about is being addressed. And additionally, we were concerned about the CBOs, how they were working with you to get this done and to be able to have some feedback and, you know, matrix — matrices — information that we can show to the public and show to the citizens of New York, that their dollars are being spent well. And that gives everyone a level of comfort and I — yes, you are right, we should be shouting this from the rooftops, and this is a wonderful way in which our Committee has been able to do such a terrific job. And thanks to all of you. Thank you.

- I think it's an exemplary partnership between community-based organizations, in the non-profit sector.

- I'm just looking at the chart of the point-based tracking. Can you help me understand that? These numbers, 6, 10, 1, what is that? If you could?

- Well, on the far right of that, the far-right column you see, is a total. And I should say here, this is internal. This is really just for us.

- Uh, okay.

- Last year, we had all these discussions and we said, let's put something, let's put down some real indicators and I find it's all — I like to turn things into score cards because we can easily relate to the numbers. So we've done that, but that's just for all of our discussions in our regular meetings, our check-ins. We had one last week where we went through this. And I think it's a good vehicle to have these kind of discussions about the CBOs and how they're doing.

- I mean, it's — what I see here is you're tracking things how engaged they were, and whether they submitted their logical framework. Like, those are some of the things that you are looking at, right?

- And the engagement part is so important. So it's not just they show up and sit down.

- Exactly.

- That they're really participating and the vast majority of them are doing really great.

- That's really great. Anyone else? Questions? I do have — there's about five minutes left in this meeting. And I do want to share with you all, the Commissioner, I don't normally do this. I wrote a poem for our team and for our community, the Civic Engagement wider community that I just wanted to share in this moment. It's very short and I don't write poems that often. So it's just called, "Belonging."

- Go for it.

- You

Longing to be here

Belong here

You are the we of CEC

The we of CEC is you

The we of New York City

The we of NYC, we of state, we of country is you.

Your unique voice, your glorious presence, your passionate dedication, your daily work are the we of CEC. The we of CEC hears you, celebrates you, values you, believes in you, builds city, state, country with you. The we of CEC is you, you, longing to be here belong here.

[ Applause ]

Thanks for letting me perform!

- Thank you for that! Yeah, we don't do that in public meetings!

I appreciate the attention, great!

Okay. So we're at the end. So is there anything else anyone would like to comment or speak about before we end?

- I think no.

- Raising a hand here.

- Natalie!

- Yes, so first, thank you so much Dr. Sayeed for sharing that. It's a beautiful tribute to our dedicated hearts at a difficult time. I just want to thank all of the participants and the guests that we had today and everybody watching at home whether they're live or they're gonna see us later on YouTube. And I want to circle back to something that Mark mentioned where are there was some concern, a valid concern, which is that the equity attention and solutions and attempts to improve are codified as a city law for our city. So despite what the rhetoric may be today or opinions may be, I just want to remind our fellow New York City residents and commissioner and all on our teams, just like Team New York City, that we do not have equity as a matter of opinion as a goal. We have it as a matter of law, as a people, New York City voted on that. I believe it's codified into the City Charter Section 34. Don't quote me on that. And I also want to remind everybody that our variance systems as a commission was also voted on by the voters of New York City. So we exist, not subject to anybody's whims or wishes but we are a matter of democracy in action. It was voted upon. The people's vote. And they said, they wanted this for us. So here we are. So thank you.

- We're all set, Natalie. Thank you!

- Thank you so much, Natalie for that.

- Can I jump in for just a second on that because Natalie was exactly right because I was reacting to the news that West Point which is where our military leaders come from, today, has been ordered to disband anything that smells, looks, or tastes like prioritizing — I'm gonna just say it, anybody but being white and being a white male.

And I was sensitive to the fact that — and maybe I'm making a bold judgment — but the TRIE work has a lot of tentacles into how our society performs. One of which is that in a volunteer military service country like ours, it is focusing communities like the TRIE communities where we derive the recruits that are going to be serving our country under leadership that will no longer have the benefits of what we, in New York, have voted for. So that's a little bit of where I was coming from. And Natalie was exactly right. Because you can't understate the importance of the Charter has to our people. But the challenges that people will have in the wider world and the wider area of government service are very real. So it's another way of saying, I appreciate what is being done especially in the TRIE network. Thanks!

- Thank you. Thank you for that, Mark. Yup, I think in the last meeting as we voted on our participation in the racial equity plan. So that's very important and we'll be continuing to realize that plan with the team working collaboratively together. And I think all of the concerns that we are seeing and have — I also just want to lift up that it is Black History Month and, you know, this is a moment in which we really get to honor the contributions of — the historic, long, deep contributions of Black American citizens in this country for the making of this country. So just want to express the gratitude for everyone part of that work including some of our commissioners, as well. So thank you so much for that.

Okay. So can I hear a motion to adjourn?

- So moved!

- And seconded!

- Did you have a — all in favor?

- Aye!

- Okay. Anyone opposed to ending the meeting?

- Okay. Sounds good we are now adjourning the meeting and we will see you next time. Thank you so much, everyone! Take care.