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Anatole Ashraf

Chairperson

Debra Markell Kleinert

District Manager

December 9th, 2024

Health and Human Services and Education and Unhoused & Shelter Committee and the Environment, Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes

This meeting was teleconferenced using Zoom

Attendees:

Lauren Springer, Chair
Amparo Abel-Bey, Vice Chair
Laura Shepard, Chair Environment, Parks
And Recreation
Warren Davis
Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos
Leticia Vasquez

Absentees:

Nellie Afshar
Danielle Brecker
John Bahia
Benjamin Lucas
Thomas Mituzas

Olivia Jackson Lewis – Public Member
Robert Wohner – Public Member
Andrea Thomas, SCS – Public Member

Guest

Ioannis (John) Demopoulos, Elmhurst Hospital Suicide prevention in Youth (ESPY) Program
Victoria Mayo, Office Manager at the Austell Place
Fanny Chang
Christopher Weickert
Kevin Davis
Annabelle Meunier, Smiling Hogshead Ranch
Henry Smith, LIC Partnership

Community Board 2 Staff

Debra Markell Kleinert

Lauren Springer, Chair Health & Human Services and Education and Unhoused & Shelter Committee welcomed everyone to the meeting to the joint committee meeting with the Environment, Parks and Recreation Committee.

Lauren Springer introduced Ioannis (John) Demopoulos, Community Health Worker, Elmhurst Hospital Suicide Prevention in Youth (ESPY) Program.

“Serving the Communities of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Maspeth”

- This is a grant funded NYS Office of Mental Health Program that specifically works in the borough of Queens taking approaches to prevent suicide in our youth.
- At the hospital they take a community and health approach to suicide prevention.
- Suicide is preventable but despite that there has been a rising rates of suicide over the past two decades.
- The Covid 19 pandemic had and still does have a big negative impact on mental health.
- Suicide trends were trending upward two decades prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Talking about suicide and making sure people have the information about how to prevent suicide, warning signs, and risk factors shows that this reduces suicide.
- They have a slogan; An Ounce of Prevention is worth a Pound of Intervention.
- Its important to engage in conversation with those having issues.
- They have done a lot of work is trying to destigmatize mental health.
- Immigrant communities do not feel comfortable talking about these thoughts.
- Suicide is the 2nd cause of death for youth ages 10-24.
- Youth residing in Queens, New York had the highest number of suicides among males and females.
- This program is to help communities catch sight of warning signs of suicide and to inspire youth to catch sight of a good life.
- The whole person has to be treated when it comes to mental health.
- They have a three-tier approach to suicide prevention training.
- The training programs focus on educating people what the warning signs are.
- Ioannis (John) Demopoulos spoke about wellness workshops. Navigating benefits.
- Recognizing signs of a mental issue and knowing what tools to use to help.
- Youth Peer Academy Internship Program to be launched this summer.
- September is suicide prevention month and 988 is the suicide prevention hotline number.
- There was a discussion on resources and certified training for suicide prevention.
- CB2 can help by sharing information about the suicide prevention program to parent coordinators of schools.
- The bulk of their work is concentrated in Queens.

Lauren Springer introduced Annabelle Meunier of Smiling Hogshead Ranch.

- Annabelle Meunier mentioned that she is no longer on the board of Smiling Hogshead Ranch but will give an update.
- Annabelle Meunier stated that there are two migrant shelters for asylum seekers that have opened near the Smiling Hogshead Ranch.
- The asylum seekers have to reapply every 30 days.
- The asylum seekers have nowhere to go so they are taking shelter in the Smiling Hogshead Ranch garden.
- There is no fence at this garden. There are picnic table for people to enjoy lunch.
- However, there are now many people at the garden due to the asylum seekers having nowhere to go.

- Due to this population there is now a lot of trash and complaints.
- People are also cooking and sleeping there.
- This situation has now turned off the membership to entering the garden.
- This trash being left in the garden has now led to a rat problem.
- The Board has reached out to DSNY, the MTA, DHS and the Mayor's office of immigrant affairs and Council member Julie Won.
- A walk thru did not take place and now there is an eviction notice placed on their shed from the MTA.
- Upon the eviction notice the Ranch has cleaned up the area and the MTA has now rescinded on the eviction notice.
- Signs have been placed in the garden stating rules.
- A discussion took place with everyone at the meeting to determine what can be done to rectify this situation of the homelessness at the Smiling Hogshead Ranch.
- It was suggested instead of having small separate meetings, everyone should come together to discuss this issue. Businesses, elected officials, property owners, city agencies and the Smiling Hogshead Ranch.
- It was stated that a lot of people are coming into neighborhoods, however, the neighborhoods are not getting any additional resources.

Lauren Springer, Chair of the Health & Human Services and Education Committee and Laura Shepard, Chair of the Environment, Parks and Recreation Committee both agreed this a discussion to be continued.

Lauren Springer thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kim Waber