**Community Board 17**

**Sanitation Committee Meeting**

**Monday, November 21, 2022**

**Present: Guests:**

Joseph Cobourne **(BM)** Ms. M. Cook

Jorge Tait **(BM)** Milovan Blair

Lilieth Robinson Patricia Ralph

Alexandra Schmidbauer Ms. Kellman

Dr. Carol Reneau **(BM)**

T.S. Candii

Monica McKain-Brown

Theo Maughan

Javeeda Smith

Kenrick Wescott **(BM)**

Leonie Logan

Eduardo Cameron

Lulu Friesdat

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The **Sanitation Committee Virtual** meeting was held on **Monday, November 21, 2022 at 7:30pm.**

**Mr. Joseph Cobourne** called the meeting to order 7:33pm.

They do not have a quorum, so they cannot vote on the September 19, 2022 minutes.

**Chairperson’s Report**

**Mr. Cobourne** said he has decided to resign from the Sanitation Committee as the Chair due to personal priorities he must handle pertaining to his family. He will be leaving NYC at the beginning of next year. The new Chair will be Dr. Carol Reneau, and he wants them to support her in any way they can.

An email was sent to the members pertaining to the subcommittee agenda, with what was discussed in September. He has not been able to organize the subcommittee meetings, but he wants to take time to set those dates.

**Dr. Carol Reneau** said this is her second appointment and she has worked with the Land Use Committee and was the Co-Chair with Rachel Goodfriend. She needs to get a clear understanding of what has been going on with the Sanitation Committee and she heard from Chairperson Daley they might be merging some of the committees and she will refrain from giving her vision for the committee. They need to observe first before they come in and create their own agenda.

She is currently a teacher, has done other community-oriented work, currently a Board member with NHS and truly looks forward to working with them.

**Mr. Cobourne** said he spoke to Mr. Daley and his plan was to connect the Sanitation and Parks & Beautification Committees, if not officially as one committee, then perhaps by having collaborative meetings once every other month. Ms. Antoine is the Chair of the Parks & Beautification Committee. They will be having a Tree Lighting ceremony on Friday, Dec. 16, 2022 at Paerdegat Park.

For the committee agenda, the 2 initiatives they discussed were to create 2 databases and subcommittees. One database would be the information pertaining to issues within the community and a listing of all the goals was sent to the members of what the database committee would focus on, long-term parked vehicles with unregistered plates, people who have left their vehicles for months that they were planning to sell, sweepers that are not effectively cleaning, as well as trees falling down and need pruning, large debris dumping and clogged catch basins.

The second committee would be for the tree guards, which they would be working on in conjunction with the Parks & Beautification Committee to beautify East Flatbush by adding a certain number of trees. First, they will draft a letter to the Brooklyn Borough President to request a grant to sponsor new trees for the community. This has been done before and now the committee would be focused on what type of trees they would like to add, mainly trees that don’t shed, because that would add to the pollution problem, as well as installing tree guards to protect the base around the trees from litter and trash. As for determining the prime locations for these trees to be placed, it would require residential approval and they would prioritize targeting the less commercial locations. This is the agenda for the subcommittees of the Sanitation Committee. They need to have a sit down with the committee members of the database and tree guard committees. The names of the members who are part of the subcommittees are listed on the subcommittee agenda. If anyone wants to join the subcommittees, let him know.

**Dr. Reneau** said if their name is not on the list for the committee, let her know if they want to be a part of the subcommittees. The Sanitation Committee meets once a month. The 2 subcommittees are the database initiative and the trees and tree guard committee. These 2 committees have goals they will be working on and maybe more in the future.

**Mr. Cobourne** said the database committee wants to create a forum on Goggle to share with the residents and members to help them collect information pertaining to issues they are dealing with and tracking it in a more effective way. Prior to this initiative, one way to expressed their issues by joining the committee meetings or emailing him one on one, but now, this is a more effective platform. The committee members can check the database and direct each concern to the proper authorities, whether it is DEP, the Dept. of Sanitation, this is more universal and effective.

**Mr. Kenrick Wescott** said he is the President of the Kings County South Civic Association and the Executive Board had a meeting with Mr. Daley in regards to partnering with the Sanitation Dept. to get work done in the community. When they decide what they are going to do, let him know, so they can work together to make this a cleaner community.

**Dr. Reneau** said she will reach out to him and follow the directives of Mr. Daley. She asked if there were anything else they need to know or any other partnerships?

**Ms. Friesdat** said since she moved her 8 years ago, and from the beginning, the litter has been the overriding concern in terms of Sanitation. They have worked with the Tilder Block Association, attended meetings at the Precinct, they have done clean-ups and it just seems challenging. She asked why litter was not listed as a number one priority in terms of the subcommittees.

**Mr. Cobourne** said he understands her concerns and litter has always been a concern and when he was drafting the document, he associated small litter with large debris, which is why it is not listed. In September, they talked about receiving more funding to add additional garbage cans for residential blocks, but they cannot place garbage cans in residential areas, only along the business corridors. He will work with Dr. Reneau to add that to the document.

**Ms. Friesdat** said she understands that a lot of work has gone on for years to try and address this. She tried to get new litter cans when she moved here by putting in a request with Sanitation, and the requests were rejected because this is considered a residential area. After attending other meetings, there has been a lot of need for a public campaign to get people spiritual and psychologically involved in the process and feeling proud about the neighborhood and cleaning it up and to really work collectively with the community.

**Mr. Cobourne** said the beautification initiative had started out as a campaign that would target the behavior of community residents and people that commute through the community, which contributes to the small litter. That was the plan during the last fiscal year, however the plan was so large with the information and the timeline they were given, it was unrealistic. For this fiscal year, they decided to take a step back and take more tangible approaches. The issue brought up was definitely a long-term goal that has always been on the forefront of the Sanitation Committee’s agenda.

**Ms. Alexandra Schmidbauer** said she is glad that there is someone else trying to track down Sanitation and get their services reinstated by requesting trash cans. Her group, Flatbush Clean-Up have engaged in a bunch of similar things by engaging with the Sanitation Dept., walking around with Sanitation representatives and Community Affairs Officers. She reviewed the plans for the subcommittees and at the last meeting, they discussed a health campaign, educating neighbors about litter contaminating the storm drains. It is a good idea to keep this at the forefront of their plan because litter is definitely an issue because they have more litter and dumping of larger items around the neighborhood. It would make a big difference if they were getting the Sanitation services they deserve. She has seen the street sweeper ride down the middle of the street, Officers do not enforce parking and cars are not moved and the street does not get cleaned and around construction sites. This is definitely a multipart issue.

**Dr. Reneau** said this is definitely an ongoing issue and a work in progress. She heard public and health campaigns mentioned. On East 25th Street between Clarendon Road and Avenue D, they have had to take matters into their own hands and had a clean-up campaign in the neighborhood and they also focused on the perimeters. A resident was able to get 3 garbage cans on Rogers Avenue. She has some leads, but they are going to need everyone on this, and it will be ongoing. When they did the clean-up campaign in Nov. 2021, they wrote into Borough Hall and Borough President Eric Adams did collaborate with them to help promote a Flatbush clean-up. This is not something new, it is ongoing throughout Brooklyn. They were able to get Sanitation to lend them the equipment needed for the clean-up.

**Ms. TS Candii** said she is the Executive Director of Black Trans Nation and their organization has done several community clean-ups this year and are currently still doing clean-ups, and they call it the Love Where You Live campaign, where they go to certain areas and do clean-ups. If anyone would like to join them in doing clean-ups, it would be very helpful because they are **(INAUDIBLE)** individuals that have been doing a lot of clean-ups with Sanitation in the district. The website is **blacktransnation.org**. On the website, they have the clean-up dates.

**Dr. Reneau** said Sanitation Dept. does donate the garbage bags and gloves, but they loan the racks and bigger equipment that has to be returned to them.

**Ms. M. Cook** asked if it is mandated that the Sanitation Dept. check all storm drains after a storm? She has called 3-1-1 and sent emails regarding the corners of East 35th Street, from Tilden Avenue to Lenox Road. They are all covered with leaves and rubbish. Also, on the corner of Linden Blvd. and East 35th Street, Snyder Avenue and East 35th Street and if it rains, it will be hard for the water to go down the drain. Also, on the corner of East 32nd Street and Snyder Avenue.

**Mr. Cobourne** said that has been an ongoing issue, and the actual protocol is that they be informed of the complaint, whether it be through 3-1-1 or the Community Board, they can act upon it and schedule a team to come and clean it. There is no system in place with the Sanitation Dept. where they clean the catch basins every quarter or bi-annually. He thinks that would be a better solution, but they want to be informed and then they act on it.

**Ms. Cook** asked can the storm drains be cleaned when they clean the streets? She took pictures to send to 3-1-1, can she send them to him also?

**Mr. Cobourne** said she can send them to him and Dr. Reneau to respond to her idea. It is definitely possible and they are supposed to be doing that to begin with, but there has been a lack of accountability. With the database committee, they need to devise a system to hold the Sanitation Dept. accountable on their end because they are supposed to be cleaning them to begin with.

**Ms. Cook** said on Church Avenue, it is very filthy and trash cans were mentioned and with more trash cans, more people are going to dump in the trash cans. If they can hold the people accountable for cleaning in front of their places, whether it is their homes or businesses.

**Dr. Reneau** said she drives through several neighborhoods every day and Flatbush is one of the worst. A home around the corner from her and the garbage was piling up and they repeatedly sent pictures to 3-1-1 and nothing happened, but they stayed on it and also did it through the block association. It is a collective effort and after doing it 4 or 5 times, the homeowner ended up getting tickets and it was cleaned up. Whenever they see garbage anywhere, take pictures, hold 3-1-1 accountable. Another sore spot was the SEARS store before it closed, and it was always filthy. They sent it into 3-1-1 and the Dept. of Sanitation and they also wrote a letter to the SEARS Corporate Dept. Sometimes, there are multiple areas that need to be addressed and this is the only way they can get some kind of resolution. They also have to keep the elected officials accountable by writing letters to them.

**Ms. Friesdat** said there are 2 things to move this forward and she does not think the elected officials are going to do them any good. They are well intentioned, but they have more urgent issues to deal with, but when they did it themselves, it was done in a public way that was organized and more people joined in. They went door to door with the businesses and told them that it is their responsibility to keep the sidewalk and the gutter clear and they would say they are doing their part. They need to do this collectively as a group, so they don’t feel like they are the only ones doing it and they need a public neighborhood or citywide campaign educating people not to put their personal garbage in the City cans because it keeps Sanittion from putting out the cans and keeps them from being effective.

**Dr. Reneau** said they have to start somewhere, and they have been doing this for over 30 years and she asked how long are they willing to continue to clean up? She agrees with them, and when it is discussed on this side, but they need look at something more than a bandage solution because they are always going to be in this type of forum saying they need to clean because they live here. The Sanitation is broken, and the elected officials are not doing their jobs. If the elected officials do not hear from them, they think that everything is fine. When they complain to the 67th Pct. about abandoned cars, they come and tow them. As it is done in other communities, they have to make the issue bigger than it is. Sanitation and the elected officials have to work and when they are tagged, they are shamed, they come over to help them their clean ups and that is still a short term solution, and in addition to that, they need to make sure they broaden it and attempt to fix the problems as much as they can.

**Ms. Schmidbauer** said they clearly need to go up the chain of command and they need documentation that they have been working on these problems and they elected officials have a hard time working on anything that is not documented. They can make a list of the agencies they need to hit up, DSNY, Community Affairs Officers, Councilmember Farah Louis, Assembly Member Rodneyse Bichotte, Sen. Kevin Parker and they need at least person from this committee who can commit to sending each of them a letter. They can come up with a draft or template of what they want to say and they can pick 3 locations and take pictures and submit the reports, which may have to be done 3 or 4 times for one location, but at least they know it is happening, and once that is accomplished, they can go up the chain of command or they can write all of them at once, and if they don’t get a response, they can go to the Borough President or the Mayor’s Office with all of their documentation.

**Mr. Wescott** said he agrees with what was said, and if the merchants start receiving tickets from the Inspectors, they will start complaining and there are a lot of homeowners that do not sweep in front of their places. A few years ago, Kings County South had a sweep down and they were able to go to the District Attorney’s Office and kids that committed minor crimes would be sent to work with them to clean up the area and getting the extra help would benefit them also.

**Dr. Reneau** said for the Database Initiative Subcommittee, she would like to add on to this committee, and they have Jorge Tait, Alexandra Schmidbauer, TS Candii, **(INAUDIBLE)** Jeanick Williams and Vanna Quashie. Instead of breaking out as separate clean-up campaign committee, she suggested that it should be the Clean-Up Campaign/Database Initiative Subcommittee. The Tree Guard Subcommittee will be working with the Parks & Beautification Committee. She asked if there were any new business or other issues to discuss? Hearing none, she asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Dr. Reneau** made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Mr. Cobourne** second the motion.