**Community Board 17**

**Social Services Committee Virtual Meeting**

**Wednesday, April 6, 2022**

**Present: Guests: Excused:**

Janice Reid Min. John Williams, Muline Mickle

Antoinette Smart New Creation Comm. Diana Gay

Sabine Jacques Health Empowerment

Michelle Griffith Leslie Frazier

Jorge Tait CK Price

Monica McKain-Brown Simone Colbert,

Victor Jordan Neighborhood Health Promoter,

NYC Dept. of Health & Mental Hygiene

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The **Social Services Committee** Virtual meeting was held on **Wednesday, April 6, 2022 at 7:30pm.**

**Ms. Janice Reid** called the April 6, 2022 meeting to order at 7:37pm.

**Roll Call**-Janice Reid, Antoinette Smart, Jorge Tait, Leslie Frazier, Sabine Jacques, Michelle Griffith, Monica McKain-Brown, Simone Colbert, Min. John Williams, Victor Jordan

**Ms. Reid** asked if everyone received the March minutes and if there were any corrections? Having heard none, she asked for a motion to approve the Feb. 2, 2022 minutes?

**Mr. Jorge Tait** made a motion to approve the Feb. 2, 2022 minutes.

**Mr. Victor Jordan** seconded the motion.

**Ms. Reid** asked if there were any corrections to the March 2, 2022 minutes? Add Ms. McKain-Brown and Ms. Jacques to roll call. On page 6, paragraph 2, it should read, the OBH Bariatrics & Metabolic Institute partnered with Stellar’s Farmers Market and the NYC Dept. of Health to hold a virtual nutrition workshop on Tuesday, Feb. 8th, 2022. Third paragraph, it should say, the Kings County Trauma Dept. The fifth paragraph, it should say, she also attended the health affairs virtual symposium. On page 7, 3rd line, it should say, inaudible should be Suboxone. If there are no other corrections, she asked for a motion to approve the March 2, 2022 minutes, with the necessary corrections?

**Ms. Antoinette Smart** made a motion to approve the minutes with the necessary corrections.

**Mr. Jordan** seconded the motion.

**Ms. Reid** said Min. John Williams from the New Creation Community Health Empowerment, Inc. has joined them tonight seeking a letter of support for DCAS to apply for the use of a City lot in the Flatbush area for the 120 Day Community Health Expo & Symposium for Flatbush and is planned for June 4, 2022 to Sept. 25, 2022.

**Min. John Williams** said he has been in CB 14 & 17 for many years and never served on the health committee. He serves on the Kings County Behavioral Health Committee. He is also a member of the SUNY Downstate University IRB and SUNY Downstate has been designated as a COVID-19 hospital and there are problems there. They are partnered with New Creations. The largest amount of deaths from the pandemic in New York, 80% were seniors and over 70% of them were diabetic, which was the leading cause of the mortality rate. The Flatbush community suffers from a major epidemic of diabetes and Dr. Maryann Banichey, an Endocrinologist at SUNY Downstate has discovered a new type of diabetes, called the Flatbush Diabetes, which is a **(INADUIBLE)**  stating condition and the scientific name for it is Ketosis Type 2 Diabetes **(INADUIBLE)**  which people with Type 1 died from high levels of ketone acidosis. With this new type of diabetes, Type 2 diabetics have high levels of ketones, which affect the kidneys and that is why they see so many dialysis centers in the area, because Flatbush is predominately Caribbean, West Indian **(INADUIBLE)**  and these are the largest suffers. This could be prevented and successfully treated and managed, and most importantly, it could be reversed. Since 2015, when the Borough President launched the Island of Flatbush Diabetes Task Force and they have had tremendous success in helping people, especially in the **(INADUIBLE)** They have done their program in various senior centers in the community and they have seen hundreds of people coming close to reversing their condition and bringing their H1C levels down tremendously, using the 3 molds, which is the CDC National Diabetes Prevention Program, in preventing, and the Stanford University Diabetes Self-Management Program and their new creation, 12 Weeks to Wellness Program, which is into natural remedies and lifestyle changes, which help people to reverse their diabetes.

They upgraded the Island of Flatbush to include central Brooklyn, the Village of Bed-Sty Bushwich, and the Town of East New York Brownsville and the center of Brooklyn is Flatbush and Church Avenues and the radius around the center includes Flatbush, Crown Heights, parts of Brownsville, Kensington, Midwood, Flatlands and Canarsie. All the symposiums and expos are held at Erasmus Hall High School and they expanded to Boys & Girls High School for Bed-Sty Bushwich and Thomas Jefferson High School for East New York Brownsville.

In 2017, they used the lot at the corner of Bedford and Church Avenues for their symposium expos, where the pitched tents and they were there for 3 months on a short-term lease. They were able to reach hundreds of people, ministering to central Brooklyn in the area of total health, diabetes basically is a **(INADUIBLE)** condition that affects so many other things, cardio vascular disease, renal disease and there are high incidents of amputations as a result that could have been prevented.

This time around, this summer they are seeking to revamp that program and ask for a shorter lease of 4 months, for 120 days because as a part of the God Squad of the 67th Pct. Clergy Council, there has been a tremendous uptick in gun violence with youth and gangs and they are very ardently working in that area and surrounding districts. They are going to include gun violence prevention and intervention with the 4 precincts representing central Brooklyn, the 63rd, 67th, 70th and 71st Precincts. They also extend to Atlantic Avenue with the 77th Pct., the 69th Pct. In Canarsie and the 73rd Pct. In Brownsville. In those 4 months, they are going have rallies and symposiums in the community for the young people, reaching out to end youth and gun violence. They will also be doing these symposiums and expos on the lot for senior health. They have done the diabetes programs at some of the Churches, day care and senior centers. Kingsbrook Jewish and Brookdale One Brooklyn Health Hospitals are major partners with this program. Kings County Hospital has a massive diabetes resource center and he was part of the beginning of that.

He is looking forward to getting a support letter from the Board. He did receive one in 2017 for the use of the lot for the health event. He is hoping they would grant him that support letter and he hopes the members would help with the outreach to help save lives.

**Ms. Reid** thanked Min. Williams for his presentation.

**Mr. Jordan** said the site at the corner of Church and Bedford Avenues is also the site of the African Burial Ground and there is a big controversy about that plot of land and how it should be used in a way that would remember the Africans that were buried there.

**Min. Williams** said he was a part of the group that was trying to get that lot designated as the African Burial Ground. The whole lot is not the African Burial Ground, because there was a school there with a basement and when they spoke about that, they are looking at 3 things, one, Africans, number 2, slaves and number 3, burial, which had to do with death. Blacks are the largest suffers of everything, when it comes to all the diseases and violence. They thought it was a good thing to focus on the fact that while they want to recognize an area, and when looking at the history of the whole area, the Lefferts Farms and the slaves that were brought and living in the Holy Cross region and there were also burials at the Dutch Reform Church. What they have been doing in that area because it is central to Brooklyn and this crisis, is to focus on that and use the site to save lives. It is not to say they are desecrating the area, but is actually promoting more **(INADUIBLE)** and that is the conviction they have for supporting the commemoration of the burial of the Africans and slaves in that area.

**Mr. Tait** asked do they help people with Type 1 diabetes?

**Min. Williams** said yes, they do. People do not die from the diabetes, they die from heart attacks and strokes and all the things that diabetes brings on. Type 1 diabetes is a genetic condition that is also an immune condition and they deal with that very well. While Type 1 diabetes is not like Type 2, because it is insulin dependent. People die from the levels of ketones in the blood and they do help people to avoid that by managing the diabetes. They have had some success in the diabetes management programs. There are 5 types of diabetes they deal with, Type 1, Type 2 and gestational, which while women are pregnant and goes away after the delivery and sometimes, it comes back with a vengeance. The Flatbush diabetes is the 4th one and dementia is the 5th type. Alzheimer’s is brought on by diabetes and they deal with mental health along with that and they are very heavy in working with mental heath to help to alleviate the results and the process of diabetes.

They have a partnership with Weill-Cornell, the CTSC and they bring on the Heart Smart Program, because diabetes brings on heart disease and strokes. They will also bring in the prevention program and the self-management program.

**Ms. Reid** asked if any other sites were identified in the neighborhood because she is concerned about this site and the community’s involvement in recognition of the African Burial Ground. Having stated that it is going to be 120 days and set up tents in that area.

**Min. Williams** said not at all, there are no other sites in the area **(INADUIBLE)**  especially with the availability and the exposure that it has. He will be collaborating with the African Burial Ground Coalition to be doing things. They promote their efforts to not to have any construction done on the site.

**Ms. Reid** asked are they in support of this venture because the site is in CB 14?

**Min. Williams** said they will be meeting on April 21st with CB 14 and he would like some of them to be a part of that meeting to give some suggestions and ideas. The letter of support would be in support of the Island of Flatbush Diabetes Task Force for all the work they do in the areas of Community Boards 9, 17, 14 and 18.

**Ms. Reid** said in terms of what Ms. Fraser said, they are seeking the letter for DCAS to grant the site.

**Min. Williams** said if they feel the letter should not be granted to get the site from DCAS, it should be awarded the way it was. The letter was generic, not focused on DCAS and his request was asking for a similar letter, not a letter saying the Board is supporting them getting use of the land.

**Ms. Reid** said the letter was sent to the members and they cannot write the letter because that lot is in CB 14 district and they cannot provide a letter for that because it is not in this district, but they can support them, however, **(INADUIBLE)**  dealing with the Diabetes Task Force, with the focus on the guns and youth gangs and their partnership with the Precinct Council. He will be meeting with the African Burial committee because he would have to clear this with them and get approval.

**Min. Williams** said in regards to some clarity to those 2 aspects, he would accept the fact that he would not expect a letter of support for the use of the lot, because they cannot do that, but will ask for the general support for the letter they had from 2016.

**Ms. Reid** said it will be up to the members and the Executive Committee and then to the General Board to approve the letter. She asked the members if they were in agreement with Min. Williams and go forward to present this in support of the diabetes program and prevention for the Island of Flatbush, also along with the gun violence coalition with the partners, including the precincts.

**Mr. Tait** said he is in agreement with the letter of support given in 2016.

**Ms. Smart** asked what is the time structure for having this event over the period of 120 days?

**Min. Williams** said when they start a program of preventing, managing and reversing diabetes, it starts with general screening and then they go into a 90 day period because diabetes A1C blood test is a 3 month period to determine whether they have lowered their A1C levels and how effective and successful their diabetes intervention really was and that is how they normally work with the people in this 90 day period. Now, because they are going into this effort with the gun violence, they added a month to it to really focus on those rallies they will be doing and the efforts they are going to be doing with the safety alliance group they will be working with and the current Borough President.

**Ms. Smart** asked what additional steps will they be taking since this is over a period of time to manage and decrease the levels of the diabetes? She is just trying to get a sense of how broad this initiative is going to be and just how much they are going to be covering in that span of time.

**Min. Williams** said they started a group in the City of communities driving recovery and it is a coalition of different community health-based organizations that come together to force the City to actually fund prevention programs. It is a shame that diabetes has not been recognized as a crisis in NYC or the State. There was a measles crisis that started in North Brooklyn and they got the national awareness and results and they made it a crisis and money was put into it and you don’t hear anything about measles any more because it was nipped in the bud. The same thing with the Opioid crisis and it was recognized by the Trump administration and billions of dollars was put into it and today, you don’t hear much about overdoses or the Opioid crisis.

There is no funding for diabetes and they argued and fought with the City Council Speaker Cory Johnson and he gave them $1 Million, but the Mayor did not put that $1 Million in the budget and it was supposed to be funded by the Dept. of Health for groups like his to run these prevention programs that are showing a 60% success rate. If they can show that they can be effective for these 4 months that they are going to get, by September, they would be able to at that time, when the new budget comes around, the Brooklyn delegation would see that they would be able to **(INADUIBLE)** They are trying to see if they could seek the $3 Million to work with the 3 areas he mentioned and to use Church-based preventive health centers initiatives and they will be driving this around Churches for these 4 months. They are going to be having workshops, seminars and symposiums where they will have an army of peer leaders that they are working to train to go out and teach the classes, and they are called Medical Missionaries. They have lifestyle counselling, training in nutrition and cooking classes. They are going to be involved as a member of this committee and they are going to be aware of all of this and they are going to be seeking their involvement and partnership to really drive this initiative to try to save lives in the community.

**Ms. Smart** said diabetes is almost at epidemic proportions in communities of color and they cannot get enough information out there on diabetes and diabetes management and a lot of people are not aware of just how widespread diabetes is in their communities.

**Mr. Jordan** said Min. Williams’ work should be commended and it is a shame they are not able to consider his other request, but they can do a letter that is parallel to the letter they gave him in 2016. He does support his good work.

**Ms. Reid** thanked Min. Williams for coming to present and discuss his plan for further education and community involvement for diabetes and also regarding the gun violence. She will be presenting this at the Executive Committee meeting, and depending on that, he will be invited to present this at the General Board meeting regarding the letter of support for this venture. Over the years, they have been trying to bring a focus to diabetes.

**Chairperson’s Report**

**Ms. Reid** said she attended the OBH Brookdale CAB virtual meeting on March 7, 2022. At the meeting was Ms. Arlene Martin, the Director of Volunteer Services at Brookdale and the nursing home and she gave an overview of the volunteer program. They are looking for volunteers to serve as feeders for the hospital and also for the nursing home. Persons would be trained and undergo an interview process, medical clearance, background check, drug screening before the orientation and persons must also have had the COVID-19 vaccine and booster, that is required. High school students are also eligible, ages 16 and older to volunteer and they also have a summer youth program that this group can also volunteer for. Ms. Matin’s number is 718-240-5277.

She also attended the CAB meeting that was held on Monday, April 4, 2022 and there was a presentation by Dr. Theodore Hufford, the Director of Bariatric Surgery and he gave an overview of the bariatric program at OBH Brookdale and talked about the types of weight loss procedures and the eligibility criteria for that process.

The COVID-19 vaccines are no longer being given at the Klein Auditorium after March 30, 2022, due to low volume. The COVID-19 vaccines are being given by appointment at the Brookdale Family Care Center.

OBH Brookdale will host their health fair on Sat., June 11, 2022, from 11am to 4pm and this why they changed their date to June 14, 2022, so they don’t conflict with them and trying to compete for available resources.

**Min. Williams** said they have a youth employment program for the summer and a lot of jobs are going to be available for the youth and young people.

**Ms. Reid** said the letter of acknowledgement for Ms. Monika Siergiej, who wants a letter of support to open a substance abuse clinic and she attended the March 16, 2022 General Board meeting and presented and she wanted a letter of acknowledgement for OASIS in order to look for another site as the site she tried to obtain was no longer available. The letter of acknowledgement was voted down by the Board and the consensus was that the letter of acknowledgement was not required by OASIS.

An update on the health fair, it will be held on June 18, 2022, pending the permit being granted. The subcommittee met on March 24, 2022 and the members that attended were Ms. McKain-Brown, Ms. Griffith, Ms. Mickle, Ms. Gay, Mr. Tait and herself. She created a health fair check list with the objectives and goals and a timeline of what they need done up until the day of the event, so they can be prepared for that. She selected red polo shirts with the CB 17 logo and Social Services on the front. She ordered 48 shirts for female and male and they will have some left. The remainder of the funds will used to purchase balloons to decorate the park. The permit was issued for the plaza area of the park, where they usually do Youth Happen’n. She will meet with the vendor for the balloons to see where they will be placed. The do not have to purchase the tote bags because there are still some at the office. She will need volunteers to help pack the bags. They will have 100 bags to give out on the day of the event. The vendor letters will be sent out and some vendors did contact her regarding the health fair. The Dept. of Health and other agencies also contacted her. She has a total of 27 participants on the list and she is not sure all of them will be able to attend and that includes the area hospitals, non-profit organizations around the area and some City agencies. She is just waiting for confirmation and the services they will be providing. She will also send letters to the elected officials that cover the CB 17 area. She will ask if they can provide water and some food items for the vendors and volunteers, because they cannot use the money for food. Once they get the commitment from the vendors, they will finalize the flyer to make it more uniformed to the what services that will be provided. They will probably have another subcommittee meeting in May, prior to the June meeting and by then they will have the number of those that responded and made a commitment. The participants and vendors will be asked to bring their own tents, tables and chairs. The Board has 2 tents and about 25 chairs that they will use.

She asked the members for a vote on the letter of support for Min. Williams?

**Mr. Tait** made a motion to grant the letter of support.

**Ms. McKain-Brown** seconded the motion.

**Ms. Reid** asked if there were any abstentions or objections for this? Having heard none, the motion carries. She will present this at the Executive meeting and then this will go to the full Board for a vote.

She asked if there were any unfinished or new business to discuss?

**Ms. Simone Colbert** said at the Brownsville Neighborhood Health Action Center, they will be celebrating Black Maternal Health Week and they will also be relaunching their Family Wellness Suite and during that time, they will be sharing their current services. They have a program where they provide Pack & Play cribs to families that are expecting. They also have free doula services for families as well as courses on childbirth education, newborn care classes and they will also be starting virtual fitness classes that include an afro beats class and she will email them that information.

Min. Williams is from the New Creations Community Health, Inc. and his number is 347-962-0451 and his email is [jhnw361@gmail.com](mailto:jhnw361@gmail.com).

She asked if there were any new business to discuss before they adjourn the meeting? Having heard none, she asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting?

**Ms. Smart** made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Mr. Jordan** seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned.