**Community Board 17**

**Social Services Committee Virtual Meeting**

**Wednesday, January 5, 2022**

**Present: Guest:**

Janice Reid Alejandro Lojo

Michelle Griffith

Victor Jordan

Diana Gay

Jorge Tait

Muline Mickle

Sharon Rose

Antoinette Smart

Pierre Albert

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The **Social Services Committee** Virtual meeting was held on **Wednesday, January 5, 2022 at 7:30pm.**

**Ms. Janice Reid** called the January 5, 2022 meeting to order at 7:40pm.

**Roll Call**—Monica McKain-Brown, Michelle Griffith, Jorge Tait, Diana Gay, Victor Jordan, Muline Mickle

**Ms. Reid** asked if everyone received the minutes? Since they do not have a quorum, the December and November minutes will be tabled until the February meeting. She asked for a motion to table the November and December meeting minutes.

**Mr. Jorge Tait** made a motion to table the November minutes.

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

**Ms. McKain-Brown** made a motion to table the December minutes.

**Mr. Tait** seconded the motion.

**Chairperson’s Report**

**Ms. Reid** said the Brookdale CAB did not hold a meeting in December and the next meeting will be held on Monday, January 10, 2022 and she will give a report at the February meeting.

She was forwarded an email from Ms. Sharon Devenish-Leed at Brookdale Hospital regarding the OBH circulation of the vaccine. They are distributing the Pfizer vaccine and is available for ages 5 years and older. A photo ID is required, regardless of age and recipients 19 years and under, must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. No appointment is required and is available every Wednesday in the CAB Auditorium from 9am to 3pm and pediatric from 3-6pm. Vaccines are also being administered at the Brookdale out-patient sites located throughout East New York. The hours are Monday through Friday, 10am to 4pm and appointments are required. She will get the information on testing since the OMNICRON variant being rampant and some of the sites are being closed down.

The $100.00 incentive to get vaccinated is still going on. Organizations referring people to get vaccinated will also get $100.00. Faith-based organizations can get a $2,000.00 grant for setting that up

At the December meeting, Ms. Monika Siergiej attended the meeting to get a letter of support to open a substance abuse clinic, Under Angel Wings Practice, in the community. She was scheduled to attend the General Board meeting to get the letter of support, but she was unable to attend. She will bring this back to the Executive Committee meeting in January to have this action item readded to the January 19th General Board meeting agenda for her to present to the community and then have a vote. She will follow up with her to confirm that she will be able to attend the January Board meeting.

**Mr. Tait** said there is a rapid testing site at Tilden Park and they will be there for a couple of months, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5:30pm. At the Clarendon Road Church, every Sunday for the month of January, they will be doing the saliva testing for COVID-19.

**Ms. Reid** said at the October Block Association meeting, Ms. Bakiriddin asked that the Social Services Committee take over the planning of the health fair/forum. Mr. Jordan was recognized for his excellent work on the health fair in 2021. If they are going to take this on, they need to do some brainstorming to decide the format, whether it will be in-person or virtual, and the topic or theme they want to offer the community at the health fair.

**Mr. Victor Jordan** said he thinks this would be a good project for this committee to take on and they can come up with new topics or some of the same topics and they have a lot of resources.

**Ms. Muline Mickle** asked if the health fair would be in-person or virtual?

**Ms. Reid** said the way things are going, she thinks it will be virtual because she does not foresee things changing. Currently, they do not have a place to meet and the meetings are held virtually.

**Ms. Antoinette Smart** asked what month are they thinking of holding the health fair?

**Ms. Reid** said that is why she is bringing it up now, to brainstorm the format, the topics and the timeline tonight. The last meeting is in June and they want to do it before then and they need a subcommittee to start planning on that now.

She asked what day would they want to do this? Last year, it was done in June. They need to decide if they want to do it in May or June and the timeframe. The last meeting for the Board will be June 15th and the last Block Association meeting will be on June 23rd. The health fair will have to be held before then and this will give them time to plan.

**Mr. Tait** suggested that they can give out PPE and have different booths for testing and vaccinations and this can be done in Paerdegat Park and they can also give out information.

**Ms. Mickle** said it would be a good idea to have it outside, depending on the state of the pandemic. If this cannot be done, then they can change to virtual.

**Ms. McKain-Brown** said they would have to think of a plan A and B simultaneously, if they were to go that route.

**Ms. Michelle Griffith** asked are they doing a health fair or a forum?

**Ms. Reid** said one suggestion was the health fair with the COVID-19 testing and then they have the forum. They have to decide whether they want to have the health fair with the focus on COVID-19 vaccinations and testing or a virtual health forum with topics and the committee needs to decide what they want to do. There are uncertainties in terms of the COVID-19 and they don’t know when this pandemic is going to end and they need to decide in terms of what would be best for them and the community.

**Ms. Griffith** said she thinks they should focus on the pandemic and vaccines and they should also think about services in the community that people have not been taking advantage of because of the pandemic and people are afraid to go to the hospitals for routine check-ups and tests. They should also emphasize on getting that done or performed at the health fair.

**Mr. Tait** said they should also focus on mental health because the pandemic is causing a lot of stress as it relates to COVID-19. Whether it is the health fair or forum, they should get someone to talk about that.

**Ms. Reid** said they can do twofold and still arrange to have the testing done in the community and still try to have some information about mental health resources that are available. The person at Kings County had contacted her about doing a mental health presentation and they can utilize Brookdale Hospital as well for their resources on mental health or have a forum on mental health coping mechanisms, especially with suicides and how children are being affected and that would be a good topic. That would be two topics

**Ms. McKain-Brown** said there are so many things because of COVID-19, whether it is mental health or unable to go to the doctor and the forum might be able to address those issues and at the same time for those who would like to have testing, it could be done simultaneously at the park on the same day.

**Ms. Reid** said she was thinking having two separate presenters, but maybe they can have a virtual presentation with resources on coping with COVID-19. She wrote an article on glaucoma for her Church because the elderly were afraid to go to the doctor for eye check-ups because of COVID-19. Glaucoma has been on the rise with the elderly in the past year or so because they have not been getting their eyes checked and get screenings. A lot of persons within the community **(INAUDIBLE)** those self-care resources have been neglected and they need to get that information out there as to where they can go in the community.

**Ms. Griffith** said it is not a luxury for people working from home, they have developed other aliments, and these are things from the fallout of the pandemic because they are hidden. There are a lot of issues being neglected in the community that need to be addressed.

**Ms. Reid** said they have two ideas generated and whether they can use the park for the health fair and include vaccinations and testing. They would have to get that organized with the Dept. of Health and at the **(INAUDIBLE)** they had some of the hospitals attend and distribute literature. They had Brookdale, Kings County and Downstate and they can reach out to them to partner and have other agencies participate.

**Mr. Tait** said if they have a date, he can contact Ms. Bossio or give her the number to work it out. He will ask Ms. Bossio if the Parks Dept. is giving out permits for 2022.

**Ms. Reid** asked do the members agree to have the health fair outdoors and have a virtual forum. She does not know how in terms of planning this and have others come will work out. Should they have two events or just one big event?

**Ms. Mickle** said they should really have one event because when people finish with one and go back home and do something else virtually, it might not be the best thing.

**Ms. Reid** said it will not be the same day **(INAUDIBLE)**

**Ms. Griffith** said virtual forum could be done at a broader level and the health fair would be more hands on and done on a different date.

**Ms. Smart** said it sounds convoluted and first, they would have to decide on two separate occasions, dates and events, one being the outdoor event at the park and the other being the forum. Both are excellent ideas, but where they are today and where they might be, they have to project down to June. There is the possibility they will still be living in a pandemic space. It would be a great idea to continue to do testing and vaccinations and there is an absolute need for mental health services on a big scale. They need people there that can speak to them and offer referrals. A lot of programs have closed down and there are a lot of areas where they can reach out to the community.

**Ms. Reid** asked if the event should be held on June 4th or the 11th?

**Ms. Diana Gay** said June 11th would be better because a lot of people would have returned home from the Memorial Day holiday weekend.

**Ms. Reid** said June 11th will be the tentative date for the health fair and have it at Paerdegat Park because of the close proximity to the Board office.

At the last meeting, they talked about the laptop distribution for the seniors who are socially isolated. She does not know how robust that program has been. The representatives from the Dept. of Health are not here to discuss the delivery of the laptops. There is a program throughout the senior centers to help teach the seniors how to use the laptops so they can have some hands-on activities. She will get an update on that.

They have generated some great ideas tonight in terms of them presenting or doing something for the community, the health fair. Do they think they should also have the forum as well? They will focus on amending their resources and other self-care activities for persons affected by COVID-19 or just one if the park is available, then they can see what resources and what **(INAUDIBLE)** they can have attend the health fair and then keep one open door event.

**Mr. Pierre Albert** said he thinks the **(INAUDIBLE)** would be a great activity, but then also a forum where they can go more in-depth and give more information and people would be more preceptive as opposed to being outside.

**Ms. Reid** said she thinks having the outdoor forum, it would be open to different persons and people who cannot get out and have access to a computer can at least listen in. Whatever they come up with, they can make sure they have the clinical experts are there or persons in the community that can offer valuable information that would be fruitful for persons.

**Ms. McKain-Brown** said she thinks they are both very important, but the forum would allow people who are locked and not getting information and they can happen on the same day depending on how much space the park has. The forum needs to have specific breakout rooms and she does not know how Webex does it. They can have breakout rooms for mental health or for people who have been home. They need to have specific guidelines and population, who would like to get certain information about how to deal with the pandemic.

**Ms. Reid** asked can they form a subcommittee to meet after the meeting to brainstorm regarding the forum and bring back to the group what their thoughts are and generate some ideas on how they want to go forward with the planning of the forum. Are any members interested in volunteering to work on the subcommittee?

**Ms. McKain-Brown** said she could volunteer, but are they interested in going that route. Yes, the forum is important or are they going to decide if the best thing is to just focus on one.

**Mr. Tait** said they think both are important and one will work with the other.

**Ms. Reid** said the recommendation was they would do the virtual forum first and have the health fair to follow. Does everyone agree with this?

The members present agreed with the recommendation to hold both the forum and the health fair.

**Ms. Smart** asked what population is the forum being geared towards? She is for the outdoor event because she has seen them in the community and the impact they have on the population they get and people are hungry for health information and to just get out.

**Ms. Reid** said the health fair/forum was open to CB 17 and was advertised by the Churches and other community areas. It was geared to anyone in CB 17 community to attend.

**Ms. Griffith** asked how successful was the last forum and lessons learned from it, and should they do something different this time or not do the forum?

**Ms. Reid** said they have a lot of information and thoughts, pro and con, regarding the ideas and thoughts. Mr. Tait will follow up to see if permits are being issued for 2022. If permits are being distributed, they should start working on an outdoor health fair. The emphasis is to have things outdoors, out in the open and not things in closed spaces because of this virus, they also have to adhere to the social distancing guidelines as well. They will table this until they find out what the park’s response will be. If the park is not available, then they will have to **(INAUDIBLE)** in terms of the forum.

**Ms. Smart** said they should table it until Mr. Tait gets the information and they can take it from there. Even if they are still in the pandemic space, the recommendations right now are if they are going to do something, do it outdoors. right now, they need to plan as though that is what it is going to be. They have no clue as to where they are heading with this. In the summer, the safest thing is it is going to hot and outdoors, they can socially distance with the space in the park and they are able to spread out and this would be a safer event and they can give out masks.

**Mr. Tait** asked if the they cannot use the inside of the park, can they do it on the sidewalk?

**Ms. Reid** said they can use the sidewalk near the Board office if the park is not available. They had some really good suggestions and recommendations and a robust discussion. They will table this and when Mr. Tait gets back to them, that will determine what the City is doing in terms of space and permits, and then they can go forward. The majority of the members would like to do a health fair outdoors. Other CB 17 health fairs have been well attended.

She asked if there were any other issues to discuss? Having heard none, she asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:07pm.

The next meeting will be February 2, 2022 at 7:30pm.

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

**Ms. Griffith** seconded the motion.