**Community Board 17**

**Social Services Committee Meeting**

**Monday, September 26, 2022**

**Present: Guests: Excused:**

Rhonda Joseph CK Price Diana Gay

Sabine Jacques Christine Delius

Monica McKain-Brown Tanya Kerr-Samuels

Janice Reid

Donna Rose

Muline Mickle

Ashley Mangru

Sharon Marshall

Antoinette Smart

Natalie Ferguson

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The **Social Services Committee Virtual** meeting was held on **Monday, September 26, 2022 at 7:30pm.**

**Ms. Rhonda Joseph** called the meeting to order 7:40pm.

She thanked everyone for attending the first Social Services Committee meeting tonight. She is the new Social Services Chair.

**Roll Call**-Rhonda Joseph, Monica McKain-Brown, Muline Mickle, Donna Rose, Janice Reid, Sabine Jacques, Ashley Mangru, CK Price, Christine Delius

**Ms. Joseph** asked if everyone received the minutes from June 1, 2022 meeting? She asked for a motion to accept the minutes from the June 1, 2022 meeting?

**Ms. Muline Mickle** made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2022 meeting.

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

**Ms. Joseph** said she wanted to use this meeting to see how they would be moving forward to discuss what the needs are in the community, what their envisioning needs are and what they knows the needs to be, they are hearing it and they live here and they know. Moving forward for 2023, the main objective of this committee was to put together a resource fair. The Chair would like for them to combine that resource fair with other committees from the Board and make it one big Community Board fair. She thinks that is a great idea, it is less heavy lifting for this committee, however, maybe the bulk of that resource fair, the ideas and the vendors, and information they would like to have and be disseminated would probably come from here and for the rest of the year, once a month, she would like to know what is everyone else’s thoughts or ideas of what they would like to see, maybe where their biggest needs are. She does not think they will be able to hit everything. They have housing issues and the housing Committee takes care of that, but maybe they want to bring in things on Section 8 or do they want to do a combined thing on the November or December meeting with Housing or do they just want to do something on Section 8. The Dept. for the Aging has a lot of programs and maybe bring in something on Medicare. There are so many things that they need to touch on and she wants to know if they just want to zero in on a few things or do they just want to do a lot of umbrella type things. She wants to hear from the people here and not just what she is thinking.

They do have a Community Assessment Survey right now that DYCD is running and from that information, they would probably get a lot of information to what the community is saying is the need, but they are like all boots on the ground and she thinks they know what they are hearing and seeing. If they want to chime it and just to hear where they would like to see this committee go and what are some of the future things they would like to bring either to a monthly meeting or how they would like to start to see the resource fair unravel.

**Ms. Sharon Marshall** said she is the Director of Community Engagement and Partnerships for the Bureau of Brooklyn Neighborhood Health, part of the Dept. of Health & Mental Hygiene and a resident of the district. She works out of the 485 Troop Avenue building and they support several Community Boards and they are here to provide any assistance through data, presentations, etc. as far as their needs as they discuss them. She is very aware of some of the needs through data impacting the district. She would like to hear from them what are the needs. The only question she had around the housing is, whether or not they wanted to do the intersection of how housing impacts health, what the social determinacy are or is this something different.

**Ms. Joseph** said they could maybe do that and not touch pieces that the Housing Committee would be touching on and they can come at it from a different angle as a committee and Housing may be trying to focus on something else, but still under the umbrella of Housing, but if it is determined that they feel Housing should do that, they may not want to touch upon that at all. She knows Section 8 is an issue, how to apply for it, where to go for it, how to become eligible for it and those are some main things that is why Social Services might be looking to get in to.

**Ms. Donna Rose** said she thinks housing is no good in their community because there are a lot of people not living anywhere and some are living with family members, and for the Section 8 and how to apply for it to get apartments because the cost of living is so high for these people and she thinks the housing would be good, and the mental health can go with that.

**Ms.** asked if that could be in collaboration with Housing?

**Ms. Joseph** said yes, they could.

**Ms. Mickle** said she has a concern because her Brother is showing signs of Alzheimer’s and she wants to know if they can get a speaker to come to the meeting to address questions of Alzheimer’s in the community and also the role Medicaid plays in giving people without good medical insurance an if they can have a speaker from Medicaid to come and provide them on the services they provide.

**Ms. Joseph** asked if she wants someone to explain the process on how to apply for Medicaid for people of all ages, from 1 to 100 years old.

**Ms. Sabine Jacques** said one of the big topics that is important is health equity and it is a big umbrella and she knows it goes back to CMS, the Dept. of Health and it is a big conversation in the community and she knows it is an important discussion because as they are looking at the electronic medical records, in which data is gathered, they want to be able to make sure that they are addressing health equity in maternal health and that is a big conversation and if there is a speaker that deals in health equity, maternal health, mental health and she is looking to collaborating with people who are working on this. OBH is big and they have a health system now and the 3 hospitals, Brookdale, Interfaith and Kingsbrook, that make up OBH is formalized. As they live in this community, she hopes they will have people come and speak and discuss what is going on in the space of health equity.

**Ms. Marshal** said she is willing to support her efforts because she works out of the Center for Health Equity & Community Wellness for the Dept. of Health and they have a big initiative addressing maternal health and also mental health is a priority for the new Commissioner, Dr. Vasan and there are many different touching point around health equity and just how to have a more equitable system and Brookdale Hospital is trying to improve their standard care and they were just recently awarded a Baby Friendly Designation and that is a standard based on the World Health Organization in improving infant and maternal care and bonding. She is willing to support with any information and data that she may need because they do have several initiatives.

**Ms. Joseph** said she is hearing a lot of health-related themes, do they want to spend their month to month meetings focusing on bringing in people to speak and address those health-related themes or do they may want to touch upon other health-related themes.

**Ms. McKain-Brown** said it was mentioned earlier about social determinacy and as they are Social Services, she thinks that whether it is housing or health equity, and they do come under that, what are the social determinacy that determines equity and housing, and she thinks they can all be linked, but how are they going to do it.

**Mr. CK Price** said Social Services could mean a lot of different things and he was wondering what separates the Social Services Committee from all the other committees. Social Services technically could be any and all of a lot of the other committees. He is asking that question because it might help them to keep things from getting too broad in focusing their efforts. Looking at the list of the other committees, and health is not a committee, so that is an excellent place for them to start.

**Ms. Joseph** said he is liking a health theme and with all the other components they have put into it so far.

**Mr. Price** said he thinks what they have addressed so far is great, but is wondering where else they could go and addressing gaps where other committees may or may not address.

**Ms. Joseph** said she does not know that she has the answers to that question per say, and when she is envisioning Housing as a committee, they are dealing with a lot of what they are seeing now, zoning, buildings, the rent destabilization, and she feels that is how they are coming at housing, the committee maybe or how she is seeing it. The Housing Committee takes on homeless issues and Section 8 and where do they go to apply for it, how and what they need to get it, like the HEAP program, she does not know if that is considered a housing issue, like paying for heat in their homes. All the committees are trying to work together, and she gets that part as well.

They are not going to solve everything tonight and they just want to start laying the groundwork for what they want to see coming up, if they are moving forward with the resource fair and she did want to put that to the committee, if everyone was in agreement with where they want to go for 2023 and have that push towards the fair while they are having their monthly meetings.

**Ms. Mickle** said it sounds good to work towards the resource fair and involve the other committees.

**Ms. Joseph** said for the resource fair, she does not know if tonight is too soon if they are looking at a April or May 2023 date and they do need to start planning, if they do want to do that and they also need to start locking down a date, so that when they start reaching out to presenters and providers. She wants to do something different with this fair, then they need to have a date so the presenter and providers can also start planning. She is just putting it on the floor, and they can start thinking about it and maybe at next month’s meeting, the members can think about it to see if it is something they want to move forward with and they can make that decision and they can put it on the floor for a vote.

The seniors totally agree with Mr. Price and she asked if he can speak a little bit about what they should be addressing as a committee.

**Mr. Price** said he was looking at the committees and reflecting on his previous experiences and having worked in Government, he realized that there is no committee for the aging, and that combined with walking around the neighborhood and thinking about how many older people they have here. Recently, he was helping deliver water at the Riis Houses, when they were dealing with arsenic in the water. He was delivering water to those who could not come out and get water and take it home themselves because they were home bound. He wants to know how do they get information to people who really need it because they are house bound and may not be able to come out to an event that they may benefit from and may not have advocates who are looking out for them, be it individually or through a facility. Their needs and things that need to be addressed are somewhat different often times than what’s good for **(INAUDIBLE)**  Wellness check-ins, dealing with people who are shut-ins, seniors and people who are older and the people taking care of them, have a specific set of needs that this particular committee might be well placed to address in a way that other committees can’t or don’t.

**Ms. Joseph** said again, that is a lot of heavy lifting and both those buckets are huge. The **(INAUDIBLE)** aging and health. She is trying to get them on track and focus on where they would like to spend their time and the things they would like to bring to the community. Those are the 3 things she is getting and is this where they are going to spend their next meeting months?

**Ms. Marshall** said the intersections or does it have to be siloed or just depends on **(INAUDIBLE)**  because even health equity addresses that and elder care and things like that, depending on how much support they get from other committees and bring more people onto the committee to provide support, then, it is doable.

**Ms. Joseph** asked can people attend the meetings and participate? She would welcome them and would love for them to be a part of the committee, but they can attend and participate, and not be on the committee, and she does not want anyone to feel like they are committed. The work they have ahead seems like a lot and they want to get a lot done, and they are going to need all hands on deck. She thinks this is going to be great and she likes the 3 buckets. If it grows and they have to shift things around, she thinks they will be able to do that.

She said Ms. Samuels is from the NAB 17, the Neighborhood Advisory Board for Community Board 17. They are their own Board and they also do the Community Assessment survey for Community Board 17. She will speak to them about what the survey is and hopefully, this committee can also help generating the survey that is already out and being disseminated.

**Ms. Tanya Samuels** said she is from NAB 17, in Brooklyn, and they cover a very unique area of Brooklyn, which is from Midwood, a little bit of Canarsie and up to East Flatbush. They are in the midst of their Community Needs Based Assessment and this just to see what is needed in their neighborhoods and what services they need and how far they have to go to get those services that they need. Is there a foot Doctor neighborhood, an afterschool program for their children or a Therapist in the neighborhood that can assist them or their children because so many of them have scars and trauma from COVID-19 and they really don’t know who is being affected. There is a lot of mental health issues that needs to be addressed and are not being addressed, and they think it is only the children or adults, but everyone is being affected, whether some have lost both parents, their grandparents and caregivers, so it is a lot compiled in it. Are they seeing these services in their neighborhood, what else would they like to see in their neighborhood? A lot of the things they are talking about, they do that. She would love to collaborate with CB 17 and get some of this work done. They will be having a forum on October 3, 2022. Come out and let them hear what they have to say and let’s do this together.

**Ms. Marshal** asked if this includes Remsen Village, the neighborhood of East Flatbush, going up to East New York Avenue, because there are a lot of needs in those neighborhoods, and they are a part of CB 17.

**Ms. Samuels** said yes, Remsen Village and East Flatbush, but not so much Crown Heights. They are on Rutland Road and East 94th Street and they come down to East 45th Street, down to Tilden Avenue and come across to **(INAUDIBLE)**  She will send the map to Ms. Joseph to share with them actually where they cover.

**Ms. Joseph** said she was trying to pull up the map to show where the cut offs are, and to also note, they just had some rezoning of their district and she is not sure where the maps are.

**Ms. Marshall** said there are a lot of needs in Rutland Plaza.

**Ms. Samuels** said they will be included in the survey because all NABs are doing this, it is included in their sister NAB, which is Board 16.

Flatlands is not included because NAB 17 cuts off at Kings Highway, and Flatlands would be in NAB 22. With the rezoning in the City council, a lot of things have changed and they are working on getting them a revised map of the area and she will find out that information and send it to Ms. Joseph to share with them.

**Ms. Jacques** said there is a lot of rezoning and things are changing and they do not know the effects of all these changes and how does that impact them? Can they have a representative or someone to come and speak to some of these changes and how it impacts this Community Board?

**Ms. Joseph** said there is a rezoning meeting tomorrow at 7:30pm and it will be virtual. She does not know if she will get all of her questions answered, but at least it will start the conversation and they can get back to her if she does not get everything answered.

**Ms. Samuels** said encourages them to share the survey wherever they go. She is in a catch 22 area. She is also in School District 23, which is the Brownsville/Ocean Hill section and also in School District 15 and she shares it at any meeting that would allow her to speak, just to get the word out, because it is so important to have these surveys done so they can know how it affects the elderly and this is how they can capture this data. Send them to their CECs, Churches, schools and drop them off at their Doctor’s offices. This is an on-line survey, and all they have to do is scan the QR code and then they can submit it right from their phones.

**Ms. Joseph** said she does not know if they are at a juncture at this point in the agenda because she wants to address some vision statements and goals and she feels like they are already there. They have their 3 buckets that they are saying they want to pursue and is there anything else they want to bring to the table that she has not addressed? Do they want to split these buckets up into subcommittees or is everyone okay with them speaking as one group and everybody is working on the same thing?

**Ms. Rose** said as one group and everybody working on the same thing would be much better.

**Ms. Joseph** said if there is something that they are more interested in, if they have presenters or if there is someone specific that they think would be a good fit to bring to a meeting and they would like them to speak. They can start thinking about that as well and if they are going to have presenters, do they want to then do more outreach into the community, so they can come the meeting so they can hear what is being said and that would also be a part of that, because the presenters are not just for them. Is this how everyone is envisioning this?

**Ms. Jacques** asked can it be both? One of the challenges she thinks is that if a presenter does come, they want it to be action oriented. She is learning a lot about Community Board politics, which is people related and how things get done. She would like to have these meetings where they are action oriented driven so they can get things done. They are going to agree that they want them to come, what is the task they are going to assign to them for them to deliver, because if they are coming on to take information, then what is the follow up to have them be held accountable. They are not coming here to sell something, they bring somebody in with the understanding that they are either going to listen or an take action and they are going to take it back and then bring it back to them, because she thinks this is a bi-directional committee where they can do their part, but then they are also at the mercy, but they also have dependencies to work with people in the healthcare system.

**Ms. Marshall** said from her experience with other Community Boards and how she developed relationships with others. Prior to working with the Dept. of Health, she worked for an initiative and she looked at the Community Board as the Health and Social Services Committee of that district as her accountability partner. She would report to them any new initiatives that were happening and if she was having trouble with that initiative where there were contacts within there and she looked at it as a partnership with the Health and Social Services Committee and making sure that they were abreast of any information and then they were also impowered to speak with the information and data that she was providing to them and they could advocate for themselves. It wasn’t just her **(INAUDIBLE)**  down with data around what were the health disparities and inequities within that community, was how she was empowering them. Each Community Board and each Health and Social Services Committee, depending on the district, each has a different flavor and from her perspective level of what they perceive, what they are empowered to do. This is something that she has been able to observe, and yes, actionable stuff and there should always be able to do and hold the agencies that are suppose to provide these services accountable of providing clear ways of accessing resources.

**Ms. Joseph** said she wants to make sure that she is understanding how they are going to be moving and make sure that everyone here is in agreement on how they should be moving. They want to bring in presenters for a subject matter and answering their questions or is it someone who is bringing them information that they are turnkeying to the community or that they are going to invite more community people that particular night to hear the information.

**Ms. Jacques** said there is a gap in what information the Community Board has with respect to an OBH and there is a gap where everything is not going to trickle down to them and there might even be a gap with DOH because not everybody goes to the website to gather information. If they decide there is a particular topic and they choose a subject matter expert, the hope is the they will bring them this knowledge and information for the gap they are missing and they have to be clear of what they are going to focus on. Say the topic is Maternal Health Equity, what does the data say about the community in respect to Maternal Health Equity. If they bring this to them, what would be their follow-up for them? They can have data, but what is happening is they can hear the community **(INAUDIBLE)**  but if there is no action, then it is just talk. She does not know how to make things more actionable. If they have her in as a Equity Health expert and she came to speak to them, she should have at least viewed the data in the community to speak to them as to what they are doing, if she is at the top working with a Health Equity Commissioner.

**Ms. Joseph** said she understands and just wanted to get more committee members here, your chiming in, what would a month by month meeting look like with a presenter coming in and talking to them and then they are going to turnkey information out or are they going to invite more people to a meeting if they are having a presenter speak, so that the community can hear the speaker or are they looking to bring in people who can address the issues in their community, and she wants them to address it, what are they doing about it and then either they are going to come back and maybe have more information 3 months down the line. How are they seeing the month by month meetings happening or what would they like to see happening? Do they need more time to think about that?

For next month, what would they like to see happen at the October meeting? They can all bring in their own people and she thinks they are all a room full of their own super power and they can have someone come in and speak, but if there is no one hear listening and it is just them, is that what they want?

**Ms. Jacques** said she would appreciate if it is possible, **(INAUDIBLE)**  to the CIO of OBH to come and talk to them as they now have this full system and they can share with them what work is being done. It does not have to be the CIO or the CEO because they can be very busy, or it can be a representative. She keeps focusing on OBH because this tied to the community, so if a representative comes, although they don’t have a seat at the table, they should give an overview of what is going on with Interfaith in terms of mental health, what is going on with Brookdale as they hear there are so many statistics, and again, statistics are not always the best numbers, but they have it, so give them a somatic view of how this committee can then work with them as this what the stats show from this committee’s perspective and again, this committee has to be clear on what they want. They should send them an action item that they would prefer them to speak on and if they get 20 minutes, that would be like a town hall meeting to them.

**Ms. Joseph** said she wants someone from OBH to speak on what they are doing in the community and this would be under the health equity umbrella. She is going to make the effort to reach out to OBH and if anyone here would like to be a part of the reaching out process or if they know of anyone at those 3 hospitals, Kingsbrook, Interfaith and Brookdale, and see if they can have a representative from what is now, OBH to come in and speak about health equity issues in Community Board 17 district. She would be happy if they can make that happen and as soon as she finds out that information, they can get someone here and then they can start doing some more outreach to the community to have them come out so they can also be a part of that conversation. How does that sound to everyone?

**Ms. Janice Reid** said she can assist with OBH Brookdale because she represents CB 17 on the OBH Brookdale CAB.

**Ms. Joseph** asked if she wants to take on that project to get a representative to come in and speak?

**Ms. Reid** said she can contact Ms. Sharon to facilitate that.

**Ms. Joseph** asked is there were anything else they would like to see at their upcoming meetings, just in case that may not work for October, but maybe they can be looking at scheduling that for the November meeting. She wants to have something in place for October if there are things they need to be addressing. Hopefully, they can start thinking about the resource fair and maybe have a month that they are going to be looking at and then they can start moving forward with reaching out and start trying to lock down some things, definitely a venue and those are some of the things they need to keep in mind, the date and a venue and where in the Community Board the catchment area they would like to see the resources to happen.

Does anyone have anything else they would like to bring up?

**Ms. Reid** said this is sickle Cell Awareness Month and OBH Brookdale is hosting a blood drive and that will be Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2022, from 11am to 5pm, in the hospital auditorium, located at 555 Rockaway Parkway. They will also be doing Sickle Cell Trait testing for all donors. Sickle Cell primarily affect those in the African American community. As previously mentioned, Brookdale is being designated as a Baby Friendly Designation and that was something they have been working on for about 5-6 years, and part of that would be successful breastfeeding initiatives for parents and helping the new Mothers with that initiative. They did have a new pregnancy open house on Sept. 16, 2022. OBH does have a new center for pregnancy and that is something they have really been pushing for and making those in the neighborhood aware of. Having Brookdale in the light for making persons come to Brookdale to have their babies and not go to other hospitals.

**Ms. Joseph** asked have they been addressing the maternal health issues?

**Ms. Reid** said in past meeting they have been and last year, they did have some information at the CAB about that, and now with the new Baby Friendly Designation initiative, she is sure they will have much more and she will speak with Ms. Marshall to see what they can offer in terms of maternity health equity. They have a new Chairperson for the CAB and they are in the midst of transitioning.

The Brookdale CAB has been in existence for over 20 years and it is the only CAB remaining within the OBH system right now and the role of the Board is basically to identify and present for discussion any problems or concerns that the community has regarding the services that Brookdale offers to the community and to help identify any health concerns or issues that could be addressed by the Administration and the staff and help to plan and develop any kind of outreach in terms of any information or anything happening in the hospital, the CAB persons would be the ones to give that information out, or if they have any programs that could be **(INAUDIBLE)**  to improve the care at the hospital. They usually work in collaboration with the groups within the community and any kind of private agencies. It is make up of at least 13 agencies that represent the members from the CAB and most of the Community Boards within CB 17, CB 18, CB 9 and CB 5 have representatives on the CAB and then other agencies, Governmental, private agencies or community organizations that work with the community groups and members of the CAB. The catchment areas are East New York, Canarsie, Brownsville, East Flatbush, Crown Heights, Ocean Hill/Brownsville, Cypress Hills, Mills Basin, Marine Park and that is limited to the communities within that area. That is how the CAB outreach has been designed. They would have to be selected by an agency to represent on the CAB and elected officials also send representatives to the meeting.

**Ms. Christine Delius** said she is here to bring information back to Senator Persaud’s office and she is the Chair of Social Services and has a vested interest in the needs of the community. She is taking notes and making sure they stay on top of things and they can also use her office as a resource for any information they may have that they see the community might need. They might see it on their end, but not seeing it in the community. Let’s use each other to take and give information. As soon as they get the ball rolling for the resource fair or anything they may come up with, give them the flyers and information and they will put it out on social media and have copies in their office for people that stop in. Let’s do this thing together and she looks forward to seeing how this committee shapes up and helps out the community in the future.

**Ms. Joseph** said she wants them to tell her what they think month to month, how they want to disseminate information. The Board has a website at this point and she knows there is a lot of work that Tamara has put into it and she is hoping they will be posting things to the site and other than that, it is going to be word of mouth, their own social media, if they choose to share this type of information. There is going to be emailing, putting physical papers in places wherever they can, at their Churches or jobs. There is not one specific way they can get things out. She did see in the minutes that they had or do have a Facebook page, she does not know how that works and she does not have access to that or how things are posted to it. It is any and all of it and they are just the messengers at this point, until they come up with something better. She is open to any and all suggestions on how they would like to do that.

**Ms. Reid** said the Social Services committee held a health fair on June 18, 2022 in Paerdegat Park, with 18 vendors that participated and thank you letters were sent to all those vendors that attended the event. They also sent thank you letters to the elected officials who donated, and they were Assemblymember Rodneyse Bichotte-Hermalyn, Councilmember Farah Louis, Councilmember Rita Joseph, Assemblymember Helene Weinstein and PathMark also contributed. They all donated water and snacks for the event and Assembymember Weinstein also provided PPE. Mr. Lebrun Burnett also donated water and apples that were put in the lunch boxes and Ms. Fraser donated $20.00 that was used to cover the lunches. She purchased the sandwiches for the lunch boxes and the vendors and committee members that attended. As per the permit, they could not serve food to outside personnel, just to the vendors and the committee itself. They did receive $1,500.00 in discretionary funds from the Board to cover some of the items for the event. $205.00 was used to purchase the banner, which can be used for future events, and 3 flyers that were put around the park to advertise the event and the tee-shirts cost $901.24. The total cost was $1,106.24 and the unused balance was $293.76. the leftover tee-shirts and the banner are in the Board’s office and the tee-shirts can also be used for future events.

If there is not anything else they would like to chime in on or to add, she asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

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

**Ms. Antoinette Smart** seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned.