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Morry Galonoy
Chairperson

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October 17th, 2022

Health and Human Services and Education Committee Meeting Minutes

This meeting was teleconferenced using Zoom

Attendees:

Lauren Springer, Chair
Amparo Abel-Bey
John Bahia
Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos

Absentees:

Clara Oza, Co-Chair
Sandra Bigitschke
Jewel Chowdhury
Selena Romero
Mary Torres
Phuntsok Tashi

Guest

Julie Chou, CB5 Manhattan
Renee Kinsella, CB5 Manhattan
Betty Kay, CB 1 Manhattan

Community Board 2 Staff

Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager, Community Board 2

Lauren Springer, Chair Health and Human Services and Education Committee welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Julie Chou and Renee Kinsella of Community Board 5 in Manhattan will be giving a presentation on NYC Public Restrooms. Julie Chou gave this presentation in June 2022 to the Land Use and Housing Committee.

- Julie Chou shared that Renee Kinsella is the Chair of the Budget, Education and City Services Committee of Community Board 5 in Manhattan.
- Julie Chou is the Vice-Chair of the Budget, Education and City Services Committee.
- The public bathroom working group was started this year. They regularly meet every month. There are also discussions with the Manhattan Borough President's office who proposed two legislations this year.
- The number of public restrooms right now in the NYC Parks is 662 out of 1,700 Parks.
- Less than half of the parks have access to a public restroom.

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

- Out of 472 MTA Stations, 78 have public restrooms. Some have closed during the pandemic and have not re-opened.
- There are public bathrooms in transportation hubs – There are 4 transportation hubs and 5 automated public toilets (self-cleaning units)
- The city purchased 20 of the automated public toilets in 2006 but has only installed 5 of them after 16 years. The ones not being used sit in a warehouse. They have been hard to site and DOT says there is community opposition.
- They are trying to get a meeting with DOT to explain community opposition as it is not clear.
- Automated public bathrooms would be easier for the city as they are paid for by another source and that source maintains it as well.
- Drugs and crime are also issues at public restrooms.
- The public restrooms at libraries is 216.
- The public restrooms at NYPD stations is 125. There are security issues.
- Privately Owned Public bathrooms (POPs) are mostly in Manhattan. There are 550 but only 14 provide a public bathroom. According to DCP, all of these bathrooms were created in the 1980's.
- There's a total of 1103 public bathrooms in NYC. With a population of 8.8 million and over 6 million in tourists, this is not enough. Only two of these bathrooms are 24/7.
- Close to 400,000 public urination complaints (311) during a ten-year period.
- The NYC Council requests an addition of \$250 million in capital funding in the Executive Budget to provide \$50 million per borough for comfort stations.
- In April 2022 and July 2022, Bill Intro 0258 and Bill Intro 0576 were put together regarding comfort stations in NYC. These bills are in the early stages and still need to be voted on.
- Intro 0576 would have to report every six months to the Department of Parks & Recreation the condition and features of each bathroom.
- Public restrooms are better located in the view of the public. Once out of public site, they are often vandalized.
- Automated Public Toilets (APT) are larger units and often have issues with broken parts. There are 15 APTS to site within the next two years.
- Some restrooms require a full time attendant and some do not. It all depends on the needs of the community.
- The MTA subway station at Time Square requires a full time attendant. It is paid for by the large development above it.
- In London, they pay retailers to open their toilets to the public.
- They need more ideas for getting toilets, but it was also mentioned that an app is needed to find toilets in the NYC area and where the facilities are, the hours, if it is wheelchair accessible, changing table.
- There is also the issue of maintaining them, keeping them operatable.
- Manhattan Borough President is now asking the agencies, Parks and DOT to catalogue their restrooms, how many do they have, where are they and what are their features.
- Support is needed for these Bills from the community boards.

- There is a strategy around gaining support by an inventory of what they have, what works for different neighborhoods, how to site them, how to fund them, how to supplement where it is necessary.
- Another issue mentioned is that sometimes this information is not kept from year to year in a database, which is important to build on.
- The team presenting asked for feedback from CB2 on any suggestions to be made.
- Some of the working group recommendations are:
 - Creating consistent signage so the public knows where they are.
 - The hours of operation
 - The features
 - A call on the Mayor to reinterpret the meaning of “public” in city rule.
 - Increase the Parks Department Budget with a mandate to fund more public toilets.
 - Encourage DOT to install the remaining Automated Public Toilets (APT) that are in storage.
 - Pressure the MTA to reopen and improve existing bathrooms and to expand the number of stations with toilets.
 - Work with the DCP to include zoning for public bathrooms requiring bathrooms in privately owned public spaces.
 - Create and fund for a Deputy Mayor position to oversee Public Spaces. This position would coordinate city agencies and programs to help set priorities for public space.
 - Encourage the creation of more drop-in sites run by the NYC Department of Homeless Services that will offer 24/7, 365 days access to shower and toileting facilities. There are currently 5 Drop-In Centers.
- It was mentioned that LIC has a lot of development with large buildings, this could be something the CB could ask for from the developers.
- If municipal buildings could have bathrooms close to the buildings access, this could increase the number of bathrooms for the public.
- Julie Chou mentioned that their community board routinely ask all applicants seeking support for any reason to make their toilets available and free to the public.

Amparo Abel-Bey made a motion to write a letter of support. The letter of support would be addressed to the Mayor, Borough President and local Councilmembers.

Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos suggested them making this presentation at a full board meeting.

Community Boards 4 and 6 are also part of this Working Group.

Old Business / New Business

- Short discussion on future topics.

Lauren Springer thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kim Waber