



Donovan Richards
Queens Borough President

Community Board No. 2

43-22 50th Street, 2nd Floor
Woodside, New York 11377

(718) 533-8773

Fax (718-533-8777

Email qn02@cb.nyc.gov

www.nyc.gov/queenscb2

Danielle Brecker
Chairperson

Debra Markell Kleinert
District Manager

May 8th, 2023

Health and Human Services and Education Committee Meeting Minutes

This meeting was teleconferenced using Zoom

Attendees:

Lauren Springer, Chair
Clara Oza, Co-Chair
Amparo Abel-Bey
Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos
Eric Narburgh

Absentees:

John Bahia
Sandra Bigitschke
Phuntsok Tashi
Atanu Majumdar – Public Member

Public Members

Julie Chou
Andrea Thomas, Sunnyside Community Services

Guest

Laura Atlas, Senior Director of External Affairs, NYC Health & Hospitals

Community Board 2 Staff

Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager, Community Board 2

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

Lauren Springer introduced Laura Atlas, NYC Health & Hospitals Senior Director of External Affairs.

Laura Atlas discussed the HERRC site that is in LIC.

- HERRC stands for Humanitarian Emergency Relief & Response Center.
- These sites are mostly set up in Manhattan. There is only one in Queens.
- These sites were set up to address the needs of the asylum seekers that come to the city. This operation was started last year.
- This operation was set up in response to asylum seekers coming into Port Authority from the southern area.
- HERRC was trying to create a space where asylum seekers could stay before the next part of their journey.

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

- For some it meant connecting them to the services that are offered here and for others getting them tickets to their next location.
- The HERRC sites are broken up by population. The one in LIC has 145 units which is small compared to Manhattan.
- The HERRC system is set up to think about the needs of the asylum seeker.
- Most of the people in the HERRC system are family households.
- The HERRC system set up is very similar to the DHS system.
- There are supply rooms at every site. Families can have access to shampoo, diapers, etc.
- Breakfast and lunch are served, snacks are provided 24 hours a day, and, in the evening, a hot meal is provided. There is no curfew.
- The HERRC sites are finding that most people are working, doing domestic work, serving as day laborers or making E-Bike deliveries.
- Most people coming across the border state that they are seeking asylum and are provided temporary status.
- They are given two dates, one to check in and one to start their asylum-seeking status which can take years. After six months they can get an employment authorization number and can start to work.
- Every HERRC site has a clinical setup which is 24/7. Vaccinations are provided on site, clinical services are provided as well as medications.
- Metro Health Plus is on site.
- Social workers and caseworkers are on site 24/7.
- DOE is at all the family sites for two purposes, one is for student enrollment and the second for students in temporary housing for bussing needs and MetroCards.
- English language courses are offered.
- It is a case-by-case basis on how long asylum seekers can stay at the HERRC site.
- The sites are in a hotel which is leased by HERRC.
- There is money included in the State budget for this operation, and Health and Hospitals has applied for money from the Federal Government.
- NYC is paying for most of the cost for this operation as they continue to seek federal and state funding.
- Most HERCC sites are at capacity. There is an open request for proposals but it is uncertain whether any new sites are planned for Queens.
- A question was asked how can CB2 help/support the HERRC program?
 - New clothing would be helpful.
 - Let the HERRC program know of any resource fairs, for coat, backpack, or sock drives.
 - Any summer programming for children would be great.
- Andrea Thomas of Sunnyside Community Services reported that their organization needs Home Health Aides and asked if the asylum seekers have work visas.
 - The Federal Government does not allow an asylum seeker to have an employment authorization number until they have been in the country for 6 months.
- Legal services are also a top need for the asylum seekers.

Old Business:

- The committee discussed revisiting the resource guide for the community.
- Lauren Springer will share with the committee the link of the document started called Stakeholders Document.

New Business:

- Julie Chou shared with the committee that three community boards got together this month in Manhattan to discuss serious mental illness.
- Julie Chou mentioned how people are concerned about their safety due to the seriousness of mental illness.
- Julie Chou will send a copy of a resolution that was worked on concerning this topic.

Lauren Springer thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kim Waber