

PENDING COMMITTEE APPROVAL
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8
MINUTES OF THE AGING COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON APRIL 23, 2020 VIA ZOOM

Committee Members Present

Eric Dinowitz, Chair
Marvin Goodman
Lisa Daub
Rita Pochter Lowe
Dan Padernacht

Committee Members Not Present

Daniella Fuchs
Karen Pesce
Jyll Townes

Other CB8 & Guests

David Gelman - CB8
Nicholas Fazio - CB8
Julie Dalton - RSS
Sharon Asherman - Riverdale Y
Miryam Rabner - MJHS
Andrea Cianfrani - LiveOn NY
Kim Lerner - LiveON NY
Bayla Butler - NORC at Amalgamated Park-Reservoir
Josue Melendez - Department for the Aging

The meeting commenced at 4:00pm.
Eric Dinowitz, Aging Committee Chair, welcomed everyone.
Members of the committee and guests introduced themselves.

Senior Centers provided an update with their experiences during the Covid-19 crisis
RSS - As the crisis began, RSS provided grab and go food, which lasted a short while. Staff is now working remotely. They report that the biggest issue is food access. They also note that in speaking to over 500 seniors in the neighborhood, they report increased rates of depression and anxiety.

Riverdale Y - The Riverdale Y has received special permission to continue their meal program on-site because they provide Kosher meals, and they are delivering those meals. There is currently a waiting list of 50 people. Riverdale Y is concerned with how to feed the extra 50 people above the 150 they are able to support. They also call members on the telephone and provide online programming, however it was noted that many seniors do not use computers, and even the seniors who mastered email now have to learn videoconferencing. In addition to the work they are doing for seniors, the Y is providing childcare for first responders.

MJHS - MJHS shared that they struggled to get personal protective equipment, while seeing an uptick in COVID positive people. They are continuing to serve seniors and working with seniors currently in hospice.

AMPARK NORC - They have been calling all of their seniors. Food access has been an overwhelming issue. The local supermarket has agreed to deliver, though they are overwhelmed with calls and cannot always deliver the same day. The use of technology among seniors has become an issue that needs to be addressed. While they have emails for over 300 seniors, there are close to 400 without emails.

Chair Dinowitz invited guests Andrea Cianfrani (LiveOn), Kim Lerner (LiveOn), and Josue Melendez (DFTA) to speak.

LiveOn pulls together over 100 people on calls every Friday and troubleshoots common problems. Nutrition has been a priority for all centers and seniors. They noted that nutrition efforts from NYC have been stepped up.

DFTA informed the committee that meals on wheels was still going on. DFTA is also delivering meals to thousands of other seniors and are taking on all new meal delivery requests. New older adults who are reaching out are being directed to the Get Food NYC program, which provides a box of meals for 2 days and the amount of food will soon be increasing. Andrea from LiveOn noted that if you are getting food through the Get Food NYC program you have to re-request meal delivery every two days, which is not realistic. Their goal is to make the renewal automatic. Additionally, the food czar is training centers to become “trusted enrollers,” which means that within a few weeks, all senior centers will be trained on a city system and be able to enroll a client directly to the system. DFTA

LiveOn said their other focus is grief and trauma going forward. Both employees and clients are in need of support. Early check-in phone calls to seniors typically took a few minutes, as seniors were asked if they had food, medication, and people to support them. Now, they say the calls may take an hour as they are working with seniors through grief and anxiety concerns.

An additional source of concern is assisting seniors in applying for SNAP, SCRIE, Medicaid, and Medicare Savings Program. LiveOn has seen the number of SNAP applications more than triple. Due to the postal service being slow, it is taking twice as long to get applications to LiveOn, a problem that is compounded by the postal service in 10463.

Marvin Goodman also reminded everyone to fill out the census and highlighted the challenges in making sure everyone is counted. Rita Pochter-Lowe offered to coordinate with CERT and DFTA to provide more volunteers to deliver food.

LiveOn provided the following websites to support seniors:

- [OATS \(Older Adults Technology Services\)](#) is an amazing organization that does incredible training, education and programs with older adults. They are doing a lot of work on technology and older adults during the COVID crisis. Tom Kamber is the ED and he and his team are a great resource.
- [LiveOn NY's COVID-19 web page](#) has resources for professionals and older adults
- Census 2020 - so glad Marvin brought this issue up. We couldn't agree more! We are working with the New York Academy of Medicine on Census outreach to older New Yorkers. You can check out our [Census 2020 Webpage here](#) which includes a link to NYAM's Toolkit to reach older New Yorkers, as well as info on upcoming webinars LiveOn NY is holding on the census.

Chair Dinowitz then began the discussion on budget priorities. Given the feedback from DFTA, LiveOn, and the senior centers, the order of budget priorities shifted from the previous meeting. Senior Center Funding moved up to address the massive undertaking senior centers will have going forward in terms of professional staff, as well as technological hurdles for the centers and their members in accessing food and support. Senior center transportation moved up as well, given that the transportation services employed by the centers were now being used for food delivery, as food access was a main concern for the centers.

Meeting adjourned at 5:20pm

Minutes submitted and assembled by Eric Dinowitz