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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Women and Families Committee
Thursday, January 23, 2025 - 6:30 PM
Conducted Remotely on Zoom

Minutes

Present: Gayle Baron, Susan Evans (Public Member), Rita Popper, Peggy Price, and Robin Seligson.

Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 9

Item 1: Planning session for 2025 Women and Families Committee meetings and forums (Community Board members and the public are urged to attend and share their preferences for issues to address)

Given the change in government nationally, the Committee sought input on the preferred issues to address this year.

Topics raised included abortion rights and related issues, childcare costs, elder care costs, public and private affordable housing availability and related concerns, food insecurity and the future of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) programs, especially in New York City and State.

The cost of living was stressed, including its impact on affordable housing, childcare and elder care. While these problems hurt lower income New Yorkers the most, residents of Stanley Isaacs housing also face such unlivable conditions as inadequate heat and hot water. Indeed, the Committee heard that workers sent by the City to fix the boiler at Stanley Isaacs often have no experience repairing boilers.

As one possible remedy, a member of the public reported that New York State's Clean Heat Initiative offers tax credits and other incentives to help residents afford heat pumps.

In addition, the cost of childcare and elder care remain prohibitive for many residents. Committee members pointed to the financial impact and emotional difficulties families face trying to pay for care for elderly, young—and sometimes both—family members. The Committee will be exploring options to assist with these care costs. Of particular interest: the City's new "Zero to Two" program for infant care. Questions to explore will include: how will this program work, and will it apply to middle as well as lower-income New Yorkers?

With abortion rights at risk of further curtailment, additional protections appear necessary. One indication: a lawsuit recently filed by Texas (which bans abortion in most cases) against a New York State doctor who mailed abortion pills to a Texan.

The Committee will explore the new threats arising to abortion rights. And at its April meeting, it will address additional protections. One possible avenue: adopting in New York State a version of a pilot program in the state of Washington. In that program, Washington now allows pharmacists—and not just doctors—to prescribe abortion pills, making the pills more accessible locally and nationally. The Committee heard that this program will likely spread to other states that allow abortion. Committee members agreed that New York State should be a leader in promoting this program.

Item 2: Old Business – No Old Business

Item 3: New Business – No New Business

The meeting ended at approximately 7:35 PM

P. Gayle Baron and Margaret Price, Co-Chairs, Women and Families Committee