

Civic Engagement Commission
June 19, 2019

SARAH: So the meeting will please come to order. Welcome, everyone back to the second meeting of the Civic Engagement Commission. I also want to welcome the members of the public who are here. I'm very happy to have you join us. And since this meeting is not a hearing, members of the public are welcome to observe and will not have the opportunity to testify at this time. But certainly in future meetings, we're going to be making that available to people. I would like to encourage if you haven't already done it, if you are a member of the public, so please sign a sign-in sheet that's going around your job we're going to be starting a contact database. We'd love to have you on it and stay connected with you. And also, wanted to ask if there are any members of the press in attendance right now. Okay. I wanted also to thank the Landmarks Commission for letting us use their space today. And as I said last time, we are being videotaped as a part of the open meeting guidelines and we are trying to make — going to make these meetings accessible to the public on the website. And we also have sign language, live captioning, and Spanish interpreters if anyone wants Spanish interpretation, please ask. It's simultaneous interpretation.

In the last meeting, we went around and introduced ourselves. And since we have — since it's our second meeting, and not everyone might remember each other's names and we also have two additional commissioners who have joined us, who have whom will be here a little bit later, I thought we could go around and introduce ourselves again. So, again, I'd like to just go around and have you say your name, your affiliation, and this time, to kind of vary it a little bit, I thought you could talk a little bit about the borough you're from — just say which borough you are from. And an example of an civic engagement initiative that you've seen happening in that borough, or something that you'd like to see happening in your borough in the future. So I'm going to start off to my right with Annetta.

ANNETTA: Good afternoon.

SARAH: And remember that you need to push the button.

ANNETTA: Good afternoon. My name is Annetta Seecharran, and my day job is Executive Director for Chaya Community Development corporation based in Jackson Heights. Chaya is set up to serve the South Asian community. Our primary focus is housing empowerment however, we usually serve the amazing diverse community that we are in. 40% of our clients are female. So an example of an amazing city engagement that I'm witnessing in Jackson Heights is the political organizing that's happened in the last year or so that led to an incredible political upsets of the election of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and Senator Jessica Ramos, and Senator Cruz. And it's been remarkable to watch that shift in Jackson Heights. I've been a resident of Jackson Heights for 15 years and it's a different place today. A place with so much hope and excitement, and truly a sense of inclusion for new communities.

SARAH: Thank you.

EVE: Hi, my name is Eve Baron and I'm the chairperson for graduate environment at Pratt Institute. We teach participatory planning as a best practice for creating just and sustainable communities. So civic engagement is kind of the DNA of the program and I'm very pleased to be a part of this group. Some of the most amazing, probably very, very localized community engagement processes that I've seen in Brooklyn, I've been really impressed with around the establishment of the city's new public plazas. It's, you know, a partnership between city agencies and community-based organizations that are actively involved in adding small amounts of green space in public space. And the processes around putting these plazas together has been very deeply engaged and I see a couple that really genuinely reflect some community priorities. So I'm encouraged by that. The thing that I'd really like to see in terms of community engagement in Brooklyn, but also the rest of the city is participatory planning around climate change and coming up with a genuine community-based climate action plan. Maybe we can work on that.

SARAH: Thank you.

MARK: Good afternoon, my name is Mark Diller and I'm the newly appointed Commissioner for the borough of Manhattan and I reside on the upper west side where I serve on Community Board 7. And I'm currently the chairman of the commission, so this room is familiar to me. I've previously served in that capacity on that board. My day job is as a lawyer. I practice, when I volunteered in response to the supposed Muslim travel ban in the early part of the current presidential administration and went to JFK, I was told that copyright lawyers were really needed there. So I ended up attending support group activities there instead. And an example of good civic engagement in our community right now is, actually, I'll be in a meeting after this one is a local grassroots effort to integrate our schools. The district that embraces the upper west side of Manhattan but also continues on to Southern Harlem is both wonderfully diverse and terribly segregated in terms of the schools not reflecting the diversity. The Community Education Council and the local superintendent of the district have made interesting and very concerted efforts to embrace the public and arrive at a solution to further diversify our schools and end segregation and it is something that even though a significant part of it is outside of the community board itself, and we're one district, we embrace it, and engage with it. And that's something that can be emulated and hopefully fostered. Thanks very much.

JOSE: Hello, everyone. My name is Jose Hernandez and I'm the New York City Advocacy Coordinator for the United Spinal Association, as well as the president of the local chapter of United Spinal. I don't have any specifics as, you know, local advocacy or civic engagement that I've done recently but I do do a lot of federal-based advocacy and I'm actually scheduled to go to Washington D.C. this summer and that'll be something to look forward for everyone who's — it's actually a pretty big event with 158 individuals with disabilities that come together from all parts of the U.S. and bring them to Washington D.C. and get them leading and fighting for their rights. It was something that I attended. And I thought that was one of the most powerful things that I've done

and also something that led me to want to be on this commission. So I would definitely like to see more individuals with disabilities registered to vote and I'm encouraged by that.

SARAH: Thank you.

DONNA: Hi, my name is Donna Gill and I'm a member of Community Board 10 which is in Central Harlem. Things that I find that civic engagement in our community, we are overburdened with substance abuse clinics and the community has gotten together to work on that so that there's equitable distribution of special clinics and not to have any more clinics — new clinics — come in to our district. So that's something that has engaged a lot of the community. And like Mark, I was on CC-3, worked with the Diversity Project. I still go to their meetings because the school — the Southern Harlem is actually part of CC-3. So our schools are actually the ones that are impacted which is mostly where the segregation happens because it's 61st Street to 24th Street. That's it. Thank you.

ANASTASIA: I'm Anastasia Somoza and in my day job, I work for councilmember Cory Johnson and I'm the first liaison at the city council to represent the interests and needs of disabled New Yorkers. So that means my portfolio primarily focuses on improving — accessibility is one of our biggest goals. So when we talk about accessibility, a lot of people think about transportation and that is very true. I am very much focused on making transportation in this city much more accessible. But one of the other things that I focus on in my role at the council, but also, I think, we needed improve in terms of a local issue, I was gonna say, I live in Hell's Kitchen, in Midtown. So my neighborhood, people in my neighborhood have always been politically active. I was born and raised in the same neighborhood and that's what I've always seen is people in my neighborhood have no problems showing up to meetings and being engaged but one of the things that I want to work on improving is making it easier for people with disabilities to have their voices heard politically and making the political process accessible to more people with disabilities because we do have political clout like the 504 Democratic Club that are geared toward us but I don't think engagement on that level is where it needs to be. And I think it comes down to it being an accessibility and also an awareness issue. So if we could work on that, that would be great.

- Hi, everyone, I'm Linda, director of community services. We have six locations across the city, mostly in Queens and also one in Brooklyn. And we provide all sorts of social services for the community. Anything from public health to senior centers, Meals On Wheels, and we're an only Korean-American organization that has a mental health clinic. And I guess on our level in our local community, there's been, if I could in share a small narrative, the fact that my mom has also run for every primary, local election, I think, says a lot. I think she said back in 2008, she said, who are you voting for. I think when I was growing up, that wasn't really a thing that I heard from our immigrant parents. So the fact that it's changing quite a bit in our community is a pretty big deal. A lot of our seniors are mobilizing more, and our youth are advocating more and they're learning what it's like to participate. So I think that's an issue in census 2020, with other

issues coming up, I think our communities are coming together, which is great.

CHARLES: Hi, I'm Chuck Apelian. By the way, we love your mom from political services, she's a triple-prime and we just love those triple-primes because we know you're going to vote and those are the type of people we try to target, so we love you, mom. I'm the advice chair for community board in Queens and I'm also the land-use chair. And my background is a land-use consultant and I'm pretty versed in that as I took that professionally when I went to school. But most of my career, I've been in the advertising and marketing business. So two different but interestingly, somehow they tie in together with jobs. But for the community board like I said, I chair — I'm the vice chair of the board. And most of you may or may not know, community boards have couple of big roles, one is land use and one is the budget and parks and transportation become other major items but it's always the budget advocating for the community, and different resources that we need, and the big thing that'll always be for the board is the land use, where it's the variance, or the rezoning, or something that has to come up. We've just recently voted on the expansion of Downtown Flushing bid. They've been in existence for 15 years and they're going to expand more than double the size of the bid. SPS came out and we went through a whole proposal and presentation. And the community board meeting approval on that, so that was a good thing that we did. The other thing also is and I'll share the link. It was an article that I just saw this morning. But if you may or may not know, each community board was set 42,532 dollars to help in outreach to the community. And we did some interesting things and the councilmember Fernando Cabrera from The Bronx came to our meeting last night. And he pushed with our speaker, Cory Johnson, knowing the fact that the speaker was a former chairman of Board 4. I think that's your community board, Hell's Kitchen. So they're empathic to the needs of the community and the funding.

And we did an interesting thing which I'd like to touch about later on, but we did a branding campaign. And one of the things that we took the lead, if you see the blue bags, is a new law, outlawing the plastic bags and taxing the paper bags for single use. The lead for the quote, "swag bags" that we put together were compliments of Community Board 7. And we want people to take a lot of them, and use as many as they can, and give them to their communities and friends. And we want to be supportive of the advantage and the legality of it and we thought that was a good lead-in. Like I said, I'd like to also discuss that later because I think that one thing that we can do as a commission is find out what the 59 community boards did with their money and what we thought was beneficial with what they did with the money. And share that within the commission and then back to the community boards. So with 59 different boards, we don't really know what some people did. And we can say, oh, wow, that's a good idea because councilmember Cabrera made the announcement that there'll be a second round of funding that will be coming out for the next year, so we will have another \$42,500 but I don't just want to make swag bags. I want to do things differently. So I think it's important to talk about that in our commission and reach out our community boards and recirculate and figure out how everyone made best use of that money. So thank you.

AMY: Hi, Amy Breedlove. I wear a number of different hats. One is business strategist

at Bourbon Quotient, which is an architectural firm working primarily on affordable and supportive housing and I'm also the president of the Calla Hill Association in Brooklyn and I'm also a board member of the Stonewall Community Development Corporation working on LGBTQ senior housing.

So those are the sort of hats that I wear. I think what runs through the line of work that I do is community and forming communities, keeping strong communities together. And organizing around that. I think some of the issues that we've been dealing with a number of the commissioners touched on in Brooklyn what we're dealing with a lot are land-use issues. And, right now, we have a few that are really large and, sort of, down the way in terms of time frame. So we're talking about the BQE reconstruction, and the new borough-based jail system, the Brooklyn-based one will be on Atlantic Avenue. So and both of these projects are supposed to trigger in 2026 and they're both decade-long projects. So the mayor has put special taskforces on both of those and we're getting a lot of community agreement on that level.

So...

SARAH: Thank you, everyone. As you —

CHARLES: We had one.

SARAH: Anthony, oh, you walked in. We're just introducing ourselves again. Talking a little bit about the borough we're from.

ANTHONY: Okay. So my name is Anthony Harmon. And I am the director of staff for the United Federation of Teachers and I also serve as president of the New York NAACP, which is the oldest, largest civil rights organization in the country and the part that I work there, is considered the labor branch and members of the community throughout the City of New York. I also serve as the executive Vice President for the organization known as the Coalition of Black Trade Unions. Prior to my current assignment at my job, as serving as the director for the director for community engagement. So I have a host of experience in working with parents and young people throughout the city for community engagement councils, CDCs, the advisory councils, student leaders and the like. And I think that there's a recurring theme in my life, which is that the force of labor. And getting people to bring something to the table. And look at the work that this commission is doing. Thank you.

SARAH: Thank you. And I think Lori might be coming from Staten Island a little bit later. My name is Sarah Sayeed and I'm chairing the commission and I'm from The Bronx. That's where I grew up. Came to the United States in 1976 and it's been my privilege and honor for the Mayor's Office in the Community Affairs Unit as a senior adviser on community engagement and I would like to say how it's been amazing to work in this administration including the work that we've been doing in the Community Affairs Unit to see a whole lot of communities that have never, ever had a relationship with government, that had never have a governmental representative come to their meetings, house of worship, to their gathering in the park to say a few words and to introduce themselves and show themselves as a resource. And so, I've had the

opportunity to do that with a lot of communities and I think that's part of the work of the Civic Engagement Commission is to be thinking about communities that have been engaged for a long time who have a voice and then there is a track of people who have been engaged that become very disenchanted with the way that the process works, and there are people that have never, ever engaged. So there are different buckets of people, types of engagement that I think we'll be dealing with. So I'm really honored to work with all of you. I feel like you're bringing a lot of depth and put expertise to this commission.

And a lot of networks, as well. And I'm, you know, hoping that we can work with all of the networks and assets that you're bringing us. We're trying to move this work forward to define it better and figure out where we need to reach in a better way. So thank you, again, for all your introductions.

I would like to go ahead and present the minutes from the last meeting. These are included in your folder. And I'll just go over them very briefly. We talked in the — the minutes basically talk about how we adopted the resolution to delegate the Executive Director of the commission and the duties and responsibilities that the Executive Director includes submitting plans for commission review and approval in relation to the core functions that we talked about last time which are specified in chapter 76 of the charter. Pursuing interim initiatives in cooperation with other public and private entities to further the core functions of the commission.

Recruit candidates for membership in the advisory committees that we're tasked with building including around participatory budgeting and language access at poll sites. And presenting these candidates for your review to the — you know, to the commission for review.

And entering into city agreements with the agencies. We talked about the example of the memorandum we had with the technological communication. And take steps as needed as appropriate. And the minutes were adopted by unanimous voice vote by those present. So I want to ask if there are any additions or corrections to the minutes presented.

CHARLES: One question. I don't see a date on here. I don't think it's dated.

SARAH: Dated on the top. The 20th.

CHARLES: Ah! Thank you.

SARAH: Any additions or corrections? Okay. Is there a motion to approve the edits to the minutes?

AMY: I make a motion.

DONNA: Second

SARAH: All in favor?

SARAH: Thank you. So all in favor for approving the minutes from May 20th, 2019. Say,

"Aye."

[Chorus of Ayes]

SARAH: So the minutes are approved. So I want to make a note here that we're trying to follow parliamentary procedure and I think we need to be frank that there are varying degrees of this procedure. Some people are very comfortable with it and I'm not sure if a lot of the public knows what parliamentary procedure is. So we are going to be practicing that and modeling it for people as we hold these meetings. And that's part of civic engagement. I think that, you know, when people go into public spaces and public meetings, there's a certain procedure that's being followed and people don't necessarily have knowledge and familiarity and I think poses for difficulty in engaging because they need to know how to engage in order to engage.

So, you know, we can also share that as a resource, you know, from the commission including on our website, help people understand what parliamentary procedure is. What are Robert's rules, although I don't think we're following those to the T here. But I think we're going to generally follow parliamentary procedure. So in the next session of the meeting, as you remember, we had sort of gone around and talked a little bit about what you think civic engagement is. And part of the reason why we want to have this conversation is we're starting out to establish an entity that has, you know, mandates from the public but we also want to have a shared understanding of how we're defining civic engagement because they're implications for how do we measure the impact of our work. And it's very important to me that we all have a shared understanding. So what we did was we took the words that you all had put on paper and we created a word cloud which is also included in your packet and the way the word cloud works is — it's this piece of paper — is that it sort of makes large the letters — or the words that appear more frequently and then the smaller ones are the ones that appear not as much.

So before we sort of go through the word cloud, I wanted to actually ask Mark since you were not here last time, if you could just say a little bit about how you define civic engagement.

MARK: The concept — civic engagement to me takes a couple of facets, one of which — many of which are reflected under here, that I really want to add without repeating.

SARAH: It's okay to repeat. We actually want repetition because it shows commonality.

MARK: Okay. So access is, well, I guess the word that I would add to that is meaningful access. That saying what has an open door and practicing that which we are preaching sometimes take on different meanings. So meaningful access means a genuine opportunity to speak and hear, listen and engage. Well, I can't use the word engage to define "engage" — to have an impact on those things that matter to either that person, or to all of us in general.

The word that I don't see here and forgive me if it's there I'm just not seeing it is I see equality. But there's been a concept that has been kicking around that differentiates equality or enhances equality and that is equity — that equitable access is a different

component of meaningful ability to participate than equality. There are graphics that illustrate this and I'll spare you those. But the overall concept that I would want to introduce or champion as a whole is the ability to ensure that resources are employed in a way that maximizes and compensates for where we start the conversation that we end up at a more complete opportunity to address those things that affect our civic engagement efforts and, in fact, real people's lives in real ways. That's the best thing that I can offer you right now.

SARAH: That's great. Um, so I thought I would just open the floor for comments on any patterns that you see I can tell you what we came up with. But we'd love to hear any thoughts on this. So if you look at the word cloud, what's the largest word?

AMY: Community.

SARAH: Yeah, that's right. And I think we talked last time about the centrality of community and, also, the importance of having diverse voices, right? You are, again, exemplary in that way, in diversity that you are bringing into this room. And we also talked a little bit before about the common good, which is captured on there, as well. Communities and dialogue to promote something greater for the public.

And then there's also access, right? We just talked a little bit about that in terms of equity. Access to knowledge, access to participation. Empowered decision-making bodies. And also we talked about the importance of education. Teaching younger people about civic engagement through civic curriculum. Even older adults about how to engage. The importance of education for building a more engaged society in which people understand their rights and privileges. And are able to hold governments accountable which is also here. Any other thoughts on this graphic?

ANNETTA: Do the color distributions mean anything? Is it just random?

SARAH: It's just, yeah... we used an online sort of word cloud generator and I think they... yeah.

AMY: I would just say that I'm struck now looking at it that transparency, listen, and responsibility seem to be in the background.

SARAH: Mmm.

AMY: I mean, there are a number of others as well. But those are hitting me right now because I know today we're going to be talking about listening and going out and seeking more input, and I really think that that transparency word needs to get bigger so I would like us to talk more about that as we move forward.

SARAH: It was transparency, listen, and what was the third one?

AMY: Responsibility.

SARAH: Responsibility, okay. Any other observations on this? Well, yeah?

ANNETTA: I'm surprised that diversity is not explicit unless I'm missing it somewhere.

AMY: Yeah, you're right.

SARAH: I mean, I think it's really great that you're noticing what's not here because that's another thing that we need to keep doing is having a reflective conversation, right? Because we talked about this last time for, like, what ten minutes? And I think working towards a definition or a concept and construct that we want to promote, like, what kinds of civic engagement do we want to promote. So part of it is about listening. It's about respecting diverse voices, making sure that diverse voices have access. So that could be something that we continue to build on. So are there other things that are not captured on this that we would like more for us to talk about going forward? So diversity after transparency, listening, responsibility.

AMY: I just want to say I think this is an interesting exercise for us to think about how we take this to the public, as well, in terms of looking at the largest words. It was our first meeting. It was our first introduction. And so, it seems to make sense to me that those words that are the largest were the largest because it's really the starting point. So I think as we go on and start to refine those words as you said, those that aren't on here, but also giving larger impact to some of the other words, I think it's something we should really think about and capture and feel — and think about how we can then use that when engaging the public.

SARAH: I was actually — I just had a thought pop into my head right now which is, can you actually have a community without civic engagement? Because in order to build community, people need to care about something beyond themselves. And that is, to me, central to civic engagement, right? You're trying to create programs, policies, a way of being together that uplifts the needs of the collective needs of the community, right? So I feel like they're almost — they're very intertwined with each other.

CHARLES: They are but the difference is that there is a community but not everybody is engaged and I think that's we all see. There'll be communities and like any other organization, this work will be easy. And there's other ones that come out when something happens, or something is on their block or something affects their lives. But most of the people just want to live their lives. And, you know, so... they're not all engaged. So I appreciate what you're saying but I think there is a big difference between the engagement and the community itself. The community exists. That's the area that we live, that's where we work. But not everybody's engaged and that's their choice. So I guess part of what we're going to do is try to see if we can, you know, engage them more but, at the end of the day, probably not everybody.

SARAH: Yes, I think that's —

CHARLES: And that's their choice. And that's okay.

SARAH: Mm-hmm.

MARK: If I could add to that, there is an element of intentionality in civic engagement that is not necessarily a part of the community. The community can arise organically by shared experiences or shared circumstances but the goals of civic engagement are to, I think as you were saying, to broaden that experience with some of these attributes so that it is more — I don't want to use the word democratic, with the small "d" more equitable, more diverse, more... so the intentionality is the additional words that I think —

CHARLES: I'm saying differently. Like, in my community board, people come on the board and that's not what they want to do. They realize that, they thought it was something else. Or I tease, they wanted pins so they could say they're on the board.

LINDA: You have pins?

CHARLES: The joke was to get the pin because the elected officials always wear the pin. So it's like, "Ha! I'm on the community board." And it's like, "Do you work?" Not really but I'm on the board. And those that come and enjoy it, they'll be engaged and they'll come on the committees that they like. And I'm not against parks, it's not what I like as far as my expertise. So what I'm saying is the same thing will happen. So people will — you'll give the opportunity. That doesn't mean that they're going to embrace it, or the different degrees of embracement will be upon themselves. And like I say some of them will come on the community board, and some of them you'll look at them, their eyes are just glassed over, and they'll have no idea what we're talking about and they'll look at their watch. So that's what I'm saying. So the community exists but it depends upon that person once we put everything out there and set the table for them, it's up to them if they want to —

AMY: So I want to jump in here.

SARAH: So I'm going to stop you because we actually have a couple of different interest board presentations shortly. This is a really important conversation. I think what it's bringing out is something that we're going to have to continue to engage which is that both community and civic engagement are happening on a spectrum. It's not like you can measure the degrees to which people feel like they're a part of a community. The degrees to which they feel like they're engaged. Some people will engage symbolically. Other people will participate more, right? So we have to think about how we measure engagement and I think that's going to be really important. So I'd like to actually have a meeting in which we dedicate a segment of the meeting to evaluation and defining this construct better.

So sorry to interrupt the flow of a very, I think, engaging moment here.

I wanted to spend a little bit of time — we're not going to be able to make all the decision around this, but we started to talk about listening sections and the listening tour that we said we would do across this city. And I had a couple of people on a call

yesterday. I wanted to thank Amy, Anastasia, and Donna for joining the call yesterday to just talk a little bit about the listening sessions. Some people have also been getting requests to meet on behalf of the commission and we were talking a little bit about how we handle those requests since we are so early in our development, some people were seeing they're not entirely comfortable having these meetings immediately. And, at the same time, we don't want to turn people down because part of what we're doing is building relationships with a variety of stakeholders.

So one of the things we discussed yesterday was that we — it would be helpful to have sort of a standardized deck presentation that people could take to meetings if they wanted to or felt ready to go to meetings on behalf of the commission.

But we definitely wanted to start creating a log of these requests. So if you are getting requests to meet, please send them to me. And then we can figure out how best to deal with them. Once we, you know, develop more fully, we can also, our staff can work with you to sort of tailor these presentations, as well.

So that's what we kind of discussed on the call, but the other piece of it is that at these meetings, are a chance, I think, if you choose to take them, they sort of can be constructed maybe as listening sessions 'cause there's always a part of the meeting where you will talk about the Commission but then you can ask for people's input on what they would like to see from the Civic Engagement Commission. And we can certainly use these meetings to talk about areas of work in the Commission, of participatory budgeting, for instance, or community board — strengthening the capacity of community boards, the language access piece, and just get their sort of experiences and read on these issues. But I think we need to think more about how we collect all this input from the meetings, from listening sessions. And we talked a little bit about — yesterday, about better defining the goals of the listening tour. So there were three goals that we discussed. One was just to educate people about the Commission because a lot of people probably don't know that it's here. And what we're charged with doing. And then, to collect ideas from the public on what they would like to see from the Commission. And then, really, sort of the vision of these listening tours is to educate and also inspire people to get more engaged.

So do you have any thoughts on the listening sessions? We can talk for a few minutes about the listening sessions. I know, Annetta, you also had experience with the charter vision commission and listening tour. So I welcome your input for a little bit here. And then we can come back to finalize going forward. Do you want to say...?

EVE: So maybe there's a connection between what you were talking about before in terms of measuring our participatory aspect and, you know, the impact of what we're doing, and the listening session 'cause I think we can interject an element of participation in the evaluation of our work and how other people, you know, evaluate it. We can do kind of participatory evaluation. And I think the listening sessions might be able to set us up with a little bit of input as to what the priorities are, you know, which we could, you know, turn into some indicators of our work.

SARAH: Okay. Other thoughts?

ANNETTA: So I wanted to say that I think it's really important that for the listening

sessions that we put tremendous effort in the outreach. One — you mentioned my role as a chairperson in the Commission, one of the things that we struggled with is having folks show up. So that typically with these sorts of efforts, the emphasis is placed on planning of the event and not ensuring that people are aware of the event and people turn up. So truly making it accessible in every definition of that term.

CHARLES: Any suggestions on how to achieve that?

ANNETTA: Yeah, I have many. And I'm sure my colleagues, as well, have many. But location, time of day, outreach, interpretation, I'm sure others can chime in. Advanced notice, truly making the information available to folks multiple times; not just one-off. Those sorts of things.

AMY: And another, too, we talked yesterday on a call about using or engaging the mayor's Community Affairs Department to help with outreach 'cause it's going to be really important if we do these borough-wide tours where they're going to be located is going to be key. But how do we get the message out to your point. And their offices would be helpful for that.

ANNETTA: I agree but I also want to say that I think it's important to partner with community-based organizations as well as religious institutions.

ANASTASIA: I definitely agree with Annetta and Amy, and one of the things that I was reminded for those who were on the call yesterday was increasing accessibility and participation of people who would actually listen in to these tours. The reality is a lot of people are so busy that they can't get places for any number of reasons. So if we were able to think about leveraging technology, streaming these events and that ties into planning them with enough time so that people know that they have the option if they can't actually attend to attend virtually through technologies in some way or another to be able to listen and participate, as well. Like, if they could send in questions to some sort of streaming setup or something like that. I think that will be key in terms of increasing participation but also addressing structural accessibility issues for people in my community in particular.

SARAH: That's important.

MARK: Another thought that derives from my career as a PTA president is the availability of childcare often drives or facilitates the ability to participate when especially if meetings are in the early evening in the after-work hours which, when we talk about time of day, is probably what we're talking about. So the ability of families that either split childcare duties or what have you, to participate will be driven by the ability to handle your children in some fashion.

SARAH: So I think that we are gonna be working on creating a standardized presentation and ways to track these requests. I think we need to talk a little bit more about just exactly what these listening sessions will seek to do. And maybe we can

reconvene with the committee again if that works for folks to try to build this out a little more. We had agreed last time that we would do this in the fall. So we have a little — not a little bit of time following here pretty soon. And we want to also start looking for locations and things like that, you know, before fall comes. So we want to work on that. Very quickly I wanted to talk a little bit about before we move into the conflict of interests bit. As you know, we signed the memorandum that's included in your packet. With DOITT to perform the functions of the civic engagement commission. I also moved my desk from 250 Broadway to 255 Greenwich so we're in a new space. And I've started to interview people. And also, finalizing the job postings. I met with city council to discuss the city-wide participatory budgeting process and we'll be talking more in future meetings about what this process looks like. I met with the Department of City Planning and heard about their process for collecting input about community needs and the budget requests that community districts have.

And met with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and Operations to talk about how they're implementing the language interpretation at poll sites. We will have language interpreters out on June 5th in the primary. And we also have, and I think I emailed you about this, we worked with DOITT to work with Civic Engagement .gov emails. So everyone should have emails soon for commission business. They should have your phone number. And they should be able to set up these accounts for you. The Water Department has started working on bylaws. And I wanted to ask if anyone would be interested in joining the bylaws working group for the Commission. Thanks, Mark. Thank you.

CHARLES: You can be the chair.

SARAH: And someone else, Donna? Okay. We can see if we're at a point where we can present a draft at the next meeting. So it's great to have your support on that. Also headed a couple of different meetings with different organizations and individuals including the ParticipateTory Budgeting Project, Arts and Democracy, Citizen Squirrel. And I think, again, in future meetings, we'll be inviting some of these partnering groups to present to us so we get a better sense of who's out there. The last meeting was a larger meeting of stakeholders. Donna came to that. A lot of people who put together, who have been engaged with us in this process of creating a civic engagement commission, working with councilmember Rob Lander. And they came and met, and sent us their recommendations for the commission and I emailed you the document that they put together for us. So that's another jumping point for us to think about what are the ways that people who have been most engaged with creating this commission, what would they like to see from the commission.

And then I'll also send you information on an event that I'll be talking at next week that's focused on democracy beyond election and it looks at other cities and their processes. So I'll send you information on that in case you'd like to attend.

We don't have time — we will table this for the next meeting just about social media and what we'd want to do as a Commission. What kind of content we'd want to be putting out. Let's talk about that later. So next we have a presentation from the conflicts of interest board, Alex Camp who's a director of education and engagement will be presenting to us. We have a handout that's in your packet about things we should be

knowing. And would you like to... I will... move on. Do you want to sit?

ALEX: No, no. I think I'll stand if that's okay. Is there any necessity for me to be on the mic?

AUDIENCE: Yes!

ALEX: Maybe I should sit down. Cramp my style but that's okay. Thank you so much. Cheers, thank you. Okay. Okay, good afternoon, everybody. My name is Alex and I'm from the New York City Conflicts of Interest Board. And for about the next 40 minutes I'm going to walk you through the basic New York conflicts of interest law which is Chapter 58 on the Civics Charter. We're going to do two basic things here. We're going to talk a tiny bit about how the conflicts of interest board works so you can know how to use us and then we're going to talk about the ins and outs of the conflicts of interest law, particularly as it applies to people with policy successions such as yourselves. The law that the charter passed about 30 years ago treats basically everybody in city government exactly the same. But there's a couple places where the members much this commission, the law does treat you differently. One of the reasons is because you're part-timers. So in some ways, the law is a little less restrictive but because you have substantial policy succession there's a couple of discretion, there's a couple of ways in which the law is a little more restrictive and we're going to go through all of this stuff right now.

SARAH: Maybe you weren't going to say this already but I had sent him in an email everyone that since this is a public meeting, during the Q&A, just to make your questions more general and we will — you'll be available to follow up on more specific personalized questions for each of you.

ALEX: Thank you. And questions is something I'm going to address in the first part. So what do you need to know about the New York City conflicts of interest board. We're a tiny city agency. We concern ourselves larger with two things, the — largely with two things. We've got four units to do that. When you file your annual disclosure forms that's with us. When you file electronically, we don't need we don't need to talk about that today. That's pretty straightforward. The next unit we have is an engagement unit. That's my unit. I am the director of that unit... so, you know, impressive with, I know.

I run a small team and we basically do engagement, classes, videos, is anybody here on Twitter? Anybody here have a Twitter account? You're crazy enough to have your own Twitter account. So if you aren't, you should follow us because we're crazy enough to have our own Twitter account. And some people say it's the best government Twitter account... ever.

SARAH: I've actually heard that, as well.

ALEX: So that's right. Testimony right there. So you should follow us we're @NYCCOB. And almost always on point in terms of ethics. So two points that are important. The two units that are more important, one of them you might have heard about because that's

where a lot of the public stuff comes out. That's the enforcement unit. About a hundred times a year, you'll probably read a press release or see a news article of somebody who violated this conflicts of interest law. Sometimes people violent on accident, and they get a warning letter, or they violate in more serious ways and pay a fine. And every so often people will violate it as a misdemeanor crime but you'll really have to scratch your head to find one of those. I think the last time that actually happened was probably Bernard Keric and that's going back a ways. So it doesn't happen too often. Now what's interesting about the work of the board is that while that has a lot of public prominence, it's probably not a good representative of the grand total of our work. The grand total of our work is this outside sized contribution we make to giving people like you and me confidential free advice. You never hear about this 6,000 instances of us giving advice because they're all confidential. But that's most of what we do, lawyers on call every day, taking your questions, walking you through a fact pattern seeing what's possible, what's not. And the way it works is this. When they establish this law 30 years ago and they gave this conflicts of interest board enforcement power, they said, look, a lot of this stuff not black and white. Conflicts of interest is not about good versus bad. Some of it's not obvious. We don't want anybody to mess up on accident. And we don't want anyone to be disincentivized to ask us a question so that's why every piece of advice that we're going to give out except for advisory of opinions, where the names would be redacted anyway, most of that is confidential which means that we can never confirm or deny that you ever asked us a question. We can memorialize what we tell you, and give you a copy of it so you can share it with the world but we can't share it with anybody. And that's to create a safe harbor so you can ask us whatever you want. So that's the first part. One very important caveat that I tell everyone. When is it best to ask for advice?

CHARLES: Always.

ALEX: Always is a good — I'll take that. That's not bad. In terms of time frame, though, you generally want to do it...

AUDIENCE: Before.

ALEX: Yes! Early. You want to do it before you've done the thing because if I've done the bad thing and I ask for advice about that, guess what, that's called a confession. Ask any DA. So just call us before. There's no penalty. A lot of times people just want peace of mind. They're 99% sure that they can do the thing anyway. They just want it verified. So you're paying taxes for this advice. But you can keep us busy. So that's part one. Done. Part two, I have a little cheat sheet here just to make sure I don't forget anything.

Let's talk — I'm now going to try to hit the things that you need to know about the conflict of interest law and I'm going to frame 'em for the people sitting at this table.

So let's go through a couple of these things right now. When we talk about gifts and the conflict of interest law, and I see some of you who have been around the block in city government a little bit. Maybe been to my classes before once or twice.

When we talk about gifts and the conflicts of interest law, what's the magic number?

AMY: 25.

ALEX: If you followed that number, that would be good because that's extra stringent. The limit is actually higher than that. It's — there's a 50-dollar valuable gift rule. So now what that law says is that we're not — we as public servants we're not allowed to accept valuable gifts from anyone or seeking to do business with the city. And valuable means 50 dollars or more. Not to burst anyone's bubble here, I've been working for 15 years for the city, and I've never been offered anything for 50 dollars for anything ever. Hey, thanks for the fine! Here's a gift. But maybe for some people, it would. Generally, then people ask me the question: well, does that mean a 49-dollar gift is totally ethical? Well, it might be legal. It doesn't mean that you should do it just because you can do it. And furthermore, the rule is aggregate and cumulative. So if person A from company — from this company gives me a 25-dollar gift today. And person B from that company gives me a 26-dollar gift a year from now, that puts me over the line. A lot of people from the city say this, if I'm dealing with them in city capacity, I don't take anything from them. I think that's a pretty easy way to solve this. Maybe they put in a 50-dollar rule instead of a zero rule because no one wants an enforcement case for a cup of coffee, or, small penny ante things. But for generally meals and things like that, we should pay our own way. Two things to remember about that. You are serving on this commission. You have a life. It's easy to forget that when you work full-time for the city. That you used to have a different life. But you continue to have a professional and personal life with friends and colleagues and clients and businesses that you work at.

This 50-dollar rule does not inflect those relationships which is to say, if you have an old friend before that wants to get you a 100-dollar gift for your birthday like they always did. They can continue to get you that gift. The place to be careful is when you have an old friend who also has matters pending before this commission. Because then it may not be so clear from an appearance standpoint why the gift was made and you want to call us for advice about that so we can look at how the law's been interpreted and give you a clean answer. But generally, the gifts rule is meant to be about accepting gifts from people who are trying to give him to me in recognition of my service here not relatives giving me gifts or other kinds of things. I want to be clear about that, though, if a friend is giving you a gift and it's permissible. It's because you knew that person from before you started working here. It's not the Chris Christy rule. Is it okay to drag Chris Christy in an open meeting.

AMY: Sure...

ALEX: We can drag him anywhere we want! So very famously. Chris Christy, we could be here all day talking about him. But one of the smaller things that happened in the Christy administration was that he was involved in a decision with the port authority with the Jerry Jones company to give some vendor access — it doesn't matter what it is. But he made some decisions related to Jerry Jones Company. And a couple of months later, there were a lot of awkward photos of him hugging Jerry Jones. So he was bragging about how he didn't pay for it. And people were saying, wait a second, you did business with Jerry Jones. And he said, you don't understand, Jerry as my new best friend. Maybe that works in New Jersey, but that's not the way that the conflicts of

interest law works in New York. But in general, it's not like we say, congratulations welcome to this commission and now you have no friends anymore. It's not supposed to work that way. Okay. The other thing for people — this could happen with people on any level but it probably tends to happen the higher you go is events. Occasionally members of this commission or staffers will be designated to attend some event. There might be a ticket, it might be an expensive ticket to get in. There might be meals involved but you're going — you've been invited there to serve as a member of this commission.

The conflict of interest law is fairly generous in this respect as long as leadership has approved your attendance there. So the idea situation is, some firm that deals with this agency, they say, hey, come to this event to see what we're doing, blah, blah, blah. We'll comp you. And you'll want to know if you can go in your city capacity. Leadership will decide if they want anybody there. And then they'll decide if they want you there. And if they say to those things, then you will be approved. Now as this agency is ramping up and those requests are coming in, you're kind of going to develop a process for this and maybe you don't have that process in place yet. And that's fine. That's what we're here for. When those kinds of questions come up, we can answer you, you know, on policy and disclosure, and what's the best practice. A lot of agencies now just have a form that their people fill out and counsel reviews it. But we'll help you develop that process as you see fit we are as you need.

Okay. Next thing. Outside positions. This is a place where part-time commission members are different than full-timers. New York City public servants who work full-time basically can't have any position with any company that does any business with any city agency whatsoever. So I can't work for NYU, I can't work for Snapple, which really is crushing my dreams. And I can't teach for — or I can't work at Macy's as a Santa's little Helper. I would need a waiver to do any of those things from the conflicts of interest board. You do not. The only position for part-timers you can't have a position with a private entity that deals directly with this agency that has business dealings with this agency. So if you've got some consultant — consulting group that you're working with, or some private group that you're buying things from, and you have a position with them, you're going to have to call us for advice and seek a waiver to do that. Waivers can only be granted if the chair signs off first and then can it be signed off by the conflicts of interest board. So leadership gets the first crack at that. Okay. When you have your outside position. Let's say you work for a law firm. They've got city business dealings with some other agency — or you don't even have to worry about that because you're part-timers. But whatever you do on the outside, just remember this, whether you need a waiver or not. There's a big dividing line between doing city stuff with city resources and doing private resources without city resources and those things should not be mixed.

I'd say the number one place where we see violations about 60% of our case is people using city time, resources, personnel, to further some outside interest, either a job or a political campaign, or a business venture and I could regale you with stories. One person got in trouble trying to run a travel agency from their city desk. That is dumb — that is dumb. That is dumb. Why is that dumb?

CHARLES: 'Cause it's dumb...

ALEX: When was the last time that you visited a travel agency? 20 years ago? Fairly outdated business model but in any case... but I've also seen, like, besides that, like, people get trouble selling sneakers online or travel agency. I also saw one member of a commission, a civil-service commission find \$15,000 for running his private law practice out of the civil service commission office. And so there were a lot of violations. So in any case, I know you're thinking, golly, that seems silly. It's a slippery slope. No one can eat just one potato chip. You get one call from outside your practice and you're like, I forgot my phone, so I give them my city telephone but then the client uses that telephone every time. And that's how a little tiny molehill turns into a mountain. So that's why the law says you don't do it at all. Just so you know, personal activities with city time and city resources that are incidental like paying your light bill or shopping online on your lunch hour. Making a call to your loved one. Those are not violations to the conflicts of interest law. They're incidental, they're minimal, but they don't get in the way of you doing your job. But running businesses, or political activity, that is the zero tolerance. Okay. We're about halfway done. Any questions so far. I'm going fast because you've got a hard out at 4:45. Yes, sir, go ahead?

CHARLES: The part about representing yourself and getting a waiver. As a part-time employee of the city, and doing the same thing as the community board, I've gotten waivers that I was told that you're allowed to represent another organization but you cannot bring them. You cannot introduce them to the commission. And if something took place as a vote, you'd have to recuse yourself.

ALEX: I'm glad that you brought that up. So let's now articulate a couple of things there. As a part-timer... like, let's say that I own a law firm, or I'm a partner at an engineering firm. But law firm comes up. So I own this law firm and the law firm has dealings with city agencies. I'm a part-time person. I can represent those clients at city agencies. That's not an issue. The moment that my client wants to have my firm represent them at the agency that I work at. I've got a double-recusal situation. I've got to recuse taking any official action that affects the client. I also can't take any action on behalf of the client that goes back to the civil service commission — I'm sorry, the civic engagement commission. It's after 4:00.

CHARLES: I've got to stop. Say the second one again.

ALEX: So the second one is I cannot take any action on my client's matters that have to do with the civic engagement commission. So I recuse on both sides. Somebody else at my firm has to partake in that. And the other thing is because my firm now represents this client before my own agency, I will need a waiver. Now the waiver is gettable if they put up the right walls so I'm not taking any action on behalf of the client but because now my firm is representing the client whereas the agency before served, a waiver must be sought. And they'll put up the firewalls. Make sense?

CHARLES: Yeah.

ALEX: Other stuff. Now other outside organizations. You kind of beat me to the punch on the first things, which is basically the outside agencies that employ, you you can represent them before those agencies, you're fine. One caveat is we, of course, never use our city title, city position to benefit our client. Most of us have titles that if we try to misuse them would get us worse service, like me. It's a classic thing where people are like, do you know who I am? And people go, not only do I not care who you are, but I'm going to now report you for misusing your position. But in any case, so there's that. Now one question that may come up because it comes up with commissions that don't have a lot of space like ours, and maybe this one, I'm guessing, is one of our commission members would like to donate something to further the work of the board or the commission like maybe some space like a meeting space.

Possible. That is totally possible. Getting a donation from an outside person of space to run your meetings is not a problem whatsoever. If subsequent to the gifting of the use of the space there now comes a problem between my firm who's gifted the space and the commission, of course, I'm going to recuse myself from both sides of that argument whatever that is. But can my firm donate the space. Yes, they can donate that space and I know that because I know boards and firms where one of the commissions was a partner in the firm and they donated the room in that law firm, so the commission could use that for their monthly meetings. So I know it happens. Now anybody sit on the Board of Directors for a not-for-profit. Okay. Fortunately, we can analogize a bit, but we can't, because the way that the law is written. And here's what it is. You may continue to be on the board for the not for profit. That's clear. If the not for profit ever has business dealings with this agency, you would need to get agency head permission to continue to serve on that board. Again, you gotta work out all the conflicts because there could be real ones, right? You've got duties to the board, you've got duties to this agency. If they're dealing on the same matters, you don't need which master to serve. So you have to figure those things out. Now here's the thing: as a member of this board and commission, you sit on this not-for-profit board as well. The not-for-profit board, to the extent that it has other business dealings with other city agencies, in order to partake in those matters, you need to call us for legal advice and you probably need a waiver to do so.

And that's because the way the law's written. So let's say I sit on this commission at the same time I sit on the Board of Directors from, let's say, Children's Village that gets a lot of money from DACS. So I need to call COYB and get a waiver to do that. Waiver's very possible. Waiver's very possible but that's what the law is gonna require. Okay. Easy stuff. Now superiors and subordinates. Not every jurisdiction that has a conflict of interest law articulates this particular restriction but we do. What it says is at 26.06-B-14, I may not enter into financial relationship to someone above me or below in chain of command. Now the staffers in this commission will be your subordinates. So what are all the ways that people have messed up in the past. Well, my boss cannot hit me up for a loan. That would be a violation. My boss cannot lend money to me. Heart of gold, this particular supervisor. Knew this guy was suffering. And says, I wanna help you. I wanna help you so you can fly like the eagle you can be at 30% interest. Irrespective of bad or good terms of the loan. The loan is still not allowed in the law. Also let's say you're an attorney. You've got a subordinate and you're going to give him free legal services on a real estate closing. You can't do it. You can't enter into a

attorney-client relationship with a subordinate and a superior, you can't enter into a Suzu with an subordinate and a superior relation, you can't enter into a lotto pool. Believe it or not. And why do I know because we actually have an advisory opinion on it. Because why do we have a advisory opinion? Because everybody wants to know. And what I'm saying is when you buy a lotto ticket with somebody else is we buy a joint property right. We never think of that as anything because we never win anything. But that's what it is. It's a financial relationship. You can play lotto with your colleagues, with your fellow commissioners but you can't play lotto with a subordinates or supervisors. Political activities. Now let's talk about a place where in one place the restrictions are the same and in one way they're different. How's it the same? No city time, no city resources devoted to any political activity. We know that. Okay. Second one. Can my boss tell me what campaign to support?

AMY: No.

ALEX: That feels wrong. Can my boss suggest what campaign I should support?

- No.

ALEX: No, strong no back there. What about a nice friendly request with a smile. Could any boss ask me to support?

- No.

ALEX: No, why not? My cynical friend with the glasses in the back, why is that?

DONNA: Are you talking about me?

ALEX: I should explain at the beginning that I have a lazy eye. You, you said with the strong, "No." Why do you say no?

DONNA: I say no because it's not legal. It's not permitted.

ALEX: Well, you're right. There's a rule against it and the rule against it comes from the very simple bromide that when your boss asks you to do anything, are they really askin'? No. Like try that out some time. Like hey, I need that report done in two hours. Do you think you could do that? No... that's not what they're looking for, right? So this is interesting. 30 years ago in charter reform, the law on the books in the '80s, said the superior and you're the superior on the commission staff could not affirmatively coerce a subordinate and they changed it in 1980 or 1990. And they said, no, no, that's not enough. They can't ask a subordinate because the ask is inherently coercive. Here's where it's different from rank-and-file city employees. You who have substantial policy discretion. There's a couple of extra restrictions on political activities. Number one, we may not ask anyone in the world for money, for anybody running for a local race. So we can't fund-raise for people running for comptroller, mayor, we can't host a house party for those people. We can't call a friend in Alaska that we haven't seen in 20 years and

ask them for money. We can't ask anybody for money for anybody running for these local races. We also can't ask anybody for any money for any current city official who's running for any race. Well, what do I mean by that? Down close to where I live, a while ago, Major Owens, the congressional representative retired and who won this seat? Avett Clark. She was a city councilmember when she ran for that seat. And we couldn't throw a house party for her because she was a current member running for office. And so a lot of people thought, thank goodness, I didn't want to host a house party anyway. But what do I think it means is those of us with discretionary policy, we couldn't do that for any local officials running for any race. Now can we run our own checks? Absolutely we can. And can you volunteer for those campaigns? Absolutely, you can. You just can't ask other people to write checks to those candidates. Clear? You're giving me a stink eye over there.

ANNETTA: I just want to clarify. Races for existing elected officials or anybody running?

ALEX: Good question. So if somebody's running — so anybody running for a city office. So anybody, whether they're an incumbent or they're a challenger running for public mayor, or comptroller, or city councilmember. I can't raise any money for those people. Now if there's somebody running for state assembly. You can raise anybody running for state assembly except that councilmember who's running for it because they're a current city official running for another office and, you know, because we have term limits. You see that a lot. People get termed out of council. And they want to run for another office. They want to run for mayor, they want to run for state assembly. And so that happens a lot. And you can raise money, you can ask for money for anybody running those races, for president, for state Senate, but not if they're a current city elected official. So this was 20 years ago almost. Remember when Rudy was running for Senate for almost five minutes? He was mayor running for Senate. We couldn't raise money for him because he was a current city official running for office. The other thing that we're not allowed to do is we're not allowed to have certain executive positions in the parties. Like county executive, things like that. So if you've got a high-level party position, or contemplating run for or getting one with one of the parties, please reach outside to us for legal advice because you can be involved in the parties but there's a limit on the level of office you can hold. For those of you who know the city lore, I think the reason that it's in there, is in the mid-'80s, people remember the Donald Manis stuff. And that was a time when Mr. Manis was president and head of the Queens reform party. And people started to say, maybe it's not a good idea for the person who runs the party also be a high-level elected official. So they separated those things out. Question?

MARK: Question is how high is high, I guess. If one is a member of the county committee but not an officer of it?

ALEX: County committee is probably fine, county executive is probably a problem. Let my look at that handout real quick. We just talk about it something quick here. It just says certain political party positions. So member of the county committee is probably fine. Executive of the county committee is definitely not fine. I think, though, that probably given your level, if you're going to be involved in the party in that kind of way,

just check in with us on a legal advice call. We'll cook up some bullet points for you to make sure that you keep all your ducks in a row. So if you're contemplating that, just spend a little bit of time with us individually. Like retail, one-on-one.

AMY: I know, keeping the question general, going back to campaigns and elected officials...

ALEX: Yup?

AMY: So I can't be on a host committee, right? I can't host a party. I can't be on a host committee. What about talking to friends and relations about having a host — hosting a party?

ALEX: Mmkay. So the law says I'm not allowed to ask anybody else for money. So if I go to my friend's house party and I pour the punch, and I don't say anything, then I have not asked anybody for money. I don't want to be too cute about this. But that's the way the law thinks about this. So to the extent — now the question is on the table a little bit is, hey, I don't want to ask anybody about money but I want to ask you to ask other people for money, that's a little too cute. So I don't want to say that you're precluded from any activity in relation to somebody else hosting a house party. I think you could make the sandwiches. I think you could pour the punch. I think you may even say how much you love a candidate. But I don't think that you can ask people for money or ask other people to ask people for money. Does that make sense?

AMY: Sure!

LEX: Now we have a very interesting question. Somebody said, hey, here's my deal. I know I can't host a house party, but guess what, my spouse has been really politically active for a long time and she would have been politically active even if I didn't have this position. Can she host a house party because we live in the same house and the answer to that, actually, is yes but it has to be clear that it's the host — the spouse who's hosting the party. And what that means is you have to get on a bus and you have to go to Philadelphia for a week. It doesn't matter — you just have to do it for a week — I'm just kidding. You basically just can't have any official role in the party when they ask you for the money. You don't have to lock yourself in the bathroom, right? You just cannot be involved in asking for the money. Yes?

CHARLES: You said you could volunteer for a campaign, could you work for a campaign?

ALEX: Excellent question. You may volunteer for a campaign. You can't ask anybody in the world for money. But you can volunteer for a campaign. You may work for a campaign. You will not need a waiver from the conflict of interests board to do so unless that campaign has some kind of interaction directly with this agency. Which it may at some point. It depends. So, yes, absolutely possible. You may have a position with the

campaign. I would assume although it's not — I'm not sure you guys are at this point yet. But as you get rolling out your code of conduct, it probably wouldn't be crazy to have people disclose whatever their outside stuff is to the agency as a matter of course. A lot of people, like, for example, I work at the conflict of interests board, we need to disclose anybody irrespective whether it's a chapter 68 violation and since you're in civic engagement, with elections and other things, it may not be unreasonable to disclose about a campaign or anything, probably good to know about. And that might not be for chapter 68 issues, that might just be for optics issues and transparency issues and those kinds of things. Last couple things. Okay.

I want to talk about fundraising I want to talk about fundraising in two different ways and then I'll talk about social media, as well. Fundraising I want to talk about fundraising in your public capacity and fundraising in your private capacity. In your public capacity, this agency can — first of all, this agency can accept gifts from people. I'm talking about unsolicited, you've got companies, you've got places that want to give gifts to this agency, this agency can accept those gifts. Now targeting solicitations to entities, this agency can target and make asks. When it makes those requests of other entities to donate either to this agency or to other city agencies, or to some not-for-profit that serves a similar mission that this agency does because those are all asks that you can make. It just has to be clear, one, that these people are not going to get any special treatment for these favors. Saying, thanks for that, but you're not going to get special treatment. And this has with work that the board is working on or just passed — or just passed. But the second is you cannot do it for anyone who has juice for the company in question. So, for example, I'm a chief cracking officer for the civic engagement commission. I'm handled all the contracts with that thing. I can't hit them up for a donation to the commission. Somebody else at the commission could but not the person who personally has power over that entity. So you have to think a little bit about who's going to do the asking. But it is possible to ask for donations for this agency, to other city agencies, to not-for-profits and you can do it with a letterhead and you can do it with city time and you can do it with city personnel because it's an official act.

Now let's move into private fundraising. You all may be members of organizations, alumni organizations, or it might be you sit on the board for a not-for-profit. There might be other things that you're fundraising for. So you might want to fund raise in your private capacity. So remember that's a private capacity, so there might not no penumbra for when those civic engagements go out. And I could talk about someone with a rich, interesting high-level life could make an honest mistake. A number of years ago there was a person who came to head the Department of Information Technology in the Bloomberg years. And he had worked in the private sector, he'd worked in the Clinton administration. So he had this huge Rolodex of all these technology companies that he had worked for over the years. He also sat on the board of a not for profit that was trying to get more computers into schools. That not for profit then wanted him to send out letters to people on this Rolodex. And so he wrote all those letters and signed his name on them. Fine. The problem was, the Department of Information Technology in New York City deals with lots of vendors and some of the people who were on this Rolodex of life were also on his city Rolodex. And so those letters of those people that were on this Rolodex but also on this Rolodex, they should not have gone out because he was now asking for money from private companies for

companies that he had juice over. So if you're going to get engaged in fundraising, go for it. But if you're fundraising in your private capacity, remember it can't be fundraising to any entity that's got a matter with any juice on, you don't want to ask for any money from those entities in your private fundraising. Make sense? Okay. Now let's do social media.

I'll end with social media. The board has a number of things to say about post-employment. I'm assuming nobody's looking to get off the commission yet, right? When you do, eventually, there are revolving door restrictions that have to do with the amount of time that you have to wait before you can appear before the commission. Don't worry about those now. But as you're thinking about leaving the commission, call us for advice. We'll walk you through to see if any of the post-employment restrictions might affect you in your post-commission service. Let's talk about social media for a second. This is the last thing.

Social media — city social media is basically like every other resource. So if there is a social media presence of this agency, can I go on there and try to rent out my apartment? No. Can I espouse political opinions? No. Can I go on rants to talk about how crazy it is, all of the stuff that's going on in my agency that I don't agree with? No. It's an official messaging platform that should speak with one voice. Word to the wise, this is not chapter 68 but we have found it helpful as we've run our social media that the less people involved, the better so that you can have a consistent voice. Social media is not rocket science but I think you want somebody to develop a practice that is engaging and I think that's why you leave it to one person. And if you want something up there, it should go through that one person with the appropriate checks and everything else. Now with private social media? You are, of course, allowed to have your own private social media.

You just must make sure of a couple of things. One is that we never reveal any confidential information that we got from this — from our city work in our private social media. What's confidential information? Information that's not FOIAable, for example, information that wouldn't be in an open meeting, I suppose. So I'm not sure if that's going to apply too much. But no confidential information. And do you know where people have messed up on that? This is a little silly but people who work as emergency medics who then take photos of what they've seen, and then they throw it up on their social media which, of course, violates HIPAA among other things. So that's one, confidential information. The big one is we need to make sure when we speak as private citizens, the public knows that. So we do not deign to represent our agency's official opinion in our private social media. People have asked me over the years, well, I have a social media account, and I don't want to talk about how I don't think my agency is going in the right direction. And it's not a violation of the conflict of interest law to do it. It's a very interesting area of law. There are a number of labor-law cases in jurisdictions around the country and I'll just leave — it's the wild west right now. These are not chapter 68 things but there was a sheriff who ran for re-election. I think it was in Virginia. His deputies didn't like him. So on their private Facebook pages, they liked the person running against their boss. Their boss won. He found about these guys like I said this other candidate and he fired them. Those deputies then brought it to the court and said that our first-amendment freedoms have been violated because basically we said we liked the candidate and now we got fired. And the judge said, incredibly, like I

said something is not protected speech. So they did not keep their jobs, or they did not get their jobs with back. Now that's Virginia. I don't know what the appeal was like. I'm just saying, nobody knows some answers to these questions on social media. But what we do know is we don't represent that we're speaking with the saying's voice when we're speaking in our private capacity. Madam, chair, is there anything else that you would like me to hit?

SARAH: Well, I think you've covered a lot and I know you have to go. But I would love to see if people have other questions.

CHARLES: Well, the last thing you said is very important. Do not represent the agency as your opinion. Do not represent your opinion as the agency's opinion.

ALEX: And you're on a community board. That happens, as well. You have to sort of train people. Yes, you could say that I'm a community board member. That's part of your bio. But you don't want on your thing say, the community board says this, or I think this is what the community board thinks.

CHARLES: Or well, what do you think the community commission is going to say? I can't give you that opinion because there's 15 of us.

ALEX: Question?

ANASTASIA: So, yeah, on... on our — so I have a Twitter account and I also have a really big national profile as an advocate in very similar to the work that I do for Speaker Johnson at the council and similar to the work that I would do locally through the commission. So is your recommendation, for example, when I'm editing my Twitter account, can I list that in my bios? Can I say that I'm a commissioner, or should I not do that?

ALEX: Absolutely, you should say what your positions are, what you do. You're actually bringing up a very relevant question that's a pre-social media question. And the question is, I wrote a book, and somebody wants to public my book, and on the dust cover on the back, they want to list who I am. Like, the person who works for forensic science, does he work in forensic science? Yes, he works for the chief medical examiner. So that's important for the bio there. But by New York City's chief medical examiner, Bucky Johnson, that's using the title to promote the book. So same thing here. In the Twitter bio, you could list all the positions that you have, including the city positions that you have, but that's just identifying your biographical information. That's not considered misuse of your title. And also the chief medical examiner's name is not Bucky Johnson. I'm not sure what it is but I know it's not that. Any other questions? Think of this as, like, an opening handshake with the conflicts of interest board. We come out and do this once every two years with various city agencies just to remind people of what these are. We went through a lot of detail today. You call us up, you're going to hear from somebody like me, who knows a lot about this law and has license to practice law and can give you confidential, one-on-one facts. Most of these can be

handled in one conversation over the phone. And if you can't, then we'll get you the help you need.

AMY: I know you said that to come to us early, but you do this for a living, and you're a lawyer so you know what that is.

ALEX: I'm not a lawyer. I'm just a big-mouth.

AMY: But for some of us, we might not know exactly until we get in it and then realize, oh, shoot. I should not have done that.

ALEX: So the board has in many cases, faced facts similar to yours where people either because something happened and they could not have known or there's not really a reasonable presumption that they could have known, or maybe they accidentally messed up on something and the individual who messed up, right, comes to the board first and says, look, I think I might have messed up. That's what we call a self-report. And if it really does from the facts that the person actually did mess up, and they didn't wait for somebody else to say anything about it, but, one, they'll get advice about how not to do it again. And we won't worry about past conduct. Maybe we give that person a private warning letter. That's not even going to be published anywhere. That's just between you and us. So over the last 30 years, that's been something that we've dealt with, and we're prepared with that. But if you can do it early, do it early because it saves us work and it saves you hassle. Anything else? Well, thank you for keeping your eyes open. So... and we're... you've got the handouts. You've got the telephone number and the website. Anything else?

SARAH: No. Should they ask for you?

ALEX: If you call the general number, 9:00-5:00, there's always an attorney who's on rotation duty for any calls that come in to the operator. They'll route you to that attorney that's on duty for the day.

SARAH: We've had a couple people who weren't here today. So...

ALEX: All right, great. Thanks, everybody!

CHARLES: Madam Chair, before I leave, I have one of our bags that shows everything we did. And we'll talk offline later on but I also brought the bags to replace the plastic bags that I'll give out to everybody.

SARAH: Oh, thank you.

CHARLES: And this, we do have pins.

AMY: I was gonna say, what about the pins?

SARAH: We're almost — we're almost —

CHARLES: I don't want to take away from the meeting. And I'll hand you this. This is what we gave. This is what we use for shopping and you can hand 'em out to people. And they're great. I have to leave. I'm sorry.

SARAH: As we're moving to sort of — we're almost at the end but I wanted to invite Lori, if you could just introduce yourself. She's our commissioner appointed by the Staten Island board of presidents.

LORI: Hello, my name is Lori Fioritto, and I come from Staten Island. It was a heck of a trip tonight in the rain.

SARAH: Thank you for making the trip.

LORI: No problem at all. And as Sarah has said, I was honored to be appointed and I'm hoping to have a voice here and help out as much as we can.

SARAH: Thank you. So are there any issues or concerns that anyone would like to raise now or suggest for the next meeting? There was a bunch of — there were some things, not a bunch, but some things that we wanted to talk about today including the social media piece.

AMY: When we're talking about the committees because that was one of the things that you referenced in document, like establishing committees and putting people on those committees.

SARAH: You're talking about the advisory committees for participatory budgeting and language access? I will work on putting together some criteria for who can serve on the committee and we need to sort of move quickly to have those advisory committees in place. So make sure that that's on the agenda for next time.

AMY: And I also just want to say about the emails 'cause I talked to Chuck before the meeting started that we're getting these emails as commissioners and I want to just say to everyone — I'm not a lawyer or anything. But I just want to say that all our emails are FOIAable so if you're going to do commission work, I would say that we should be doing it on our commission email.

SARAH: That's exactly right. And that's why you will have an account at civic engagement. Your, probably, first initial and last name @civicengagement.nyc.gov so we will be sending you emails through that. Any other...?

ANNETTA: When is the next meeting?

SARAH: Yeah, the next meeting was scheduled for July 10th from 11:00 to 1:00. And part of the reason why we're trying to move it around during the day. I think, again,

trying to find ways to be inclusive and bring people in at different times of the day. All right. If there's no other issues or concerns, I'd like to move to adjourn the meeting.

MARK: Without objection.

SARAH: Sorry?

MARK: Without objection.

SARAH: All right. So without any discussion, we'll call this meeting to adjourn. And, again, the next meeting will take place on July 10th from 11:00 to 1:00 and I will send out a location for that meeting. Thank you very much for being here.

AUDIENCE: Thank you.