

## **Minutes from Dutchess County Complete Count Committee Meeting Aug. 13, 2019**

The Dutchess County Complete Count Committee held its first public meeting on Aug. 13, 2019 at the Dutchess County Mental Health Center, 230 North Road, Poughkeepsie.

Committee members attending were: John Penney, Chairperson of the committee; Jennifer Drake, Senior Program Officer of The Dyson Foundation; Karen Dipnarine-Saroop, Executive Director of Dutchess County Interfaith Council; Jonathan Bix, Executive Director of Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson; and Christine Sergent, Executive Director of North East Community Center. Also in attendance were Dutchess County Planning and Development Commissioner Eoin Wrafter and two members of the public.

Committee Chairperson John Penney updated the group on outreach efforts to date. These include having a presence at the Dutchess County Latin American Festival on July 27 and at the La Guelaguetza Festival on Aug. 4, both at Waryas Park in Poughkeepsie. He also had census material on display at National Night Out outside Poughkeepsie City Hall on Aug. 6.

Penney has been in contact with key government officials in hard-to-count areas and has given presentations to the Dover Town Board and Beacon City Council.

The bulk of the meeting was devoted to a presentation by Karen M. Barnes, Partnership Specialist for the U.S. Census Bureau Field Division. Barnes used a PowerPoint to take the group through various aspects of the census. They included the importance of having everyone fill out the census, as both the redrawing congressional districts and determining how billions of dollars in federal aid gets distributed are at stake. She also pointed out that information collected by the Census Bureau is confidential and protected under law. She said those breaking the law could face up to five years in prison and/or fines of up to \$250,000. Barnes went over the timeline, saying that by April 2020, households will receive an invitation to participate. People will have three options to respond: online, by phone, or by mail. Starting in late April, census workers will start going door-to-door to those who have not responded to the census.

Barnes said the census has a significant need for more employees, especially ones who know their neighborhoods, and the bureau is recruiting at, [2020census.gov/jobs](https://2020census.gov/jobs).

“We have a much better chance of reaching people if (census workers) live in those areas,” she said.

Penney said he will contact Dutchess BOCES District Superintendent Dr. Richard Hooley to coordinate an effort with the Dutchess County school superintendents to spread the word about the census -- and to have it included in a classroom activity this school year before April.

Penney said the Complete Count Committee would have a table at Jazz in the Valley event at Waryas Park on Aug. 18. He said he will also make a number of presentations in September, including to the Red Hook Together community group and the Dutchess County Mayors and Supervisors Association. At an upcoming meeting, committee member Jennifer Drake is expected to update the committee on potential grants available for census-related events and activities.