

COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 30, 2008 BOARD OFFICE, 5676 RIVERDALE AVENUE

PRESENT

Robert Fanuzzi
Juan Goris
James Plaza
Julie Reyes
George M. Kuzma

Pamela Otto
Nestor Reyes

AFFILIATION

Committee Chair
CB #8
CB #8
CB #8
Manhattan College Business
Manager
KRVCDC
BOEDC

R. Fanuzzi called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

The minutes of the meeting of September 25, 2008 were read and accepted. The election for Vice-Chair was held and Juan Goris was nominated. The motion was seconded and he was unanimously elected vice chair of the Economic Development Committee.

Chair's Report, R. Fanuzzi

A priority for the committee will be pursuing the development of a Work Force One Career Center, a division of Small Business Services, in Bronx Community Board No. 8 District. The establishment of this satellite will be top budget priority for the Economic Development Committee for FY 2011, in addition to more funding for NYC Business Solution, an entrepreneurial resource under SBS. Presently, these two entities serve the South Bronx and Community Board #3, and are currently under reorganization. Increased presence of these two city services will aid the committee in organizing a jobs development program for the district, culminating in a job's fair.

The second item in the Chair's report was to state the need for further resources, either through grants or appropriations, for the Kingsbridge BID, so that it could add a recruiter with the mission of expanding the BID. Ms. Pam Otto, of KRVCDC, emphasized the need for market research in advance to determine whether local businesses are willing to join the BID.

The third item of the Chair's report was to call for the development of City Harvest program in Kingsbridge and Riverdale to redistribute unneeded food to shelters, etc.

The renovated Stop and Shop will open on November 15.

II. Guest Speaker

Manhattan College

Mr. George M. Kuzma, Business Manager

According to Mr. Kuzma, Manhattan College is entering into an agreement with a leasing agent to procure a tenant for 12,000 square feet of commercial space. The space is currently unfinished and there is no predisposition on part of the landlord to subdivide the space. There are 29 parking spaces for the facility. Mr. Kuzma's polling of CB8 resident employees of Manhattan College has found a strong desire for the franchise Trader Joes to lease the space. He also emphasized his willingness to hear all ideas from the committee and the community, and Manhattan College's desire to provide a community amenity.

Julie Reyes suggested that an appropriate addition to the Trader Joe store would be a book store. Mr. Kuzma said that Follet, the manager of their college bookstore, could be persuaded to open a smaller retail branch in the site. Others suggested a Barnes and Noble, since the district has lost a local bookstore and has none in the vicinity short of Central Avenue. She also suggested that it would be a great location for a coffee retailer (with WiFi), since booksellers seek this partnership and the Broadway area has no such retail service. Mr. Fanuzzi stated that a goal of the commercial development at the site should be to redirect commerce from Westchester to the Bronx by providing what local residents are leaving the area for.

Mr. Kuzma suggested that perhaps a "high end" Wine Store, with a kind of specialty available merchandise, along with product information and assistance catered for its clientele. However, it was stated that there are too many liquor and wine stores throughout Riverdale already. Nestor Reyes reported that even Bronx Terminal Market has had trouble filling retail space with clothing retailers, and warned against that pursuit. According to Mr. Kuzma, Whole Foods was first approached, but the space is too small.

Mr. Fanuzzi closed the discussion by commending Manhattan College on its outreach, and by promoting the unique location of the site: as between Riverdale and Van Cortlandt Park communities, and at the end of Broadway, it truly unites the community. He promised that the Economic Development Committee would

seek to negotiate with Trader Joe's or any retailer to make sure that the pricing structure and selection of products correspond to the needs of our economically diverse community. He also put Mr. Kuzma in touch with Mr. Rome Birkett, the real estate specialist for the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation, for assistance in marketing the site. Vice-Chair, J. Goris made the important observation that the landlord might have trouble filling the space if the current allocation of parking spaces (29) is not expanded.

Old Business

Discussion of the Senior Transport and Shopping Shuttles was tabled.

Green Market site search

As discussed in the last meeting, the establishment of a Greenmarket will provide an attraction for local residents and make a positive economic impact on local business. Currently the residents of Riverdale are leaving the area in pursuit of these types of Greenmarkets and taking a large portion of our neighborhood economy with them.

Two sites were discussed: one in Kingsbridge Heights, in the parking lot of Our Lady of Angels Church on Webb Avenue, and the other in Marble Hill, in the area bounded by U-Haul, the city playground, and St. Stephen's Church. The latter site would perhaps involve a street closure of Kingsbridge Road for the Saturday morning hours, as is done in Inwood; and the use of the U-Haul parking lot for farmers' trucks. The committee preferred the Marble Hill site for its central location. Mr. Fanuzzi reported that Hilary Baum, founder of the Food Co-Op, would be consulted with site selection and be a possible guest at the next meeting. A criterion of site selection, according to the directors of the Greenmarket program, is residential density and improvement of food access for residents of all economic strata.

IV. New Business

Bicycle Racks

Mr. Thomas Durham and Mr. Robert Bender, members of Riverdale and Kingsbridge's biking community were gracious enough to provide the Economic Development Committee with the list of sites for bike racks. In an era when gas prices are high and further funding for alternative transportation is stagnant, local bicycling represents a vital part of local commerce. The committee compiled this list, to be shared with the Traffic and Transportation Committee:

Johnson Ave near W. 235th/Key Food
Riverdale Ave near Palombo's Bakery
Riverdale Diner on W. 238th Street
Broadway near 234th, Garden Gourmet area
Subway stops at W. 225th, W. 231st, and Broadway and W. 242nd Street
North Broadway near the Henry Hudson Parkway overpass

Tibbett Avenue and W. 231st, near Tibbett Diner and Bally's

At the suggestion of Nestor Reyes, a final list, compiled in consultation with Traffic and Transportation, will be forwarded to Nicole Stent to present before the next District Managers meeting, Economic Development Committee and Anthony Perez Cassino, Chairman of the Traffic and Transportation Committee.

Investment Banking

A member of the committee, Howard Ring, recommended in writing that the committee seek out a discount brokerage house (like Fidelity) to establish a local branch.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM, with the next meeting to be held on November 19th, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

James Plaza
Economic Development Committee

Robert Fanuzzi
Chairman
Economic Development
Committee

JP:RF:db (November 5, 2008)