

**BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8**

**MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON APRIL 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010  
AT THE BOARD OFFICE, 5676 RIVERDALE AVENUE**

**ATTENDANCE**

Robert Fanuzzi  
Steven Balicer  
Steven Froot  
Ari Goldman  
Juan Goris  
Sergio Marquez  
Aliza Appelbaum  
Linda Cohen  
Ellen Feld  
Mila Kochaobia  
Roseann Milo  
Andrew Sandler  
Tracy Shelton  
Cliff Stanton

**AFFILIATION**

Committee Chair, CB8  
CB8  
CB8  
CB8  
Committee Vice Chair, CB8  
CB8  
Riverdale Press  
rep. Senator Jeffrey Klein  
  
rep. Councilman G. Oliver Koppell  
KRVCDC  
KRVCDC

- I. Chair's Report
  - A. Committee members should submit capital and expense budget requests at the next meeting.
  - B. The 2010 Schervier/Marble Hill and Riverdale Neighborhood House/Riverdale Youthmarkets will open on July 8.
  - C. At the request of local merchants, R. Fanuzzi asked officials from Ethical Culture Fieldston School about weekend usage of the school's Riverdale Avenue parking lot. The school uses the lot on weekends for team events.
  - D. On behalf of local merchants, R. Fanuzzi submitted a request to Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz for decorative light posts to be placed along South Riverdale Avenue commercial district.
  - E. Tracy Shelton was introduced as the director of the Kingsbridge Riverdale Van Cortlandt Development Corporation. Ms. Shelton comes to the job with many years experience as an attorney for NYPIRG and strong ties to the community.
  
- II. Guest Speaker: Cliff Stanton, Board Member, Kingsbridge Riverdale Van Cortlandt Development Corporation: "Plaza NYC" for South Riverdale Avenue  
With the help of a power point presentation, C. Stanton reported on the Plaza NYC program, run by the Department of Transportation. The KRVCDC is considering filing an application with the DOT to convert the triangular parking area bounded by Riverdale Avenue, Fieldston Road, and 235<sup>th</sup> Street into a pedestrian plaza area. The renderings and examples provided by DOT exactly matched the area considered. Triangular areas of this kind have been converted into public areas for concessions, arts installations, musical performances, and benches, as well as plantings. The purpose of the Plaza

NYC program is to provide the community with a public space and to make an economic impact on the surrounding commercial area. The initial cost of construction and all capital expenses are covered by DOT; yearly expenses for maintenance and operations are to be covered by the local sponsor of the application.

As part of the follow-up discussion, several contributions and concerns were raised.

- A. S. Balicer reported on the efforts of Councilman Oliver Koppell to convert the site in question to a Green Streets Space. The conversion was halted at the last minute due to budget considerations.
- B. A. Sandler expressed the continuing interest of Councilman Koppell in the site, and told C. Stanton that he would bring the program to his attention.
- C. R. Milo of the South Riverdale Avenue Merchants Association raised a concern about the upkeep of the area: garbage collection, landscaping, etc. Contracting costs for this service would also be borne by the community, whether that be the local sponsor or a merchants organization.
- D. Several community members raised concerns about security, the site being across the street from a building currently housing Manhattan College students.
- E. E. Feld raised the ever present concern of parking, and questioned what parking spots would be lost under the Plaza NYC proposal. Although C. Stanton responded that the lost parking would be more than made up for in increased pedestrian traffic, he pledged to work with local merchants to minimize any loss. He also raised the possibility that the DOT could find a way to preserve nearly all the existing parking spots—make the plaza “parking neutral—by changing the traffic patterns or parking patterns of contiguous roads.
- F. R. Fanuzzi stated the importance of contacting the residents of the apartment buildings on Fieldston Avenue, and proposed that the same presentation and outreach be made to their co-operative boards.

At the end of discussion, R. Fanuzzi proposed that C. Stanton and KRVDC meet with the South Riverdale Avenue Merchants Association to further develop the proposal and to respond to concerns. E. Feld offered to hold the meeting at the Sotheby’s Real Estate office on Riverdale Avenue. All committee members were invited.

### III. Old Business

- A. South Riverdale Avenue Merchants Association  
R. Milo reported on the efforts of the merchants association to install lights on trees on Riverdale Avenue. R. Fanuzzi forwarded permits from the Parks Department, which governs all use of trees.
- B. Real Estate Vacancy Map  
R. Fanuzzi has been in contact with Monetta Wilson of Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation regarding the creation of an interactive map of vacant commercial buildings, providing contact information, ownership details, and square footage. He will be consulting

with the Technology Committee and the Laws Rules and Ethics Committee about how to proceed further.

C. Bike Racks

Local merchants have been asking for a timetable for installing bike racks in Community Board 8 and particularly on South Riverdale Avenue. R. Fanuzzi agreed to write a joint letter with the Chair of the Traffic and Transportation Committee, Tony Cassino, asking the Department of Transportation to install bike racks as soon as possible.

D. Shopping Trolley

R. Fanuzzi referred inquiries about a shopping trolley running in South and North Riverdale to minutes of past meetings and to ancient news clippings in the Riverdale Press. He will also be contacting Skyview Owners Corporation, owners and operators of a van service, to extend their South Riverdale route and stops on Johnson Avenue to include Riverdale Avenue.

IV. New Business

A. Speed Limit Enforcement on Riverdale Avenue

Merchants requested a police presence on Riverdale Avenue to measure whether drivers are exceeding the 30 miles per hour speed limit.

B. Street Fair on Riverdale Avenue

The committee and community members expressed strong interest in holding an arts-related street fair on Riverdale Avenue in the Fall 2010. R. Fanuzzi forwarded the information regarding the use of the sidewalk to the South Riverdale Avenue Merchants Association and will work with local arts groups to organize the event. Linda Cohen, representing the office of Senator Jeffrey D. Klein, volunteered to report on the weekly arts fairs held by the Eastchester Merchants Association at the next meeting.

C. Arts Installations in Vacant Storefronts

At the request of representatives of local arts groups, R. Fanuzzi contacted landlords who own vacant commercial buildings about the possibility of opening their storefront for a temporary arts exhibit. A third party group, the non-profit organization manages the building and underwrites the insurance on behalf of the arts group, while landlords reap the publicity and the street gains foot traffic. The landlord has not replied, but more inquiries will be made.

Robert Fanuzzi  
Chairman  
Economic Development Committee