

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8
MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON JUNE 9TH, 2011
AT RMHA
5676 RIVERDALE AVENUE, 2ND FL., BRONX, NEW YORK 10471

PRESENT

Maria Khury
Steven Balicer
Robert Fanuzzi
Nils Graham
Patricia Mullen
Robert Press
Gregoria Feliciano
Ari A. Spett
Andrew Sandler
Marina Lopez
Brendan McHugh
Manari Merino
Bob Bieder (Guest Speaker)
Irene Moore Korman
Michael Nixon
Jose Lopez
Kevin Vega
Phillip Friedman
Connie Dennie
Tom Durham
Brendan Contant

AFFILIATION

Cmte. Chair, CB8
Cmte.Vice-Chair, CB8
Vice-Chair, CB8
CB8
CB8
CB8
Community Committee Member
CB8
Rep. Councilman O. Koppell
Khury Tours
Riverdale Review
Sante Fe Grill
Bronx Merchants Coalition
Country Bank
BOEDC
Resident
Citibank
Treasurer, CB8
Columbia Florist
CB8
CB8

Meeting called to order at 7:30PM

Maria Khury-Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to this, the last meeting she will lead as the Chair of the Eco. Dev. Committee. A storm with strong winds and rain did not keep the attendees from partaking and she was very appreciative for their support and attendance. She thanked the committee for their support in the course of the year. She mentioned the collaboration and hard work of the Vice-Chair Steven Balicer and Committee Member Gregoria Feliciano.

Chair moved to approve minutes of 4/07/2011 and 5/09/2011 which were unanimously approved with change.

Chair's statement : Pleased with progress that Economic Comm. made towards goals established this year. Much was accomplished this year. Thanked all committee members and community partners for their work in bringing the accomplishments to fruition.

Chair Khury asked Gregoria Feliciano to introduce the evening's guest speaker, Mr. Bieder, a staunch advocate of the SBSA.

Bob Beider presentation on Small Business Survival Act:

Approximately 40 years ago, there was commercial "rent control." He stated that advocates like him simply seeks a fair process for both tenant and landlord. He believes that the Small Business Survival is just that. The key to this act is its

premise to assist small businesses and small property owners, where ideally, neither side is more powerful. Frequently though one side is more powerful than the other with access to more capital for expenses such as legal fees and cost incurred allowing viable space go without a tenant until a few spaces are empty to attract larger tenants (that are not always best tenants for areas such as CB # 8). Process begins 180 day period before the end of the lease. Then, non-binding mediation would begin. If in 90 days both parties still disagree, it then goes to an arbitrator.

He rebutted the argument raised by NYC Council Speaker. Christine Quinn and Councilman Oliver Koppell, who feel that the act is unconstitutional as it conflict with New York States' Constitution. Beider cited that his side's attorneys, a panel of legal experts found that it is constitutional. Yet, Councilman Jackson, who re-introduced the act, has withdrawn his office's support. Anabel Palmer supports the SBSA but her office's resources are focused on fair wage issues.

Mr. Bieder added that BIDS have been very supportive because vacancies esp. extended periods decrease real estate values of home owners who also need to visit other commercial spots for their consumer needs.

Newly appointed board member, Ari Spett, commented that after a 5 or 10 year lease expires, landlords seek to collect 3 to 4 times on the next lease agreement.

Attendees expressed concern that members of the NYCC may receive political contributions from real estate interests.

Beider provided more history; Ruth Messinger introduced the SBSA drafted by Sherri Donovan in 1988. Although it passed but Ed Koch, then Mayor, vetoed it. It was re-introduced but did not pass because of 1 vote.

Ari Spett, read a summary of the SBSA; that it has been reviewed by American Arbitrators ... it is constitutional because both parties involved do not give up their rights to court. And as an owner of a small business, he views it to be positive. Mr. Spett asserted that a community is held together by its constituent parts that should not have to withstand the current situation. In areas of CB # 8 such as Broadway, Riverdale and Johnson Avenues, in the past 20 years, esp. last 5 years, a trend has developed where a landlord will leave commercial properties vacant for longer and longer periods.

The Chair then facilitated a planning discussion for SBSA Forum for fall 2011. The goal would be to present both sides in a manner that would encourage community participation using methods such as creative scenarios, case studies and/or mock trials from both tenant and landlord perspectives. Experts from professional legal, arbitration associations and consumer rights groups would be invited to participate. Several suggestions were offered as to the venue for the forum and possible dates in the Fall when the Economic Development committee can host this event. The chair indicated that she would have to discuss the forum with whomever is elected Chair of the Committee moving forward.

The Chair asked several Eco Dev. Committee members to assist her in presenting and recognizing, with framed certificates to several community and committee members who made significant contributions to the work of the Economic Development Committee this year.

The Honorees were (see attachment):

Mr. Michael Nixon- BOEDC

Ms. Manari Merino- Santa Fe Restaurant

Ms. Irene Moore Korman- Country Bank

Mr. Kevin Vega- Citibank

Ms. Gregoria Feliciano -Committee Member

Ms. Khury thanked her Co-Chair Steve Balicer, Brendan Contant and Ari Spett for their assistance in selecting the Honorees .

As requested by the Chair, every committee member shared their perspective on the work that was completed this year and what areas need further review and/or development in the coming year.

The “Year” in Perspective was discussed. Many agreed that the Business to Business card exchange as was the Bank Dating were very successful event that should be repeated.

As well, a new idea is to implement a Youth Job Fair. “Taking the meetings on the road” should as rotating the meetings in the community brings the committee’s agenda to the businesses.

Praises from many for a job well done went to the Chair. She was grateful but affirmed that the success of the year was due to the collaboration of the committee and the participants from the business community.

Budget Priorities for Year 2013 were presented and approved as follows;

Expense Priorities

- **SBS and/or EDC** to allocate or provide grants or supplemental funding to the Kingsbridge **BID** to assist merchants associations and other Community Sponsored theme events. These funds should provide for local advertising, printing, entertainment and decorative enhancement of the festival streets.
- Funding for the South Riverdale Avenue 3rd Annual Arts Festival from **SBS and/or EDC**.
- **EDC,BOEDC and/or SBS** to support funding for Job Fairs at local high school or community agencies that service young adults entering the labor markets. Funds should be used for promotional video advertising and printed materials. A trained Job Developer will also promote employers to these events.

Capital Priority

- **EDC and/or SBS to support funding for “Bishop’s crook”** decorative streetlights for South Riverdale Avenue commercial corridor to match those on the North Riverdale Avenue commercial corridor

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Minutes submitted by,

Gregoria Feliciano, Committee Member

Patricia Mullen, Board Member

Approved by,

Maria Khury, Chairperson

Economic Development Committee