Arts & Culture Committee of Community Board Nine

Savona Bailey-McClain & Michael Palma, Chairs
Tamara Gayer, Vicky Gholson, Christa Giesecke, Linda Walton & Diane Wilson,
Board Committee Members
Lee-Ann Pinder, Valarie Winborne, Margaret Troupe& Quincy Troupe,
Public Members

Committee Meeting Minutes of November 6, 2006

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m. by co-chairs Savona Bailey-McClain and Michael Palma

Present: Savona Bailey-McClain, Co-chair, Michael Palma, Co-chair, Jordi Reyes-Montblanc, Tamara Gayer, Vicky Gholson, Ph.D., Christa Giescke, Diane Wilson, Linda Walton.

Absent: Margaret Troupe, Quincy Troupe, Valarie Winborne

Excused: Lee-Ann Pinder

The meeting had a quorum.

Adoption of the minutes and agenda was postponed until later into the meeting.

Jordi Reyes-Montblanc, Chair of CB9, made a presentation. The Chair shared his high hopes for the committee. The Arts and Culture Committee he stated, has a number of people who care, are highly opinionated and rugged individualists that need to work together.

The Chair presented copies of recommended Standard Operating Procedures that he believed followed the Board's bylaws. Mr. Montblanc stated that it had been a long time since a committee had been formed at CB9. The Chair admitted that he doesn't know anything about arts and culture and so in forming the committee, decided to pull folks together who had an interest. He worked with the committee during the summer to create an acceptable mission statement. At summer's end, his only request for the committee was to plan a celebration for the opening of Harlem Piers. The Chair didn't want an ordinary NYC street fair where the same merchants move from one neighborhood to the next. He wanted something special different where the **"arts"** could be the centerpiece of the celebration. Mr. Montblanc stated that the Arts & Culture Committee would not produce the celebrations at Harlem Piers but rather develop the concept, which would be shared with the Executive Committee who would then realize those concepts.

The Chair shared an example of the Medieval Festival that's given every year in Fort Tryon Park. He said that it's a lot of fun. The event is held in Community Board 12 that he feels has been successful in conceptualizing art events. Tens of thousands of people come to see the medieval event.

Tamara Gayer and Diane Wilson then brought up the issue of public members before the Chair of the Board. The Chair stated that it is the prerogative of the Committee Chairs to recommend public members to the committee. Normally, public members are introduced at committee meetings and not before. Public members do not have an attendance

requirement. And their vote counts as a public member. The Chair has decided that for the future, potential public members need to attend a few meetings in order to get to know everyone on the committee, live in the community and have the approval of both Co-chairs.

(Below is an excerpt from the bylaws regarding public members)

Excerpt from Bylaws – Page 2 Public Members:
Public Members shall consist of community members who have indicated a desire to serve on selected committee(s) by completing C.B. #9"Public Member" application. They will be appointed to selected committee(s) by the Board's Chairperson and will be eligible to vote within the committee (s) to which they are appointed as per Article V. Section B.

The issue of voting then came up by several committee members – Jordi Reyes-Montblanc, Diane Wilson, Tamara Gayer, Vicky Gholson, Michael Palma and Savona Bailey-McClain. It was stated that when a motion is brought before a committee, committee member votes are counted first, then CB9 board members who may be present, public members and then the general public.

Committee members asked about minutes for which the Chair stated that all committee meetings must have minutes whether there is a quorum or not. The case of the Gabarron Foundation was brought up. The Gabarron Foundation attended the September Arts and Culture Committee for which there was no quorum. The Chair stated that in those cases, the sense of the committee can be taken into consideration should a vote be necessary. Then the parties requesting a vote from the committee can be recommended to either the Executive Committee or the General Board.

Concerns were further raised regarding approval of the Gabarron Foundation. The Chair stated that the foundation had missed both the Parks Committee and the Executive Committee. The foundation was referred to the Chair of the Board who then recommended the foundation come before the General Board. Committee member Diane Wilson stated that there was still a problem because folks did not have time to digest the presentation. Also stated was that committee members felt that the sculptures were racially insensitive.

Both Co-chairs stated that the Public Art Coordinator for the Parks Department was told that for the future, presentations should be made before two committees. Vicky Gholson stated how she believed that communities are deliberately left out of the loop. Co-chair Savona Bailey-McClain stated that City Parks is trying to work with community boards and that Ms. Clare Weiss, Public Art Coordinator lives in Northern Manhattan and is strongly advocating on behalf of the community. The Co-chair also stated that the insurance requirement for public art has increased making it more difficult to have public art and bonds are also required as well.

Committee members then inquired about priorities and delegation of tasks. The Co-chairs stated how tasks and delegation of tasks would be decided by members **"organically".** There was discussion between the Committee Chairs and with Committee members about monthly agendas. Committee members wanted to have a say in who would be on the agenda. It was stated that a City agency, civic organization or the general public could ask to be on the agenda and that it's our civic responsibility to allow the public to come before the committee with an issue. Though a draft agenda could be sent in advance,

there will be times when community request could be made at the last minute. Both committee Chairs assured the members that they would not have several presentations at a committee meeting without their prior knowledge because that would be unfair.

There was more discussion about committee priorities and whether the committee even wanted to make the 197A plan a priority. The following goals were then finally agreed upon by all committee members.

Goals

1) Broad visioning document
2) LDC Advocacy
3) Harlem Piers Opening
4) Bringing in the Community

Michael Palma shared his concern for housing and work spaces for artists. Co-chair Savona Bailey-McClain shared that at the panel discussion at the Gatehouse – Harlem Stage, Commissioner Kate Levin stated that the City of New York cannot support housing that's just for artists. That would be discrimination. A private developer could build such a building but an alternative could be to configure a potential site so that it could be conducive to artists and then those individuals can apply openly along with other applicants.

Vicky Gholson suggested that a draft resolution be developed regarding housing for artists. Michael Palma seconded the motion. Tamara Gayer made a statement that the community shouldn't be selling itself short for money. A vote was taken and the motion to draft a resolution was approved.

Vicky Gholson further stated that funds will be needed to develop a cultural arts district plan. Co-chair Savona Bailey-McClain stated that there are fund for some community planning. Funds for the management plan of the Heights Heritage Area, was awarded in August by the NY Department of State, Division of Coastal Resources. One hundred thousand dollars was earmarked. The NYC Parks is the NYC municipal sponsor. The process involves the Municipal sponsor assigning a Project Manager, a work plan is approved and then working groups formed and consultants brought on board. So, some resources have been acquired to support some community planning.

The committee approved having two letters prepared that informs the community and elected officials that we have an Arts & Culture Committee and the other would reach out to CB12's Parks and Art Committee regarding some joint programming around the Hispanic Society.

Last discussion involved Co-chair Savona Bailey-McClain's request for bios of each committee members. The purpose was for everyone to get to know one another and share the information among committee members and guest. The Co-chair felt it might help relations but committee members felt it violated their trust instead. The outcome of the lengthy discussion was that there will be no emails unless absolutely necessary. Face to face discussion would be easier.

Meeting adjorned at 9:35 p.m.