

Community Board 9 Manhattan

September 19, 2013

Chair's Report

Attended the West Harlem Empowerment outreach to promote anti-violence and provide resources for the community.

Attended forum on Diabetes to promote nutritional changes as well as increase in exercise for youth and adults.

Attended initial meetings to establish 125th street Merchants Alliance. A great debt of gratitude is due to 125 BID for the tireless work to help the group organize. At this week's meeting their logo was unveiled as well as promotions and projects for the upcoming holiday season.

Met with the US State Department along with Ann Rocker and the Riverbank State Park Commissioner and staff to discuss civic engagement with Russian leaders seeking to best utilize and green areas of communities in the USSR that were industrial and are currently abandoned and vacant, using Riverbank as a prototype.

Borough Board summary: NYC Department of Sanitation Mr. Dave Hirschler, Director, Waste Prevention, spoke on reducing the use of Styrofoam. Department of Sanitation is recommending people to not use Styrofoam for coffee cups or food plates. Many businesses have now transition from using Styrofoam to other materials in order to help the environment.

Presentation: Campaign for Tomorrow's Workforce

Ms. Sierra Stoneman- Bell of the Neighborhood Family Services Coalition and Ms. Paula Galvin of the Fund for Public Advocacy gave a presentation on upcoming changes to the GED in New York State. Over one million adults in NYS lack high school credentials. The American Council on Education and Pearson bought the GED program and are raising the cost and ramping up to more rigorous standards. The NYS Department of Education decided to look for another high school equivalency test provider instead and chose CTB/McGraw Hill instead. A new high school equivalency test – TASC (Test Assessing Secondary Completion) – will be implemented in NYS in 2014. It will meet the common core curriculum standards. The State may approve other pathways to equivalency as well. A surge in the number of people who want to take the GED before the program changes in 2014 is expected. Those who have completed a portion of the GED but not all sections should be encouraged to finish. On January 1, 2104, you must start again if you have not passed all sections of the GED. The 2013 GED Campaign to Finish is a partnership of CUNY, NYC Agencies, and community based organizations (CBOs) working to get New Yorkers to finish the GED in 2013. The campaign has four parts: create awareness of the coming change to the GED, engage young

adults through the hotline and website, provide prep and counseling programs through CBOs, and get people tested at DOE centers. The goal is to get 3,000 tested and achieve a 75% pass rate.

Presentation: One NYC One Nation's Civic Engagement Opportunities for Immigrant Leaders

Monica Taveras of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs spoke about their Know Your Rights & Responsibilities Forums and the Immigrant Civic Leadership program.

One NYC One Nation brings together New York City's philanthropic, public and community leadership to strengthen immigrant communities by collaborating and leveraging resources, programs and opportunities throughout the City.

One NYC One Nation projects will be developed in each of the City's five boroughs in the following program areas: Civic Leadership & Community Bridge Building, Know Your Rights and Responsibilities Forums, Neighborhood Leadership Institutes Neighborhood Leadership Institutes, Immigrant Civic Leadership Program (CORO NY), and UnityNYC Grant Awards.

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Attended the 30th precinct Clergy Council July and August, the council continues to support WHEC in its efforts and work with the precinct to decrease criminal activity. The Council is planning an appreciation breakfast to honor the work done by Deputy Inspector Stephenson on October 16, 2013 at 10am to be held at St. James Presbyterian Church.

Attended meeting with WHDC and Harlem YMCA to promote a coalition between youth programs in the area that need to space and pool facilities.

Attended the 125th street BID annual meeting where the possibilities of "virtual" services were highlighted as well as the "Connect the Dots" program. Connect the Dots will drive business to local merchants and services along 125th street.

Met with several members regarding ways in which they can enhance their service to the community and the board by sharing the skills and talents they have in a more productive manner.

Met with Janus Properties to discuss the development of the Tastee Bakery and minority involvement in the project.

Meeting held with NY Waterways, Gray line, Aloft Hotel, 125 BID, and other stakeholders to discuss community exposure in order to bring more patrons to the area making Harlem more attractive to visitors.

Attended Land Use meeting for presentations by HSA and the ML Wilson Boys and Girls club at which time the committee agreed to write a letter to HPD encouraging them to provide tax credits to help fund the project. HSA indicates that the lot next to their school is being cleaned up in order for the developer to determine what can be developed there. There are renderings on the internet, however, those are said to be of a speculator nature.

Discussions held with the Hudson River Foundation, they have reviewed each request for funding and complete their visits to every project that submitted a proposal they will present at the October General Board Meeting.

Attended the initial launch of the vessel assigned to our Harlem Pier. Two hundred and fifty (250) individuals took the "maiden voyage" it was an exciting experience and gave great exposure to our Piers many were amazed at the beautiful functional park land available to the public.

Spent the remainder of the day after the "maiden voyage" at the Piers for City of Water /Family Fun Day. The day was filled with activities for children and adults with hundreds of families coming out and enjoying, art, face painting, designing ornamentations for their hair, shows, zumba, great (diverse) music/dance and much more. Back to school supplies were given out that were donated by City Council Woman Inez Dickens and many stayed into the evening ordering dinner from Dinosaur and eating under the stars as the sun set.

Took part in the "Gastro Cruises" inviting friends and associates across the city to join me in dining at CB9 restaurants and taking the moonlit cruises from the West Harlem Piers, to introduce others to our Piers and our restaurants.

Represented at the Senior Jubilee.
Represented at the Harlem Tourism workshop

Attended, along with the Chair of Landmarks/Parks, the unveiling and dedication of the Riverbank State Park Murals. This summer New York State Parks engaged two not-for-profit arts organizations to work with local youth to develop murals for Riverbank State Park. Groundswell, which has done 400 murals across the City, developed a mural for the water play area that is adjacent to the outdoor pool. Creative Arts Workshops for Kids, which has done 40 mural projects, developed murals on stretched canvas that was hung inside the Athletic, Aquatics, and Cultural facilities. Each group was led by 2 professional artists and brought together local youth in researching, designing, and creating the murals. Youth participants were encouraged to assume significant responsibility, team work and leadership roles, as well as obtain tangible job skills such as design, construction and urban revitalization. All together 50 local youth employed through the NYC Summer Youth Employment Program participated in

these programs. The end products have beautified the park and its facilities, engaged youth in societal and personal transformation, and given expression to the story of the park and the local community.

Attended the ribbon cutting for the 123th street park/playground, with Chair of Landmarks/Parks, and several board members. The ribbon cutting was very moving in that it was the anniversary of the March on Washington and fitting that community members adults and children joined hands and sang "we shall overcome" it was most fitting given the need that we still have to uplift our community through safe places for our children to recreate while parents engage in or pursue employment opportunities as well as a safe place for our Seniors to spend the time that they have so admirably earned.

Attended the Morningside safety meeting held by DOT with the leadership of the community, which gave community leaders an opportunity to give input before the plans were presented to the public via the CBs.

Met with tenants of Neighborhood Artists HDFC because they have lost their section 8 subsidy, due to violations in the building that are the responsibility of the landlord HCCI. The group was referred to the Housing committee for co ordination of action to remove the violations, prevent evictions, and re-instate the subsidy.

Met with several grantees of the WHDC CBA funds who are having difficulty in recruiting CB9 residents to participate in their programming. Discussed the importance of the groups having assessed the area before submitting their proposals and was able to share resources to help with their attracting residents to participate.

Continuing to monitor participation of Black Architects with Columbia, an additional architect from the group has been selected to work with a larger firm as part of the Columbia development.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Rev. G. Morgan-Thomas, Chair
September 19, 2013