

CB9 Economic Development/Harlem Piers Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 2, 2016 at 6:30 pm

Location: Broadway Housing, 583 Riverside Drive at West 135th Street

Committee Members: Quenia Abreu, Chair (present) , James Archer (Absent), Erik George (absent), Nekpen Osuan (Present), Nick Smith (Present), Jose Taveras (Present)

Visitors: John Padmore, Chair of CB9, Wendy Li,

Call to Attention at 6:50

At 7pm quorum achieved – Call to order

Motion to Adopt Agenda and 2nd by Jose Taveras

Adopt Minutes- no minutes present

Introductions: Quenia Abreu introduced herself as the new chair of the committee, followed by an introduction by Pad Moore, chair of CB 9. Q invited the committee members to bring forward and discuss those issues initiatives and projects they considered should be priority for the committee to work and for members to choose the ones they wanted to lead.

Discussion of Committee:

The committee members present decided on the following priorities:

The Marine Transfer Station – Efforts to be led by Jose. The committee agreed it needs a new status report. The question was raised as to why there are two companies working on the removal of asbestos. It was suggested that We Act gets invited to give an update. Padmore will arranged a meeting with DCAS and will work on getting all documents and previous reports to the committee. He suggested the Committee works on an agenda/proposal for the usage of the station to present to the board. It was agreed we should considerer proposing something that can be used by the entire community such as a theater and meeting rooms. The committee will research how other marine transfer station have been converted to community space around the country.

Unemployment in CB9 – Nepken to work on this with another member. The committee agreed there is a high unemployment rate in WH and needs to be addressed. The situation with Colombia University Employment Center in relation to the community agreement and the meeting that took place in the summer was discussed. Q and Padmore gave an update. The requested report from CB9 on the usage of the employment center by residents of CB is still pending. Padmore will reach out to Victor Edward who has been working on this issue to follow up with Victoria Mason from Columbia and make presentation to the committee.

It was also agreed to reach out to big employers in the area, including City College, Mount Sinai, Columbia University and others to present on employment opportunities and their plans to engage the CB9 community. The outreach will also include Development or Construction projects going on in CB9 such as the Boys and Girl Club.

Padmore informed the board was sending out a letter to WHDC for them to ask the grant awardees (for economic development) to make a presentation to the committee. Q mentioned she has learned there were two awardees: We Act and Strive, both organizations were awarded funds to provide training and placement to CB9 residents. The committee agreed to request and update on St John the Devine on MWBE and local workforce utilization. Q - will reach out to Crescent consulting on the matter.

Padmore will talk to the Strategic Committee about having a discussion with WHDC regarding an apprenticeship and a training and employment center needed in West Harlem ASAP since all of the construction jobs available at CU are union.

Small Businesses - The committee expressed concerned about small businesses closing in the area, such a Kovo and the warehousing of commercial space by landlords. The committee will start visiting some of the businesses that are having problems, including Floridita, which was displaced by the CU expansion and has low visibility and it is experiencing low traffic. As well as BTA, there is delay on the work being done to the side walk which is negatively impacting the business.

Old Business – None

New Business

CU Expansion - Q announced that Skanska and Velez construction, the companies hired to work on the next CU expansion building will be making a presentation to the committee at the next meeting on March 1, 2016. The presentation will include MWBE and Local Workforce Goals and their outreach plan.

Small Business Survival Act – NS gave an update on the bill. The bill which is being proposed at City Hall gives rights to commercial tenant to negotiate and with the landlord and go to arbitration if needed when their lease expires. The decision reached during arbitration will be binding. As it stands, commercial tenants have no rights once their lease expires. Currently the bill has 20 supporters, it needs at least 32 to make it to the floor for a vote.

Newsletter, Survey and Directory. The committee brought up the need for a newsletter both digital and in print as well as a survey and directory of organizations/agencies/small businesses in the community. The committee will look for pro-bono resources with City College and Columbia University (in-kind support through the Benefits Agreement) to make it happen.

Adjourn- motioned and 2nd by Nick Smith at 8:00 PM.