

Waterfront & Economic Development Committee Manhattan Community Board Nine

Savona Bailey-McClain, Committee Co-Chair, Jane Arrendell, Committee Co-Chair
Brandon Brice, Elvis Hernandez, Ernestine Welch, Board Committee Members, Maritta
Dunn, Mark Irgang, Caren Irgang, Evelyn Maier, Public Members

Committee Meeting Minutes of April

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Committee Co-Chair Savona Bailey-McClain and Jane Arrendell.

Present: Savona Bailey-McClain, Jane Arrendell, Brandon Brice, Elvis Hernandez,
Ernestine Welch, Evelyn Maier,

Absent: Mark Irgang, Caren Irgang, Maritta Dunn

Guests: David Seiter

The Committee was very honored to have Mr. David Seiter as our guest speaker. He was invited so we could look at ways to reduce costs for property owners while maintaining their buildings. With such a large building stock of older buildings, our community needs to explore ideas that could be shared with property owners to reduce heating and air conditioning costs.

Please read bio below.

David Seiter is the founding Principal of Future Green Studio. His portfolio includes international, high-profile, large-scale urban parks and waterfronts, high-end residential garden and estate planning for celebrity clients, and green roof design and implementation. Prior to gaining a Masters in Landscape Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania, David spent two years in Japan, where he apprenticed with a prominent garden designer in Kyoto. In addition to designing and building, David manages a private green roof plant nursery in Gowanus, Brooklyn. He also teaches "An Introduction to Green Roofs and Living Walls" at CUNY Citytech.

Mr. Seiter gave the committee a Powerpoint presentation showing examples of green roofs he has done in the city and nearby. The example showed very light modifications to intensive green sites. Now, Mr. Seiter shared how the state offers a one year property tax abatement that covers 25% of the cost for building by there has only been one permit. For light modifications permits are not really needed but the roof needs to be able to hold the weight and if properly done, this can help the long term conditions of roofs.

In a New York Times story, various New Yorkers agreed on some of the plus and minuses.

New York has a few green roofs, but it has not prioritized them in the way that Chicago has (or Toronto, which is thinking of making green roofs mandatory for some new buildings).

The reason is cost, said Carter Strickland, a senior policy adviser in New York City's long-range planning and sustainability office. "We found that street trees are more cost-effective than green roofs," he told the panel.

New York City is also emphasizing “white” or “cool” roofs, with the ability to reflect rather than absorb the sun’s heat. Green roofs, Mr. Strickland said, might cost \$25 to \$30 a square foot; “cool” roof would cost “a fraction of that,” he added.

There are other impediments in New York — including a tough permitting process. Miquela Craytor, the executive director of Sustainable South Bronx, said that it took her organization two years to install a “green wall.”

And implementing Mayor Daley’s vision in New York, beehives and all, would face an even more fundamental hurdle, according to David Yassky, a former New York City council member: “It’s illegal now in New York City to keep bees,” he said.

Mr. Yassky added that he hopes to change that through legislation.

The Committee other tax incentives that could help encourage more green roofs for our community. The Historic Tax Credit which is at 26% could possibly be helpful and we need to look into that matter.

Nothing conclusive was decided but the matter will be explore and most likely included in our statement of needs.