

MINUTES

Joint Meeting of the Community Board #9

Economic Development Committee and Land Use Zoning Committee

Tuesday, January 18, 2011, 6:30 pm

at Broadway Housing, 583 Riverside Drive

Present: *Economic Development Committee:* Chair: Hon. LaQuita Henry Board Members: Hon. Jane Arrendell, Hon. Savona Bailey-McClain, Hon. Pat Jones Public Member: Maritta Dunn
Absent: Hon. Brandon Brice

Present: *Land Use and Zoning Committee:* Assistant Chair: Hon. Javier Carcamo Board Members: Hon. Jane Arrendell, Hon. Charles Cooper; Hon. Kyle Doyle; Hon. Marshita Washington-Meyers, Hon. Walter South, Hon. Simon Thoresen. **Excused:** Chair: Hon. Christa Giesecke

Present, Board Members: Hon. Larry English; Hon. Vicky Gholson; Hon. Brad Taylor ; Hon. Diane Wilson; Hon. Linda Walton

The meeting is called to order at 6:35 pm by Economic Development Chair, LaQuita Henry. She welcomed all to the combined Economic Development / Land Use and Zoning Committees meeting. In addition, she informed those present that the Columbia Spectator was in attendance and asked if there were any objections by the panelists to photographs taken of them during the presentations. There were no objections. The Agenda as presented was adopted. Ms. Henry did not have Minutes of the last meeting and stated that they would be available at the next regular meeting of the Economic Development Committee.

In the first of three presentations, the Chair called on Ramon Diaz, owner of Floridita Restaurant, to provide an update on the scheduled reopening of the 35-years plus (30 employees) business. Mr. Diaz informed the 40-plus in attendance that there has been difficulty in the relocation process for the restaurant. He stated that Columbia University has refused to build-out the new space for the restaurant; that there is asbestos/ lead found that the landlord is required to remove; and among other things, the restaurant has filed an injunction taking Columbia University to court.

Among the comments at the close of his remarks:

- Maritta Dunn suggested that the Community Board intervene in the negotiations between Columbia University and Floridita Restaurant (Ramon Diaz);
- Ms. Dunn requested a Letter of Support be sent to Columbia in recognition of Floridita's plight;
- Tom DeMott of Community Preservation Committee stated that businesses like Floridita (Ramon Diaz), Tuck-it-Away and the Singhs (gasoline station) have all been victims of "eminent domain."
- Savona Bailey-McClain – advised Mr. Diaz to ask Columbia University what is it that they are envisioning for the future of Floridita;

- Dr. Vicky Gholson proposed a resolution which we would be stronger in light of Floridita's longtime presence in the community and "giving back" to the community.
- Board Chair, Larry English, offered to telephone Columbia University's respective executive in order to arrange and attend a meeting between Columbia University and Ramon Diaz to help resolve this issue.

Finally, it was determined to grant Floridita Restaurant (Ramon Diaz) with a Letter of Support from Community Board 9. This Letter of Support action passed 14-0-0. In a second vote from the community residents, all present were unanimously in support of the Board acting on behalf of Floridita.

Five panelists from various City agencies (see Agenda) presented a perspective on **Fresh Initiatives** of which our communities should be aware, specifically underserved areas with below square footage of fresh produce whether in supermarkets or bodegas and of farmers markets. Some of those present confronted the greenmarket initiative under GrowNYC stating that previous applications to bring a farmers market to Montefiore Park and other areas of District 9 had been rejected. A representative from Montefiore Park Neighborhood Association also spoke of its recent efforts with GrowNYC that had been difficult and not encouraging.

Recommendations from the body were to send a Letter to GrowNYC stating Community Board 9's deep concerns and the need to rectify the unequal permitting of farmers markets in communities of color. Additionally, the Letter requests that GrowNYC agree to work with CB9, to survey together the prospective sites and to identify possible markets. Committee members have already cited possible locations: 143rd Street between Hamilton Place and Amsterdam Avenue, 145th Street and Amsterdam Avenue, St. Nicholas Park, and 125th Street and 12th Avenue. In a vote of 14-0-0, it was agreed that a resolution be drafted stating support for the current efforts to bring a farmers market to Montefiore Park as well as requesting a survey of other sites in CB 9. In a vote of 14-0-0, a separate action of a Letter of Support in favor of the current efforts to bring a farmers market to Montefiore Park. In a second vote from the community residents, all present were unanimously in support of the Board acting on both the Resolution favoring more farmers markets and a Letter of Support for Montefiore Park's farmers market filing.

The final Presentation incorporated executives from NYC Economic Development Corporation and the NYC Small Business Services (see Agenda). There were a few general Q/A following. Because of the lateness of the hour, all were invited back for occasional updates.

There was no New Business or Old Business.

The meeting was properly adjourned at 8:55 pm.