



Donovan Richards
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Community Board No. 2

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Anatole Ashraf
Chairperson
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March 5, 2024

Laura Rothrock
President
Long Island City Partnership, LICP
1 MetLife Plaza
27-01 Queens Plaza North, Level B
Long Island City, New York 11101

Dear Laura Rothrock:

RE: **LICP Revitalization Grant for Long Island City**

Thank you for notifying CB2 at last month's meeting and sharing your application narrative that awarded LICP a \$10 million Revitalization Grant for Long Island City. As you move quickly forward with the State and Borough President's office in the process of forming a community committee to review future RFPs to allocate this \$10m, we are writing you to formally and firmly propose two major components be part of this process to ensure that all needs and concerns of the entire Long Island City community are properly addressed for a truly comprehensive, connected investment in our neighborhood:

- 1) Appropriate and equitable representation of our neighborhood's various sectors on the selection committee, to accurately represent needs across all areas of LIC and not just private interests.
- 2) Prioritize deeper investment and support of LIC's unique Arts & Culture sector by naming it as a requirement in any RFP application, which will require applicants to actually connect with our local sector with forward thinking and innovation as cited in your application narrative.

Moreover, we have identified long term specific areas of revitalization needed in Long Island City that were not adequately addressed in the LICP application narrative. We look forward to working with you to ensure these are included in the \$10m revitalization projects the committee will be selecting. **We strongly request these areas be addressed explicitly, and prioritized or required in RFPs the committee selects:**

- **Arts & Culture investment**

"Serving the Communities of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Maspeth"

- **Blissville, an underserved area ripe for revitalization**
- **Infrastructure - transportation and sewage investment**

1) Selection Committee

Here is our recommended breakdown of selection committee representation of local community residents, owners, and stakeholders, knowing the LICP has one seat on this committee, and understanding the RFP area reaches across Community Boards 1 and 2. As the number of committee seats were not disclosed to us, we have assumed 20 seats and provided equivalent percentages for any other number of committee seats. **85% of seats on this committee should be residents of LIC.**

- LICP- 1 seat (5%)
- Community Board 1- 1 seat (5%)
- Community Board 2 - 1 seat (5%)
- Arts and Culture, institutional -1 seat (5%)
- Arts and Culture, small organization/non-institutional- 1 seat (5%)
- Small business owners: mixed use - 1 seat (5%)
- Small business owners: retail - 1 seat (5%)
- Small business owner: food/bev - 1 seat (5%)
- Homeowners (owner-occupied, not highrise)- 2 seats (10%)
- Parks/Open space organizations- 1 seat (10%)
- Blissville residents/service orgs- 2 seats (10%)
- Queensbridge residents/service orgs - 2 seats (10%) *CB1 district
- LIC-based Public School leader- 1 seat (5%)
- Life Sciences organization (assuming Cornell Tech per LICP's narrative)- 1 seat (5%) *CB1 district
- Senior programming organizations/current senior centers - 1 seat (5%)
- LIC medical facilities/healthcare organization - 1 seat (5%)
- LIC Environmental group- 1 seat (5%)

2) Arts & Culture Inclusion in RFP Requirement

There is a seriously undervalued, underinvested opportunity to revitalize the arts & culture sector in Long Island City that was not adequately cited in the LICP application. The arts & culture sector in LIC is a characteristic feature of the neighborhood. It encompasses the local workforce, mixed use buildings, retail businesses, residents, public open space, and amenities of LIC. It is a priority interwoven with the 4 areas LICP identified for the \$10m revitalization grant, yet it is not explicitly addressed. Arts & culture in LIC is not optional. It is not secondary, and should not be an issue treated like window dressing.

To this point, we ask LICP to work with us and other arts & culture stakeholders in the neighborhood to provide language to guide potential RFP applicants regarding innovative ways to incorporate project ideas in their RFPs that will sustain and expand the arts & culture sector here alongside the other priority areas of revitalization in LIC. Following LICP's 4 identified areas in their narrative, project ideas can explicitly suggest concepts such as:

1. Strengthening LIC's Mixed Uses and Retail Environment:

- Tiered tax incentive programs when a retail/mixed-use space includes a permanent or 10+ years arts studios or performance space
- Activate or create public open space intended to also accommodate ongoing public art such as murals, sculpture, and/or performance art space (performances and classes), as well as artisan popup markets

2. Growing the Innovation, Advance Manufacturing and Tech Industries:

- Forward-thinking projects that integrate life sciences with arts programs, especially with arts organizations and institutions already existing in LIC
- Attracting/supporting schools with innovative STEAM education programs

3. Improving Surface Transportation and the Pedestrian Landscape:

- "LICP's own initiatives" for wayfinding to include design working with local artists

4. Enhancing the Public Realm to Build Community and a Sense of Place:

- "Complete street" amenities to explicitly include arts and cultural centers, especially representing populations in LIC
- "Public-private partnerships" must include arts & culture creation and performance/display spaces and should NOT be glazed over as "other amenities"

Explicitly including arts & culture as part of this grant RFP is critical in these stages of the committee formation and grant making process. The narrative in the application that won the \$10m failed to cite arts & culture as part of the NY robust industry, the quality of life in LIC, workforce contribution, and private sector leveraging. There was also a concerning lack of strong partnerships with arts & culture entities listed in the narrative.

One community vision meeting Sept 1, 2023 at one cultural organization location (that was not expressly described in LICP's narrative) about this \$10m grant is not sufficient. Mentioning the need for a sewer system investment project once in the application does not proportionately reflect its dire need in our neighborhood. Mentioning activating space under overpasses, grantmaking for small businesses, and creating and displaying public art are all great starting points. However, these must be reiterated in order for these to actually be addressed in RFPs. LICP's idea of a new "museum of LIC" should be re-imagined, especially in partnership with the

current arts & culture sector, as there are other well-known needs for support in currently existing arts & culture entities in LIC that are more feasible.

We are a resource for LICP in this project. We look forward to working with the LIC Partnership to uplift these areas in arts & culture and our concerns above in the forthcoming RFP process, and in conjunction with the selection committee. We appreciate the work and care the LIC Partnership does for the neighborhood, and **this \$10m revitalization grant is a critical opportunity to be an innovative leader in how our neighborhood should properly be revitalized with the needs of its residents and community at the forefront, over the profit interests and agendas of outside entities that are already eradicating the vitality of LIC's character and arts & culture sector.**

Thank you.

Sincerely,



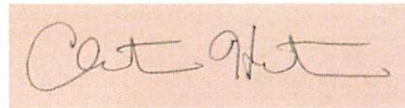
Debra Markell Kleinert
District Manager, CB 2



Anatole Ashraf
Chairperson, CB 2



Karesia Batan,
Chair, Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee



Christine Hunter,
Chair, Land Use & Housing Committee

Cc: Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor, State of New York
Honorable Grace Meng, US Congress
Honorable Nydia M. Velazquez, US Congress
Honorable Michael Gianaris, NY State Senate
Honorable Kristen Gonzalez, NY State Senate
Honorable Jessica Ramos, NY State Senate
Honorable Juan Ardila, NYS Assembly
Honorable Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas, NYS Assembly
Honorable Zohran Mamdani, NYS Assembly
Honorable Steven Raga, NYS Assembly
Honorable Robert Holden, NYC Council Member
Honorable Shekar Krishman, NYC Council Member
Honorable Julie Won, NYC Council Member
Honorable Donovan Richards, Queens Borough President