

Economic Development & Culture Committee
October 15, 2020, 6:30 p.m.
Held via video conference

***** MINUTES *****

Present: Melanee Farrah; Marissa Y. Mack; Giselle Malave; Celia Ramirez; Vinny Torres; Jenny Tromski; Ny Whitaker; Nilsa Orama (ex officio); Angel Mescaín (staff)

Absent: Adem Brija; Edwin Marcial; Arturo Perez

Excused: Dawn Sanders; Steven Villanueva

Guests: Xavier Santiago, CB11; Lermond Mayes, AM Dickens office; Carey King, Uptown Grand Central; Pablo Guzman, Union Settlement; Tamika Mapp

- 1) Call to Order– Adoption of the Agenda- Motion Made by V. Torres, second by J.Tromski
- 2) Announcements
 - a) Melanne Farrah announced that she will be leaving the Board at the end of this month to pressure other endeavors. She thanked the Board and Community for their support and encouraged the committee to continue to preserve the neighborhood and continue to grow. The committee thanked Melanee for her service and work as Chair and wished her luck.
- 3) Informational Updates
 - a) Carey King, Uptown Grand Central, gave an update on small business and various community initiatives. She noted heaters have been approved for use during outdoor dining and open streets are still in effect, with an additional location, Pleasant Ave. added to the list. The new location was made available in large part due to a huge push by the Manhattan Borough Presidents Office and Gale’s support of the Wagner NYCHA Development. MAP, Street Lab, Art in the Park, Bistro Casa Azul and others have been out there on the weekends with various programming. C. King also mentioned a new small business grant with the organization LISC will be opening Monday and a Halloween/ Day of the Dead outdoor event is in the works.

Pablo Guzman, Union Settlement, gave an update on applications and process of East Harlem grant, noting grants are available in amounts up to \$20K average given has been \$13K. \$2MM has been granted to date. \$2MM left to be granted. Possible amount to be awarded to food trucks as well. M. Mack asked the Pablo come back next month and present findings and stats on program to date.
- 4) Presentations & Discussions
- 5) Old Business
 - a) Continuing discussion regarding legislation introduced by Assembly member Dickens to aid small businesses. *A. 10924 - Establishes the New York state small business protection program.* Lermond Mayes, Inez Dicken Office, presented on bill noting that some of the details of the bill are still being worked out but the office is working through funding and partnership

development. V. Torres wanted to know the time line for the bill passing. L. Mayes indicated there is not time frame, the office is still obtaining and gathering resources. T. Mapp wanted to know how the office is reviewing 2018/2019 tax returns and suggested that the office use bank statements to determine income and need for businesses. M. Mack asked about the application process and parameters for those eligible to receive funds. L. Mayes indicated the parameters have not yet been worked out but happy to discuss with us further once they are. The committee took a position to support the resolution brought forth in September with the caveat that a representative from assemblywoman Dike office will be present to answer further questions during the boards full board meeting V. Torres, motioned to support the resolution second by G. Malave. Motion passed.

6) Statement of District Needs & Budget Requests for Fiscal Year 2022

a) The committee discussed its list budget requests and agree to submit the following updated requests G. Malave, District Needs Representative, lead the conversation on updating the budget tracker.

i) TRACK CODE- 311202131E

(a) Recommendation- Our committee has agreed to keep this request, however, certain modifications will be made to better fit the current effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.

(b) Reason- Due to the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID 19 pandemic, funding is needed, as well as the collaboration with MTA, DSNY and DOT to protect the interest of long standing local businesses to ensure customer accessibility to all places of business on the Second Avenue Subway Phase II outreach and response.

(c) Revised request- Support local, long-standing business.

ii) TRACK CODE- 311202116C

(a) Recommendation- Our committee has agreed to keep this request, however, certain modifications will be made to better fit the current effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.

(b) Reason- Funding for the renovation of the 125th Street Library branch is needed in order to address targeted upgrades, such as heating, cooling systems, new roof, windows and doors. Upgrades to the fire alarm, security systems and surveillance, ADA compliance and elevator replacements are needed as well. Given the current circumstances that generate enormous social stigma against those effected by Covid 19, this is essential for the recreation and mobility of the local residents and the enhancement of community development.

(c) Revised request- Extend library hours or expand and enhance library programs.

iii) TRACK CODE- 311202117C

- (a) Recommendation- Our committee has agreed to keep this request, however, certain modifications will be made to better fit the current effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.
- (b) Reason- Aguilar Library will continue to be the main public space for community residents to seek library services during the ongoing renovation of the 125th Street Library. Therefore, it must be ensured that all patrons have accessibility to the facilities by the adjunction of an accessibility ramp for ADA compliance. In addition, keeping in mind a COVID 19 conscious plan of action in executing the renovation. The estimated cost for this work is \$397,000.
- (c) Revised request- Create a new, or renovate or upgrade an existing public library.

iv) TRACK CODE- 311202104E

- (a) Recommendation- Our committee has agreed to keep this request, however, certain modifications will be made to better fit the current effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.
- (b) Reason- Due to the rising unemployment among the community, support is needed to motivate and mobilize job seekers towards certification/technical training programs and enhancement of occupational skills. This is all in effort to stimulate the East Harlem workforce and economy.
- (c) Revised request- Provide or expand occupational skills training programs.

v) TRACK CODE- 311202107E

- (a) Recommendation- Our committee has agreed to keep this request, however, certain modifications will be made to better fit the current effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.
- (b) Reason- Due to the rising unemployment among the community, job seekers are searching for stable pay and our East Harlem workforce development must address the need for local employment and training organizations in collaboration with SBS and EDC by connecting local residents with employment opportunities in growing industries. SBS must increase funding for training vouchers that will benefit residents looking for higher incomes.
- (c) Revised request- Provide or expand occupational skills training programs.

vi) TRACK CODE- 311202109E

- (a) Recommendation- Our committee has agreed to keep this request, however, certain modifications will be made to better fit the current effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.
- (b) Reason- Given the enormous pressure and obligation to abide by COVID 19 safety regulations, city agencies must prioritize having this information readily available to local merchants so that they are educated on current and changing agency regulations. This is in the best interest of the general health of the community and patrons as well as, offering support to business owners in unfairly placed fines and inadequate treatment from city agency inspectors.
- (c) Revised request- Assist with on-site business compliance with City regulations.

vii) TRACK CODE- 311202113E

- (a) Recommendation- Our committee has agreed to keep this request, however, certain modifications will be made to better fit the current effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.
- (b) Reason- A continuous maintenance for the preservation of East Harlem's authenticity as a historical landmark needs to be maintained amidst the economic back lash of COVID 19, which has already further impoverished our community. Funding for the Avenue NYC program should continue for existing place-making and tourism efforts.
- (c) Revised request- Provide or expand district marketing, branding and promotion.

viii) TRACK CODE- 311202120E

- (a) Recommendation- Our committee has agreed to keep this request, however, certain modifications will be made to better fit the current effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.
- (b) Reason- The social impact caused by COVID 19 in our community requires expansion of availability of library operating hours to 7 days a week as well as supportive community resources.
- (c) Revised request- Extend library hours or expand and enhance library programs.

ix) TRACK CODE- 311202125E

- (a) Recommendation- Our committee has agreed to keep this request, however, certain modifications will be made to better fit the current effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.

(b) Reason- In collaboration with The Department of Cultural Affairs, we must continue funding the development of the art and culture of East Harlem, especially in wake of the reopening of our local businesses. This is imperative for the enhancement of our community.

(c) Revised request- Support nonprofit cultural organizations.

x) TRACK CODE- 311202126E

(a) Recommendation- Our committee has agreed to keep this request, however, certain modifications will be made to better fit the current effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.

(b) Reason- In collaboration with EDC and SBS, implement incentives to attract growing industries to East Harlem, especially businesses that are STEM related, thereby providing additional career opportunities for local residents.

(c) Revised request- Expand programs for certain industries, e.g. fashion, film, advanced and food manufacturing, life sciences and healthcare.

2) New Business

3) Community Notes

a) X. Santiago, mentioned 101st street had their cash mob and the International Puerto Rican film Festival is currently taking place. Additionally, El Museo is distributing surveys on how LatinX people identify, which will be distributed throughout the month of October.

b) C. King mentioned Harlem Restaurant Week starts Monday, with roughly 60 different businesses in East, Central and West Harlem participating.

4) Adjournment

Respectfully submitted by Marissa Y. Mack