Economic Development & Culture Committee  
December 11, 2018  
Bonifacio Senior Center  
7 East 116th Street, New York, NY 10035

*** MINUTES ***

Present: Jose Altamirano, Adem Brija, Carlos Diaz, Holley Drakeford, Melanee Farrah (Chair), Marissa Mack, Edwin Marcial, Celia Ramirez, Dawn Sanders, Jenny Tromski, Jesse Yang, Angel Mescain (staff)

Absent: Vincent Torres, Candy Vives-Vasquez, Davon Woodley

Excused:

Guests: Carey King, Uptown Grand Central; Lou Martini, Bistro Casa Azul

1. Call to Order– Adoption of the Agenda

   The meeting was called to order at 6:30PM.

   Motion to adopt the agenda by Villanueva, seconded by Brija and passed.

2. Announcements
   - Informational Presentation was cancelled, postponed to next meeting in January
   - January 8th SIMS meeting
   - Request to subcommittee members to invite 1 local business to attend the next January meeting
   - Please attend holiday parties of local businesses
   - Tree lighting on 106th St. and Third Ave. on Friday 14th
   - Tree lighting at 125th St. Next Friday

3. Informational Updates
   a. Committee Chair
   b. Staff Liaison
      i. Angel said there is a New Media Project demolition commenced recently on 125th St and Triboro Bridge area
4. Presentations & Discussions

 a. The African Center
   i. Alana Hairston, Director for Programming
      ▪ Opening was 3 months ago
      ▪ Soft launch in the middle of January
      ▪ Hosting Events like:
        • Nigerian Artists
        • Nigerian Theatre Performance
        • Book Launch
      ▪ Looking for volunteers with the community
      ▪ Mission: dedicated to promoting a new narrative about Africa and its diaspora through a focus on culture, policy and business.
      ▪ How we Eco Dev can help?
        • Building a community of supporters to know what they do
        • Connect artists and authors to them

   ii. Melanee
      1. How does someone rent their space?
      2. How does someone be hosted in their space
      Response: Phased approach opening the museum, they only have one space even though the building is 70K SF

   iii. Edwin
      1. What is the fee
         a. Yes there is but discounts for non-profits
      2. Space to be rented
         a. 50 people maximum

   iv. Marissa
      1. Where are the events listed?
         a. They do not have anything listed
      2. Volunteers
         a. They have a volunteer posting that can be posted by us. Only requirement is that they are older than 18

   v. Angel
      1. What is the capital program about? How much are they looking to fund raise?
         □ She is not comfortable sharing that information
         □ Fundraising will be done in phases
         □ Fundraising will be used to complete the building
         - Contact Info
           $ ahairston@theafricacenter.org
         - Follow up:
           $ 50 person max capacity space
           $ Phased approach - keep in contact with us event by event

5. Old Business
6. New Business
7. Community Notes
   a. Carey East Harlem Merchant Association:
i. Hearing on Small Business Rent Control
   1. Landscape of small business has been in news because old proposal from 1980s has been reintroduced
   2. Small Business Jobs Survival Act
ii. Bill is written by Rodriguez
   1. Requires landlord to give 10 year lease
   2. REBNY says bad idea
   3. Community Organizer says bad idea
   4. SBS is against this law
iii. There is no data on the number of small businesses
   1. CDNA Commercial Needs District Assessment done in 2015
iv. SBS is not doing much to help small businesses
   1. 250 leases have been negotiated in the thousands of small businesses in the city.
v. Questions/Comments:
   1. Melanee
      a. How do we incentivize SBS to support small businesses
      b. RV came to help businesses become MWBE business
      c. Eco Dev is going make SBS come to East Harlem and then we prepare the people attending
      d. Lease Negotiation Support
      e. RV is the opportunity to converse with SBS
      f. United Business to come to next meeting
   2. Adem
      a. There are store owners who are landlords that would be split in this legislation
   3. Jennifer
      a. SBS is offering
         i. MWBE registration training
         ii. Lease Negotiation
      b. We should see what the business owners want
   4. Mel
      a. We need to have more feedback from the small businesses
   5. Holley
      a. Believes problem is that there’s not enough money in the area, MWBE doesn’t really help those aspects.
   6. Jesse
      a. Bringing consulting groups in to do pro bono and help assess businesses
   7. Edwin
      a. Against RV because he wants a satellite office in East Harlem, there’s one in West Harlem.
   8. Dawn
      a. She believes businesses don’t realize that they can reach out to elected official.
      b. She believes city or state can penalize businesses for small things that may take out a business
   9. Holley
a. LegalAid can provide businesses legal support

10. Jennifer
   a. She’s going to organize small businesses and what segments they’re in

8. Adjournment

Ms. Farrah adjourned the meeting at 7:50PM.