

Economic Development & Culture
March 10, 2020 at 6:30 pm
Bonifacio Senior Center
7 East 116th Street, New York, NY

Present: Melanee Farrah (Chair), Celia Ramirez, Steven Villanueva, Ny Whitaker, Jenny Tromski, Marissa Y. Mack, Angel Mescaín (Staff)

Absent: Dawn Sanders, Henry Flores, Edwin Marcial, Adem Brijia

Excused: none

1. General Announcements

- a. NW mentioned Census starts Saturday and can be done electronically.
- b. AM announced Mount Sinai will not be able to hold Tuesday's Full Board meeting. March Full Board is canceled, and business will be discussed possibly in the Executive Committee meeting.

2. Presentations

- a. Report on recent outcomes and future expectations of the East Harlem Working Together Program (Union Settlement).

Pablo Guzman presented East Harlem Working Together initiative is coming to an end in June. The initiative has taken on sweeping the streets between 116-125 and 3rd Avenue. Businesses have appreciated this service. However, after June 30th, they will need to take this task on themselves. This initiative has produced 33 business workshops. Due to COVID-19 they are moving trainings and programs to a digital platform. They have held 98 place making events with Buy Local East Harlem and Uptown Grand Central and they have worked together on 12 major district marketing events including Mexican Independence day and East Harlem Nights etc. 10,000 people have been lured into district throughout all of the events. Pablo is looking to work with Eco Dev. Committee on Small Business Fair. He is looking for members to join a working group to see how the initiative can move forward after June 30th.

ACTION: Board will look to distribute needs for working group, once Pablo sends them. Pablo also mentioned his concern with the number of business that were closed recently. Four business closed on 116 street and eight on 125 street. 14 % vacancy has recently grown into 32% in the neighborhood. The Board will look to see if there is any reason specific to the area.

NW mentioned she was thankful for the change that the initiative has brought to the neighborhood and has seen the community evolve over the years.

JT asked if specifics on closing will be on the exit report. Pablo mentioned yes. NW wanted to know about which businesses are in area what is missing i.e., shoemakers etc. Pablo mentioned he would look into it.

MM wanted to know about extending the program funding. Pablo was unsure but indicated he would ask D. Nocenti and let us know.

- b. Update on plans for Harlem Eat Up event in Marcus Garvey Park. (Marcus Samuelsson Group).

Dawn Padmore, of the Carlington Company Marketing Agency, presented on Harlem Eat Up, along with Raymond Louis, Community Relations Consultant, and Kiesha Harris, Associate Producer. Harlem Eat Up is in its 6th year. The Festival was set to move to Marcus Gravy Park this year with the proposed date of May 11-17, but it has been postponed this due to the COVID Pandemic. In lieu of the event, businesses will be promoted during the set week of the festival. The group is open to ideas on ways to do this. Mr. Louis requested a letter of support from the committee so that once the festal is set to move forward, the letter will be available. The group also presented to the Community Board Parks and Licenses committee.

ACTION: Eco Dev. to provide a letter of support, the Board was unable to do so during the meeting because there was no quorum. Mr. Louis will provide a letter for the Board to mirror.

- c. New Politics Leadership Academy Presentation.

Emmitt Lamb shared about New Politics Leadership Academy and presented on the program they have entitled Answering the Call. The program is a nonpartisan program geared towards getting people into politics and provide support to individuals. The program is 5 session and free of charge. Program was started 5 years ago.

MF wanted to know how long ago the organization was founded, is fundraising involved, and is the organization bipartisan? Mr. Lamb indicated the organization was founded about 5 years ago, considered cross partisan, no fundraising for participants.

3. Old Business

- a. Small Business Fair.

Janet Peguero presented on Small Business Service and their partnering with Eco Dev. On the SBS resource fair. SBS has an existing initiative to host a number of events throughout the city along with the mobile outreach unit. The department is currently assessing the idea of moving forward given the COVID pandemic.

NW mentioned the committee should wait to assess how to move forward.

JT mentioned calling the event and then possibly doing an event or seminar in replace of the actual gathering with resources from SBS and other.

MM recommended having a fair geared towards the needs based on the current environment instead of a general resource needs for small business that are not applicable at this time.

MF asked that as the Board thinks about what to do and figures out the ways in which we move forward with no physical contact. No firm date yet.

NW wanted to know about grants/ loans and any additional information from SBS. looking for more information.

Ms. Peguero mentioned this is still being ironed out but SBS is still a resource.

AM mentioned that instead of asking small businesses to come to a fair, we should bring fair and resources to small businesses similar to a small business crawl.

MM mentioned making packets of information to drop off to business with information form the vendors who were set come to the fair.

NW invited people to the East Harlem community alliance meeting March 19th Thursday at 9am.

b. Budget Tracking

JT tracking questions drafted to all agencies to follow up with community needs and follow up.

4. Other Business

- a. MF presented a vote to changes the Budget Justice resolution. The committee is unable to vote since we do not have quorum.

- b. AM noted the Bail Forum and the Executive Committee meeting is canceled for this month. He will keep us updated.
- c. NW questioned about having quorum and how to move forward with meetings.
- d. AM indicated CB's have not been given guidance and there is no direction as of yet as to what to do.

5. Adjournment

Respectfully Submitted by Marissa Y. Mack