

Economic Development & Culture Committee
September 16, 2020, 6:30 p.m.
Held via video conference

***** MINUTES *****

Present: Adem Brija; Arturo Perez; Celia Ramirez; Dawn Sanders; Giselle Malave; Marissa Y. Mack; Melanee Farrah; Steven Villanueva; Ny Whitaker; Xavier Santiago
Absent: Edwin Marcial; Vinny Torres
Excused: Jenny Tromski
Guests: Athena Moore, MBPO; Lauren Done, Sen. Benjamin's Office; Mariely Moronta- Sanchez, AM Rodriguez' Office; Louise Burwell

1) Call to Order– Adoption of the Agenda

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

2) Announcements

a) A. Mescain reported the upcoming meetings of the CB11 Economic Development & Culture Committee are scheduled for:

Thursday, October 15th

Tuesday, November 17th

Wednesday, December 16th

- b) CB11 will hold a public hearing on the Statement of District Needs & Budget Requests (SDNBR), for Fiscal Year 2022 during its Full Board meeting on September 22nd. Written testimony can be submitted via email to mn11@cb.nyc.gov until September 25th
- c) M. Farrah, welcomed new committee members Giselle Malave, owner of Sapoara Restaurant and Arturo Perez, CEO of the Borinquen Neighborhood Health Center, and asked that all existing members of the committee introduce themselves.

3) Informational Updates

- a) Local elected collaboration on Census Outreach and Voter Registration
- i) Athena Moore, Director of the Northern Manhattan Borough President's Office, presented initiatives in place to help encourage the community to fill out the census and vote. Her office has been supporting a number of programs, including, but not limited to, Battle of the Boroughs and a collaboration with the Harlem Reentry Project, handing out voter registration forms and census fortune cookies to help get the word out. The MBPO has also partnered with New York Urban League and Harlem Boys and Girls Club on voting and census initiatives and will continue to keep the Board informed on ways to get involved.
- ii) Lauren Done, Budget and Revenue Coordinator at Senator Benjamin Benjamin's Office, informed the committee of the extensive social media post, community events email newsletters being distributed by her office to encourage census and voter registration. The Senator's office recently held a grocery give away with First Corinthians Baptist Church, which had a census focused table, and held a virtual session with Julie Menin, Director of NYC Census, on current needs and efforts. L. Done indicated she will keep the committee posted on upcoming events.
- iii) M. Mack asked the members of the committee to 1. ensure they have filled out the census and 2. push the census through social media platforms, due to the low participation in the Harlem community.

- iv) C. Ramirez wanted to know if there was a way to reach out in her immediate neighborhood to assist with door to door volunteer efforts. D. Sanders indicated she will be working with NYC Census and can provide the committee with the requested information.

4) Presentations & Discussions

- a) Committee discussion regarding legislation introduced by Assemblywoman Dickens to aid small businesses (further information on the bill available through <https://trackbill.com/bill/new-york-assembly-bill-10924-establishes-the-new-york-state-small-business-protection-program/1942983/>)

A. 10924 (same as S08364A) - Establishes the New York state small business protection program to provide loans and grants to qualifying entities that have less than 100 employees per location, did not receive any federal funding for the Federal CARES Act, was in existence in New York state by the first day the state disaster emergency related to COVID-19 was declared by the governor, can document actual economic harm or revenue shortfall as a direct result of the pandemic, and has filed 2018 or 2019 tax returns.

Motion to issue a resolution in support of the proposed legislation by Dawn Sanders, seconded by Marissa Mack and passed unanimously. The letter will add a condition, requesting limiting excessive documentation requirements that hindered small business in receiving previous COVID federal funding.

- b) Committee discussion regarding Statement of District Needs & Budget Requests (SDNBR), for Fiscal Year 2022
 - i) Report from District Budget Consultations. Consultation meetings were held during the summer with both the Department of Small Business Services and the Economic Development Corporation.
 - ii) M. Farrah thanked G. Malave, who will be the committee liaison and report back to the SDNBR committee on behalf of Eco Dev. M. Farrah also directed committee members to review the materials and resources provided.

5) Old Business

- a) A. Mescaïn mentioned that the Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI), for a cultural operator of the space in the mixed use development being built on the 126th Bus Depot / African Burial Ground, has closed and further movement on the project is on hold, due to the pandemic. He will keep us posted.

6) New Business

7) Community Notes

- a) M. Mack informed the committee the Harlem Cultural Collaborative is working to put together a legislative meeting, with electeds and stakeholders within the Harlem community, regarding the need for partnerships and funding to help sustain cultural institutions. Further information will be shared once available.
- b) X. Santiago discussed the open streets initiative, which has helped restaurants and allowed spacious community engagement during the pandemic. The program will be extended through October. A movie night component will be added, in partnership with the international Puerto Rican film festival, which was founded in community and is currently celebrating its 10th year.
- c) Mariely Moronta- Sanchez, from Assemblyman Robert Rodriguez office, mentioned the office is hosting phone banking events related to the census on Tuesday's from 6-8pm. Information has been shared with the Board. The Assemblyman will also host various popup events. Information will be shared with Angel.

- d) M. Mack and N. Whitaker shared about the work Uptown Grand Central continues to do to help Small Businesses navigating Rent and Leases. Their current partnership with Harvard Business School, is helping to offer various resources to ensure businesses stay afloat during this time.
- e) N. Whitaker indicated the next East Harlem Business Alliance meeting will be held September 17th . The Alliance represents more than 200 small businesses and not for profit organizations etc. in the area.
- f) G. Malave shared information on diningalliance.com which allows people to purchase goods and services from local vendors to support people in the community.

8) Adjournment

Ms. Farrah adjourned the meeting at 7:48 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by: Marissa Y. Mack