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COMMUNITY BOARD ELEVEN

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Economic Development, Culture & Tourism Committee
Tuesday, March 10, 2015, 7:00 p.m.
Bonifacio Senior Housing
7 East 116th Street, New York, NY 10035

*****Minutes*****

- Present: Diane Collier (chair), Holley Drakeford, Judith Febbraro, Jose Grajales, Marissa Mack, Celia Ramirez, Edwin Marcial, Amie Kyros-Petrucci, Debbie Quiñones, Vincent Torres, Mia Brezin (staff)
- Excused: Jose Altamirano
- Absent: Jose Garza, Yma Rodriguez
- Guests: Sam Law, Peter Insalaco, Gennifer Garrissally, Jose Calderon Jaslyn Jimenez, Mario Colon, Eric Brewer, Christina Carr, Priscilla Fok, Joo Paek, Michelle Fernandez, Juan Pagan, Raphael Benavides

Meeting called to order at 7:10 p.m. by committee chair Diane Collier.

1. Presentations/Discussions

- a. Presentation by New Harlem East Merchant Association on their Retail Experience Analysis of East Harlem's shopping habits.

Sam Law presented on NHEMA's survey and analysis of 2,307 individuals' buying habits on 125th Street. The East 125th Street corridor is the second most active retail corridor in East Harlem, accounting for 17 percent of the businesses in the four corridors. As in the community board's 2011 report, residents still do more shopping outside of East Harlem and requested more diverse service and retail offerings.

Noted highlights of the survey:

Majority of out shopping occurs in the Bronx, followed by East Harlem below 116th Street, and then Central Harlem.

Subways and buses are the most frequent modes of transportation.

Food and groceries are the most commonly purchased products in East Harlem, followed by clothing.

Pharmacies are the most frequently used service, followed by medical services, dental care, restaurants, barbershops or hair salons, and take-out food.

There were requests for more local store promotions, both “sit-down” and “take-out” dining options, youth services, movie theaters, cobblers, dry cleaners and floral shops.

Mr. Law reiterated the corridor’s problems: homelessness, sanitation, and concentration of drug and alcohol services. He concluded with NHEMA’s proposed solutions, including ACE street cleaning, creation of promotional materials using social media, and working with the Salvation Army 125th Street location for a homelessness solution.

The Chair commended NHEMA for their work, and noted a significant street cleanliness improvement due to their ACE campaign. NHEMA will be appearing in the near future before the Public Safety Committee regarding their maintenance initiative under the 125th Street viaduct.

b. Julia De Burgos Cultural Center Update

Jose Calderon, President, Hispanic Federation presented on the current and upcoming cultural programming occurring at the Julia de Burgos Cultural Center. Since receiving the lease from EDC in 2013, the Hispanic Federation has been aggressively renovating the public space, multi-purpose room and theatre. Last year, 77 community and cultural events were held at the center and included: Dias de los Muertos Arts Exhibit, Children’s Film Festival, Juan Rulfo Trilogy, multiple musical events and dance troupe performances. Approximately 50 percent of the events were sponsored by the Federation to promote local Latino artists. Future events’ planned include a monthly film series, dance classes, LGBT theater festival and a “Con la Musica por Dentro” concert series. Mr. Calderon and Ms. Jaslyn Jimenez, Vice President for Programs, are researching other outreach means (kiosks, wayfaring signs) to promote the Center’s offerings.

Funds received from sources such as UMEZ and the City Council pay for operating expenses, including \$6,500/month for rent, utilities, and insurance. Private parties help with fundraising, and rates are included in the package presented to committee. Debbie Quiñones noted the \$400 security deposit, which is double the initial charge. Mr. Mario Colon, Manager, stated the increase was necessary to cover charges when parties extended past their rental period.

Jose Grajales asked for the status of the milestones in the formation of the Julia De Burgos Arts Alliance (JdBAA) and the number of events/participants at the Center; Debbie Quiñones asked about greater participation from community residents; Felix Campos asked why there were no notices in the center about programming; Celia Ramirez expressed concern over the lack of communication between JdBAA and the Federation; and Raphael Benavidez asked about allocation of the \$1M in City Council funding. A significant milestone which has not occurred yet is the incorporation of the JdBAA and the subsequent transition of operations from the Hispanic Federation to the Alliance.

The Chair noted that all parties were passionate about the questions asked, and decided that another meeting in May is necessary to devote quality time, discussion and possible solutions to questions raised. Mr. Calderon reiterated that his organization’s goal is to empower and promote the indigenous artists of East Harlem. Their priority is the Center’s sustainability and will work with the local partners to achieve such.

2. Old Business

- a. Debbie asked the committee to review and discuss at a future meeting inclusion of cultural funding with all new developments in East Harlem.

3. New Business

- a. Mia Brezin's report on Silicon Harlem is postponed to the next meeting.

4. Announcements

- a. Debbie drew attention to the Call for Artists for a mural project flyer in the Julia De Burgos. Deadline for submissions April 30th.

5. Adjournment

- a. Judith Febraro made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Vinnie Torres and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.