

Pending Committee Approval

**Minutes of the Economic Development Committee for Bronx Community Board 8
Tuesday, February 4, 2025**

Meeting Recording

**Meeting was held at Community Board 8 Offices, 5676 Riverdale Avenue, Suite 100
Bronx, NY 10471**

Committee Members in attendance (5): Constance Barnes-Watson (Vice-Chair), Angel Ortega, Ashley Medina (Community Committee Member), Jyll Townes, Karen Walker

Absent Committee Members (4): Julia Gomez, Nick Fazio, Oscar Martinez (Chair), Caesar Tobar Acosta

Guests/ Attendees: Mary Ellen Gibbs (CB8) joined via Zoom but left, SBS Representatives Senior Compliance Officer Angel Pagan and Ben Vasquez

Vice-Chair called the meeting to order at 7:11 PM

Chair's Report:

*We did not have the report, as Oscar was absent due to an emergency.

The tentative date for the spring walkthrough will be 3/14 or 3/21/25.

The vice chair motioned to re-arrange the agenda items in the chair's absence to allow the SBS representatives to share information first. Karen Walker seconded the motion.

Next item on the agenda was the Small Business Services (SBS) presentation on General Services provided:

Mr. Pagan gave a brief history of his office's evolution at SBS, such as Quickstop becoming SBS and the different services provided by the two branches of SBS. One branch supports businesses to ensure they obtain the proper licenses or permits to start a business. The other, where Mr. Pagan works, visits new businesses to ensure they have opened their business according to city regulations.

Ben talked about the many resources available through SBS for businesses such as legal assistance, training classes, and the importance of seeking assistance before opening businesses to ensure compliance.

Mr. Pagan spoke briefly about the City of Yes and the new zoning laws, sharing examples of how zoning affects businesses in buildings and what's permissible in certain zones. Angel inquired about SBS providing market and customer research assistance to small businesses to support them before they open in an area that may not be the best for that type of business.

Mr. Pagan also talked more about the Commercial Leasing Assistance (CAL) legal support, noting that he does monthly walkthroughs to businesses to point out things that need to be up to

code and offer support. He mentioned participating in walkthroughs with former Econ Dev Chair Nick Fazio. He noted that each borough has small business offices, and the services are free. He shared a story about a young man who he helped start 1104 Juice Bar in the Bronx, who utilized the support of SBS and Angel's team, and now he will be opening a second store in mid-town.

Lastly, he shared that businesses should aim to have a 2-year reserve in case of unforeseen troubles to keep their businesses afloat. He left flyers and business cards for the CB office to distribute.

Next item on the agenda were the Budget 27 Priorities:

Oscar was researching items with SBS, and due to his absence, we did not discuss them. However, we will follow up and finalize them in our next meeting.

Next item on the agenda was the Betty Campbell Award:

The Committee reviewed the language on the press release and application and changed the criteria to clarify the intent of "contributing to the community." We decided that "encourages community spirit and well-being, innovation and entrepreneurship" would replace the language of the prior announcement. We also agreed that the language on the press release should match the language on the application and will make updates. The Committee members present discussed businesses self-nominating and considered allowing this as we noted that if a business truly meets the criteria, either someone else will nominate them or they will be fully supported if they self-nominate.

The remaining committee members need to decide so we can solidify this on the application ASAP, and Farrah can have it published.

Approval of January 7, 2025 Meeting minutes –No quorum/ Postponed until March meeting

Next agenda item was new business: none

8:16 pm meeting adjourned

