

## PENDING COMMITTEE APPROVAL

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Bronx Community Board 8  
Economic Development Committee  
Meeting Minutes December 9, 2021

- Attendance:
  - Committee member: Nick Fazio (chair), Moses Esema (vice chair), Joy Campbell Privaterre (vice chair), Julia Gomez, Constance Barnes, Camelia Tepelus
  - Absent: Osvaly Jimenez
  - CB 08 Board Members: Kelli Buford, David Gellman
  - Community Members: Victor Cruz, Robert Wachsman, Larry Heier, Ms. Marie Claude, Jillian Baez, Brian Brody
  - Guest: Heather Kim (Early Bird Café), Katie Mayer (Early Bird Café), Randi Norfleet (Entrepreneur Assistance Center)
- Meeting called to order at 7:05pm
- Chair's Remarks
  - Thanked committee members and non-members for their attendance and wished them Happy Holidays;
  - Approval of Minutes from October 28, 2021: Minutes were approved with one abstention (Camelia Tepelus). Camelia noted her approval with caveats to identifying actual committee members.
  - Mention of the new vaccination mandate for private-sector employees scheduled to take effect on December 27, 2021, and its impact on small business owners
  - Following CM Keith Powers's introduction of legislation to reinstate the use of propane heaters, merchants in the hospitality sector are hopeful they can recoup expenditures and that heaters will be used again this winter if the legislation is passed
  - Representative Nadler introduced legislation to expand the PPP for businesses impacted by Covid-19. More information is available here: <https://www.thenycalliance.org/news-item/24-Week-PPP-Covered-Period-Legislation-Introduced/>
  - The City Planning Commission voted to approve the DCP/DOT proposed text amendments that geographically would have restricted establishments from applying for the new version of Permanent Open Restaurants (POR). That program is still in its concept phase and DCP and DOT are asking for our input. An email from week of November 15<sup>th</sup> was sent to business owners and members of the

public advising of how to respond. Additionally, a survey for members of the public is available [here](#) and we urge all New Yorkers to respond by December 31, 2021

- A schedule of in-person and virtual public events, set for this fall and winter, is available [here](#) and will be listed on **[NYC Engage](#)**
- Five Borough Board Meetings are scheduled: NYC DOT and DCP will share an overview of the Permanent Open Restaurant Program with the Bronx's meeting scheduled for **December 16, 2021, 10:00am**
- Two Virtual Public Roundtables are also scheduled for **Tuesday, January 11, 2022, 12:00pm - 1:30pm** and **Wednesday, January 12, 2022, 6:00pm - 7:30pm**- both providing an opportunity for residents and the merchant community to voice their concerns and offer their input. The permanent outdoor plan framework to be announced in March 2022;
- November 10, 2021 Press Release from NYS Department of Financial Services Acting Superintendent Adrienne Harris announcing approval of the new banking development district in Van Cortlandt Village in the Bronx. More information available at:

**[https://www.dfs.ny.gov/reports\\_and\\_publications/press\\_releases/pr20211110](https://www.dfs.ny.gov/reports_and_publications/press_releases/pr20211110)**

- Chair Spalter and Nick Fazio met with NYS Department of Financial Services representatives on December 2, 2021 at Knolls Crescent to discuss with business owners the desperate need for financial services in the community and EDC's work to save the Chase Bank branch. DFS representatives were very encouraging, and advised they would discuss the matter internally and then reconvene with us to plan.
- On Thursday November 18, a meeting of KRVC, SBS, EDC, the Bailey Ave Merchant Association members and local elected officials was held to discuss the recovery process for the businesses adversely affected by the fire on November 1, 2021. Merchants shared the status of their recovery and what they still needed.
  - Thanks to Tracy from KRVC and CB Bx8's Ciara and Tania for organizing the meeting and getting all of the stakeholders together at one time. Another great job by our DM and the office staff
- Mention of the Doe Fund's return to assist the cleanup of the Marble Hill Business Corridor, to which we are committed despite recurring graffiti vandalism, and Chair Fazio thanks to Ciara for her continuing efforts
- Ciara, Tania, and I attended the Kingsbridge BIDs annual meeting to celebrate 20 years since their inception. Thank you, Katherine Broihier and Jennifer Sproull for the good work they are doing in the BID
- Lastly, Congratulations to a good friend of this committee, Marlene Cintron from BOEDC, who was chosen by the Biden Administration for a leadership role within the US SBA. Marlene will now be the Region II Administrator for the SBA that involves overseeing SBA operations in all of NY, NJ, PR, and the Us Virgin Islands.

- Small Business Report- Katie Mayer and Heather Kim, co-founders of Early Bird Café on Mosholu Avenue in North Riverdale
  - Early Bird Café was opened in June 2021, intended as an investment in North Riverdale to revitalize the area. Funding of \$30,000, mostly from small donations from the community, was raised as seed money. Ms. Kim and Ms. Mayer thanked to Nick Fazio, EDC, and SBS for their critical help
  - Founders focused on three pillars: providing nutritionally sound food, comfortable ambiance and work force development. Early Bird is investing in training staff with the goal that experience can be used at the Café and beyond:
    - Café Founders discussed challenge of obtaining funding for a new business because most of grants money awarded to businesses that were established pre-Covid
    - In response to suggestion by Camelia that Katie and Heather connect with Riverdale Mainstreet Alliance, the Café Founders replied they are about to join the Board and are planning a street fair and/or block party
    - In response to question by Chair concerning vaccine mandate, Heather and Katie stated that patrons are asked for their vaccination card but they expressed some concern about “Covid police” and the leeway that may be necessary for coffee shops for patrons are just grabbing a coffee
    - Founders proud of their training program but stated that their staff have not had previous restaurant experience
    - Rising costs will eventually necessitate pricing changes because of inflation and other vicissitudes including decreased foot traffic in colder weather
- Entrepreneur Assistance Center- Randi Norfleet - [rnorfleet@bocnet.org](mailto:rnorfleet@bocnet.org)
  - Program Director Norfleet of BAC network a program for businesses established for less than five years (in Harlem and the Bronx). EAC provides support based upon a “business model canvas,” a 60-hour, ten-week virtual program teaching various aspects of a business plan: technology, financial structure, marketing, branding, customer segmentation:
    - Although there is currently a cohort of 19 for an English language course to be completed in January 2022, an upcoming Spanish language course is being planned for the Bronx in Spring 2022 and an English language course planned for Harlem in Spring 2022
    - Ms. Norfleet stated that application responses have been robust and each candidate is interviewed to vet for business owners who were committed to the process and capable of being engaged in the virtual platform. Current funding under ESD allows for four sessions per year. Additionally, an EAC was just opened for Staten Island adding to a presence in Queens, Harlem and the Bronx

- Program is heavily metric driven insofar as requirements for program participants to attend, number of jobs created, loans and grants obtained, MBE and Veteran participation
  - Part of requirement of Program is that applicants have to join NYC SBS mentoring platform and enter themselves as a “mentees,” to ensure continuity. Cohort graduates receive counseling to facilitate sustainability of their efforts
  - Committee members are encouraged to recommend program to their business contacts and contact Tania for more information, or to reach Ms. Norfleet
  - <https://esd.ny.gov/entrepreneurship-assistance-centers>
  - [rnorfleet@bocnet.org](mailto:rnorfleet@bocnet.org)
- Bailey Avenue Merchants: Update on recovery efforts from the fire on **November 1, 2021**
  - Chair advised that a meeting was held on Thursday **November 18, 2021**, with SBS, EDC, KRVC, representatives from Rep Espaillat, Assembly Member Dinowitz, Council Member Dinowitz and State Senator Biaggi’s offices:
    - SBS representative Bernadette Nation gave us a detailed status report. Assembly Member Dinowitz’s office helped to expedite the FDNY inspection, a prerequisite to Department of Buildings signoff and assessment by insurance adjusters. The landlord is presently cooperating and SBS is reviewing tenant leases. EDC has facilitated review by Legal Aid to determine whether the tenants qualify for rent forgiveness
    - Business owners advised that it would take approximately two weeks to reopen with the caveat that damage caused to the building structure had to be repaired and the bureaucratic hurdles overcome
      - Community member Victor Cruz asked where merchants who could not attend meeting could obtain resources being made available by the City. In response, Chair stated that EDC believes all of the affected businesses were made aware of the meeting and are having their leases reviewed but if there are merchants who need information, they should contact CB Bx 8 to facilitate inquiry
      - Community member Marie Claude asked for clarification on zoning constraints to landlord. Chair explained that while the landlord can sell to whomever, a new landlord would be subject to zoning requirements, including applying for a variance
      - In response to question by Camelia about funding for affected businesses, Chair responded that SBS and EDC have agreed to collaborate to obtain relief through the City’s ASTEP Program (Accelerated Sales Tax Exemption Program) thereby giving businesses tax breaks that facilitate investment in rebuilding

- New Business
  - Camelia mentioned NYC Covid Safe application upgrade now permits subfolders so that multiple vaccination cards can be uploaded
  - Chair advised that SBS Recovery Growth report has been issued and recommends it to members:  
  
<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/sbs/downloads/pdf/about/reports/supporting-nyc-recovery-growth.pdf>
- Outstanding Business
  - Chair reported that the Cannabis Control Board was formed in October 2021, and has already had two meetings and agendas are available online:  
<https://cannabis.ny.gov/>
  - Full commercialization of cannabis for recreational usage is scheduled to be rolled out in 2022
    - Chair sent a letter to the Borough President's office to inquire if the Community Boards will play a role in licensing and/or permitting. More information likely after the State Legislature reconvenes in January
  - Chair mentioned NYT article from **December 6, 2021**, on the City's plan to daylight Tibbetts Brook to ameliorate the burden to the sewer system and flooding:
    - Chair believes this issue will be on the agenda for the joint meeting by ENS and Parks and encourages EDC members to attend
- Adjournment

Submitted by Nicholas Fazio