

Pending Committee Approval

Bronx Community Board 8 Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes September 22, 2022

I. Attendees

Committee: *Nick Fazio (Chair), Constance Barnes, Rhashida Hilliard*
Absent: *Julia Gomez, Moses Esema (Vice Chair), Bob Fanuzzi*
Community Attendees: *Manari Merino (Santa Fe Grill), Efrain Farciert (Santa Fe Grill), Matthew Ramirez, David Lindsey (Kingsbridge Social Club)*
Guests: *Professor Winston Peters (Manhattan College), Arnold Adler (The Bread Man of Riverdale), Rich Berroa (Claudy's Kitchen)*

II. Called to order at 7:32 pm

- A. Announcements: *N. Fazio*
1. Thank you to Kingsbridge Social Club for hosting the September meeting of the Economic Development Committee for Bronx Community Board 8.
 2. South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SOBRO) could not attend due to a scheduling conflict. However, the Economic Development Committee (the Committee) invited SOBRO back on September 22 to discuss staffing and workforce services for Community District 8's small businesses.

III. Presentation by Entrepreneurs @ MC Program Director, *Professor Winston Peters*

- A. Manhattan College initiated the program in 2021.
- B. The three main aspects of the program are teaching entrepreneurship, start-up activities, and general business management.
- C. The program includes two pitch competitions:
1. The Innovation Challenge (<https://manhattan.edu/academics/schools-and-departments/school-of-business/Innovation-Challenge/index.php>)
 2. Battle for the Bronx hosted by Fordham Foundry (<https://www.fordhamfoundry.org/>)
- D. Discussion
1. *R. Hilliard* asked if there are initiatives to support local small businesses.
 2. *Prof. Peters* asserted that students are encouraged to understand small businesses' "pain points" and create products and services to address those challenges.
 3. *Rich Berroa* asked if businesses could hire interns through the program.

4. *Prof. Peters* indicated that he encourages students to seek internships and would be happy to work with local businesses to facilitate student internships.
5. *N. Fazio* offered the assistance of the Economic Development Committee and to connect *Mr. Berroa* with *Prof. Peters*.
6. *Rhashida Hilliard* inquired about the inclusion of environmental considerations and sustainability into business models.
7. *Prof. Peters* indicated that the program teaches the "Triple Bottom Line" model (TBL), whereby businesses focus on *profit, people, and planet*. TBL theory contends that companies should focus on social and environmental issues as much as profits.
8. *Matthew Ramirez* asked about the types of businesses students have started.
9. *Prof. Peters*: A sustainable make-up line, mobile COVID-19 testing device, virtual reality rehabilitation platform, wind power technology, and many others.
10. *N. Fazio* offered to connect *Professor Peters* with the NYC Economic Development Corporation's Life Science division for possible future collaborations.

IV. Small Business Owner's Report

A. *Richard Berroa* from *Claudy's Kitchen*

1. Thank you to *Manari* and *Efrain Farciert* from *Santa Fe Grill* for their encouragement and support of *Claudy's Kitchen*.
2. *Claudy's Kitchen* opened during the pandemic but managed to survive.
3. Sales are picking up thanks to increased foot traffic and more dine-in customers.
4. Drinks-To-Go legislation has been beneficial.
5. However, inflation and lack of employees have presented new challenges for *Claudy's Kitchen*.
6. Switching 3rd party delivery services helped cut some of the additional costs. Some companies charge a 30% delivery fee.
7. The merchants in the Broadway and 242nd Street commercial corridor report an increase in volume, and revenues are up despite rising costs.
8. The supply chain is a significant issue; all businesses report problems getting supplies.
9. *Claudy's Kitchen* supports the creation of a "pedestrian plaza" at 242nd and Broadway near Manhattan College Parkway, and Riverdale Mainstreet Alliance (RMA) is looking into this initiative.
10. *Claudy's Kitchen* does not support outdoor dining structures when businesses do not use and maintain them.
11. *Mr. Berroa* shared the NYC Seed Funding Program with merchants in attendance.

12. NYC Seed Funding Grant offers grants based on 2021 taxes up to \$50,000 or 10% of sales (<https://nyseedgrant.com/>)
13. *N. Fazio* offered to disseminate the application link to CB 8's merchant contact list.

B. Discussion

1. *N. Fazio* asked if DSNY improved service to the area.
2. *Mr. Berroa* responded that conditions have improved and thanked CB 8 for their assistance.
3. *Mr. Berroa* stated that lack of parking is still a significant complaint from consumers and other merchants in the corridor.
4. *Mr. Berroa* communicated that there is also a significant issue with individuals feeding birds under the train. An "emotionally disturbed" individual provides food for pigeons under the elevated train, which results in unattractive and unsanitary conditions. They made numerous 311 reports.
5. *Mr. Berroa* inquired about the legality of the mobile marijuana vending truck parked near 242nd and Broadway.
6. *N. Fazio* stated that Board Office looked into this issue. The complaint now falls under the jurisdiction of the Department of Consumer Affairs and Worker Protection (DCWP) as a possible vending violation. The Board Office has forwarded *Mr. Berroa's* previous complaints to DCWP. They have also contacted the Office of Cannabis Management and the NYPD about the issue.
7. *R. Hilliard* asked if there were other issues or concerns that the Committee could help them to address.
8. *Mr. Berroa* conveyed that support for a pedestrian plaza would be helpful.

C. *Arnold Adler* (The Bread Man of Riverdale)

1. The Bread Man of Riverdale started as a philanthropic endeavor by baking sourdough bread for the Friendly Fridge. The for-profit business took off from there.
2. It is a home-based business and sells bread at the Riverdale Neighborhood House Farmer's Market, Community Market at One Yoga for All, and other local businesses.
3. *Mr. Adler* was featured on ABC news and the Kelly Clarkson Show and used the proceeds from the show to incorporate an LLC.
4. *Mr. Adler* indicated that he would like to scale to 50 to 100 loaves a week and is currently figuring out how to expand his business.

D. Discussion

5. *Mr. Berroa* asked if he would consider partnering with a "co-packer" to market the brand and help him fill delivery orders.
6. *Mr. Adler* responded that it is an interesting idea but is unsure if that is the right direction for the business.
7. *R. Hilliard* asked if he considered a mobile bread truck.
8. *Mr. Adler* indicated that he would consider it.
9. *C. Barnes* suggested that he sell to local bakeries and cafès.

10. *Mr. Berroa* suggested he also consider selling to Gourmet Garage and other local businesses.
11. *Mr. Farciert* (Santa Fe Grill) offered to meet with Mr. Adler to discuss supplying Santa Fe Grill with his product.
12. *N. Fazio* suggested that *Mr. Adler* contact the Small Business Development Center at Lehman College (SBDC) and the SBA's Service Corp of Retired Executives (SCORE) to help him determine how to capitalize on the business's current success. He also offered to make the appropriate introductions for *Mr. Adler*.

V. Chair's Report: *N. Fazio*

- A. Announcement: Riverdale Restaurant Week is October 1-8
 1. Please go to <http://dineoutriverdale.com/> for more information and to see a list of participating businesses.
 2. There will also be a beer crawl on October 8 that has three different starting locations. Shuttle service transportation is provided. (<http://dineoutriverdale.com/bar-crawl/>)
 3. Thank you *Laura Levine* from Bronx Burger House (one of this year's MVM recipients) and *Michael Gabert* for organizing and promoting the event.
 4. Please spread the word and make reservations to take advantage of Riverdale Restaurant Week/ Dine Out Riverdale.
- B. *N. Fazio* stated that there had been only marginal progress on Bailey Avenue for the storefronts impacted by the fire of November 1, 2021. DOB NOW indicated that the architect filed permits and cleared them to start work. However, workers are not currently repairing the damage despite numerous efforts by the board and *Assembly Member Dinowitz's* office to engage with the landlord and encourage them to move forward. In addition, DOB has indicated that they will not get involved in issues between property owners and businesses.
- C. Announcement: The Mayor's Office, in partnership with the Bronx Chamber of Commerce, is engaging with the merchant community to improve the functionality of DOB.
- D. *N. Fazio* stated that the Committee would engage with the Bronx Chamber and offer the unfortunate situation on Bailey Avenue as an example of how the DOB should do a better job of helping small businesses with these types of disputes.
- E. *N. Fazio* stated that the Committee is looking for other business locations for upcoming meetings. Ponce Bank on Broadway is a consideration.
- F. Announcement: Bronx Burger House's *Laura Levine* and Dine-out Riverdale Co-Founder *Michael Gabert* (*Flexis Media, LLC*) will give the Small Business Owner's Report and report on the results of Riverdale Restaurant Week on Thursday, October 27.
- G. Announcement: There is no November meeting since it falls on Thanksgiving.
- H. *N. Fazio* stated that the board office offered December 6 as a possible alternative meeting date.

VI. Outstanding Business - None

VII. New Business

- A. Suggestions for guest speakers
 - 1. *C. Barnes* suggested that the Committee invite Communitas America <https://www.communitasamerica.org/> to an upcoming meeting.
- B. *Manari Merino* expressed that Santa Fe Grill is interested in contact opportunities with the City of New York and New York State and asked the Committee for assistance.
 - 1. *N. Fazio* indicated he would direct *Ms. Merino* to the right resources at SOBRO to help with RFP processes and contract procurements.
- C. *Mr. Ramirez* offered to send the Committee some suggestions of locations for future meetings.
- D. Committee members in attendance decided to table the discussion on merchant corridor walk-throughs until the October meeting.

VIII. Approval of Minutes from May 22

- A. Tabled

IX. Meeting Adjourned at 8:59 pm