

MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

November 12, 2020 at 7:00 PM
via Zoom Conference

1.) Present:

Committee members: Nick Fazio, Julia Gomez, Camelia Tepelus, Moses Esema, Joy Campbell Privaterre

Community Board Members: Board Chair, Laura Spalter, Sergio Villaverde,
Guests: Clarence Stanley- SBDC, Harry Dannenberg- SCORE, Sharon Higgins- MBDA, Tim Gamory- Bronx Exchange, Sydney Collins- Manhattan College, Pierina Sanchez, Eliomar Sanchez, Marianna Miller-D'Allessandro, Richard Goldstein, Natalie, Nicole, Joanie

2.) Call to Order: 7:05pm

3.) Approval of Minutes from 10/22/20: Nick Fazio indicated that there was one correction to the October Minutes. Minutes approved by acclamation as amended.

4.) *Camelia Tepelus asked the committee to acknowledge the contribution of 7,500 masks from NYC DSBS and Bronx Borough President's office, that was facilitated on behalf of CB8 ED Committee and provided to KRVC for distribution to the community during Open Streets on Johnson Ave. The committee thanked Camelia for facilitating procurement of the masks to the community and to KRVC for distributing them.*

5.) Chair's Report:

- SBDC and SCORE flyers: Nick Fazio stated that CB 8 will be distributing flyers promoting the services of the Bronx Small Business Development Center and the Service Core of Retired Executives (SCORE) via the board's merchant contact list, Facebook, and Twitter. Fazio thanked Clarence Stanley, Harry Dannenberg, Sydney Collins, Kim Lyons, Laura Spalter, Julia Gomez, Tania Ochoteco, and DM Ciara Gannon for assisting with the initiative.
- Announced that a very important webinar will take place on Monday, November 23rd on small business survival during Covid-19. The registration link and flyer has been distributed to our merchant contact list and on Facebook and Twitter. For more information please email the Director of SCORE's Bronx Division, Mr. Harry Dannenberg at harry.dannenberg@scorevolunteer.org or go to: <http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07ehdfzxlaf2eaa0d4&llr=7bofavbab>
- The regulations for outdoor dining heating units were reviewed. For detailed information on the guidelines and regulations go to: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/counseltothemayor/downloads/Heaters-FAQ.pdf>

- Open storefronts program of DOT was announced to help retail merchants by expanding the open restaurants concept to the retail sector. Fazio asked for the committee and attendees to report their observations about how the program might be working within CD 8. For detailed information about the program, go to: <https://www1.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/pedestrians/openstorefronts.shtml>.
 - It was reported that Gov Cuomo announced that bars, restaurants and gyms are to close by 10 pm. The new rules are effective at 10pm on Friday, November 13.
 - Knolls Crescent Update: Nick Fazio announced that the resolution on Tuesday, November 10th passed the full board and will go to elected officials and Chase Bank Executive Offices of Community Relations. The committee thanked A Touch of Sun owner Marjeta Lazri and GM Michaelan for their leadership and for starting a petition among the businesses in Knolls Crescent and their many loyal customers. The merchants collaborated to compile hundreds of signatures echoing the sentiments of many Knolls Crescent residents.
 - Fazio conveyed that the ED committee has been in contact with Marlene Cintron of the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corp and they are monitoring the potential vacancy at 13B Knolls Crescent.
 - SBDC Executive Director Stanley stated his experiences with bank closures and reinforced that community engagement can be an effective tool in getting banks to remain open. He advised that CB 8 continue on the present course. He also brought up the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) and suggested that we report to the New York State Banking Commission about the circumstances of the closure and why it is problematic for the community.
 - *Camelia Tepelus asked if there will be follow up to the Board resolution appealing to the landlord to prioritize renting the space to another financial institution. The committee agreed that all options should be on the table.*
- 6.) Presentation by Sharon Higgins from the Minority Business Development Agency: Director Higgins reported on conventional and innovative financing techniques for small business and how the MBDA can assist emerging firms. She asserted that there are numerous opportunities to form cooperatives that pool resources for the purpose of obtaining capital for nascent and established businesses. MBDA can help emerging entrepreneurs to join a team of businesses within their network. Ms. Higgins suggested interested businesses contact her at: (718) 732-7580, or go to: <https://www.mbda.gov/business-center/south-bronx-mbda-business-center> Director Higgins also reported that “Alternative Lenders” such as Newtek are innovating ways to provide low income small businesses financing and capital. The ED committee indicated that they are interested in learning more about unconventional types of capital and cooperative arrangements for small businesses.
- 7.) Update from Manhattan College student Sydney Collins. Ms. Collins reported that she has worked on increasing the merchant contact list to over 300 businesses and has accumulated data on over 400 commercial entities district-wide. Sydney has also helped develop flyers for SBDC and SCORE. Board Chair Spalter and the ED

committee thanked Sydney for her dedication, hard work, and for the outstanding job she did for the board and the community.

8.) Outstanding Business:

- **Most Valuable Merchant Award:** Members of the ED committee reviewed the nominations. It was noted that all nominations were outstanding candidates for the award. The award was granted by unanimous vote to Flowers By Zenda owner Mr. Orlando Kross. Mr. Kross will be able to accept the award at an upcoming full board meeting. The board office will begin accepting nominations for 2021 starting in January.
- **City Bench:** Nick Fazio asked if members of the ED committee had any recommendations. There were no recommendations presented. Camelia Tepelus inquired about the process for submitting recommendations. Discussion was held and agreed that ED committee recommendations will go to the T and T committee for consideration and further discussion
- **Graffiti Removal Update:** Camelia Tepelus reported that the Marble Hill is still having difficulties with this issue. Board Chair Spalter indicated that the board office is working with CM Rodriguez's office to organize a clean-up that will include graffiti removal in Marble Hill. Funds from CM Rodriguez's office have already been procured for this initiative. Camelia Tepelus indicated that CM Cohen's office has said that they will be using FedCap to remove the graffiti in Knolls Crescent. Dr. Tepelus will report back on the progress at the December meeting. Chair Spalter also stated that board office has developed graffiti complaint form. The board office will be contacting the property owners to request that they remove graffiti on their properties when complaints are submitted to the board office.

9.) New Business:

- Camelia Tepelus announced the Small Business COVIDWatcher, a large research study conducted by Columbia SIPA, to inform the city on policies to best support small businesses survival during COVID. Dr. Tepelus, stated that the survey was provided to all BIDs by the BIDs Association from NYC Planning and SBS with the request of disseminating to their members.
- Nick Fazio introduced CEO of the Bronx Exchange, Timothy Gamory. Mr. Gamory provided a brief report on the Bronx Exchange's initiative to develop an information platform for Bronx Small Businesses. Mr. Gamory complimented CB 8 on its efforts to develop a merchant database and indicated that the Bronx Exchange would be interested in future collaborative efforts to engage with our small businesses for the purpose of guiding them to resources critical to their success. Fazio invited Mr. Gamory back to present to the committee on the vision of the Bronx Exchange and update us on their current project at a future ED committee meeting.

10.) Nick Fazio thanked all guests in attendance and appealed to everyone to stay safe during this difficult time.

11.) Adjournment- 8:20pm

Minutes submitted by Nick Fazio