

COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 22, 2009 BOARD OFFICE, 5676 RIVERDALE AVENUE

PRESENT

Robert Fanuzzi
Anthony P. Cassino
Thomas C. Durham
Bert Feinberg
Juan Goris
Damian McShane
James Plaza
David Bent
Dan Eudene
Joe Hendler
Aileen Jones
Nick Judd
Thomas Mialkowski
Robert Press
Marlene Rosen
D.H. Sargent
Sarah Shaikh

AFFILIATION

Committee Chair
CB #8
CB #8
CB #8
CB #8
CB #8 Chairman
CB #8

Riverdale Neighborhood House

Schervier
Riverdale Press

Schervier – Building Healthier Communities

- I. The minutes of the November 18, 2008 meeting were read and amended, with “John Beuhalt” changed to “John Benfatti.” The minutes were accepted as amended.
- II. Chair’s report
 - A. The Bronx Housing Court is holding a community outreach program for those dealing with consumer debt on January 27, 1118 Grand Concourse.
 - B. At the January meeting of the Bronx Borough Board, the borough president’s office issued a study of employment figures in the midst of our economic downturn. Of particular relevance for Bronx Community Board No. 8 and its young workforce is the fact that employment statistics are down for that demographic. Future meetings of the committee will seek to bring together public and private job training agencies, such as JobsFirst NYC and Workforce One.
 - C. The chair and Julie Reyes met with Ray Salaberrios, Director of the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation, on January 10 to discuss the community benefits provision of the ULURP resolution supporting the Ceruzzi/Blumenfeld development. The group planned out job placement and job fair strategies, and planned a further meeting on February 3rd with Pamela Otto, Director of Riverdale Kingsbridge Van Cortlandt Development Corporation, and Katherine Broihier, Director of Kingsbridge Business Improvement District, to discuss business recruitment opportunities.

III. Vice Chair's Report

- A. Juan Goris reported on the efforts of Manhattan College to fill their commercial space on the first floor of their parking garage. According to the business manager George Kuzma, multiple realtors are working on behalf of the college and two or three strong candidates have emerged.
- B. The vice chair also discussed the terms of the public parking provisions for the Manhattan College Parking Garage. The college is required to open the garage for public parking during the summer, but the vice-chair and the rest of the committee were interested in expanding access if the parking garage was being underused by college students during the school year.

IV. Old Business

A. A Farmers' Market for Bronx Community Board No.8

1. Tom Strumolo, the scheduled guest speaker and director of policy and programming for Greenmarkets, a division of the Council of the Environment for New York City, was unable to attend due to a last minute scheduling conflict. But he scheduled an official site visit for February 3, and assured the chair that Greenmarkets is "very interested" in the committee's proposed site, Tieck Way (Kingsbridge Road) between West 230th Street and West 228th Street.

2. The committee discussed the details of the site proposal as presented by the chair: a full or partial street closure on Tieck Way; a Saturday or Sunday date; possible parking for cars on the access road to JFK High School; a preference for a "traditional model," where individual vendors sell their food, over the Youth Market model, which is for an organization or sponsors to purchase from vendors. Nevertheless, the committee realized that several institutions in the community could make valuable partners, and articulated a "hybrid" or "mixed model": a traditional farmer's market that has relationships with other institutions and programs and therefore a community outreach function. (Another name suggested was the "Bronx model.") Paulette Schomo, President of the Marble Hill Houses Tenant Association, has already given her organization's support, and Rev. Nathaniel Dixon, pastor of St. Stephen's United Methodist Church, is working with Sarah Shaikh, a community liaison from Schervier on a local "Building Healthy Community" venture; Ms. Shaikh expressed great interest in expanding her work to the farmers' market. Dan Eudene of Riverdale Neighborhood House, the sponsor of the Youth Market, suggested that his youth program might be expanded to surrounding schools.

3. For the purpose of transportation access, the committee also discussed reaching out to other senior care institutions such as Riverdale Senior Center and Atria, which have vans and transportation systems for bringing the area's large elderly population to the site on a regular basis.

4. The committee plans to hold a special public hearing in Marble Hill on March 2 to bring a completed proposal to the community.

B. Bicycle Racks

In order to complete the list of bicycle rack sites compiled by the Economic Development committee, the chair, Tony Cassino, and Tom Durham surveyed the district (by car) and compiled a comprehensive list of proposed sites, to be

submitted to the Department of Transportation through the Traffic and Transportation Committee.

- V. New Business: "Reviving Riverdale"
The chair attended a meeting of "Reviving Riverdale," a group of citizens hoping to improve the retail sector of Riverdale Avenue and other areas of the Bronx. The group will be among the speakers at the February 26 committee meeting, which will be devoted to exploring commercial development prospects for Riverdale Avenue. The committee hopes to determine whether there is a shortage or backlog of entrepreneurial ventures in the area, whether there is adequate financing and fair lending practices, whether the landlords' price is market rate, and whether landlords intend to lease their property.
- VI. Adjournment
- VII. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Damian McShane
Chairman

Robert Fanuzzi
Chairman
Economic Development Committee