

COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

**MINUTES OF THE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON SEPTEMBER 24, 2009 AT THE BOARD OFFICE
5676 RIVERDALE AVENUE**

PRESENT

Robert Fanuzzi
Juan Goris
Sergio Marquez
Ari Goldman
Steven Froot
Herbert Young
Petr Stand
Jay Nadler
Leonidas & Maria Koumoulos
Michael McShea
Myra Joyce
William Douglas
Candice M. Giove
N. Clark Judd

AFFILIATION

Committee Chair
Committee Vice Chair
CB #8
CB #8
CB #8
CB #8
Chairman, KRVCDC
Jay-Bar's
Land and Sea Restaurant
Bronx Community College

Riverdale Review
Riverdale Press

- I. Review and Acceptance of Minutes
The minutes of the May 28, 2009 meeting were read and accepted.

- II. Chair's Report
 - A. We will not be getting either of its two Expense Priorities for FY 2011:
(1) funding to open a local office for Workforce One, a Small Business Services contractor that matches employers and job seekers; and
(2) funding to open a local center of NYC Business Solutions, an entrepreneurial training service also funded by Small Business Services.

 - B. The Chair introduced Michael McShea, an employment specialist at Bronx Community College, who discussed the availability at BCC of continuing education programs and job training programs in such fields as computer tech and allied health. Mr. McShea indicated that the programs are tuition-based, but that vouchers were available.

 - C. The schedule for Civil Service exams for the next year (June 2009-June 2010) is now on the CB #8 website.

 - D. The Committee has been notified that The Boys and Girls Club want to open an office in the northwest Bronx, which will result in four job openings.

- E. The Chair solicited volunteers to fulfill a request by a community partner for the Committee to staff a table at an upcoming Saturday bazaar at Saint Stephen's Church.
- F. The Chair asked for volunteers to appear in a video journal compiled by an organization called Green Machine, an organization that seeks to move the Bronx toward a green economy.

III. Election of Vice-Chair

The incumbent Vice-Chair of the Committee, Juan ("Frankie") Goris, was reelected by unanimous consent.

IV. Guest Speaker

Peter Stand, Chairman of the Board, Kingsbridge-Riverdale-Van Cortland Development Corporation (KRVDC)

- ⇒ Mr. Stand has chaired KRVDC for the last 7 years
- ⇒ He has been a local area resident all his life, and is the owner of an architectural planning and development firm in Manhattan that has worked on a number of projects in the Bronx, most recently a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)-certified commercial building being developed according to "green" construction principles
- ⇒ When KRVDC was first formed, its focus was mainly residential, its traditional mission being to facilitate the construction of affordable housing in the area
- ⇒ KRVDC's primary government partner and funding source traditionally was the Department of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR)
- ⇒ KRVDC, however, increasingly views its mission as broader in scope, including increasing the Green network; making builders and owners aware of incentives and funding for green development; linking people up with the New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA); partnering with 501(c)(3) entities; and serving in the role of a community development financial institution (CDFI).
- ⇒ Unfortunately, DHCR contracts limit what initiatives KRVDC pursues (such as counseling to property owners and tenants), and would not cover, for example, a recent highly successful Earth Day event sponsored by KRVDC. As a result, the Board of KRVDC recently voted not to pursue additional funding from DHCR
- ⇒ Mr. Stand noted that no more than 50% of KRVDC's board may come from Riverdale
- ⇒ KRVDC is currently conducting a search for a new executive director, and prefers to hire a person who lives in the community
- ⇒ On the subject of revitalizing commercial areas such as Riverdale Avenue, Mr. Stand suggested adopting the "mindset of place making," which could be implemented by installing benches, flowers and art installations that would attract interesting merchants. Organizations like Green Streets and Bronx Council on the Arts might be resources in this regard, as might the Kingsbridge BID, were it to be extended to 238th Street

V. Old Business

A. Riverdale Avenue Vacancies and Openings

The Chair welcomed Jay Nadler, the owner of Jay-Bar's, a new retail business to be located on Riverdale Avenue near 238th Street in the space previously occupied by Fieldston Market. Jay-Bar's, which is expected to open this November, will offer fresh produce, fresh dairy, deli meats and imported cheeses, prepared foods and some grocery items seven days a week. Jay-Bar's will have tables to allow customers to eat on the premises, and will offer catering services. Mr. Nadler explained that he was trying to fill some of the void left by the closing of Fieldston Market, as well as fill a gap in the kinds of food available to residents of the neighborhood. (A laundromat will occupy the 40% of the former Fieldston Market location not utilized by Jay-Bar's.) Mr. Nadler is a long-time resident of Riverdale, a general contractor, and Food & Beverage Director at TCR.

Although this still leaves six empty stores on Riverdale Avenue, Mr. Nadler is optimistic that half of those sites will be occupied by this time next year. He is a proponent of the munimeters that were recently installed in lieu of parking meters, because this creates three additional parking spaces on the block. The Chair advised that DOT previously had rejected the proposal that diagonal parking be implemented on Riverdale Avenue.

The Chair offered to put Mr. Nadler in touch with a recruiter at the Riverdale Chamber of Commerce with respect to hiring for Jay-Bar's and indicated that the Community Board will do anything it can to assist with any permits the new business requires.

The Chair also indicated (1) that he would seek to reopen dialogue with Manhattan College about revitalization efforts in the area, and (2) that consideration should be given to holding a Riverdale Avenue Street Fair that would not closing off all traffic, but would have the booths facing the storefronts on each side of the avenue

B. Youthmarket Plans

The Marble Hill Youth Market has been a great success. Statistics will be placed on the CB #8 website soon. The last day for the Youthmarket is October 29. An open question is whether to move the day of the Youthmarket in the future from Thursday to Saturday.

VI. New Business

A. Parking Problems for Broadway merchants; Ceruzzi development delay

The Chair introduced Maria and Leonidas Koumoulos, who have owned the Land and Sea Restaurant on Broadway at Kimberly Place since 1986. They reported that since the closing of the former municipal parking lot in the area as the result of the approval of the construction of what was supposed to be a mall and Manhattan College parking facility, which is now stalled, they have lost a great deal of business because customers either cannot find parking or are ticketed by overzealous traffic enforcement agents. The Koumoulos' report that with their restaurant receipts down \$10,000 per week from before April 2009, they will not survive. They stated that other Broadway merchants are suffering as well, and that the Kingsbridge BID did not appear to be actively working on the issue. Their view is that the municipal parking lot, which is still owned by the City, should be reopened until construction by Ceruzzi starts at the site. Frankie Goris, the proprietor of the Ibiza Lounge, stated that the effect of the parking problems could be felt as high up as Broadway and 242nd Street .

The Chair thanked Candice Giove of the *Riverdale Review* for covering this story, and suggested that the Koumoulos' circulate a petition to be signed by local merchants that could be presented to the Economic Development Corporation (EDC), which has jurisdiction over the Ceruzzi project, when a three-person committee from CB #8 meets with the EDC the week of September 28 about the stalled development. The Chair also expressed the hope that the Kingsbridge BID would become involved in finding a solution to the problem facing the merchants.

B. Barnes and Noble Recruitment

In response to requests by committee members, the Chair reported that a letter had been sent to Barnes & Noble last spring about the possibility of opening a store in the district, and that the Chair also had contacted a representative of Ceruzzi about the developer's reaching out to Barnes & Noble directly. With respect to consumer demand in the area, it was noted that the Target at 225th Street is apparently Target's highest volume store owing to both foot traffic and customers arriving by private vehicle. Given the ongoing vacancy at Manhattan College, the Chair also reported that efforts would begin persuade the Follett Bookstore at Manhattan College to open a "street-side" location.

C. Community Board #8 Job Fair

At the suggestion of the District Manager Nicole Stent and SBS, the Chair proposed that a job fair be held in CB #8, which would seek to assist young people and recent graduates in finding employment. In order to do this local community partner would have to sponsor and/or host the event, provide a site for the event.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Froot
Member
Economic Development

Robert Fanuzzi
Chairman
Economic Development

SF: rf (October 3, 2009)