

**COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8 BRONX  
MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HELD  
FEBRUARY 23, 2010**

**PRESENT**

Robert Fanuzzi  
Anthony Cassino  
Steven Froot  
Ari Goldman  
Juan Goris  
Sergio Marquez  
John Bindela  
Katherine Broihier  
Lisa Cooper  
Vasco Da Silva  
Ellen Feld  
John McKeon  
Rose Ann Milo  
David Nimowitz  
Michael Nixon  
Laurel Noble  
Evelyn Oliver  
Robert Press  
Howard Ring  
Cliff Stanton  
Cori Worchel

**AFFILIATION**

Committee Chair  
CB #8  
CB #8  
CB #8  
CB #8  
CB #8  
Jasper's  
Kingsbridge BID  
Elisa Contemporary Art  
Sotheby's  
Sotheby's  
John's Botany Bay Florist  
Baby It's You  
Urban Prairie  
BOEDC  
Riverdale Review  
Con Edison  
Bronx News  
  
KRVCDC  
KRVCDC

The meeting was called to order at 7:30PM.

1. Chair's Report

- A. R. Fanuzzi asked realtors in the community to submit the addresses of their vacant commercial spaces to Community Board 8 for the purpose of creating a database of empty stores. The March meeting of the Economic Development Committee will feature a presentation from Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation on a mapping software it uses to chart vacancies, interface with demographic census data, and match with a directory of waiting business owners.

2. Guest Speakers

- A. Evelyn Oliver from Con Edison gave a presentation on incentives for energy savings. ConEd's energy efficiency program is for small businesses that use less than 100 kilowatts or less of power (this is equivalent to a small McDonalds). ConEd will conduct a free energy survey, and the business can receive up to 70% rebates for the labor and goods that would make the business more energy efficient. The business must use a ConEd qualified contractor to receive the rebates.
- B. Michael Nixon from the Bronx Overall Development Corporation (BODC) gave a presentation on the different types of loans small business can receive either from the SBA or backed by the SBA.

One such loan is the 504 Loans. This program provides long-term, fixed-rate financing to acquire fixed assets (such as real estate or equipment) for expansion or modernization. It is designed for small businesses requiring "brick and mortar" financing, and is delivered by private, non-profit corporations set up to contribute to the economic development of their communities. SBA will provide up to 40% of the value the capital expenditures, up to 50% will come from a lender and the owner will need to put up 10%

(only SBA approved borrowers can use this loan). The term of the loan is either 10 or 20 years (10 years is for fixed assets and 20 years is for purchasing buildings). Furthermore, closing costs are also financed. This program is only for capital expenditures and not for working capital or inventory.

Another loan is the 7(a) Loan Programs. This is SBA's primary and most flexible loan program, with financing guaranteed for a variety of general business purposes. It is designed for start-up and existing small businesses, and is delivered through commercial lending institutions. The loan can range from \$5,000 to \$1.5 million (and up to \$2 million for certain projects). Once the SBA approves the borrower then the SBA will guarantee to the lender up to 90% of the loan. For 7(a) Loans, the SBA is just a guarantor and does not actually give out the loan.

Another type of loan for energy efficiency for businesses is the Bronx Environmental Revolving Loan Fund, which is designed to provide zero interest loans to Bronx businesses and building owners that implement energy efficient measures and/or new technology, which improves the air quality of our borough. Eligible companies are for-profit companies, non-profit organizations and housing corporations operating in the Bronx. The eligible uses are implementation of energy-efficient measures, including electric/alternative fuel machinery and equipment; boiler retrofit; new technology to reduce air pollution and/or cause energy savings (e.g. Green roofs and other greening measures like solar or wind technology). The size of loan ranges from \$10,000 to \$100,000. The term of loan is up to 10 years and there is a 2% origination fee. The business owner must put up 10% for existing businesses or 25% for start-ups. This is a revolving loan so it is first come, first serve.

- C. Mr. Nixon then spoke about merchant's associations. He stated that merchant's associations are done at the grassroots level and they can range from informal associations between businesses to Business Improvement Districts ("BID"). However, the BID takes many years of planning to happen. Once a merchant's association is formed, this can bring more political and economic visibility to the area.

R. Fanuzzi said that businesses in CB8 should decide if they want to have a merchant's association, and if so should it be by street organization (like Johnson Avenue, Riverdale Avenue, Broadway, etc.) or regional (North Riverdale, Central Riverdale, etc.).

### 3. New Business

#### A. Stella Doro Factory

R. Fanuzzi has been contacted by commercial leasing agents who are asking what kind of stores the community would support if developers proposed a retail use for the factory. He asked community and committee members to come to the next meeting with their priorities so that the committee can establish its bargaining position. He also stressed that there were many publicly funded programs that support and subsidize industrial uses and that the committee as a whole was committed to raising wages for people who work in the district.

#### B. Johnson Avenue Street Closure

Tony Cassino, chair of the Traffic and Transportation committee, presented the Temporary Pedestrian Street proposal to close Johnson Avenue from a number of

consecutive Sundays in July and August. Mr. Cassino stated that this has so far been done in about fourteen communities in NYC. The idea is to bring more people to the area by creating events during the street closing and this will hopefully help the local businesses. Mr. Cassino stated that he has polled a number of the businesses on Johnson Avenue and West 235th Street and a majority so far seems interested in the idea.

After much discussion, the members of the committee supported the idea with the proviso that the Economic Development Committee would work with the local merchants to make sure that they played a lead role in planning and had their concerns addressed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ari Goldman  
Economic Development Committee

AG:db (March 2, 2010)