MINUTES

Meeting of the Community Board #9
Economic Development Committee

Tuesday, May 3, 2011, 6:30 pm

at Broadway Housing, 583 Riverside Drive

Board Members Present: Economic Development Committee: Chair: Hon. LaQuita Henry


Absent: Hon. Savona Bailey-McClain, Hon. April Tyler

Public Member: Absent: Maritta Dunn

The meeting was called to order at 6:51 pm (with quorum present) by Economic Development Chair, LaQuita Henry. The Agenda (see attached) was presented, adopted. Minutes of the last meeting, February 8 joint meeting were submitted to the Executive Committee and will be available the next regular meeting of the Economic Development Committee.

A stimulating discussion on jobs and how the lack of which greatly impacts our District 9 community. Some of the presentation highlights:

• Workforce 1 (system developed with funding from federal government. Workforce Investment Act in 1998); currently, the agency oversees recruitment, professional, scientific, food service, technical work with corporations, community based organizations, colleges, provides services to people where they are.

• Workforce 1 in Manhattan operates 3 centers: including Washington Heights, Upper Manhattan.

• Of the thousands that come through the door are not job ready; 40% (via Dept of Labor) of those served are collecting unemployment insurance and are mandated to sign up for placement assistance; 60% (SeedCo services) are walk-ins; some are at mid-level range, most are with low level skills. Each center has a different field based on jobs offered. Provide common services functionally aligned. Additionally, the Centers share the success: referral to placement.
There are 8 orientations per week. However, program eligibility does not rest on unemployment; an employed person can receive assistance as well.

If one has a resume, person may get a referral to the screening representative or to career advisor team member. Will try to refer applicant where a center is more geographically convenient, as well. Generally the numbers are too great for overall personal intensive attention. Most people are not placed by Workforce, but are assisted, advised.

At some centers, there is proprietary software to provide online assistance with benefits (financial counseling, legal services, health benefits). This is an effort to eliminate the applicant’s need to go to Human Resources Administration, thereby making for a one-stop shop and cutting out some of the extra steps for the unemployed.

Most positions are roughly $10 per hour.

Workforce 1 believes it is doing good work in engaging non-custodial parents, specialized programs for fathers (and their children) with rap sheets, court orders, legal problems, etc.

This year, approximately 55,000 have come through the doors. Last year, about 30,000 were new applicants.

Note: agency will be discussing with SBS the legislation to make sure that funding continues.

Individual training grants have been eliminated but are expected to garner back in July ($300,000 left and expected back; via SBS, federal government provided some stimulus money 2009/2010 $850,000 at the highest stimulus amount in ITGs). Receiving the individual grant is based on assessment.

5,800 placements mandated by Department of Small Business per year. Now, the Workforce 1 is a little behind in placements, but they believe the placement goal is still doable.

Though statistics are available, they have not accessed the MIS system to know client base and how many prospects from District 9, placements for District 9 residents to cull some data relative specifically to District 9, it will take a great deal of dedicated time to research and compile and coordinate through the various city agencies involved.

New York Urban League: NYUL focuses on housing, employment, education. In the area of employment services, NYUL partners with many associations, companies and primarily with the HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities).

Corporations that want tax breaks support Workforce 1. These larger corporations can pay the higher salaries. However, the NYUL also recognizes that small businesses
ire about 60% of employed. Must not make mistake of focusing only on the big corporations. Must not ignore them.

- The 60% that one sees at Workforce 1 are not job ready, have limited skills set and many may lack confidence. Often when the competition for a position is between the employed and the unemployed person, the employed gets hired over the unemployed because their skills are current and there is the confidence that reflects that.

- Contracting in NYC is highly political. Important to have elected officials in support of programs. Could apply for Workforce grant, but NYUL has not yet.

- Problems for electives for a SeedCo issue is that it is a major org coming from outside â€œem â€œ Would be good for SeedCo to partner with a community based organization and for the community based organization to get credit for its work done.

- Secular based training like the former Airport Training group that started from a training grant for Airport Opportunities was a phenomenal concept. Concept began before the Jobs Training Partnership Act to partner a job prospect prior to the actual hiring. All hiring was done through this program.

- Using numbers provided by Workforce 1, about 25,000 persons that Workforce 1 sees are not getting jobs.

- Job seekers are lacking today in the skills set that gets them employed. Isnâ€™t an emphasis on employability training, career path. Businesses are at fault too for taking person from program that is not the right person, but they need someone fast.

- With NYUL Corridors to Self-Sufficiency Program, they match skills with industry for employability skills. Sometimes it starts with GED, it starts with ESL â€“ â€œYou get hired on your skills, but you get fired on your attitude.â€ Retention is biggest hurdle â€œ some incentives are given (eg. Metrocard). There are some learned behaviors and that is a process: learn to get to job on time, work well with coworkers and supervisor, etc.

- Report on Black America -- close to 30% of unemployed are degreed professionals. Major focus of the employment initiative has been for equal access, to assist those to get into new jobs and to advance into their careers. With those degrees, key piece missing is entrepreneurship. There are avenues that the entrepreneurial person must take: SBA may be place to start, business solutions centers also. However, â€œif you are broke, do not try to start a business. Must have working capital. Then business plan, marketing plan â€œ
Columbia University Employment Center (Willie Bentley) was invited and did not formally participate, however, Columbia’s Office of Government and Community Affairs Victoria Mason was present, participated and indicated that she would encourage its Center to make a report ready and to come before economic development committee first.

- Clearly Columbia is about partnerships. We hope to have a range of jobs, entry level to the range of professional jobs.

- There is the medical, health "hope to have on-going partnership with the LDC and with the community board. In the weeks, months ahead we can talk about on-going partnerships.

**Banco Popular** (Wanda Matos, Branch Manager): Wants to participate more in the community and to inform community and businesses of the programs available.

**What should CB9 do?**

**Recommendations:** Per NYUL, to district from Community Board 9 would be to weed out the bogus agencies: make list reputable agencies in our reports. Educate the community as a whole about the rules of the game Per Workforce 1, usher people toward training that is reputable, that they know is not unscrupulous. Columbia: we send out information via emails to the Community Board for broader dissemination.

**Recommendation:** Nikoa Evans can implement a training program similar to that of the Federated Department stores. Starting with Federated department stores, intern or trainee knows that being a manager is next step, that there was a rotational program. [Does the restaurants industry, the food business â€“ small business â€“ come to Workforce for personnel hires? Workforce 1, Green: They have a restaurants boot camp, and attended by Red Rooster, Harlem Tavern, Dinosaur). *How do you handle turnover? This is costly for small businesses.* Workforce 1, Green: we are not required to track retention, to help them get new job or promotion â€“ yes, but not retention. NYUL, Spivey: Itâ€™s up to the Corporations to decide what they will buy into.

**Recommendation:** Matos. Banco Popular does workshops and needs to disseminate invitation to more people â€“ amazing how many have credit issues. There are a number of workshops even for youth who rely on their parents guide which often times needs to be broadened. Important to have good credit and to learn about this at an early age. The Bank sponsors sessions on how to read a financial statement. Must educate the small business owner to be ready to go to SBA. Bank knows of businesses expanding, starting and which will need workers, so they are in a position to inform the community board. Does 1-to-1 consultation with business owners.
Recommendation: Henry: With survey listing of small business, we can how many small businesses could hire at least one person, even as part time.

Recommendation: Mason: there is opportunity to input information online at the university website, to begin the process, applying online is an important first step to getting accurate information of who you are as a candidate. HR team will provide update on measures they introduce to assist employment.

Recommendation: NYUL, Workforce 1 and Columbia have computers for those that do not have access at their home.

Recommendation: Boathen: "we must do a better job of profiling the employer. Do a deeper dive into our work force. Get list of employed as well as list of unemployed. Must extrapolate data from sources available, Corwin: "underemployed talks about an income level. Though looking at the number of short term unemployed and long-term unemployed is a truer number. Harlem's rate is 30% unemployment.

Items under Old Business updates (Chair information)

Flordita and Manhattanville businesses: information was as of April meeting that Floridita owner responded that issue was being handled by his attorney and no other action suggested.

Marine Transfer Station: committee suggested special meeting of July 13 requesting report and interaction with EcoDev Committee.

Farmers Market at Montefiore Park: Harvest Home application moving forward with anticipation of commencing in July.

Montefiore Park Plaza development: FY 14 construction start at site though will know in late May if an anticipated earlier start can take place.

FRESH Initiative: with no vacant site with required footage (16,000 plus) available in our district, EDCa's FRESH director indicated they had found a St. Nicholas Avenue location (near but not in the district). Could still be opportunity for a seasoned CB9 district based business to expand.

The two Legislative Bills at City Council on Street Vending have garnered more signatures from Council representatives.

Task Force on RFEI (old Taystee Bakery Factory) of EDC: reported that at session with EDC. Task Force gave feedback on 6 presentations "square footage and design rendered, proposed uses, likely construction and permanent jobs, MWBEs connected to development contractors, and that Board Chair proposed to EDC that CB9 Executive Committee be invited to its next session with Task Force where all or 3 finalists will be presented. Reported that the Task Force favored one particular design that featured,
among other things, much needed office incubator spaces and arts studios, anticipated some 500 plus permanent jobs, some 250 construction workers and with developer's architectural rendering that had great appeal for transforming current streetscape of that section of 125th Street.

Discussion of an economic development session received mixed comments on what focus and when such a session should take place. It was agreed that the June meeting should focus on this topic.

Returning to the Minutes, the Minutes were properly moved and seconded with corrections.

Being properly moved and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm