

Economic Development Committee**DRAFT**

October 5, 2010

Committee Members**Present:**LaQuita Henry, *Chair*Elvis Hernandez, *Assistant Chair*

Christa Giesecke

Savonna Bailey McClain

Ernestine Welch

Excused

Jane Arrendell

Absent

Brandon Brice

Public Members**Absent:** Maritta Dunn, Caren Irgang, and Mark Irgang

The October meeting of the Economic Development Committee was called to order at 6:44 pm by the Committee Chairperson, LaQuita Henry. Ms. Henry opened by welcoming everyone to her first meeting as chairperson and stated that she and Assistant Chair, Elvis Hernandez will be working to engage others from the community in the Economic Development endeavors of Community Board 9 and specifically this Committee which represents those efforts.

The Agenda was adopted. The Chair announced that representatives of the regional Small Business Administration were contacted but were not available for this meeting. However, they anticipate and would be very pleased to make a presentation at a future meeting.

Mrs. Welch informed the body that she would no longer be a formal member of this committee because of the amount of time it takes to manage the Senior Issues Committee. She indicated that it is difficult to be a part of two committees when one chairs a committee. Ms. Henry remarked that the goal is to have about 5-6 members of the Community Board on the Economic Development Committee.

Minutes of the June 2009 meeting were not available and were tabled for the November meeting.

Discussion of the recent Small Business Act signed by President Barack Obama and the topic of Health Care Reform and its Impact on Small Businesses took place and will be expanded upon by the regional Small Business Administration.

Upcoming activities were discussed: they include participation of Community Board 9 in a November 19 Small Business Workshop being sponsored by the Harlem Community Development Corporation and Citibank. Community Board 9 will be prominent in participation by the Committee Chair serving on Planning Committee.

Ms. Henry restated the goals and priorities of the CB 9 Chair for our district as stated in the Community Needs Statement sharing the challenges and achievements. Challenges include: jobs creation was cited, assisting businesses with access to capital for small businesses, financial literacy is strong factor, and the significance of arts and culture as an important tool in the economic development of communities.

Pertaining to jobs creation, Mr. Hernandez has commenced a survey on green markets and if they truly provide jobs for the community when they are only set up once a week instead of five days a week. There is a limitation for people within our communities because the farmers market is primarily farmers. They do not provide an opportunity as they are established now for members of the community to sell. There is, according to Mr. Hernandez, plenty of room at these Farmers Market sites for others to participate. He will advance his survey to prepare a preliminary report to the Committee and will invite those involved with licensing these markets to present and explore other ways of looking at this potential income generation activity. Ms. Henry suggested having a conversation with Ms. Sonia who runs the Community Board 10-based Farmers Market on 145th Street in front of the Jackie Robinson Park.

Another survey suggested by Ms. Henry was a survey of small businesses in our district to get a picture of what their hiring needs are, what they feel they are missing by not having an additional worker. This survey would provide a picture of what we are working with in the area from the point of view of the employer. What is the role of financial literacy (preparing workers to work) on the results of this survey should be considered as well. Perhaps the Committee can structure a Panel Discussion around this as well.

The above discussion sparked planning the calendar to invite respective speakers to address the concerns, paint a picture for how our district is impacted. Ms. Welch noted that we should make sure that the Latino business community is included and that diversity is considered in pulling people together to come to the meetings and presentations. Mr. Hernandez added that the business person does not share his/her time so freely, therefore if the Committee is prepared and discussing what they want to hear, they will come and continue to come. The typical business person needs to see the Community Board has having its concerns in mind and willing to assist.

In working with the businesses, we should set short-term and long-term goals. Guests from the business community were present: owners of the catering hall at 501 West 145th Street. The owners described the business and its space. Additionally the space will be made available to some community groups and the Community Board at no cost.

The meeting was forced to adjourn when a fire alarm sounded at about 7:20 pm with a very smoky th Floor.