

Manhattan Community Board 9  
Arts and Culture Committee Meeting  
Monday, 03 May 2021

Meeting Minutes

**Committee Members:**

Co-Chair: Hon. Harriet Rosebud  
Co-Chair: Hon. Daria Hardeman  
Hon. Walter Alexander  
Hon. Anita Cheng  
Hon. Monique Hardin-Cordero  
Hon. Tina Lumley  
Hon. Ilana Mercado  
Hon. Jonathan Sinagub (prepared minutes)

**CB 9 Board members:**

**Attendees:**

Carol Brown – Harlem Opera Theater, Board Secretary, [harlemoperatheater@gmail.com](mailto:harlemoperatheater@gmail.com), 718-775-6280  
Dan Cohen – CB9 member, RKO Task Force  
Yuien Chin – Harlem One Stop  
Dale Dobson - Maysles Documentary Center, <https://www.maysles.org> [Dale@maysles.org](mailto:Dale@maysles.org), 917-856-6473  
Victor Edwards – CB9, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair  
Meldiz Jimenez – Broadway Housing Communities (BHC), [mjimenez@bhc.org](mailto:mjimenez@bhc.org)  
Melvin McCray - The Digital Media Training Program, [melvinmccray@gmail.com](mailto:melvinmccray@gmail.com), 917 748-4122  
Margo Moore – New York Public Library, [MargoMoore@nypl.org](mailto:MargoMoore@nypl.org)  
Eric Oberstein – Harlem Stage, Managing Director, <https://www.harlemstage.org>  
Voza Rivers - Harlem Music & Jazz Festival, Executive Producer, [vrivers@aol.com](mailto:vrivers@aol.com), 917-334-8694 & 212-862-7200  
Shante Skyers – Harlem Stage, Development Manager, <https://www.harlemstage.org>

**Location:** via Zoom

**Meeting called to Order:** 6:30 PM

**Adopt Prior Meeting Minutes:**

**Adopt Agenda:**

Amened Agenda adopted to include Meldiz Jimenez from BHC and update on RKO theater by Hon. Anita Cheng & Hon. Dan Cohen.

**Committee Reports:**

1. Artist News - News affecting the artist community, Hon. Tina Lumley & Hon. Walter Alexander

## 2. RKO Theater Project, Hon. Anita Cheng & Hon. Dan Cohen

### Presentations/Discussions:

1. Voza Rivers - Harlem Music & Jazz Festival updates
  - a. 2021 - 47<sup>th</sup> year of Harlem Music & Jazz Festival, Harlem Week a combination of virtual & live performances; August 8<sup>th</sup> to August 15<sup>th</sup>; 1<sup>st</sup> day "Great Day in Harlem"; August 14<sup>th</sup>- St Nicholas Park; August 15<sup>th</sup> – Harlem Day; Theme – Reimagine, rebirth, Rebuilt and Rejoice; expand Harlem Week Activities- 2020 – 293 million media impressions from all over the world–
  - b. 2021 – highlight more outside activities, in line with COVID-19 guidelines; Partner with CCNY, Jazz Mobile @ Grant's Tomb; Harlem School of the Arts, Jazz @ Lincoln Center; Late Night Jazz, draw people from outside community.
  - c. Hon. Harriet Rosebud – What is different? will there be opportunities for community artists to be showcased? Harlem "week" is a misnomer, actually begins the last week in July; live and taped performances- "Joints are Jumping" featuring local clubs, "Sunday Brunch" @ Convent Avenue Baptist Church.
  - d. Hon. Daria Hardeman – What can this committee do? June is an important month – Black Music Month – Advertise; Music has been highlighted & singled out as part of Harlem Week; Agreed to meet in two weeks with the Co-Chairs of the committee to update and coordinate.
  - e. Hon. Tina Lumley inquired about if the organization listed local, CB 9 artists. It does not. The organization has a broad out-reach.
  - f. Hon. Walter Alexander inquired about the organization's response to NYC opening up on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The organization will abide by all COVID-19 regulations as they are in changing week to week, and they will obtain all required permits and work with NYC agencies.
  - g. Hon. Daria Hardeman – discussion about grants & funding – arts organizations struggling for finding the gap between funding for arts service organizations and performing arts organizations; Performing arts are more attractive to funders; discussed the creation of a West Harlem Arts organization and welcomed Voza Rivers expertise in working together to highlight local artists; requesting everyone to send lists of local artists to Voza Rivers to help tack.
2. Zead Ramadan, interim director, WHDC - Introduction of Michael Unthank, Sandra Garcia, arts consultants for the creation of Arts Organization in West Harlem (not present) Hon. Daria Hardeman announced that the resolution to create a West Harlem Arts Organization, servicing West Harlem Artist and Art Organizations, was approved by Community Board 9; the creation of the organization was in response to the absence of any such organization in West Harlem where artists could receive funding during the pandemic. Next Step is for the committee to meet with the WHDC proposed consultants to begin forming the organization; the organization will be an independent entity not connected to the Community Board.
3. Dale Dobson - Maysles Documentary Center
  - a. Documentary Center is a Harlem-based nonprofit organization committed to community, education, and documentary film. We use filmmaking to amplify and expand under-represented artists and narratives, while empowering young filmmakers in creative self-expression, communicating ideas, and advocating needs.
  - b. offer comprehensive, hands-on documentary production programs for filmmakers of all ages. This includes on-site production and media literacy programs for adults and young people, as well as community-based partnerships where our experienced teaching artists work with students to develop storytelling, film production, and community engagement skills. We have partnered with a range of community organizations, schools, universities, and festivals in New York City and globally. All programs are free or low-cost, with sliding scale available for those with a fee.

- c. Education Programs – Filmmakers Collaboration for students & adults, Film for Change, Community Producers Program, Teen Producers Academy, Van Liers Fellows; Youth Justice Program; Panel Discussions – Part 1, film screenings & discussions, “ Considering Harlem – Legacy & Futures”; Part 2, June screening, “Sidewalk Cinema” .
  - d. Hon. Harriet Rosebud – Inquired about the process of submission & consideration for CB 9 artists, show casing West Harlem film makers. Submissions are curated and West Harlem film makers are given consideration.
  - e. Discussion with Melvin McCray – perhaps there is an opportunity to collaborate & have some of The Digital Media Training Program’s students submit work; from Dale Dobson, the foundation of the Maysles Documentary Center is the Youth Justice Program; the discussion will continue, M. McCray to send D. Dobson links to students work, and to update the committee at the September meeting.
4. Shante Skyers & Eric Oberstein - Harlem Stage
- a. Harlem Stage has been, for over 40 years, the performing arts center that bridges Harlem’s cultural legacy to contemporary artists of color and dares to provide the artistic freedom that gives birth to new ideas. The Gatehouse a 161 seat theater, closed due to Covid-19.
  - b. Music, Dance, Theater works are developed and presented at the Harlem Stage Gatehouse. And a humanities initiative designed to give audiences the chance to interact with artists and take part in the creative process.
  - c. The Frances Davis/Harlem Stage Arts Education Program is based on the idea that arts education plays a key role in developing a young person’s creativity, self-image and appreciation of diverse cultures. Each year, we enable more than 2,300 New York City public 21, schoolchildren to experience the transformative enrichment that singularly comes from exposure to the arts.
  - d. Digital Events – 5/21, Gala, “Arts & Activism”, 5/27-6/11, “Consequences: Now She is Rising”, 6/19, “Pity these Ashes: Tulsa 1921-2021”
  - e. Looking to create outdoor venues with NYC Parks Department, Historic Harlem Parks- Marcus Garvey Park, St. Nicholas Park; Jazz Mobile, Bryant Park, and Jana La Sorte; work with Open Culture NYC to comply with open street rules & regulations.
  - f. Harlem Stage would like to have venue in CB 9 and would like to know how best to disseminate information on their programs.
5. Meldiz Jimenez – Broadway Housing Communities (BHC)\
- a. BHC seeks to actively engage and support the community we serve through a unique supportive model blending stable affordable housing, access to the arts, and early childhood education programs.
  - b. Youth Leader Institute (14-21 year old students), support academic workforce development & civic engagement (will bring students to future CB 9 committee meetings); Youth Fellows program, collecting interviews around housing issue with their families.
  - c. Virtual events - 6/4 and 6/5, collaboration Sugar hill on-line Story telling; 6/19, Youth Housing Summit, oral history; 6/23, Block Party; 7/28, Children’s Justice, theme “Assembly”.
  - d. Sugar Hill Children’s Museum of Art & Storytelling (SHCMAS) was conceived as a stimulating space for neighborhood families to gather and share in cultural programs as well as a setting to actively address the educational needs of the community’s youngest children, where they would not only see art and talk about art but share their own stories and make art from them.
  - e. Hon. Harriet Rosebud discussion – Start a dialogue w/ Arts & Culture Committee, provide a listing of CB 9 artists and disciplines; Melvin McCray will reach out to Meldiz and BHC.

6. Margo Moore – New York Public Library, via chat, some NYPL libraries will reopen to public with computer use & limited browsing (not all - @125<sup>th</sup> Street & Washington Heights)

**Old Business:**

7. Artists Speak - Melvin McCray, filmmaker, Digital Media Training
8. Reviewed curriculum, and calendar which is on their website; Partnering with MOMA, PS 1 to showcase artists, exhibit planned for July with an artist catalogue. Will work with CB 9 Arts & Culture Committee and Hon. Daria Hardeman to produce artists stories on surviving the pandemic.
9. COVID Vaccine PSA project – Hon. Anita Cheng
  - a. Produced a couple of draft pieces using testimonials, which are found to be effective, having received two one from Hon. Walter Alexander & Hon. Monique Hardin-Cordero. Trying to engage NYC Link to air the PSAs.
  - b. Anyone that has a testimonial should send them to Hon. Anita Cheng.

**New Business:**

1. Artist News- Hon. Tina Lumley and Hon. Walter Alexander News and Updates Affecting the Artist Community
  - a. Reaching out to various art organizations to acquire artists lists and development an artist/art organization data base.
2. RKO Theater Project, Hon. Anita Cheng & Hon. Dan Cohen
  - a. Reviewed presentation by developer, issues of restoring theater and maintaining affordable housing.
  - b. Next step is to approach WHDC to see where they stand on this issue and to begin a discussion of raising private funding to secure the restoration of the theater and maintain the affordable housing units.
  - c. Created a task force to focus on this development, invited people to join.
  - d. Hon. Anita Cheng discussed the projected budget to restore the theater of \$20 million; private foundations could be approached to fund restoration.
  - e. Hon. Victor Edwards stated that it appeared to be affordable housing versus theater restoration and that outside groups need to work to save the theater.
  - f. From Melvin McCray suggested that Mr. Carlton Brown, NYC developer be contacted to discuss the RKO project. Mr. Brown is the principal of Direct Invest Development, LLC. He is focused on developing strategies to bring capital markets to disinvested communities to invest in the development of “sustainable restorative” human settlements. He is active in the Rose Center for Public Leadership, Urban Land Institute and National League of Cities.
    - i. The Kalahari Condominium at 40 West 116th Street in New York City ( & 1400 Fifth Ave) is a 249 unit mixed-income development built in 2008. It was one of the first condos in New York City to be built to the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Certification standards.  
<https://vimeo.com/439643288> - give a listen.
  - g. Question remained as to the Arts & Culture Committee role.

**Next Meeting Scheduled for first Monday in May 2021, 06/7, at 6:30 PM.**

**Location: Zoom**

**Meeting Adjourned: 8:35 PM**