

Community Board 9 Manhattan

Economic Development/Harlem Piers Committee Meeting

Date: Tuesday, April 4, 2017

Location: Broadway Housing, 583 Riverside Drive, West 135th Street

Called to order at 6:45 | Quorum not achieved

Attending Members: Jose Taveras (co-chair), Maritta Dunn, Basia Nikonorow

Absent Members: Quenia Abreu (co-chair)/(excused), Nepkin Osuan (excused), Nick Smith (absent)

Guests: Barbara Askins (125th Street Business Improvement District), Peter Arndtsen (Columbus-Amsterdam Business Improvement District)

Discussion: Business Improvement Districts vs. Merchant Associations

Barbara Askins/125th Street BID

- Has mixed emotions about Merchants Associations
- There are three tiers of economic development corporations
 - Merchants Associations (MA)
 - Local Development Corporations (LDC)
 - Business Improvement Districts (BID)
- Problems with Merchants Associations: One business will not pay, there is always one that does not pay the dues. This creates a domino effect with the other businesses and they will stop paying dues. Therefore, there is the problem of MAs always starting and stopping.
- For the 125th Street BID, it took 3 years of outreach (going door to door with EVERY business) and convince business owners to become part of the district.
 - Major requirement: Have people believe in you.
- There were one-on-one trust issues. Everyone must trust the main organizer including the residents.
- BIDs are much higher on the totem pole when it comes to responses from city agencies and elected officials. Due to the fact that business owners and landlords are paying taxes into the district. Therefore, there is usually a much better response from city government to BID than to MAs and LDCs.
- Major question: Who is willing to pay dues? Are business willing to pay extra for other businesses that cannot or will not pay dues?
- 125th Street BID received a Merchant Organizing Grant from Small Business Services
 - 1st Year: Did an assessment and organized
 - Tried to convince merchants they can organize!

Current Neighborhood Conditions (Harlem/Manhattanville)

- Harlem is changing, and it is in an era of change. In order to truly see the issues of the district and garner support, one must go block by block and not in a generalized view of the district.
- The Economic Development Corporation (EDC) totally messed up the street redesign project of West 125th Street.
- Of all the businesses along West 125th Street between Morningside Avenue and the Hudson River, 50 percent of storefronts are non-profits.