



**Economic Development/West Harlem Piers Committee Members:**

Co-Chairs: Hon. Joyce Adewumi & Hon. Michael Gross

Hon. Gregory Brito, Hon. Andrea Brecker, Hon. Clotilde Monguya, Hon. Metin Sarci

DATE: January 7th, 2026

TIME: 6:30 PM

**MINUTES**

**Attendees:**

**Committee members present:** Joyce Adewumi, Michael Gross, Gregory Brito, Andrea Brecker (by video)

**Committee members absent:** Clotilde Monguya

**Other public member attendees:** Lailah Hall

**Call to Order – 6:40 PM**

**Adopt Agenda – Accepted**

**Adopt Minutes –** Since there was no quorum at the December meeting, the minutes were not approved.

**I. Introductions/Presentations/Announcements**

- a. Introduction of Committee members, and Board members.
- b. **SoHarlem, Inc.** Janet Rodriguez presented on SoHarlem, an organization with a grant from the West Harlem Development Corporation that serves as an incubator for creative entrepreneurs and mentors and trains emerging designers and local residents. They help small businesses in the fashion industry build websites and receive instruction on garment sewing and pattern making. SoHarlem uses recycled materials for all of their designs and places a heavy emphasis on sustainability. They recently lost federal funding due to the Trump administration's targeting of DEI initiatives, and has therefore been applying to additional grants throughout this year. Nevertheless, they have been able to work with many entrepreneurs throughout this district.
- c. **Morningside Heights Community Coalition.** Dan McSweeney did not present at this meeting as he is planning to present to the Executive Committee instead.



- d. **NYC Multicultural Festival.** Joyce Adewumi presented on the multicultural festival, taking place in June and which aims to reduce hate crimes through cultural exchange and also provides economic opportunities for small businesses. The festival includes vendor training, free equipment for vendors, and performances representing various cultures.
- e. **The Ladies of Hope Ministries (LOHM).** Dr. Topeka K. Sam and LaToya Desprez presented on LOHM, another organization with a grant from the West Harlem Development Corporation that is working to end the crisis of poverty and the incarceration of women and girls. They offer safe housing, reentry support, and advocacy programs that are grounded in the lived experiences, insights, and ideas of people with direct, lived experience with the criminal justice system. The program offers virtual courses, partnerships with companies like Google and Marriott, and paid internships, while also addressing the need to provide opportunities for both women and men in correctional settings. The Committee discussed collaborating to develop an internship program for small businesses in the district and providing support for formerly incarcerated vendors at the New York City Multicultural Festival.

## II. Subcommittee Reports.

- a. **West Harlem Piers.** No new updates were provided. The Committee addressed issues with the pier's infrastructure and reviewing the status of the ferry and public programs previously proposed. We also brought up collaboration with sailing groups and Harlem Rocket to enhance the area's offerings and proposed revisiting the condition of the transfer station pilings to ensure safety for future construction.
- b. **Strategic Planning Taskforce.** No new updates were provided.

## III. Old Business.

- a. No old business was reported.

## IV. New Business.

- a. **Internship Program with Columbia Business School.** This committee discussed organizing an internship program with students from the business school, wherein they provide assistance to small business throughout the district. We discussed ensuring that the business school interns are willing to accommodate business owners by coming to their place of work. The committee also discussed the Community Benefits Agreement provision outlining the option to request help from the Business School for the district.
- b. **Small Business Conference.** The committee proposed organizing a "summit" to provide resources and training for small businesses, potentially in conjunction with a multicultural festival. The group agreed to explore dates



and locations for the summit, with a preference for morning sessions on Mondays or Tuesdays.

**V. Action Items**

- a. The Ladies of Hope Ministries (LOHM).** Agreed to coordinate with LOHM regarding internships and work site opportunities for justice-impacted individuals.
- b. SoHarlem, Inc.** Agreed to potentially collaborate with SoHarlem regarding vendor support at the Multicultural Festival.
- c. West Harlem Piers.** Agreed to check status of West Harlem Piers program and pier conditions, reach out to Harlem Rocket regarding their planned meeting, look into the current status of MTP ferry operations and explore partnership opportunities with sailing group for youth programs
- d. Small Business Conference.** Agreed to help work out a timeline for planning a conference for small businesses across the district.
- e. Internship Program with Columbia Business School.** Agreed to work on outlining a program with the Business School and to examine the relevant portions of the Community Benefits Agreement.

**VI. Adjourn**

- a.** The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

**Next CB9 Economic Development/West Harlem Piers Meeting: Tuesday, February 3rd, 2026**

The minutes are respectfully submitted by Michael Gross