

MINUTES
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 9
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/HARLEM PIERS COMMITTEE
ZOOM MEETING DATE Tuesday, JUNE 2, 2020

Committee Members:

Co-Chairs: Hon. Maritta Dunn (present) Hon. Joyce Adewumi (present)
Hon. John Martin-Green, (present), Hon. Tina Lumley (present), Hon. Jonathan Sinagub (present),
Hon. Kelsey Bitts (absent), Hon. Vanessa Jones (present), Hon. David Hanzal (excused)

Board Members:

Hon. Ken Miles, Hon Miriam Fare, Hon. Heather Jason, Hon Victor Edwards

Hon. JA called the meeting to order at 6:53pm.

Hon: MD asked that we talk about what we will do to support the small businesses once the epidemic is over.

Hon. JA called our attention to old business which were:

1. To get a list from Ray of the small businesses in our district which the Borough President's office compiled a few years ago. He was to reach out to Aisha Robinson.
2. Ken Miles was to do a one pager on how to access the SBA loans.
3. Eutha informed member that they have been notified through OMB that the budget consultations that usually takes place in the fall, will be done remotely, due to the pandemic. Committee Chairs and members should meet with their agencies to discuss the budgetary needs in our community.
4. JMG reminded us about sending a letter to the Electeds asking for oversight and transparency in the allocation of the loans.

Ray reported that he had not been able to reach Aisha Robinson and the Athena Moore regarding the list of small businesses in our district.

Hon. JMG suggested that we should also find out what the businesses need.

Everyone agreed that because if the corona virus and all the protests, it has been very difficult to follow through with what we were supposed to do.

In discussing the Needs Assessment, Eutha advised that we look at last year's request and find out what the response was and contact the appropriate agency and see what needs to be worded differently or what we need to do to get a more favorable response for the coming year. Eutha said that she included last year's document in the last general board meeting. She said there is a document attached which has the responses from last year and if we don't find it she could resend it.

Hon. JA asked Eutha to resend the document so that the committee could begin working on the issues.

Hon. JA asked if members of the committee who have been in the committee for a few years bring new members up to speed by summarizing for us what issues they have identified in the district and what have been the requests for the past years.

Hon. MD and Hon. JMG said that they don't recall what had been done in past.

Hon/Miriam Fare from the Health committee told us that the Health committee also has the issue in the sense that they also didn't have concert asks for DOH but they know that Health is a huge priority and health equity and they are just going to push to be included in anything and everything. She said it is good to have a discussion with the agencies about how the cuts affect our district, at the least.

Hon. JMG suggested that we find out who acts like a liaison on our business community because they would be able to give us the answers to the questions that we have and the types of support that we want to appeal to be given to the businesses in our district.

Eutha suggested that we discuss funding for small businesses not only for today for also for tomorrow. There are federal funding, but we can also request capital and expense funding for our district.

Hon. Miriam F. suggested the following: permanent outdoor market space that is social distance, help converting businesses to be socially distant and help businesses redesign for social distance. A lot of business need help going online. We need a business support center. We have to think radically and out of the box right now. Every community is becoming self sufficient and sustainable. Small business need help with technology, social media, etc. We need a community business center. Businesses need bilingual signage.

Hon. KM: I agree. with our tax base being so much different from that of our community board neighbors, is there any way to determine / look into additional tax subsidies for the potential businesses that stay in our communities? Agree with online onboarding. google has small business workshops they ran through their supplier diversity team in Central Harlem. Maybe we can push for access to those virtual workshops for West Harlem as well also, there may be a broader conversation about online access for the district so we might even be able to support small businesses that do decide to transition online making sure businesses have adequate PPE so that customers that do come in are safe and these small businesses don't have to take on those costs out of pocket (since we won't have a vaccine for a while)
agreed on the rent reform. some kind of subsidy to offset folks locked in.

Hon VJ: Do you all know about Google Primer? It's an app that Google created to support small businesses.

Hon.JS asked if we are to write a letter to the electeds enumerating these concerns and needs. Eutha responded that these are the needs we need to put together to be submitted in the fall. We can call the agencies to ask them how to properly word our needs assessments and ensure that they actually look at our submissions.

Hon. JS said that another thing we need to talk about is the rent in this district. We are losing all our businesses especially the Mama and Papa shops.

Hon. JA. It appears that there are tax abatements for new businesses to come into this district and build but none to help small businesses stay afloat.

Hon. JS. When business returns, they will need to adapt they will have a lot of physical and financial issues, therefore, this business center should provide a multidisciplinary approach to helping solve the problems. How do we move forward with these ideas? What is the vehicle that will make these things happen?

Hon. VE suggested that we reach out to Kenya Abreu former chair of EDHP and President of Women's Chamber of Commerce and Kesha Smith from Council Member Mark Levine's office for a list of businesses in our district.

Hon. Heather Jason: The data from the Storefront registry will be due by July 1st, we'll be able to access all the data for the storefronts in our area. This is a citywide program from the Dept. of finance. Every single storefront in NYC must register.

Hon. VE. Google Primer has Onboarding for some small businesses where they are learning about shipping, social media and do all sorts of things to start their businesses. Small businesses could start from there and then take more advance classes.

Hon JS. I have just gone to the Dept of Finance for the Storefront list and they list the businesses according to address by zip code and by the different classes of storefront. This is a start to putting together a list of businesses in our district.

Hon MF. She is also here from the Health Committee to press for Cannabis legalization because Cannabis is a barrier and weapon that's being used. Its very sad that our community and New York City in general cannot talk about this. People are self-medicating in our community. We don't have an Opioid or Heroin crisis. If we don't get ahead of this Cannabis will legalize one day and we will not profit from it. The health committee said that it is an issue that is not only of social justice, it's of health and economic development. It is something that we must talk about and get ready for next year to understand how we can benefit and our community from Cannabis legalization and do it right. We must consider what this means for NYCHA, moms who have babies in public hospitals who get tested now and lose their kids while white moms self-medicate for free.

Hon. JA The Marine Transfer Station could be used to grow cannabis

Hon. MF many years ago at WEACTION we talked about the Marine Transfer Station being used for an Urban farm. We should not just look at the Transfer station as a recreation we could also look at it as space for education, economic development and health.

Hon. JS can we write a letter of support to the Health Committee"

Hon. MF: We are going to meet over the summer because we realized that cannot stop right now, too much is happening and we realized that in particular with the cannabis we have to re-educate the community, we might have to do some Zoom forums to just specifically talk about this. Cannibals was criminalized and used as a weapon to incarcerate Black and Brown men. Everyone should watch the documentary titled 13th by Ava Duvernay.

Hon. JA Drive Through movies are coming back, we should identify a place where it can be located.

Hon. JMG. Image Nations have used inflatable screens to show movies in Harlem.

Hon. MF asked whatever happened to the amphitheater at the lower level of the Riverbank State Park.

Hon. MD said the elevator stopped working and that was the end of that.

Eutha reminded us that Riverbank is a State Park and out of our consideration.

The committee agreed to meet on June 8th at 6:30pm

Hon. JS said he would try to put together a list of small businesses.

Eutha: The district office will be working on the list with John and Joyce.

6. Adjournment

Hon. JMG motioned to adjourn the meeting, Hon. DH seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm

Respectfully Submitted by
Hon. Joyce Adewumi