



**THE CITY OF NEW YORK
COMMUNITY BOARD 9
MANHATTAN**

Morningside Heights
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Sugar Hill

Economic Development and West Harlem Piers Committee Meeting

Hon. Maritta Dunn, Hon. Joyce Adewumi Co-Chairs

**Hon Chris Berry, John-Martin Green, Michael Iglesias, Ken Miles, Clotilde Monguya,
Clayton Sanford Committee Members**

DATE: Tuesday, September 5, 2023

TIME: 6:30 pm

MINUTES

Attendees

Committee members present: Maritta Dunn (co-chair), Joyce Adewumi (co-chair), John-Martin Green, Michael Iglesias, Clotilde Monguya, Clayton Sanford

Committee members absent: Chris Berry, Ken Miles

Other attendees: Monique Hardin-Cordero (CB9 Cannabis Task Force co-chair)

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:35pm.

II. Adopt Agenda

The agenda was amended to include discussions of the Marine Transfer Station (at the recommendation of Monique Hardin-Cordero) and subcommittee positions.

III. Discussion

(a) Introduction of New Members

Three members of the committee—Clotilde Monguya (CM), Michael Iglesias (MI), and Clayton Sanford (CS)—are new members of CB9 and were given opportunities to introduce themselves.

- CM is an OB-GYN, public health expert, and nonprofit leader with a background in economic development and a focus on strengthening ties between Africa and communities like Harlem.
- MI is a law student at Columbia, who recently interned in the office of the NYC attorney general and has previously worked at the US Small Business Administration and the IRS.
- CS is a computer science PhD student at Columbia who studies AI and frequently uses the West Harlem Piers as a community members.



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The more experienced committee members—Maritta Dunn (MD), Joyce Adewumi (JA), and John-Martin Green (JMG) introduced themselves as well.

(b) Current issues before the committee

The experienced committee members described the past work of the committee, including honoring longstanding “anchor” small businesses, which have existed for at least 50 years under the same family ownership in the same location. Recent recipients include Franklin & Lennon Paint Co. (which has existed for 82 years!), Tom’s Restaurant, and Benta’s Funeral Home. MD suggested continuing this practice, where the committee can identify and honor qualified businesses during even-numbered years.

MD proposed that the committee ask CB9 to demand that the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation (“Parks”) present an accurate accounting of the spending of funds allocated by the [2009 Community Benefits Agreement](#) (CBA).

The CBA details a collection of financial commitments made by Columbia University for 25 years, including \$76 million towards a benefits fund administered by the [West Harlem Development Corporation](#) (WHDC, not to be confused with the West Harlem *Local* Development Corporation (WHLDC), which negotiated the CBA). Some of those funds were earmarked for economic development of the West Harlem Piers (WHP), including the rehabilitation and redevelopment of the Marine Transfer Station (MTS). These funds were administrated by Parks, despite the fact that WHP is not a park itself. (As a consequence, Parks will not fund permanent restrooms at the site, although the committee succeeded in obtaining porte-potties on site instead.)

The committee has suspected that Parks has spent the funds on projects elsewhere in the city, despite the specific requirements outlined in the CBA. CB9 recently demanded an exact accounting of expenditures by Parks, and Parks provided a document with “estimated” expenditures. MD wishes CB9 to once again demand an accurate accounting of the funds, citing the insufficiency of the previous estimates. If the funds were improperly spent, the committee would then request that Parks transfer the funds to the [NYC Economic Development Corporation](#), which could ensure that the funds are spent on relevant projects like the MTS.

CM raised the issue of cannabis, citing its relevance to numerous committees and asking whether the Economic Development Committee ought to be involved with helping community members receive training and licensing to start cannabis businesses. MD said that, while cannabis is certainly economic development, the unsettled legal environment makes it harder for this committee to be involved at the given time, especially while so many currently existing small



businesses in the neighborhood need assistance. JA shared that the creation of the Cannabis Task Force was largely due to the overlap in jurisdictions of multiple committees—Economic Development, Health, Uniformed Services—all of whose work is heavily impacted by the legalization of cannabis.

(c) Marine Transfer Station

Continuing from the previous conversation about cannabis, Monique Hardin-Cordero (MHC) spoke that the Cannabis Task Force recently passed a resolution recommending that the MTS be used to as a cannabis education center, where community members can learn about the cannabis agriculture and the supply chain. She noted that these plans would not conflict with the plans previously presented by MTP Investment Corp to repurpose the MTS into a community center with a ferry terminal.

MD provided additional context into the MTS proposals. She described how MTS presented their plans to the full CB9 several years ago, and that those plans were widely supported by both CB9 members and [WE ACT](#) and that MTS had sufficient funding for the scope of their plans. However, their plans included use of the upper pier, but not rehabilitation of the lower pier, which could instead be funded by the CBA funding held by Parks. MD doesn't see a reason to proceed with the MTS proposals (including the cannabis additions) until the funding for the full rehabilitation is secured, hence the pressure on Parks to provide an accurate accounting of their expenditures.

She also noted that the previous proposal fell apart due to the beginning of the pandemic and the unwillingness of the Department of Sanitation to give up its space at the MTS. With those issues passed, the primary concern in the funding from Parks for the rehabilitation of the lower piers. MD also discussed the risk of the piers sinking in two years, if rehabilitation does not occur, noting a study that was held several years ago on the work needed for the piers. MD talked with MTD at the beginning of the summer, who remain interested in developing the piers.

Several questions were raised by committee members including questions exploring legal options should Parks fail to produce a satisfactory documentation of their expenditures (MI), questions about next steps if the park does document that the funds were spent elsewhere (JMG), and about the possibilities of considering private funding (like with Little Island in Chelsea) (JA).

(d) Subcommittee roles

There were several subcommittee roles to fill:

- Taking minutes — **Clayton Sanford**



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- Small business representative — **Clotilde Monguya**
 - During the meeting, CM discussed opportunities that through the UN that focus on economic development projects connecting Africans and African-Americans and discussed the opportunity to ensure local businesses attend events like those.
- Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) representative — **Michael Iglesias and Clotilde Monguya**
- Events — **vacant**

IV. Old Business

V. New Business

VI. Meeting Adjourned

John-Martin Green moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30pm. Clotilde Monguya seconded, and none objected.