

Community Board 9 Manhattan
Chair's Report
March/April 2013

Collaborated with Treasurer and Asst. Treasurer and DM to set up public budget hearing March 5 to facilitate CB9's response to the FY2014 budget and agency findings and recommendations for district services.

Met with the Horticulture Society regarding their assisting small community groups in our district develop programming that can be funded by the Environmental Benefits Agreement. Also discussed the possibility of a Community greenhouse.

Meeting held with DOT and Uniform Services Chair to discuss the select bus route. Informed them of the concerns that have been shared with the board regarding the proposed plan (buses and traffic not being routed onto Convent Ave the parking for the fire station, the loss of parking along 125 street etc., and indicated that we need to have a public forum.

Attended: Arts and Culture meeting to discuss the Strategic Planning committee.
Public design commission hearing on "Design" of the gas meter station.
Speaker Quinn's Women of Faith breakfast

Meeting held with representative from Con Edison Community relations regarding process for funding for district programming.

Meeting with St. Luke's Hospital Administrator, Chair of Health Committee, Nurses association and representatives from the Nurse's union around the closing of the pediatric Unit of St. Luke's. CB9 has requested that an additional meeting be scheduled to continue discussion after a complete utilization report is provided to the board.

Meeting held with Arch527 to continue monitoring the procurement process at Columbia University and the progress of Black Architects' seeking to work on the Manhattanville expansion. There are those who have taken smaller jobs and are establishing a reputation with CU and others who are still not interested in doing smaller projects but are desiring to be partnered with those large corporations that have contracts with CU.

DM and Chair met with Realtor and representative from WHGA regarding possible meeting and office space. A space at 133 St. and Broadway has been identified as possible space and DCAS is reviewing to determine if space would be appropriate. If it is considered appropriate by DCAS it will be presented to Board and the board will begin to develop the plans for renovating the space.

Ongoing communication with members of the Nurses association of St. Luke's and Administrators at Mt. Sinai regarding merger and attempt to eliminate Pediatric beds at St. Luke's.

Discussions with Columbia University regarding setting up focus groups, around the in-kind benefits service portion of the CBA. Focus groups have begun and Chair attended meeting held for Clergy on April 23.

Meeting held with students from City College who are seeking to partner with Green Markets and establish a system of bringing fresh fruits and vegetables to the district. They were introduced to local Green Market managers, local NYS farmer's and farm co-ops as well as given information regarding the CBA funds being distributed by the WHDC.

Discussions with the Hudson River Foundation regarding establishing a process to have our Health and Environment Committee participate in the review process of applications for the EBA grant funding. Their board will discuss further and Clay Hiles will work with H&E to put a system in place.

Meeting held with the Land Use and zoning committee (March 12) for update on Boys and Girls club. Committee was informed of the fact that the B&GC has had to change their financial planning as a result of agreeing to preserve the existing building. They were unable to receive the NYC tax credits that were originally set aside until they receive SHPO certification which they have already applied for. They have also applied for state tax credits they should hear back in May, then they will be able to go back to the city for the NYC tax credits. We discussed the need to have them meet with the Land Use committee, and the Chair felt that it would be most appropriate to have them come to committee quarterly. Also discussed the need to be constructive and not attacking, during future presentations. Given the history of CB9 has been adversarial when they presented in the past. The committee was informed that they recently hired a new Executive Director, Wayne Francis, and that the Chair would be meeting with the developer the following week for more specific information and update on progress.

Met with Director of WARM a domestic violence prevention program to discuss the need for expansion of services to CB9.

Held "New Member" orientation with six of the newly appointed board members. We are truly fortunate to have such a dynamic and diverse group of men and women joining CB9 in our journey to make our district one of the best in the city.

Discussions with Harlem Hospital Administrators and Psychiatric Physicians around issues of diversity and the hospitals practice of not hiring an equitable number of Minority Physicians.

Attended CU focus group for Clergy which was well attended but should have had a much larger attendance based on the number of Houses of Worship in our district.

Meeting held with Ben Wanake, developer, for B&GC at which time he stated that the funds for the project have been placed in an account at OMB that would keep them available even if Councilman Jackson and Scott Stringer are no longer in the office. Councilman Jackson has given 3 million dollars, Scott Stringer has given 1 million dollars, HPD has put in 3 million dollars and they are expecting a number of large private gifts. They will be applying for Federal Historical preservation funds and are seeking to place the project on the Federal registry. They have not received the SHIPO certification as of yet and cannot apply to the buildings dept. for approval of their plans until they have it. He is willing to come back to the board and give an update at the May board meeting.

Meetings with parents of children of Kindergarten age to discuss options for schools and the experience they have had with TCCS and the Columbia Elementary School at 110th. Concerns were expressed regarding the representation of Hispanic students as well as the percentage of students being selected in the lottery from our district, and whether there is a need to have a district lottery to assure that students for CB9 are proportionately represented.

In reviewing the St. John Divine website the statement that St. John Divine makes regarding their commitment to the Chair of CB9 was made publicly. Even though, when that statement was made it was made at a public meeting held to inform the community about the possible development of a housing project on the north site of their campus. At which time they were presenting with Equity Residential Development Corporation and the Chair of CB9 (Walter South, Brad Taylor, Simon Thorosen and others) were in attendance. Equity is no longer developing the project, and that statement assures that if SJD seeks to develop that site, they must adhere to their commitment or at least this board has leverage to negotiate how that project is developed. As Chair of CB9 I represent any committee Chair who is unable to attend meetings with agencies, community groups or organizations who have a need to consult with this board and when possible have other members accompany me.

Being active in many grassroots groups I also constantly speak with residents of this district on the streets and at community meetings who because I am Chair of CB9 give input and feedback which is shared whenever it is appropriate.