



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

May 26, 2004 Calendar No. 27

N 040315 BDX

IN THE MATTER of an application submitted by the Department of Small Business Services on behalf of the Fordham Road Business Improvement District pursuant to Section 25-405 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, as amended, concerning the formation of the Fordham Road Business Improvement District, Borough of the Bronx, Community Districts 5, 6 and 7.

On February 3, 2004 the Mayor authorized the preparation of a district plan for the Fordham Road Business Improvement District (BID). On March 1, 2004, on behalf of the Fordham Road District Management Association (DMA), the Department of Small Business Services (DSBS) submitted the district plan located in Community Districts 5, 6 and 7 in the Borough of The Bronx.

BACKGROUND

The proposed Fordham Road BID is located in the Fordham Road section, in the Borough of The Bronx. The BID extends along Fordham Road and is generally bounded by Jerome Avenue on the west and Washington Avenue on the east.

Fordham Road is the third largest retail corridor in New York City, boasting 25,000 shoppers daily and half a billion dollars in retail revenue annually. Within the BID boundaries, there are over 200 stores that represent 55 property owners. There is a strong mix of regional and national retail stores such as The Children's Place,

P.C. Richard and Son, the Gap, Duane Reade and Seaman's Furniture store along with mom and pop shops.

There are three educational institutions of higher learning within the BID's boundaries: Fordham University, Monroe College and CUNY on the Concourse, a brand new, state-of-the art education facility, offering programs and courses held in collaboration with Lehman College, and Hostos and Bronx Community Colleges.

The proposed BID will provide services that will primarily focus on sanitation and marketing. The sanitation program may include cleaning and sweeping of sidewalks and gutters, emptying garbage receptacles and removal of graffiti. The BID proposes to employ a team of sanitation workers that will operate 7 days a week. The program will supplement the existing municipal sanitation program. A marketing program will include advertising of special events, (such as the Renaissance Festival, a day of entertainment and celebration) and publications that advertise the businesses, their locations and special sales events.

An economic development program is also provided for the BID; exploring initiatives that will address business attraction and retention, parking issues and securing additional financial resources for the BID's initiatives.

The budget for the first year of the BID is projected to be \$500,000. The budget will allocate \$235,000 to a sanitation program; \$75,000 to marketing ; \$125,000 to administration; \$30,000 to economic development and a contingency plan of \$35,000.

The BID assessment method is based upon a combination of linear front footage, assessed value and commercial square footage of the properties. Commercial properties will be assessed at a rate not to exceed \$23 per individual property linear front foot (FF) plus not more than \$2.30 per \$1,000 dollars of individual property assessed valuation (AV) and not more than \$0.052 per commercial square foot. The maximum assessment for any individual property is capped at \$25,000 in the first year of the BID's operation. Wholly residential properties will pay an assessment of one dollar annually. Properties that are government and/or not-for-profit owned shall be exempt from the assessment; however, if the government and/or not-for-profit owned properties are used commercially or for-profit, they will be assessed in the same manner as commercial properties.

Outreach to property owners, merchants and residents was documented and submitted to the City Planning Commission, by the Fordham Road BID Steering Committee. The BID has 57.4% of total assessed value property owners in support and 7.7% of total assessed value

property owners are opposed.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The district plan was reviewed pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and the SEQRA regulations set forth in Volume 6 of the New York State Code of Rules and Regulations, Section 617.00 et seq., and the New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Rules of Procedure of 1991 and Executive Order No. 91 of 1977. The designated CEQR number is 04DBS004X. The lead agency is the Department of Small Business Services.

After a study of the potential environmental impact of the proposed action, a negative declaration was issued on January 12, 2004.

LAND USE REVIEW

On March 1, 2004 the Department of Small Business Services submitted the district plan for the Fordham Road Business Improvement District (BID) to the Department of City Planning. The plan was then transmitted for review to the Office of the Mayor, Office of the Bronx Borough President, City Council Speaker, City Council Members of Council Districts 14 and 15 and Bronx Community Boards 5, 6 and 7.

Community Board Public Hearing

Community Boards 5, 6 and 7 adopted a resolution recommending approval of this application (N 040315 BDX). Community Boards 5, 6 and 7 sent letters to the Chair of the City Planning Commission, affirming their support for the BID. On April 28, 2004, Community Board # 5 voted 21 in favor; 0 opposed and 0 abstentions. On March 10, 2004, Community Board 6 voted 20 in favor; 0 opposed and 0 abstentions and Community Board 7 voted 21 in favor; 0 opposed and 1 abstention on March 23, 2004.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On April 14, 2004 (Calendar No. 1) the Commission scheduled April 28, 2004 for a public hearing on the district plan. On April 28, 2004 (Calendar No. 9), the hearing was duly held. There were four speakers in favor of the proposal and none in opposition.

A consultant who worked on the Fordham Road BID's Steering Committee, spoke in support of the BID. She stated the BID was twenty years in the making and its boundaries captured the regional retail businesses in the area. She also spoke about expanding the BID in the future to include a larger area that included more of the local neighborhood businesses.

The Dean of College Relations at Monroe College and a member of the

steering committee spoke about how the BID would help to compete with other shopping areas. As a property owner and commercial tenant, Monroe College would pay the commercial assessment rate and is actively participating in the maintenance of the community's appearance by sweeping the sidewalks and curbs, removing graffiti and providing lighting on buildings that includes buildings owned by the City. He also spoke about the success of the "Taste of the BID" that was held last August in order to allow property owners, commercial tenants and merchants as well as shoppers, to experience the type of services a BID would provide.

A vice-president of an automotive and realty corporation spoke in support of the BID and stated that the Fordham Road shopping area must be competitive. He said that a BID would make it a more attractive place to shop and for businesses to establish in the area.

The assistant vice-president of Fordham University spoke in support of the BID. He said that Fordham University would continue to participate and support the BID even though as a non-profit institution, they are exempt from paying the assessment.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

Consideration

The Commission believes that the proposal to establish the Fordham Road Business Improvement District in the Bronx is appropriate.

The Commission believes that the Fordham Road BID will be an effective economic development mechanism that will keep the shopping area competitive.

The Commission has carefully reviewed the documents that the proposed BID sponsor submitted regarding notification of constituents about the pending BID. It believes that these outreach efforts for the BID were adequate and satisfactory.

BID's are important to the City because they improve the business climate and aid in promoting economic development for the City. Fordham Road is the third largest shopping area in the City and the largest shopping area in the Bronx. Creating a BID will help benefit the property owners and merchants of the area by creating a cleaner, more attractive area for shoppers and for businesses to locate.

Resolution

The Commission supports the proposed plan and has adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the City Planning Commission certifies its unqualified approval of the proposed district plan for the Fordham Road Business Improvement District.

The above resolution duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on May 26, 2004 (Calendar No. 27) is filed with the City Council and the City Clerk pursuant to Section 25-405 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York.

AMANDA M. BURDEN, AICP, Chair

KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, *Esq.*, Vice Chairman,

ANGELA M. BATTAGLIA, IRWIN G. CANTOR, *P.E.*,

ANGELA R. CAVALUZZI, *R.A.*, RICHARD W. EADDY, ALEXANDER GARVIN,

CHRISTOPHER KUI, KAREN A. PHILLIPS, JOHN MEROLO, DOLLY WILLIAMS,

Commissioners