

MINUTES FROM THE MONTHLY MEETING OF
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD # 1
HELD
JUNE 30, 2009
SOUTHBRIDGE TOWERS
90 BEEKMAN STREET
COMMUNITY ROOM

Julie Menin, Chairperson, called the meeting to order.

Public Session:

Diane Stein – (Council Member Alan Gerson’s Office) reported that proposed cuts to Fire Department service in Lower Manhattan were restored in the fiscal year 2010 budget adopted by the Mayor and City Council. Library funds have also been made available. NY Downtown Hospital will be able to purchase equipment to improve cardiovascular services and grab bars are being provided free of charge.

Thomas Chase – Objects to the application for a newsstand at Liberty and Nassau Streets, based upon its location in front of a commercial building he represents.

Alan Tannenbaum – Book of Alan’s photographs about NY in the 70’s is back in print. Photos are on exhibit at the “Not Fade Away” art gallery.

Jim Cullen – Requests that a street be named after Frank Durkan, who worked as an attorney in this community for more than 50 years.

John Ricker – (NYC Comptroller William C. Thompson’s Office) ClearView on the Comptroller’s website allows you to retrieve information regarding contracts that have been registered in NYC. For additional information regarding education and the lack of parental input, go to www.comptroller@nyc.gov.

Jim Watson – B.P.C. resident shared his major concerns regarding the West Thames Street Bridge: the loss of trees and the chaotic intersection.

Molly Hyojung Bidol – (Assemblywoman Deborah J. Glick’s Office) reported the Assembly Member’s disappointment over the adoption, by the Hudson River Park Trust Board of Directors, of an extension of the Pier 40 lease from 30 to 49 years. She’s concerned that DOT is seemingly inconsiderate of seniors, by rerouting the M7 bus southbound down Seventh Avenue while sections of Broadway will be closed to traffic at Times Square and Herald Square. Assembly Member Glick continues to communicate with the NYPD as well as the State Liquor Authority (SLA) regarding liquor license renewals. She voted “No” on Mayoral Control although the Assembly passed legislation renewing it. Pointed out that this year, for the first time in the history of the Rent Guidelines Board (RGB), the RGB’s yearly price study showed that costs to landlords have not risen significantly. Owners have benefited from past rent hikes and will be able to continue to make a profit due to last year’s rent increase even if rents are frozen during the economic downturn. She voted to freeze rents at the current level for 2009-

2010 so rent-stabilized tenants can get through these difficult times and our city can continue its economic recovery.

Robert Sokolowsky – Expressed concern about the burlesque theater concept at Marilyn Drodge’s Harmony Theatre revival at 279 Church St., corner of White Street. Stated that clubs with sex, bondage and burlesque activities should not be permitted in this neighborhood.

Susan Streit and Avery Miller – Announced the opening of seasonal green markets that sell produce from farms within 200 miles of NYC. For more information go to: www.ceyc.org.

Greg Kirschenbaum – (B.P. Scott Stringer’s Office) - thanked all who came to the rally to restore Community Board budgets and invites all to attend the July 13th Small Business Conference (the IRS will be present). The MBP issued a report focusing on using tools such as zoning and tax abatements to increase availability of healthy food.

Erin Drinkwater – (Congressman Jerrold Nadler’s Office), a station optimization program is being implemented to keep the postal service on track. They’ve been remiss in various ways. CB 1 members noted that services at the Church St. station have been reduced and there are no longer stamp machines there.

Jessica Loeser – Identified herself and noted that she was available to discuss or answer questions about the development of a seven story residential building at 46-48 Lispenard Street.

Michele Quigley – AHRC, evaluates adults and children for behavioral and other services. Michele.Quigley@AHRcnyc.org. Offered the AHRC facility for a meeting.

Andy Neal – Opposed the liquor license application for 27 Desbrosses Street.

Paul Goldstein – (Assemblyman Silver’s office) informed us that the school on Spruce Street will open in a year. Issues related to the middle school have been settled. There is also potential space for middle school students at 26 Broadway where space will be taken over by the Board of Ed. The Gateway Plaza deal has been approved, allowing 11 more years of rent stabilization. A continuation of commercial tax incentives for Lower Manhattan has been approved. The SLA 500-foot rule has been clarified in the Assembly, so that any 3 establishments will fall under the rule, not just 3 establishments in a single category. The City is delaying the Chatham Square project.

Daniel Koffler - Just learned about the LMDC Small Business Assistance Program and is concerned that the Claremont School at 41 Broad Street is not eligible. The Chairperson said that Ro Sheffe has been effective in this area and will look into this.

Joel Kopel – C.B. 1 Treasurer thanked the troops for the ballgame win.

Mary Cooley – (State Senator Daniel Squadron’s Office) informed us that the State Senate had been ordered to reconvene this afternoon. Governor Paterson has put his foot down and wants both sides to go back to work. What is needed is a bipartisan operating agreement that leaves the question of leadership aside while enabling the Senate to pass the legislation that is so important

for our city and our state.

Business Session:

The May 26, 2009 minutes were adopted as presented.

Chairwoman's Report:

Chairwoman Julie Menin noted that:

- She and several other Board Members met with Chairperson Amanda Burden of the City Planning Commission today regarding the Tribeca North rezoning. The meeting went very well and the board's ideas were well received.
- The Port Authority and Silverstein Properties are still deeply divided. The Community Board wants public amenities, e.g. the performance center as well as other cultural components, to move forward. Cited Jazz at Lincoln Center as the kind of use that could go into an office tower.
We don't know yet what will be built on Tower 5. It could be the location for a free-standing performance center. Co-chair Catherine McVay Hughes suggested that since the Tower 5 site will be turned over before the others, it would be a preferred location for a cultural center.
- Intoxication on construction work sites in CB1 will not be tolerated. We're pressing for strict enforcement and the use of alcohol should be monitored very carefully. The Port Authority has assured us that workers found drinking have been terminated. We shall take up this issue at upcoming meetings because a zero tolerance policy must be implemented.
- LMDC's RFP for Lower Manhattan schools is moving forward. The grants will be available to all schools in the catchment area. Members of the LMDC will be present at the July Youth Committee meeting.
- Thanks to B.P. Stringer and others for successfully advocating for restored funds for community boards in the City budget that was approved.
- Extended thanks, from the Board, to Judy Norinsky for her service; and best wishes in her new endeavors.
- We are now seeking a community liaison to replace her and a job description has been sent to the Community Board members and is available at the District Office.

District Manager's Report:

Noah Pfefferbilt reported on the following issues:

- The CB budgets results are good news. But next year will bring new challenges.
- Send comments and or suggestions regarding the newsletter which was prepared with valuable assistance from Helena Hovitz.
- Look out for the upcoming report on the CB1 rent stabilization project, implemented by Tom Goodkind and others. The document will be forwarded to Ro Sheffe for formatting.

- Thanks to Judy Norinsky. We hate to see her leave, but look forward to working with Roger Byrom as Chair of the Personnel Committee in finding a replacement for her by Labor Day if possible.
- Judy Norinsky thanked us and is set to segue her CB 1 experience into a degree in Neighborhood Preservation at Pratt Institute.

Committee Reports:

NOTE: IF YOU WISH TO RECEIVE A COPY OF A RESOLUTION SUMMARIZED IN THE MINUTES, PLEASE CONTACT THE CB 1 OFFICE AT 212 442-5050

Youth & Education Committee

R. Skinner

Programs for youth at the South Street Seaport Museum – Report

Michael Lord is the new Director of Education at the South Street Seaport and will oversee the upcoming programs, including some for toddlers and restoration of the tall ship, etc.

Zoning for new schools – Report

Sheldon Silver’s Task Force continues to discuss plans for the new Lower Manhattan schools. A new concept has been designed for the two new schools, “Common Zone.” John White has promised to return to the task force to provide more information. He has committed to attend an upcoming committee meeting where he’ll provide additional information. A representative of the CEC has also been invited.

Use of ball fields at Murray Bergtraum High School – Report

Discussions have been held with the Murray Bergtraum High School regarding use of their ballfield by Lower Manhattan community organizations. We’d like to increase access to the ball fields by Lower Manhattan community organizations. We’ll have to continue our dialogue with the school regarding when and for how long the children use them. We would like to understand clearly the procedures for use of these ball fields that are in place so that we can have as much use of them as possible. These discussions will continue.

LMDC RFP for school funding – Report

The LMDC RFP was discussed as was the DOE capital budget. It looks as though the RFP is on track and needed funding will be available to schools around the start of the coming school year.

Bob Townley has a nature camp. Children are taken to the Catskills weekly to learn about water outings, etc. July 27th is the next nature trip. July 4th, there will be a noon BBQ and swim at the Youth Center. Seniors should be told about the swimming pool, etc. We encourage the intergenerational spirit.

Battery Park City Committee

L. Belfer

Report on issues covered by Leticia Remauro, Vice President for Community Relations, Battery Park City Authority – Report

Extended appreciation to the Speaker and other elected officials who helped negotiate an agreement to extend rent stabilization protections for 11 years to Gateway Plaza tenants as of midnight today.

The BPC Authority has control of Pier A and is considering what should be included in the RFP. Anyone with suggestions about what should be at Pier A is encouraged to come to the next meeting.

Paul Hovitz added his appreciation regarding the BPC success, but added his apprehension regarding a subsidized program that could threaten our existing community center.

Chairperson Julie Menin acknowledged that we have to be sensitive about this issue, and that the Manhattan Youth Center is an important Downtown facility.

CB 1 member and Founder of the Downtown Community Center, Bob Townley said that he is optimistic that all will work out. He acknowledged his concern and hopes that support will continue for the Downtown Community Center.

Presentation surrounding the proposed West Thames Bridge by BPCA architect – Resolution

Concerns regarding the bridge were stated, especially pertaining to the need for an elevator for seniors and others. Leticia Remauro requested a write-up of the board's concerns.

A friendly amendment was made so that the first "Therefore Be It Resolved reads "insists" and not urges. It was accepted.

Bob Townley believes the whole resolution should be rewritten. (Elevators for the bridge are needed on both sides.) Linda Belfer reported that there may be issues with the expenses involved.

Chairwomen Julie Menin added that we should demand elevators on both sides.

BOARD VOTE: 36 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained 0 Recused

Financial District Committee

R. Sheffe

Proposal for Newsstand at the Southwest Corner of Nassau and Liberty Streets – Resolution

The building owner objects to the location. The building owner's representative stated that because the application requested a location across the street from their building, they didn't immediately oppose the proposed site. Now that the owner realizes the newsstand is intended to be located in front of their building, they are strongly opposed. A motion to table was suggested,

but the Department of Consumer Affairs gives the community board only 30 days to express an opinion. Chairwoman Menin reminded the members that tabling it is the same as not taking a position.

BOARD VOTE: 17 In Favor 20 Opposed 0 Abstained 0 Recused

Proposed Minor Modifications to a Special Permit for Privately Owned Public Space at 100 William St. – Resolution

BOARD VOTE: 35 In Favor 1 Opposed 1 Abstained 0 Recused

LMDC Small Firm Assistance Program – Extension to Failed Businesses – Resolution

The LMDC website needs to be updated, says Roger Byrom, CB 1 member.

Albert Capsouto agreed that the website is not up to date.

Businesses that have not yet gone out of business have an opportunity to qualify for the LMDC grant, but not those that have already gone out of business. We are asking the LMDC to extend the opportunity for a grant to these businesses.

BOARD VOTE: 37 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained 0 Recused

Tribeca Committee

P. Braus

Proposed street closure on Saturday, August 1, 2009, Lispenard Street between Church Street and Broadway by Kiante Young Inc. – Resolution

BOARD VOTE: 37 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained 0 Recused

27 Desbrosses Street Liquor License proposal. The establishment, owned by Ponte, wishes to open a bar. Some members felt that scant, ambiguous, inconclusive and inconsistent information was provided by the applicant.

Gunther Bilali, restaurateur, agrees to early closings – 1 AM during the week and 2 AM on weekends, and promises not to apply for an outdoor café license and not to place speakers on the ceiling. He also owns Anchor, another local restaurant. He resides at 47 Renwick, apt. 4-B.

Andy Neale, representing several condo boards in the vicinity of the applicant's proposed establishment, opined that this is a Trojan horse for a nightclub lounge. Moreover, he provided testimony from numerous local residents who offered claims contrary to the owner's statement that there had been continuous use at this location. In reply, the restaurateur supplied an electric bill. However, it apparently covered electricity for the public hallways.

There was no Board vote on this matter

313 Church, application for liquor license for Ave A Candy LLC

BOARD VOTE: 36 In Favor 1 Opposed 0 Abstained 0 Recused

46-48 Lispenard Street, City Planning Commission application for Special Permit pursuant to Section 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution to allow residential use of a seven story building in the Tribeca Mixed Use District.

BOARD VOTE: 37 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained 0 Recused

Landmarks Committee

R. Byrom

250 West Street, LPC application for replacement of windows, rooftop addition, replacement of cornice and modification to entrance – Resolution

BOARD VOTE: 31 In Favor 0 Opposed 1 Abstained 0 Recused

Partial Building Collapse at 71 Reade Street – Report

The Buildings Department and the Landmarks Preservation Commission each had a representative at our last committee meeting. They were thoroughly grilled regarding the building’s collapse (second building on this block that has had issues within the past 2 years). The recently restored cast iron façade was destroyed rather than preserved. There were many violations and residents had made complaints. Both representatives agreed there were problems with this situation. LPC said more care should be taken in the future, but the DOB felt they’d done their job.

Lower Manhattan Sidewalk History Board Project – Report

A proposal to place more signboards downtown is not welcome in this landmark historic area. We don’t want intrusive signage that doesn’t connect to anything. A decision was deferred to a later date.

Planning and Community Infrastructure Committee

John Foss

Columbia Student Studio Project Follow-up Discussion Regarding the Greenwich South neighborhood. The committee would now like to meet with the City Planning Department to discuss inclusionary housing as well as with other city agencies that may be helpful in planning a cohesive community.

A CB1 Infrastructure study done will be conducted in the fall when CB1 hopes to receive another Urban Fellow from the Borough President.

There is concern that some residential buildings developed with tax abatements after 9/11 are not living up to the agreements. We shall meet in the near future to learn what if any requirements were involved.

Seaport/Civic Center Committee

J. Fratta

The Department of Parks and Recreation discussed outstanding projects and renovations within our area

Proposed Street Co-Naming – Southwest Corner of Reade Street and Elk Street for Frank Durkan by Mathias Reilly, Friend and Client. The committee is concerned that there are no set guidelines regarding co-naming of streets. The Chairman asked Chairperson Julie Menin to set up a task force to establish such guidelines. The primary concern was that although Mr. Durkan worked in the community, he wasn't a resident, and therefore there may not be sufficient justification to name one of our streets after him.

Proposed sidewalk and curb lane closure, on Fridays and Saturdays, 8 am to 8 pm, on South Street between Beckman and Fulton Streets by South Street Seaport/GGP for the Fulton Stall Market.

BOARD VOTE: 32 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained 0 Recused

Pace University, September 4, 2009 to September 5, 2009 from 9 am to 5 pm, sidewalk closure on Frankfort and Spruce Streets between Gold Street and Park Row, and on September 4, 2009 to September 7, 2009, sidewalk closure from 9 am to 5 pm on Fulton and John Streets between Dutch and William Streets.

BOARD VOTE: 32 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained 0 Recused

Proposal for CB1 fairs on August 14 and November 6 in City Hall Park and August 21 and November 23 in Thomas Paine Park

BOARD VOTE: 32 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained 0 Recused

WTC Redevelopment Committee C. McVay Hughes

Fulton Street Transit Center - Update

The conical dome is not actually glass. The connector is expected to be finished in September 2011. The north side will be the first side to open for business in December of this year. The south side will be open for business, January, 2010.

Lower Manhattan Development Corporation – Update

John DeLibero will take over the duties of Mike Murphy who has resigned as Spokesperson for LMDC. John will meet with us monthly to provide updates on 130 Liberty St. and other matters. Later this month, Speaker Sheldon Silver will conduct a tour of the decontaminated building.

Drinking at the local bars by construction workers, as described in a recent Post article, is a serious concern. At the next World Trade Center Redevelopment Committee we will discuss this with the Port Authority.

Next month, we hope to have DEP meet with us regarding Local Law 41, which Council Member Gerson helped pass in 2005, requiring DEP to report annually on progress with retrofitting of tour buses. Not all of them have been retrofitted according to the annual report.

Quality of Life Committee

A. Capsuto

LMCCC met with us as usual. We had a PowerPoint presentation from NYPD Inspector McCarthy regarding the WTC traffic management center operated jointly by NYPD with NYC and NY State DOT. It was informative. Sam Schwartz, a consultant, is working to mitigate pedestrian crossings and improve safety whereas NYPD is managing all of the vehicular concerns. There is an enforcement task force monitoring all building projects. Discussed problems on West Street, which is being monitored by cameras as well.

Representatives from EDC, FAA and the management of the Downtown Heliport met with the committee. If you see an aircraft that appears to be flying too low, you should call: 800-319-7410 and get the number of the helicopter so an agent can trace it back to the responsible company and action can be taken.

Councilman Gerson and Madelyn Wils will schedule meetings regarding helicopter usage in and around lower Manhattan.

Susan Sangara, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, discussed the risks to different categories of people from the swine flu. Seniors, 9/11 victims and those with underlying medical conditions including blood disorders, obesity, etc. provide different challenges. A new vaccine should be available within a few months.

Catherine mentioned her son's school where the Swine Flu had affected several children. She'd like to preempt this flu before school opens. Any product used to clean your hands should contain 65 % or more of alcohol to be effective.

Old Business:

No old business was conducted.

New Business:

No new business was conducted

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned, as there was no further business.

Respectfully submitted by: Noel E. Jefferson, Secretary