



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10

215 West 125th Street, 4th Floor—New York, NY 10027 T: 212-749-3105 F: 212-662-4215

CICELY HARRIS
Chairperson

Economic Development Committee

Thursday, January 16, 2020 – 6:25 p.m.

SHATIC MITCHELL
District Manager

Attendance: Joshua Clennon, Jennifer Prince, Cicely Harris, and Mari Moss.

The meeting began with a presentation of the full liquor license renewal for Bianca's on the Park. Michael Nared, Manager and son, presented on behalf of Bianca's on the Park, a Black-owned Family business. The economy being what it is effects anyone who is trying to renew a liquor license because, the restaurants are not necessities they are luxuries and if people cannot afford to come outside and venture into their establishment, then they no longer exist. So what they try to do is make it as feasible as possible for people to venture into their events, to have the best experience that they can. They have been blessed to do so for the last twenty-two or twenty-four years. They have been an institution in Harlem since the 90's and before that they also owned a parking garage on 155th in the 80's. Mr. Nared grew-up working in development and that sort of thing, and also previously worked for the City of New York in the Buildings Department. They are looking to renew their liquor license because they see good in what they do. They take pride in the fact that they hire from the community and rarely turn anybody away because of price. They try to create an elegant experience for everybody at budget or below budget costs.

They employ about forty people. They are not operational every day, but hopefully as the neighborhood is expanding they hope to open every day. They invite everyone to come and take a look at the space. Many people are impressed at the size of the space. They are blessed every year to say they survived another year. Committee Member Jennifer Prince asked about the number of (rental) spaces. Mr. Nared responded that, depending on the economy of the neighborhood they either grow or shrink. At one time they had three spaces and now they have two; they now have one grand ballroom and one small more intimate space. Committee Member Mari Moss commented on the amount of community service they do. She commented about the owner coming before the board and sharing issues with the increase in the rent. Mr. Nared explained that what has happened to them is rather unique. Once upon a time they were on 110th street and Lenox Avenue. Donald Trump's organization came and bought their building –out; they were only leasing a space. They moved to the space 125th, which used to be DMV. It was the last ballroom in Harlem. They kept the name Alhambra ballroom. There have many tenants on the ground level. There was Ms. Lee from Manna's had a seafood restaurant, there was a gospel uptown, a mini-mall, and Harlem Lanes.

Bianca's on the Park is their Corporate name, the Alhambra is a like a d/b/a. Almost all of their 40 employees live in the community. They have to have people who live in the neighborhood and recognize that there are too many people in the neighborhood who need jobs. They have never had a liquor license violation. They have had things happen around them but never directly to them.

Committee Member Jennifer Prince asked if there were any changes, or hurdles they anticipated experiencing over the next few years. Mr. Nared shared that it was probably his sister Tracy who attended the board meeting discussing the rent concerns. The economic boom is hard for them, and they rely on the community to come to their establishment. They have new landlords and their landlords want their return. For about ten years they were the only tenants in the building. They are one of the few black businesses remaining. The neighborhood is changing drastically, there is new hotel coming up right next door to them and they are going to be their competition. They are going to be their competition because they will have ballrooms and things of that nature that people can rent out and then they will carry a name. They don't even need Harlem money, they can channel outside resources. They know people are going to come to the neighborhood, but you don't want to forget the people that struggled in your neighborhood, so they still have to

keep the people who supported them through the years. The economy dictates their business, because if people can't afford it then people don't come in.

They hire from the neighborhood because it helps to hire from within. Their biggest claim to fame is their space and their square footage because not too many people have that. As a result, they get a lot of political events and their motto is they don't turn anyone away for money. They will work with a budget. Committee Member Joshua Clennon asked how they market the space. Mr. Nared answered, you, you are my marketing. We don't go on TV and advertise it is word of mouth. A lot of companies will renew every year for their holiday parties. They listen out for the good and the bad, because knowing the bad makes them better. So basically the marketing comes from customers. They have a website that shows their events. Most people are rarely searching for a ballroom, they might be looking for a large space. They are the last one.

Committee Member Mari Moss asked what they are going to do in anticipation of the new hotel arriving. Mr. Nared, answered that they will continue word of mouth, and they keep their prices lower than everybody else's. Committee Member Jennifer Prince asked about any service projects or donations made. Mr. Nared shared that they worked with the Assemblywoman during the holidays. Most of the politicians in Harlem will call them up either for the space or the man-power, or their ovens to cook something. They give out turkeys on Thanksgiving. Committee Member Jennifer Prince asked who the other tenants are in the building. Mr. Nared said there is a Doctor's office on the third floor and the IRS is coming into the building and the supermarket on the ground floor.

Committee Member Jennifer Prince shared that moving forward for February they are working to push a representative to come from Whole Foods as well as to reschedule with DSNY for a presentation on new carting regulations. Jennifer asked if the members had additional suggestions for agency or business representatives or future agenda items. Committee Member Mari Moss suggested the Department of Health because a lot of people have been talking about health issues. There are a lot pending statuses for restaurants and the Department of Health would be a great place to start to speak about how to keep the restaurants healthy and make sure their food is up to date and on par. She also suggested the Department of Buildings. There is a lot of building going on, like Boulevard Bistro, gut renovations. The Department of Buildings would help us to understand what the requirements are for updates and how to avoid citations and violations and being able to make sure we are able to connect businesses. Then there are entrepreneurs, what are we doing about entrepreneurs. MWBE's, what are we doing to connect people and organizations to resources. Then the accountability piece which would be an economic development portion – really getting feedback from the whole committee on revising an accountability plan. Making sure that when we look at our District Needs and statistical data, what steps are we taking in our community so that we can cut down on poverty rates, and unemployment rates. These are ways to connect the dots and make sure we are having a flourishing community within the community and people don't have to go outside of Harlem to find things that they need. They can come to the community board as a resource that can connect them to all of the opportunities that are available. HCCI has a specific program to connect with MWBE's.

Committee Member Joshua Clennon did an MWBE procurement fair with a gentleman named Duane Norris, last year at the State Office Building. They had basically all the agencies from the City and procurement professionals, who work to get bids from contractors, did presentations on how to submit a solid bid. It had a lot of people turnout and was a packed-house. He will follow-up with Mr. Norris and see about an opportunity for the community board to partner. The fair was fairly recent, in September. Committee Member Jennifer Prince suggested following-up during the March meeting.

Committee Member Mari Moss spoke about the budget process and boards budget. She said if the board had major goals and an accountability plan, there is an opportunity to increase the community board budget. The work that the community board is significant enough to increase the community board budget to help with facilitating the community needs more.

Committee Member Joshua Clennon mentioned Spaceworks and the Mart 125 project and hadn't heard anything since. Committee Member Jennifer Prince shared about the Marginal Neighborhoods Economic Development Corporation community that had gathered signatures, and presented their plan for Mart 125 at the November previous economic development committee. Community Board Chair Cicely Harris shared that we are supposed to get an update from Stacy Lynch out of the Mayor's office. Cicely spoke with her briefly two or three weeks ago about it, they are still having meetings at that level. She does believe that some community organizations are in those talks. She is not exactly sure why the Community Board has not been a more integral part of those conversations, especially since we were part of the impetus why SpaceWorks didn't go forward. There was supposed to be a new RFP that was supposed to go out and it hasn't. They were also supposed to give a new designation to the space, right now it still has an arts and culture designation and that hasn't happened. As the community board we still want that to be an incubator space, also giving acknowledgement to the vendors that were there. A lot of the vendors that were there are still trying to thrive, so we wanted them to have a space. We also understand it has to make money, but what does that look like. We are supposed to get an update from the Mayor's office by March. So hopefully we will put out something to the community in March.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 pm.