



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10

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CICELY HARRIS
Chairperson

Economic Development Committee

Thursday, December 12, 2019 – 6:30 p.m.

SHATIC MITCHELL

District Manager

Attendance: Delsenia Glover, Victoria Horsford, Mari Moss, Jennifer Prince, Cheryl Smith, and Shanelle Washington.

The meeting began at 6:50 pm.

The meeting began with a presentation from Sweet Catch. Sweet Catch is a seafood boil restaurant. They hope to operate as a full-service restaurant, offering lunch, dinner, and brunches on weekends. The goal is a family friendly restaurant. The goal is to provide jobs in the neighborhood and provide a nice friendly establishment in the neighborhood. The owner, Kawana Jefferson currently owns a bar and grill in Crown Heights, she has operated for four years. They plan to hire 10 to 12 employees - front of the house, bar backs, dishwashers, cooks, and runners. The owner will be the operating manager initially and intends to be hands-on as this is her second business.

They intend to hire in a similar manner to their Crown Heights bar and grill, using Craigslist, hiring agencies, and Social Media. When asked if they had used Work Force One, they said they were not familiar. We offered to share information about Work Force 1.

Sweet Catch will be located in a former hair salon and juice bar on northwest corner of 113th and Malcolm X Boulevard. The entrance and interior are ADA compliant. Mrs. Jefferson described the lay out and shared that there will be a small DJ booth. The seated capacity is 74 with 13 seats at the bar. There will be a DJ and they plan to invest a significant amount of money in sound-proofing. They do not have tenants in their Crown Heights bar and grill location. They are putting a lot of money into the materials – they will sound proof the roof (ceiling) as well as panels on the interior. The intention with the music is for it to be background music to help with a vibe, not to have a loud type of situation. Mrs. Jefferson continued, people are going to be dining, so they want the music to remain at a comfortable volume. They do not foresee the music volume being an issue, but they want to take every precaution.

The application includes several letters of support and community signatures. Committee Member Shanelle Washington asked if the owner is currently in the space. Mrs. Jefferson responded that they have put a deposit but are contingent on signing the lease, but they have not yet because they didn't want to sign it before they went to the community board. We asked Mrs. Jefferson how she was able to obtain the letters of support from community members. Mrs. Jefferson explained that she worked in Harlem for several years at Londell's so that was able to get Londell's son's support. Her brother is the Pastor of Emmanuel Church and he and his wife live in condo in the Kalahari on 116th and he was able to reach out to some people he knew has relationships with to get their support as well. The letters are a result of a combination of her relationships and her brother's.

The community board office has received three responses and concerns from community members living in the residence above the proposed restaurant. We reminded Mrs. Jefferson that our board works best is when we can facilitate the conversation between the business owner and the community. Committee Member Jennifer Prince asked Mrs. Jefferson to share ways that she has worked with, partnered, or given-back to the community of her current bar and grill in Crown Heights. Mrs. Jefferson shared that they were a part of a Brooklyn small business coalition. They have made food donations and do a lot of community outreach. The committee reviewed the statement from the community. There were two community members present. The first resident present shared her concern around cleanliness, DJ, hours, and noise from traffic in and out. They will have a daily pick-up with a private carting company.

They will also have cooling trash for the seafood to control the odor. The hours, because it is a restaurant and not a bar, the goal is to be open during the week until 12 am. They would like to have a sidewalk café and will follow the city regulations for sidewalk café hours. On the weekends they would like to close at 2 am. They do not foresee a crowd – they intend to close the restaurant area at around 11pm. They do not expect to go to 4 am and don't want to go until 3 am. They are not looking to have a DJ nightly. Right now in Brooklyn, they have a brunch. They do want to have a DJ for brunches and some special occasions, but it is not going to be nightly. That is not the goal or the business model. The resident then asked how they plan to test to ensure the neighbors can't hear the sound. They will rely on the experts to make sure that their investment in the sound-proofing keeps the noise level down. They believe it will be mutually beneficial now to prevent any concerns as far as sound. A second resident asked if they knew what materials would be used and if they would de-couple the ceiling and use *pvc*. They responded yes, and they would be sound-proofing from the sub-floor to the finished ceiling. They also clarified that they would be further sound-proofing the interior walls – with external panels. Sonya Munetz introduced herself, she is the President of the Condominium Board. They are in such an early stage that they are open to any suggestions and information that they can bring back to their bar.

The business prior to the hair salon was a twenty-four deli which sold beer and was referred to by Sonia as a nuisance property – there were people loitering. Committee Member Jennifer Prince suggested attending a forthcoming Board Meeting in January – we asked if they might consider carving –out a portion of the agenda to speak with Mrs. Jefferson about the new business. Sonia responded that she would discuss it with her Board members. A community member asked Sonia whether the association had an architect on their board who could review plans. While they do not have an architect on the Board, they do have a management company that they work with and if there are any plans they are sure they can get someone to look at them to ensure that the plans are within the guidelines of their bylaws and regulations by the city and state. A community member asked Mrs. Munetz whether their Condo Board had a retail guidelines for the occupant of the commercial space to abide by. Mrs. Munetz explained that there are not guidelines in the by laws, the occupant would follow guidelines set by the owner of commercial property who is also a Board member. The condo board members and residents do not have control over what is done with the property, they can only voice their concerns about their quality of life and for the potential of the property to become a nuisance property – which it has been in the past. They only want to maintain their property value. The owner is on the Board and with the Developer who rehabbed the building. They are concerned with the sounds because there is a minimum sound level that might not be comfortable.

Committee Member Shanelle Washington asked Sonya Munetz whether the owner of the retail space and fellow condo-board member had shared any information with the condo-board members about the new occupant. Sonia said he has not shared information or responded to any official correspondence, she thought he might be at this meeting. Committee Member Delsenia Glover, asked whether there was an flexibility about hours given the tenant concerns about sound. She asked if the business would take it down to earlier hours to alleviate some of the concern. The owner, responded that they have found that the hours are customary of the bar and restaurant industry. As far as their margins go, the hours are crucial in order to sustain and pay their bills. They believe the hours are reasonable and respectable hours for the area and hours that other restaurants and bars operate under. Committee Member Jennifer Prince asked about customer traffic and gathering outside of the business and how they anticipate moving traffic. They intend on having some type of security because safety is key. They find that when you have a reputable business it tends to push out traffic that you might not necessarily want. The owner is 38 and educated and was a school psychologist prior to this and a lot of their patrons look like them – very professional. Committee Member Jennifer Prince clarified how patron traffic will be moved. They repeated that they will have security and one of their main goals will be to keep traffic flowing and keep people from loitering and congregating in front of the establishment. Committee Member Delsenia Glover asked if businesses typically have security for a restaurant. Mrs. Jefferson's partner shared that some places do, but it would not be security personnel, it would be a doorman. The partner said the restaurant would be similar to another she is a part of called Soco in Brooklyn.

Their menu caters to the day and they hope to be busier in the day, everything about their establishment caters to the day, but it is customary in their industry to have their hours. Committee Member Jennifer Prince asked whether they were pursuing security personnel and whether they would like to amend their application. Committee Member Victoria

Horsford asked how many restaurants in the area served lunch. They responded, not many. Committee Member Shanelle Washington asked about whether the condo board members were made aware of prior occupants before the space was leased to them. Sonya shared that this is the first time that she had received notice that a new tenant was coming, even a notice of a meeting to review a liquor license. While he may be on the board-it is part of the bylaws because he was one of the developers - he is not very vocal. Asked for clarity around moving rowdy people from in front of the building. She did not understand why a doorman wasn't efficient. Committee Member Jennifer Prince clarified that during the renewal process the committee has heard concerns from residents about customer noise and have requested restaurants and bars address the noise created by customers gathered outside of the business. Because this has been a voiced concern in multiple discussions, she felt it relevant to discuss with new occupants.

Committee Member Jennifer asked the residents present whether Lolita's across the street has been a model neighbor or whether there have been concerns. Sonya... shared that there have not been concerns with loitering or noise levels. When they did have their out-door seating they eventual got rid of it. Sonya shared that the residents would definitely be opposed to a sidewalk café. Committee Member Delsenia Glover felt that saying that most of their business was during the day, while having late hours was seemed to be a contradiction. Mrs. Jefferson's partner shared that the hours are customary. They do intend on opening at 11am and do want to have a brunch on Saturday and Sunday.

Committee Member Mari asked if they have experienced any complaints from residents in their current location in Brooklyn. There is a staff of around twelve in Brooklyn. Mrs. Jefferson responded, no. Committee Member Mari Moss also asked whether they were planning on doing DEP come to the business to administer a decibel test. Though they can't speak technically to materials, they are not cutting corners as far as sound-proofing is concerned and that in the end it would only be more problematic for them. They will take all measures to avoid any kinds of sound issues. Their music is only there to add to the atmosphere. Committee Member Victoria Horsford asked if they had a marketing plan in place because the price point for the boil is higher than most of restaurants above 116th. They are in the process of selecting a marketing team. The price points are from market-research, and the price point is in line with a boil. A lot of their clientele are from here and are accustomed to paying a certain price for a certain experience. It is a food experience and family experience and that is what they intend to market - the quality of product, the taste, and the family atmosphere.

Resident Sonya Munetz, asked what type of kitchen equipment would be used and how would you vent and exhaust. They will have gas, however at this time they are working with the architects and the department of building. The condominium board do not want any duct work or piping up through their building. Sonya then asked as a resident, they would like to maintain the look of their façade the way it is. They had a previous tenant who tried to affix a sign that was higher than he was allowed, and they requested it be removed. Committee Member Mari Moss responded that deli and restaurant requirements are totally different. Sonya then asked if a business wants to open a restaurant, that the residents' needs and desires to not have any venting pipes on the outside of the building would be ignored. Committee Member Mari Moss responded that the FDNY would not approve range-hood piping that would not approve plans that would counter what they are describing.

Committee Member Delsenia asked whether the kitchen would be open until 11pm during the week and 2 am on the weekend. The owners responded it will not. Committee Member Delsenia Glover then said that the restaurant will be club. Committee Member Jennifer Prince clarified that food, even if a limited menu, must still be available if alcohol is served. They will abide by the guidelines to adhere to the law. They will not be a club, there will not be any dancing. It is not the goal of the restaurant.

Sonia asked about what kind of signage would be used. They are still finalizing the core elements of the signage. With pest control will there be a monthly contract. Yes, there will be pest control weekly, if not daily. Sonia said she is still concerned with the DJ element. Whether a DJ or house music, the music will be played at a certain volume. The DJ is there to bring a certain atmosphere, and they are hiring a sound engineer so that the levels are locked and can not be raised by anyone who is not their sound engineer. Committee Member Shanelle Washington said that the property owner needs to be present. The questions being asked of the future occupants should be relayed to the owner instead.

Committee Member Jennifer Prince shared that setting up a meeting between the owners and the residents is a good next step. Mrs. Jefferson extended an invite to attend a future meeting. Mrs. Jefferson's partner also requested access to the building's bylaws. Sonya said she will have to email the owner, Steve Williams about the request to the bylaws. Mrs. Jefferson's partner said the intent is to get off to the best start. Sonya shared also that with the nature of the business, it is likely that the building will have a higher insurance. Committee Member Victoria Horsford asked about the square footage of the space. The space is 1490 square feet. Committee Member Jennifer Prince went over the next steps in the process of the review of the liquor license application and sharing the future partnership and attending the condo board's meeting and working to address the community concerns. The tentative opening date is sometime in the spring.

The committee moved into old business regarding Indian Summer. During last month's meeting their support was contingent upon obtaining additional signatures. They originally had twelve signatures, they brought additional signatures to the general board meeting. So the board will formally vote on them during the January meeting.

Committee Member Delsenia Glover asked how the committee could make a recommendation to the executive committee without quorum. Committee Member Jennifer Prince clarified that when there is not quorum the item can be brought to the executive committee and following the report from the committee, the executive committee can vote to include the item on the agenda for the general board meeting or vote to have the item return to the committee.

The committee discussed the signatures that Indian Summer had obtained. The goal of the signatures is to show neighborhood interest and awareness of the business. Committee Member Mari Moss suggested that we set a signature minimum. Committee Member Jennifer Princes suggested that the committee talk about discussing a finite signature number during the January meeting.

Because the committee did not have quorum the committee discussed additional suggestions for follow-up and concerns with the application. Committee Member Mari Moss pointed out the letters of support from local elected officials and community leaders like Inez Dickens and Cordell Cleare. Committee Member Delsenia Glover stated that the only thing that concerned her was the concern from the President of the Condominium Board about noise. She believed it was slightly disingenuous that they talked about it being a restaurant, but stop serving food before they close. Committee Member Jennifer Prince and Committee Member Victoria Horsford reminded the committee members that if they are serving liquor they must also serve at least a limited bar menu and that the kitchen must close at a certain time. The committee was concerned about the planned disc jockey and the establishment's intentions of keeping the disc jockey music at low volumes. The committee also discussed the existing restaurant across the street, Lolita's and their lack of issues with restaurant. The committee also discussed the planned duct work and the necessity of the condo board members to discuss the planned construction with the owner of the space. The committee also discussed the significant sound –proofing that the establishment plans to complete. Committee Member Mari Moss recommended that the establishment have DEP come to do a decibel test. The committee recommended the establishment follow up with the decibel test and addressing customer traffic outside the restaurant. Committee Member Delsenia Glover mentioned Sweet Catch's desire for a sidewalk café. Sweet Catch would have to return to the committee for their sidewalk café, but the Condo Board is not in support of a sidewalk café.

Committee Member Jennifer Prince also shared information about Catch & Grill who requested a 30-day waiver. The establishment's initial liquor license was not approved by the SLA. We now request that establishments requesting 30-day waivers to come to the economic development committee to share the reasons for their request. The committee reviewed the written information. They presented earlier this year. Committee Member Shanelle Washington suggested the economic development committee producing an event before the end of the year. The committee agreed to table the discussion until January. Committee Member Cheryl Smith requested inviting Whole Foods to an upcoming meeting. There have been community concerns about the quality of the food and customer services and is an issue for our community.

Committee Member Cheryl Smith also asked about Chai Walli, they look like they are open. The Committee will follow-up with Chai Walli.

A community member asked about the process for sharing feedback during the meeting. They suggested advice for Sweet Catch hiring a sound engineer.

Committee Member Delsenia Glover asked if anyone had seen the exhibit Un-design the red line. It is a traveling exhibit and she took some folks from the public advocate's office last week. As a community board committee concerned with economic development in our community it might make sense for us to do the tour. Committee Member Delsenia would be happy to set it up because it will change the prism through which you view economic development in your community because it gives you a history of red-lining and how it came about. In communities of color, particularly black communities are on a continuum that began over a hundred years ago and what we are experiencing right now is still a part of the racist continuum. It would behoove us to make sure we have an understanding of this history as we make decision about what we do allow or support as far as development economic and residential in this community. It is at 1 whitehall street at enterprise. Committee Member Jennifer Prince asked whether it was known where the exhibit would be traveling to next. Committee Member Delsenia Glover said she was in contact with one of the co-creators, so there is an exhibit in Brooklyn and one in Manhattan that ends at the end of December. She can talk to him and see whether he could do one at the State Office Building. Committee Member Shanelle Washington said that Harlem was created by people who look like us and said we have to be truthful when we talk about History. The Committee will discuss the idea further.

The owner and head Chef Brenda Beener, from Seasoned Vegan came to request a 30-day waiver. Their renewal was up on November 30th. Their attorney mistakenly did not submit the paperwork on their behalf. The committee has been asked to review all 30-day waiver requests. It is not something that is voted on, but allows the committee to meet with the restaurant. The Committee Members asked if the business sold liquor and if it had a DJ. Seasoned Vegan only serves wine and does not have a DJ. Committee Member Jennifer Prince commented that Seasoned Vegan is in the same area as Sweet Catch. The owner said they were listening to them, and the area itself has had a couple shootings. The area where they are moving to is a hot spot and because they are there we've noticed less drug sales. They have been in their location for six years and have been told by the community that they have changed the area. They have the respect of the neighborhood and they have a clientele of people that are mostly conscience and it has just been a very different and community changing experience. Committee Member Shanelle Washington asked if they support King Day. And what you are doing for the community in asking people to move away. Chef Brenda answered that they have had some drug activity in front of the restaurant and it all depends on how you approach them. Committee Member Shanelle Washington asked if there was some give-back being that the location is across from some of the worst NYCHA housing in the district. Mrs. Beener answered that they employ a lot of them and that has helped us also and because of that and people see that they have been more of a help to the community than anything else. They give free food to the community and free food on pre-Thanksgiving. Their philosophy is that you can't just receive. You have to give back to people that support you. Committee Member Cheryl Smith asked for clarity about the reason for the 30-day waiver and if it was only late because it went to the attorney and if the attorney was still an attorney of record for them. Mrs. Beener answered that they have now changed the recipient email address to theirs. Instead of SLA contacting them it went straight to the lawyer. He is still their attorney as far as their SLA license. The attorney claimed that they did not receive the information. However the SLA said the form went to them.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.