



CITY OF NEW YORK  
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10

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**CICELY HARRIS**  
Chairperson

**SHATIC MITCHELL**  
District Manager

**Economic Development Committee**  
Thursday, November 14, 2019 – 6:30 p.m.

**Attendance:** Stanley Gleaton, Victoria Horsford, Mari Moss, Charles Powell, Jennifer Prince, Cheryl Smith, and Shanelle Washington.

The meeting began at 6:42 pm.

The meeting began with a presentation from Indian Summer – a new restaurant requesting a wine, beer, and cider license. Indian Summer will be located at 239 Lenox Avenue, the former location of Boulevard Bistro. They have completed a substantial renovation of the premises – gutting the entire restaurant top-to-bottom, including the cellar. The previous restaurant did not use the cellar and there was a significant rodent problem. The owners have invested well into \$100,000 to \$150,000 into the restaurant, and creating a very unique Indian restaurant. They will have limited hours, closing at 11:00 pm every night. Food will be the primary focus of the restaurant and they will rely more on food and delivery than wine and beer. The owners live in the community (near the restaurant on 117<sup>th</sup> between Fifth and Lenox) and this is their first liquor license and business in the community.

They plan to hire six people – two service people, two chefs, one dishwasher, one delivery person. They are committed to hiring people from the local community. In addition to hiring from the community, they hope to hire former Boulevard Bistro employees. The restaurant will serve modern and eastern Indian food. Most of the local Indian restaurants sell middle spicy to very spicy food. Indian Summer will serve more sweet flavors and introduce duck entrees. There will only be ambient music played and soundproofing is not planned. The owners have met the residents above. Currently, the brownstone is in the midst of being auctioned. Indian Summer will use the on-premise outdoor space in the warmer months. The signatures gathered were from the neighborhood. The anticipated opening is the end of November. Specifically, they hope to open before Thanksgiving but they are still waiting for the permits.

The entrance and interior bathrooms are handicap accessible. There are two steps from the sidewalk to the patio. There is a ramp (to be used as needed) for the two steps. Committee Member Cheryl Smith asked whether they had established a process or policy for a customer requesting the portable ramp. They have not yet determined the process for customers notifying the person inside that the customer needs the ramp. They will have to implement a system to address that. They suggested putting a small bell on the outside. Committee Member Charles Johnson asked about the signatures. There are only two tenants living above the building. They obtained eleven signatures and said they can obtain signatures and Committee Member Charles Johnson suggested about fifty signatures. Committee Member Cheryl Smith also suggested attending a Mount Morris meeting to obtain signatures.

The second presentation was from liquor license renewal for Renaissance Harlem. There have been no significant changes to the business over the past two years. They employ about twelve people. Their hours have remained from 9 am to 12 and Friday, Saturday until 1 AM. The capacity of Renaissance Harlem is 45 people. The menu has not changed. We also asked about business at Panty Bistro. They do not float employees between the two businesses because they are different styles. Renaissance Harlem is more fine dining. Renaissance has been open for two years and Panty Bistro has been open for five years. Panty was opened downtown in 2008. In the past two years – they have seen the neighborhood changing everyday. Committee Member Cheryl Smith asked if there were any challenge they see now or

they foresee occurring over the next two years. Not really but they always worry about what is to come - business can be up and down but rent is always going up. They give back to the community a lot. Most recently they catered the repast for a community member who was murdered. They do what ever they can to help. All of the employees are from Harlem. Terrance Buyerson from Strive, once brought about ten students to hear his story about working in the restaurant industry and opening a restaurant in the community. Committee Member Cheryl Smith encouraged the students present during the meeting to ask the owner a question. Years ago he came to the US, not speaking English and started as a dishwasher. And from there someone taught him how to cook and taught him the business, and since 2008 he has owned his own business.

The third presentation was for the liquor license renewal for Barrawine. Business has been good. They change the menu once or twice a year. The base of the menu is the same but they always try to change items on the menu. Barrawine has been open for six years. There have been no changes in their hours. Barrawine employs twenty-five people, and most of the staff is from the local neighborhood. Most of the staff has been there for five years. They have a strong team from after the first year. Committee Member Cheryl Smith asked about the change in the main entrance, to 120<sup>th</sup> Street. There have been no issues with the entrance. There have been no significant issues with theft at the sidewalk café. The owner works with the church across the street. The serve food to the homeless and have a food pantry – the owner brings food to the church. Most of the time is for them and they also work with other churches and schools as much as they can. There have been no police incidents or SLA violations in the past two years. They had an issue with people on the sidewalk and the police recommended that they call the police. They have not had any incidents inside of the restaurant.

They do not anticipate any changes. They are now more established, in the beginning they were reacting to the needs of the customers. They considered opening for lunch but they do not think the business is there for it. They see that Settepani across is doing well (during lunch) and there is no way they are going to compete with her. They are so happy she is serving lunch and doing well. The menu and cocktail menu they do not plan to change with the exception of one or two things. One of the students asked if they give young people the opportunity to work and gain experience at their restaurant. The owner responded that we all have a first day and the best thing is to train our people and to teach them. The owner also started in the business from scratch. Any new people are very welcome and it is great to have a mix of people on the team – people with experience and people with freshness and different experience. The attitude is the most important because in the service business you don't do things for yourself you do things for the client. It is not about you it is about the other. If you have that in the restaurant business, then you are very welcome and the rest we are going to teach you. If you have the right attitude it is always yes. The owner is open always to everyone. He gave an example of a new employee who has been with him for six months and he has been amazing. Another student asked about hiring employees from diverse ethnicities and without experience. The owner explained that Barrawine is as diverse as the community it is in. A community member also shared that because there are some businesses that don't have such nondiscriminatory practices, there is the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Committee Member Cheryl Smith asked about the previous issue with noise complaints from the resident above. The resident no longer lives there and the current residents have no issues with Barrawine.

Mart 125 – Marginal Neighborhoods Economic Development Corporation (MNEDC) – MNEDC is requesting a letter of support from the Community Board 10. They will be presenting to additional committees on the community board. MNEDC is a 501 c(3) and is a Chapter 14 – 11 which means it is quasi-government as well as being 501 c(3). They are chartered to work in all five boroughs of New York City. As a quasi-government entity, if the Office of the Mayor or anyone else has property and are not doing anything with that property within a certain length of time they have to turn it over to this organization. There are only two of these types of organizations in New York City. The Mart 125 was put there for vendors to use exclusively. There was supposed to be a replacement to the vacated Mart 125, and instead, it has been vacant for twenty-two years.

The MNEDC shared their plan for the Mart 125 space. They plan to have true affordable housing to help the community. They also want to put up a culinary institute – the food service industry is the second largest employer in the America.

They have established a relationship with a restaurant owner who will give opportunities to young people. They also want to create a place for merchants to grow their businesses. They are also setting aside a space for cultural activities. They believe the Mart 125 is the last bastion in the community. Committee Member Jennifer Prince asked for clarity around whether the MNEDC has worked on a project like this before and who are the people who are supporting them. A member Board Member and member of their Fundraising Committee explained that the MNEDC has not done a project this big before – they estimate it is a \$22 million project. The team is made up of members who have been involved in similar projects. They have received letters of support from Governor Patterson, Adam Clayton Powell, to a few notable contractors, have all come together with the right vision as far as the plan. The MNEDC is adamant on keeping majority interest for the community. They are still in proposal phase as far as negotiating with the private sector investors to determine what the right mix would be.

The organization was in hiatus and has now reformed their board. They are in a project preparation phase. They have gathered over a thousand petitions to show community support. However in order to get anything to stick, the key is site control. In order to get site control they want to ensure they have community support. Currently, the EDC has the site control. Site Control means that EDC has the property now. Ken Knuckles of Upper Manhattan Empowerment zone had site control previously and then he gave it back to EDC. They approached him to do a joint venture and he said he doesn't do joint-ventures. They have had a meeting with Genesis, Apex, and HCCI. Once they have Community Board support they will go to EDC. They will go to EDC and say they want to acquire site control as a quasi-government agency with community support and in return we hope they will give us the site control in the fine print. There are still so many hurdles for the MNEDC to go through once they have site control. Site control would then allow MNEDC to go to the bank and to investors and say that you have site control. The site control will last for x number of years and months; it does not mean that you have ownership of the property.

The Department of Cultural Affairs have already committed \$1 million and EDC has committed as much as \$13 million. The site control allows you to further investigate the space and determine an accurate amount for the project. Committee Member Mari Moss asked about EDC's involvement and desire for a thorough plan as opposed to EDC taking on a managerial role. Mrs. Bates answered that EDC does avoid management by their selection of the project. Committee Member Stanley Gleaton and Committee Member Cheryl Smith requested further information about what the MNEDC is requesting from the Community Board. Mrs. Bates said they are requesting support for the idea that the MNEDC has put together. They have not met with the Manhattan Borough President. The President of the MNEDC is a speech pathologist with the New York Board of Education and had a prior engagement and wasn't able to attend the meeting tonight. They have a campaign beginning where they are appealing to all the politicians in the district. The campaign is only requesting their support. Committee Member Stanley Gleaton asked for further clarity on the other community support. They are just now beginning to engage the elected-officials. They have created a template letter support – they have about four or five local businesses and restaurants. It is really up to the committee how they want to outline their support. But they want to show some sort of community buy-in. They are requesting a letter from the entire Community Board – and they are focusing on the committee's that are most relevant to the project.

Committee Member Victoria Horsford asked who the MNEDC is speaking to about capital funding for the project. They have a few high net worth individuals that are committed. Their idea was to have black capital and are unable to share their names as of yet because they do not have site control yet. Committee Member Shanelle Washington asked them to clarify what they believe affordable housing. They have structured what they believe to be as the most progressive ideas for affordable housing. They did a calculation of \$18,000 a year or lower. With some of the capital they are getting they will be able to do a joint-partnership with the 125<sup>th</sup> Street side of the street that can help to monetize the affordable housing on the back end. It is important that they get the site control because they understand the need. In conclusion, there will be affordable housing, a business incubator, cultural space, a fourteen story building – estimated at \$22 million for construction.

The committee members then moved into voting items. The committee began with discussion of the Indian Summer. Committee Member Cheryl Smith shared that she used to love going to Boulevard Bistro and stopped because of the rodent problem. She was pleased to hear that the new business did a full renovation of the full space – including the

cellar. The restaurant plans to open at the end of the month. There was a motion to support the new wine, beer, and cider license for Indian Summer made by Committee Member Cheryl Smith and it was seconded by Committee Member Mari Moss. The Committee agreed that the support would be contingent upon getting additional support for the new wine, beer, and cider license. The motion passed: 5 yes 1 no 1 abstention.

There was a motion made by Committee Member Mari Moss to support the renewal of the liquor license for Renaissance Harlem and seconded by Committee Member Victoria Horsford. There was no additional discussion on Renaissance Harlem. The motion passed: 4 yes 1 no 2 abstention.

There was a motion made by Committee Member Mari Moss to support the renewal of the liquor license for Barra wine. Committee Member Mari Moss asked for clarity about the previous issue that Barrawine experienced. Committee Member Cheryl Smith explained the tenant and sidewalk café issues. The tenant above complained about the noise level but he moved about two years ago. In the meantime the building has been sold. The entrance used to be on Lenox Avenue but a community member complained because of the proximity to the church – forcing the entrance to be on 120<sup>th</sup> Street. The owner does a lot of work with Mount Olivet, donating to the pantry service. Committee Member Cheryl Smith would like to learn more about the food pantry relationship. The motion passed 5 Yes 1 no 1 abstention.

The committee then discussed the MNEDC presentation and request for a letter of support. Committee Member Stanley Gleaton recommended that the organization return once they have engaged the elected officials. Committee Member Jennifer Prince clarified that the request is a letter of support for their plan and proposal. The question is whether the committee can support an idea and craft a letter of support that highlights the concept that the committee determines is most important. Committee Member Victoria Horsford explained that the organization that the Community Board did not support is still moving forward with fundraising from different groups, but MNEDC is far more community- centered. Committee Member Cheryl Smith reiterated the support of the concept and acknowledging that though the details of the project is not there, the community support for the project is there. By supporting the plan does not mean that we are all in. Committee Member Victoria Horsford suggested that they meet with the Empowerment Zone. The Board will likely have a lot of questions during the full board presentation. Committee Member Stanley Gleaton made a motion and Committee Member Mari Moss seconded the motion. Community Member Dr. Samuels said she did not understand why anyone would think that EDC has made good decisions about Harlem. They have been one of the culprits that have helped push the indigenous community out of Harlem. Just looking at what they did with the Victoria – and this board refused to say anything about it. The politics around that is sickening, and one day all of that will come out to the community. But EDC has not made good decisions for this community and because there is no 197 – A plan, time and time again they just did what they want along with some members of this board. Who were able to finagle to get properties or just sit on buildings until the money increased. We can make some changes from here on out as a community. This plan has a lot of community support, it may not have the politicians support – and this board because it is appointed by politicians may go along with them, but that is not what the community wants. And the board is supposed to be reflective of the community. So conceptual-wise it needs to be accepted and approved and if there are questions it needs to be brought to the MNEDC to allow them to respond to them. The community votes the politicians in who unfortunately votes the board –in. It is a circular problem. Decisions need to be made for this community, not for who wants to run for office and get money from the politicians to run. So, I would say as a community member and supporter the MNEDC should get support from this board this time. This one time support this for the community. The motion passed: 5 yes 0 no 2 abstention

Finally, the committee discussed the district needs statement. The committee reviewed the previous requests, which were mostly related to trash pick-up and rat abatement. Committee Member Jennifer Prince reminded the committee that the requests are declarative statements directed toward specific agencies. The statements can be beefed up with additional details. Committee Member Mari Moss talked about the plans from the city and state and the 197-a plan, and that the needle has not moved very much, regarding the huge poverty rate and unemployment rate. There is a reason business owners are asked about employment. The issues of job creation and supporting businesses with available resources in the community is important. Committee Member Jennifer Prince reiterated the need for statements that

are tied to an agency for the district needs statement. The statements are due in the next twenty-four hours, however moving forward the needs can be collected in an ongoing basis. Committee Member Cheryl Smith asked about the most recent data for the community and that it may have shifted. We all have presumptions but we should know what it is and it might prompt us to ask different questions. Committee Member Jennifer Prince said we will follow up with the office to see if the office can make sure the data is present during each meeting. Community Member Dr. Samuels said that the 125<sup>th</sup> Street BID has been a problem. All I see is buildings not owned by us, businesses we are not even in. I pointed out Dunkin Donuts at one of the meetings. When it is brought up they say talk to you later but the later never comes. Committee Member Jennifer Prince clarified that the BID is not a City Agency. However Community Member Dr. Samuels said from what she can see, the BID has a lot of influence over what is going on 125<sup>th</sup> Street. Dr. Samuels said as she said when she was growing up all she saw were black businesses growing up on Adam Clayton Powell and Frederick Douglass Boulevard. They don't exist anymore there is a real 'why' to why this is happening. These young people need to see people owning businesses outside of just restaurants and this is not happening. And for twenty years I have talked about this on this board. The National Urban League came to a Land Use meeting and did a presentation that was not clear. Dr. Samuels kept asking whether they could develop something for the street vendors to come in doors. She could never get an answer. There were other questions that people had in the meeting and could not really get an answer. Next thing she knows, there was another meeting and she doesn't know if the community knows what has been accepted. There is no clarity as to what it is going to be about. Again, similar to the Victoria somebody needs to be asking some questions. What is going on with the building and how does it effect our community economically. These things can not just be popping up. We need to know what is coming into our community. We let this happen all the time and after the fact we start crying about it. It happens because we take our eye on the ball. Let the community hear this, I don't see the positivity. Committee Member Jennifer Prince asked if Dr. Samuels is requesting that the National Urban League attend a subsequent meeting. Committee Member Shanelle Washington shared that small businesses do not have the capacity to employ people in our district. She asked if there was some way for us to come up with a resolution, so that developers who come into the district and pay zero taxes. You have to figure out what you want to ask for. The businesses are not able to pay employees to live here. It doesn't make sense if you are not going to deal with the economic development of the development. Right now we have all new developers and anyone who rehabilitates a building is paying zero taxes. Our school system is in the trash because no one is paying taxes. How are we going to create a labor force if we are not even asking for what is needed. We need developers to pay their share. Committee Member Jennifer Prince reiterated that the District Needs is not a thesis it is specific to the agency. A student visitor asked about supporting homeless with finding jobs.

Committee Member Shanelle Washington made an announcement about an upcoming panel on the cannabis industry.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 pm.