

Community Board 12 – Business Development Committee

Tuesday, June 2, 2020

Committee Members Present

Domingo Estevez, Chair
Tanya Bonner, Assistant Chair
Francisco Lopez
Nobles Crawford
Jonathon Frometa
Cindy Matos
Christina Richiez
Ashley Fernandez
Rafael Fernandez, Public Member

I. Welcome, Opening Remarks

- The meeting was called to order at 6:54pm by committee assistant chair, Tanya Bonner
- Tanya acknowledged the state of the world and the increased violence against the Black community and shared her thoughts

II. Reports

- Small Business Owner Testimonies
 - Cirilo Moronta, Owner of 809
 - Cirilo has been a part of the community for 45 years and as a Business owner in the community for 35 years.
 - He owns the grocery store on Nagle and Dyckman, Dyckman restaurant, and 809
 - Cirilo is very concerned about whether his businesses can stay afloat and generate the revenue they need to keep up with the rent. He has been closed since March 14th and has not opened 809 since. He was a recipient of the PPP loan but did not receive nearly as much to stay afloat for a few months. He also expressed the great lengths he had to go through to provide documents and paperwork. With the PPP loan, Cirilo can only use 25% to go to discretionary costs such as rent, food, and supplies. The remaining 75% have to go to the payroll of his employees. This then highlights a further issue as the businesses in CB12 employ many undocumented workers. The PPP loans do not take them into effect therefore leaving them at a greater disservice.
 - Domingo recommended Tanya weave that into her resolution and pointed to Angela Fernandez, Commissioner of the Division of Human Rights to provide context on what undocumented workers can do. Angela mentioned they can incorporate their business and pay taxes on that therefore allowing them to receive federal funding.
 - As far as utilizing spaces and receiving government funding, Nobles, Tanya, and Francisco all recommended using spaces uptown with large venues such as 809, Tenth Avenue, Lucky 7's as spaces for contact tracing, COVID-19 testing, and antibody testing

- Due to the Fordham events the night before where businesses were looted, Uptown businesses are taking precautions and safeguarding their property. It is an additional expense (Cirilo spent \$900 on plywood at Home Depot)
 - Domingo called into question the roles that corporate banks are having in the community - naming Banco Popular as the biggest lender of the PPP loans. He recommended canvassing businesses to see what the current state of their business is.
 - Elected Official Updates
 - Evelin Collado, representative from Councilmember Ydanis Rodriguez's office
 - Mentioned there are other loans outside of the PPP that are not paycheck related that businesses are eligible for. Reports that a lot of businesses in the community are not being approved for the loans and Evelin would like to know the status of most businesses.
 - There are legislations enacted by Councilmember Rivera and Councilmember Adams in relation to businesses and personal liability and provisions of leases and against the harassment of commercial tenants. This has become law. This prevents them from holding tenants liable for commercial leases.
 - There are resolutions Councilmembers are calling for to cancel 3 months of rent both residential and commercial or at least allow commercial tenants to be exonerated in property taxes or other ways to alleviate it.
 - Update to the SBJSA Bill - primary sponsor is Councilmember Rodriguez, there is a lot of pushback, there are some changes to the language that was recently introduced that concentrate on businesses above 96th street. Tanya asked if there is a hold on penalties and fines or a temporary suspension of fines. Evelin mentioned that there is a bill to change the way penalties are issued in the moratorium.
 - Carmen De La Rosa, Member of the NY State Assembly
 - Carmen introduced herself and shared her personal thoughts on the state of the world and the community and shared her frustration.
 - Assembly member De La Rosa then began with what she is not happy about. The first being the rent package she just passed and why she voted no. She felt that the rent package was not comprehensive or robust enough and would not deliver for the community. She mentioned that the package restores rent burden and for her it does not equal relief. It did not cover undocumented immigrants and people who are not traditionally employed. There are not enough protections for tenants.
 - She also mentioned that there has not been much done to interruption insurance. Pandemics are specifically prohibited from interruption insurance and she is working with other State Assembly members to specifically work on incorporating pandemics into the language of the bill.
 - They engaged with the BID that involves Grub Hub and other delivery apps. The city rolled out a cap at 15% delivery fee, ensuring that these delivery systems are not taking from small businesses.
 - State Comptroller announced \$50Million towards a small business relief job retention. There is no loan minimum but a maximum of \$350,000. 25% of the loan is targeting women and minority owned businesses. It is part of the \$484 Billion relief package included from the Federal Government.
 - CDLR is working on the excluded worker fund - an annual tax that would create \$5.5Billion dollars in state revenue that would work as a bail out for workers such as undocumented or who are not traditionally employed. They are projecting a \$3k monthly income for these families.

- With the resolution, Tanya is trying to capture all types of funding (private and government) be available to businesses and it is important that we have access to data in the spirit of transparency so we can identify areas of improvement.
- Committee member Nobles Crawford also mentioned that the resolution should address specifically data and business information to get more granular into who is receiving funding. Steve Simon suggested explicitly stating that most banks are local banks and non-chain banks
- Public member Rafael Fernandez wanted to clarify the SBA funding and shed light into the new loan. Regarding the New York FLF - Apple Bank is an investor and a lender for the FLF loan and can provide further resources and information on how to get funding.
- Resolution passed unanimously

IV. Community Partner Updates

- CLOTH, Jackie Tesman
 - Magic Johnson is issuing funding outside of PPP for small businesses
 - CLOTH tried to send out a survey to business owners for SBA recipients and only got 6 responses
 - They had to cancel their pop up event but are looking to host virtual events on Saturday from June 13th to August 29th. Each book club will feature an author, they will pay the artist for the work and will include raffles and books

Meeting adjourned at 9:10pm