

**Community Board 12, Manhattan: Business Development Committee Meeting  
November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

Present: Tanya Bonner (Vice-Chair), Cindy Matos, Francisco Lopez, Rafael Fernandez, Juan Guzman, Christina Richiez, Ashley Fernandez

Excused: Nobles Crawford, Domingo Estevez

**This meeting was called to order at 7:11 pm.**

**A. Welcome & Opening Remarks**

Vice Committee Chair Tanya Bonner opened up the meeting checking in with the board and community members, given the Presidential election's challenging times.

**B. Approval of Agenda**

Small changes were made to the agenda by Tanya Bonner. As the meeting was pushed back a week, it was challenging to get small businesses to accommodate this new time. The names of the presenters were added to the agenda. Ashley Fernandez motioned to approve this agenda, and Juan Guzman seconded.

**C. Committee Business**

a. **COVID and Small Business Protection** –Pauline Ferrante, Padmore John, Dr. Noel Mayindo, New York City Dept of Health/Mental Health

Located in East Harlem, the Harlem Neighborhood Response team supports all emergency response groups in Harlem and Upper Manhattan during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Noel Manyindo came on to share updates on the rise of COVID-19 in our area. He mentioned that there are new geographical areas added to the hotspot list every day. In 10033, there was a small increase in cases to trigger action from the emergency response team. They reached out to 163 partners to divulge information on preventative care as well as contact tracing. They also provided signs, floor decals, and masks in partnership with other community partners. There was a small decrease in cases.

At this time, 10034, 10031, and 10039 are considered hotspots as they currently sit above 2% in cases. Once New York City hits 3%, this threshold will prompt schools' shutdowns and businesses' restrictions.

The floor was opened up for questions for Dr. Mayindo. There was a concern about how DOH is communicating with individuals in the community. Dr. Mayindo believes that there needs to be a tailored approach to the needs of business people and services, focusing on small retailers and restaurants. Another question was about the patterns of the spread in gyms, supermarkets, and small stores. Dr. Mayindo mentioned that small indoor events with large groups of people are super spreader events. There is a small degree of protection in an outdoor environment.

Padmore's team is looking for materials to distribute to small businesses and Community Board 12, including flyers, posters, and decals that will reflect various languages. Pauline wanted to have a larger forum to crowdsource questions, needs,

and concerns to serve as a conduit and a resource for the community. Lorial Crowder from CLOTH shared that she plans on reaching out to this team to strengthen the support for COVID-19 in this community.

**b. Update on the Small Business Jobs Survival Act (SBJSA), and the Need in the time of COVID -19- David Eisenbach**

David opened up by giving us context into this bill. This bill was first introduced in 1986, initially introduced by Ruth Messinger. Real estate speculation has created a system for landlords to make more money, not renting the storefront than renting it. What SBJSA does is put into place a system where every new lease requires a provision. When it comes time for the new lease, the tenant and landlord must agree on the rent, and if they do not, they have to go in front of an arbitrator. This person will then analyze rent history and the greater rent prices in the area and explore a fair rent price. It also eliminates the 'pass along' (surprise hidden fees such as property taxes or water bills that are not explicitly written into the lease but implied via provisions). It protects immigrant-owned businesses by Landlords that require cash to receive a lease offer. SBJSA brings transparency to the process of protecting the tenants and businesses and contributing to the economy via jobs and tax revenue.

In 2018, David and his team met with Corey Johnson to push this bill, but the conversations were stalled as the mayor came out against this bill and proposed rent stabilization. COVID-19 has exacerbated open storefronts' dilemma; however, David and his team believe the time is now. David urged the board to keep pushing our officials as our City, and State governments are adamantly against the bill. His proposal is encouraging our City Council members to bring this to a vote.

COVID-19 has exacerbated this situation. Landlords have no incentive to bring rents down. What they can do is ask for double or triple the rent and get a reappraisal of their building regardless of a tenant accepting this rent price, thus increasing their property value, which makes them eligible for larger bank loans. SBJSA's goal is to keep tenants in their spaces as they look to keep rents reasonable.

Vice-Chair Tanya Bonner suggested David come back and continue to work with the board, recommending the board resolve to provide language that supports David and his team.

**c. Discussion of the City's New Open Storefronts Program**

Tanya Bonner opened this agenda item by giving more context into the Open Storefronts Program and sharing her plan to bring DOT into the December board meeting. It assists ground floor storefront businesses to conduct activity on sidewalks and roadways temporarily. This program started October 30<sup>th</sup> and will continue to December 31<sup>st</sup> and is all self-permitted. Businesses apply and are

**d. Community Partner Updates – CLOTH**

Lorial Crowder, the Small Business Program Director, shared that their annual gala is on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020, and tickets start at \$25.

November 28<sup>th</sup> is small business day/ Small Business Saturday, and CLOTH is partnering with AMEX to garner some interest from small businesses.

Their annual tree lighting will continue to occur, and dates will come out shortly and be shared by Lorial.

Vice-Chair, Tanya, recommended the committee create a proclamation in support and acknowledgment of Small Business Saturday. She then moved this to a vote in which it passed unanimously 7-0-0 (7 committee members present) from the board and a unanimous yes from community members.

**D. Old Business/New Business/ Announcements/ Adjournments**

**Old Business:** Back on August 4<sup>th</sup>, there was a Health and Environmental meeting to address noise in which Tanya Bonner suggested a task force be created to address these issues. A diverse group of 22 people, 8 identify as Hispanic or Latino, four identify as Black or African American, 1 identifies as Middle Eastern, and nine as white or Caucasian. It is evenly split between Washington Heights and Inwood, and the vast majority live and work in CB12. The majority of the members have been in this neighborhood ranging from 2-40 years.

Francisco Lopez had questions about the goal and mechanisms of enforcement of this taskforce. Tanya clarified that the task force will not serve as an enforcement committee but will identify the issues that affect the health and environment of CB12 residents. The task force will create resolutions on priority areas to gather feedback to provide tangible solutions that determine who will be accountable.

**This meeting was adjourned at 8:46 pm.** Motioned by Francisco Lopez and seconded by Ashley Fernandez.