



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4

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JOHN WEIS
Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.
District Manager

PUBLIC MEETING

DATE: Wednesday, February 3, 2010
TIME: 6:30 p.m.
PLACE: Fulton Center Auditorium, 119 Ninth Avenue (17/18)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PRESENTATION: Douglas Hill, a systems engineer, presently a consultant to the Regional Plan Association on climate change issues and to the Energy Technology Systems Analysis Programme of the International Energy Agency, will provide a short Power Point on the dangers of climate change to NYC.

MEETING AGENDA

- Public Session Corey Johnson
Adoption of Agenda John Weis
Adoption of Last Month's Minutes
Reports
Manhattan Borough President Sandy Myers
Local Elected Officials Various
District Manager Robert J. Benfatto, Jr.
Chair John Weis
Committee Reports John Weis
Committee Letters & Resolutions John Weis
(letters and resolutions, see reverse)
Old Business John Weis
New Business
Adjournment

PRESENTATION

Douglas Hill gave a power point discussion about some of the projected affects of a warming climate on the New York City harbor area. Much of the city is coastal and low lying subject even now to flooding at high tide during storms. With increasing ocean levels expected over the next century, these tidal surges will be exacerbated and create extensive damage. A possible solution is to protect the lands adjacent to the inner harbor and the East River with flood barriers somewhere around the Narrows and at Arthur Kill and Throggs Neck. Other cities such as London and Rotterdam have made use of such man made barriers. These locations would protect much of the city but would still leave the southern shores of Staten Island, southeast Brooklyn, JFK, and the Rockaways exposed.

REPORT OF ELECTEDS (out of agenda order) State Senator Tom Duane appeared and as a courtesy spoke at this point in the meeting. He reported on his activity in Albany and the issues facing the State Senate. Later on the Public Session was interrupted for the appearance of State Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal who is on the Assembly's Tourism/Arts Committee and spoke about the critical role of the arts in New York City. She also mentioned her actions to stop vacancy decontrol legislation. The Public Session was also stopped towards its end to enable Councilmember Gail Brewer to speak. She described some of the

budget cuts and the lack of funding for youth programs and she gave an update on the Windemere.

### **PUBLIC SESSION**

Nineteen people signed-in.

Jan Buttram of West 36th Street spoke about the importance of the theater to New York City's cultural life and its economy and supported the recommendations of the Theater Task Force.

Robert Cain from the US Census Bureau announced that there were job opportunities to be had with the Bureau for the upcoming decennial census. Workers would be involved with the follow-up to the mailed questionnaires. Part-timers and temporary positions will be available with up to 8,000 jobs in Manhattan alone. The Bureau needs translators and for the last week in March training sites.

Lauren Danziger of the Greenwich Village/Chelsea Chamber of Commerce spoke in favor of Item #35 which was her organization's application for a street fair on West 24th Street on June 12th. This would be a new street fair with representatives of major non-profits in the neighborhood and local businesses. One hundred percent of the proceeds would go to community organizations.

Shay Gines of the NY Innovative Theater, David Gruber of Community Board 2's Arts Committee, Kathleen Treat of the Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association, Ginny Loulouides of the Alliance of Resident Theatres/New York, and Jeff Leenan of West 29th Street all spoke of the economic importance of the theater to New York and CB 4 and in favor of the recommendations of the Theater Task Force including rebates to landlords for renting space to performing arts groups.

Frank Dermini of West 34th Street described the changes to his area when part of Dyer Avenue was closed and he spoke for continuing the closure.

The Committee for Better Transit's David Kupferberg discussed the MTA's proposed service changes and the affect it will have on CB4. He urged everyone to attend hearings scheduled for March 4 at FIT.

Katherine Consuelo Johnson spoke in support of Item #36 which is an application for a new street fair on West 44th Street to raise funds for a PS 51 production of Peter Pan. It will be run by PS 51 Players Neverland Carnival.

Martha Hauze announced a hotline for Mexican nationals.

### **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND**

**THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY BOARD MEETING** After the Public Session the agenda for the night's meeting was adopted without changes.

The Board accepted the January minutes as submitted by the new Co-Secretary of CB4, Paul Seres.

**REPORT OF MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT SCOTT STRINGER** represented by Sandy Myers Myers reported on the efforts to keep St. Vincent's Hospital open as an acute care facility with a functioning emergency room and specialized clinics. She also updated the Board on the anti-gay attack on Ninth Avenue in the fall; the alleged perpetrator has been located in England and charges will be filed against him in a military court. The internal NYPD investigation into the incident and how it was handled is continuing.

The BP believes there should be more LGBT sensitivity training and hate crime stats should be more widely distributed.

In the area of education, the BP recently issued a report on school closings. He concluded there needs to be more transparency in the decision making processes concluding with school closings.

### **REPORTS OF OTHER ELECTEDS**

Katherine Smith reported on the activities of Congressman Jerold Nadler.

Melanie LaRoca introduced the new representative of Councilmember Christine Quinn, Amanda Younger. The Councilmember is proud of the newly designated Lamarine Landmark District voted up by the Council.

**REPORT OF THE DISTRICT MANAGER** ROBERT J. BENFATTO Bob announced that the move of the central intake for homeless people

will be moving from Bellevue to West 35th Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues. He is investigating the impact this will have on the block and the neighborhood and will report on developments as they unfold.

### **REPORT OF CB 4 CHAIR JOHN WEIS**

John outlined the proposed expense budget cuts that will affect the Board's operations. He described the current situation at St. Vincent's Hospital. He also stressed the importance of the upcoming Census.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS – LETTERS & RESOLUTIONS**

#### **Executive Committee**

Item 1: Letter to DCA re Thompson Rest Inc (dba Don Giovanni)

Item 2: Letter to DCA re 953 Associates LLC (aka Eatery)

The Board ratified action of the Executive Committee in accepting these renewals for unenclosed sidewalk cafes. Before voting, a lively discussion ensued about the nature of grating around sidewalk trees and the consequences

they have both on the trees themselves and on the measurement of useable pedestrian space on the sidewalk in front

of unenclosed cafes; and what is or what should be CB 4's position.

Chair John Weis described this as a messier issue than one would expect.

Christine Berthet argued that the Dept of Parks on its website makes specific reference to gratings least harmful to trees and these recommendations are not followed by the Dept of Consumer Affairs which approves sidewalk café applications. CB 4 should go with what Parks suggests is best. Joe Rusticia felt that there was enough ambiguity that we should wait until we hear from Parks before we change CB 4's policy.

John agreed and said that the even before these applicants showed up the Board had requested Parks to answer our questions. To date this has not happened. Lisa Daglian emphasized that in her view Parks only states a preference, not a regulated demand.

### **Landmarks**

Item 3: Letter to Landmarks Preservation Commission on 331 West 21st Street. Ed Kirkland spoke for the committee describing the situation and the violations to be cured.

Passed.

### **Transportation Planning**

Item 4: Letter to the MTA about changing the West 43rd Street bus stop of the M16.

Item 5: Letter to the MTA about the design of the four fan plants for the # 7 subway extension. It was suggested that the span of the driveways be reduced and that the facades be more pedestrian friendly.

Item 6: Letter to Congressman Jerold Nadler and Senator Chuck Schumer regarding four transportation projects located in CB 4 we would want to be partially funded through the next federal economic stimulus package. Walter Mankoff wanted a fifth to be added to our list, the bus garage, but this was rejected since it is not ready to go. Overall, Lisa thought this letter should be tabled until the Board had a better sense of what actual legislation will emerge from Congress.

Item 7: Letter to Manhattan Commissioner of the DoT Margaret Forgiore re changing traffic patterns on Ninth Avenue to enhance pedestrian safety and better direct Lincoln Tunnel traffic.

Item 8: Letter to DoT PANYNJ Chair Chris Ward about closing permanently The northbound lane of Dyer Avenue between West 34th and 35th Streets.

Item 9: Letter to Manhattan Commissioner of the DoT Margaret Forgiore Re parking regulations on West 15th Street and Ninth Avenue.

All these items passed.

### **Waterfront and Parks**

Item 10: Letter to Jenifer Lantzas, Public Arts Coordinator about art to be displayed on and or around the High Line.

Item 11: Letter to Mayor Bloomberg urging him to undertake a feasibility study of possible storm surge barriers around New York City.

Both items approved.

### **Business Licenses & Permits North**

In beginning the discussion of the letters from both BL&P committees, Lee Compton raised the issue about distinguishing in our letters what is something to be stipulated as a condition of licensure and what is simply a description of a business' ordinary method of operation.

Items 12 through 21: All these items passed.

### **Business Licenses & Permits South [Chelsea]**

The meeting of the BL&P South Committee did not have a quorum so none of the letters to the SLA introduced at this full Board meeting were voted on in committee. They represent the sense of the committee members present at the time.

Items 22 through 26: It was first thought that letters to the SLA regarding applications for various types of alcohol serving licenses should be sent to the Executive Committee. Subsequently, it was decided that they should go back to the committee to be reviewed at its February meeting. The discussion at times was confusing and the Board Chair had to intervene expressing frustration. He tried to clarify our actions. At one point Item 25 was considered for postponement but this move was voted down and the Board approved the application.

Items 27 through 31: Letters to the DCA for unenclosed sidewalk café renewals were all approved.

### **Quality of Life/Education, Libraries, and Cultural Affairs**

Items 32 through 36: Letters to SAPO re street fairs in May and June and seasonal farmers' markets.

The applications were all passed.

None of the other standing committees had items to report out to the full Board.

### **New Business**

Item 37: Letter to Hon Christine Quinn concerning the possibility of a real estate tax credit or other incentives to landlords who rent space to non-profit performing arts groups. David Pincus of CB 4's Theater Task Force spoke

for the letter saying the idea emerged from an on going conversation with other community boards and their arts committees. Two other boards have already sent this letter to the Council Speaker. Walter stated that he had no problem with the content of the letter but didn't understand the emergency nature necessitating its introduction under new business. David responded by saying that the Task Force had approved it but that its meeting date was only a few days ago. John added that it was new business because the letter had not gone to the Executive Committee first because of this timing issue.

Item 38: Letter to Mayor Bloomberg about funding and implementing the HKNA originated plan for a "Green Necklace" of parks near Dyer Avenue.

Item 39: Board voted to have the Executive Committee write a letter in support of St. Vincent's Hospital and the continuing negotiations attempting to save this health care institution critical to the life of CB 4's neighborhoods and the whole lower West Side.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Burt Lazarin