

Monday, January 13 8:30 AM – 10:30 AM

Pace University

1 Pace Plaza

New York City

## **MINUTES**

After a fire drill, the meeting began late at approximately 9:00 AM. Bob Yaro opened the meeting by reminding the Civic Alliance that the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation would host their first public hearing of the year that evening at Pace University in the auditorium of the Michael Schimmel Center for the Arts. Ron Shiffman will testify on behalf of the Civic Alliance. His testimony will mostly center on the lack of an adequate public process for gathering input and lack of clear decision making process for rebuilding.

Bob Yaro added that LMDC is moving forward to finish a master plan for the site by January 31 [at the public hearing Monday evening Alex Garvin stated that the master plan will not be completed until mid February.] The Civic Alliance has called for a better public process and has not received a response.

Ron Shiffman clarified that his testimony will not criticize any of the designs but rather the program they are all based upon.

Bob Yaro opened up the meeting to discussion around the planning process and the status of public input.

Paul Elston stated that he was not clear on the relationship between the current designs resulting from the Innovative Design Study, and how the Master Plan will be created. He thought the current designs are excellent. The LMDC has responded to many of our recommendations such as creating civic amenities and connections to the waterfront. He urged Ron to recognize the positive elements of the plans in his testimony.

Gail Karlsson noted that it was difficult to determine to what extent criteria for green building design has been incorporated into the current designs.

Paul Elston replied that it may not be possible to get the answer until the design process moves further along.

Nancy Owens echoed Paul's sentiment that we shouldn't go in and say everything is terrible because there are a lot of positive attributes to the current designs. She also observed that it is difficult to compare the different designs to each other because there is no comparable format that each one is produced in. Also, on the subject of doing another Listening to the City, she stated that she did have some reservations. She is not sure whether that format will be able to get into enough specifics to be useful. At this point, an environmental and qualitative analysis is needed. It's not clear whether there is enough criteria on the table to judge the nine new designs at the ground level.

Ethel Sheffer asked, how will the land use plan of the LMDC be reconciled with the Ekstut plan from the Port Authority? She is not sure whether a Listening to the City will be useful. Certainly it should look at the LMDC master plan in the context of the Mayor's Vision, as opposed to comparing the nine plans to one another.

Bob Yaro clarified that a third Listening to the City would be held after the LMDC has come up with its Master Plan. This would be evaluated in the context of other plans such as the Mayor's Vision. This is a proven formula that we know will engage the public, engage the media and affect the process.

Ron Shiffman reminded the group that the last Listening to the City did not just discuss the plans, but also the economy, infrastructure, jobs and other vital issues affecting the region.

Coco Gordon pointed out that working groups of the Civic Alliance have already developed specific recommendations and we should draw on these in the advocacy we do instead of retreating to generalities.

Al Papp Jr. made the point that all of the nine plans deal with above-ground and asked what is going on in each one below ground. He also brought our attention to an excellent piece in the Wall Street Journal that ran last Friday, written by Ada Louise Huxtable. Bob asked Petra to send out the piece by email with the Civic Alliance minutes.

Rocky Chin asked, where is the integration or comparison of all nine proposals? We need to adapt a comprehensive approach to planning for the WTC Site. He stated that he was in favor of another Listening to the City as an effective public input process.

Nancy Owens— Alex Garvin had said that there may be 2 or 3 plans chosen in the next step. She thought that LMDC would use their money wisely to create a database of all the studies that are out there on Lower Manhattan. As she found when working in the planning workshop, accessing all the relevant data is difficult and time consuming.

George Penesis thought that MAS was trying to create such a database. New York New Visions has evaluated the 9 schemes and come up with a 35-page document that will be

available tonight. The LMDC also released a CD-ROM which contains information on all nine proposals.

Paul Epstein brought everyone's attention to the work of the Scorecard working group. They have developed a draft rating scale (1 to 10) for public participation. 10 is the highest, one is the lowest. The latest work of the LMDC is cruising near the low end of the scale. Paul suggested that the rating scale could be incorporated into the next Listening to the City, so that the public could actually determine the shape of the public process. He passed out the draft rating scale, which is included with the email containing these minutes.

Bonnie Harken approved of the idea of examining the public process over the long term. She challenged the idea of a "final decision" regarding the master plan. This is a long process. If we do another Listening to the City we must be careful to shape the program effectively because it is a powerful tool. We also must hold the public agencies accountable to provide the necessary information.

Joanne Derwin stated that she understood the need for a deliberative process but expressed her hope that there are certain portions of the rebuilding that can be initiated immediately, such as transportation infrastructure.

David Kallick echoed that everyone is frustrated by the backwards process that we are embroiled in at the moment. However, it is important to recognize that within the nine proposals there are some great aspects that we should recognize and reinforce.

Bob Yaro seized on the excellent segue way into a policy framework that was drafted for review and distributed at the beginning of the meeting. Before introducing it he commented that of all the nine plans, two of them were interesting to him because they "broke the rules" and made civic use the centerpiece of the designs: these were the designs by Libeskind and the THINK team.

Beverly Willis announced that R.Dot was coming out with a retail position paper this Thursday. They have analyzed the need for retail throughout all of Lower Manhattan. Working with Alan Gerson, RDOT set up a city-wide committee, and has received strong support from retailers like Simms and the Rouse Company. We need to support retail that is spread out throughout Lower Manhattan as opposed to focused solely on or under the Trade Center site.

Beverly Dolinsky raised the concern that the transportation advisory council of the LMDC has not met in months. LMDC needs to make its transportation study public and provide better access to information.

Ellie King asked, what is the relation of the location of the PATH train and the nine new designs?

Gene Russianoff pointed out that there is no public process planned for after the release of the master plan next month.

Bob Yaro concurred. It's frustrating, he said. We asked a year ago for a game plan for the planning process. Instead, the agencies act according to the political exigencies of the moment. But, the master plan decision made in February might just be one milestone in a two-year process.

Nancy Owens referred to the draft policy statement and suggested that we restate the point the recommends limiting retail development.

Bob Yaro agreed that the point was referring to the limiting of retail space on the WTC site and particularly underground. It will be revised.

Beverly Willis stated that one of R.Dot's concerns is that the so-called transit hub planned for Broadway/Nassau streets is beyond the scope of the nine new designs.

Al Papp recommended that Civic Alliance be more specific about its transportation recommendations in the policy statement.

At this point the discussion shifted to plans for the Civic Alliance's testimony at the LMDC public hearing in the evening. David Kallick pointed out that tonight would be an opportunity to engage the nine plans and that we should focus our testimony on that. Some of the ideas contained in the plans (like keeping the 8 acre bathtub for civic use) could gain political momentum and we should push for that. Jeff Zupan added that between the analysis that New York New Visions has done and the Civic Alliance's draft policy statement, we have the beginnings of some statements that can resonate with all of the groups. However, we need to boil down the complexity to some key issues that everyone can understand.

Bob Yaro: We need a place that can be a catalyst for the future of Lower Manhattan. It's not a "city in the sky" that we want but a "city on the ground!"

George Penesis suggested the addition of a bullet to the policy statement about public process.

Paul Elston voiced his concern about our lack of understanding about the issues that are informing our policy. This stage in the process deserves a more specific response. We should provide an audience for the New York New Visions analysis. He stated that he was skeptical about a LTC 3, but he was skeptical about LTC 2, and it was a great success. Again, he recommended that we convene a group around what New York New Visions has written.

Ethel Sheffer repeated something that Alex Garvin had said last week – that every one of these designs is 5% of what will need to be done. He even said, "We will need to lay out

parcels, etc.” The good work of New York New Visions is clearly what LMDC and Alex Garvin are relying on.

Bob Yaro summarized the policy statement again in light of everyone’s comments and then left the meeting to catch a train, leaving Ron Shiffman to moderate the rest of the meeting.

Petra Todorovich gave a brief update on follow up to the Civic Alliance Planning and Design Workshop on lower Manhattan, thanking everyone who was involved, who attended the midcourse correction and the presentation on December 18. She added that the “Overnight Draft” had been printed and was available at the door. RPA was putting together a more polished and concise executive summary that would be widely distributed and follow-up would be conducted with the people who were contacted before the planning workshop through our outreach efforts. She then turned it over to Colin Cathcart, who was one of the workshop participants and who gave a brief update on the results of the workshop.

Colin summarized that there were three scenarios or stories that their teams worked with that played out over all of Lower Manhattan. The first, the Global Office Center came up with a new green building prototype and looked at expanding office development along certain corridors throughout Lower Manhattan. The Creative Hubs team looked at ways to make downtown more fine-grained and mixed use. They looked at the possibility of converting “soft buildings” as opposed to “soft sites” and large public investments in streetscape, greening, and amenities to leverage private investment, echoing the recommendations in the Mayor’s Vision. The Livable Neighborhoods team focused on amenities, parks, kids, and housing to answer some of New York’s housing needs and strengthen neighborhoods throughout Lower Manhattan, preserving LM’s core of low and middle income housings, as well as augmenting it. Finally, a regional team looked at targeted infrastructure investments to support downtown’s growth.

Ron Shiffman encouraged everyone to take a look at the “Overnight Draft,” which is really worth a good read.

Lance Brown, who chaired the workshop, added his comments to Colin’s. He added that one aspect that developed during the workshop, which was somewhat surprising was that the three scenarios overlapped a great deal and tended to support each other. For example, all of the groups looked at the potential for linking Chinatown with other parts of Lower Manhattan, but also the possibility of developing new activities there. He went on that some people who had read the report observed that there were few recommendations for the WTC site. In fact, each scenario develops an attitude about the site which is synthetic rather than isolated. Lance’s only concern is that we don’t distribute the information from the workshop effectively to the people who need it. With the exception of the Mayor’s vision there is a parity of information on the context of the WTC site (the whole of Lower Manhattan.) He also recommended that when we distribute the executive summary we send out the full “Overnight Draft.”

The meeting concluded at approximately 10:30 AM.