

CIVIC ALLIANCE TO REBUILD DOWNTOWN NEW YORK
Meeting Minutes

Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
Monday, February 25, 2002
8:30 AM

Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton
One Liberty Plaza
Room 3901

1. Introduction and Welcome

Bob Yaro, President of Regional Plan Association opened up the meeting and thanked our host, Jonathon Ball at Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen and Hamilton.

2. Social Economic and Environmental Justice: Ron Shiffman, SEEJ co-chair, Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development introduced the presentation.

- The theme of this task force was included in the original Civic Alliance Mission Statement, “How the regeneration of downtown can be part of a program that lifts and benefits the whole city and metropolitan region. In particular, how the needs of low-income communities and workers can be met?”
- Approach based on RPA’s 1996 *A Region at Risk* – the “3 Es”
 - Equity, Economy, Environment
 - When these three qualities come together we have Quality of Life
- Goals
 - Improve prosperity for all persons within the region
 - A healthy and just environment
 - Vibrant and sustainable growth
 - Juncture is improved quality of life
- Healthy and Sustainable Communities: Cecil B. Corbin-Mark, West Harlem Environmental Action Coalition
 - Think holistically
 - Schools – children, of residents and workers, should be put at the center
 - Mobility – rethink and revitalize infrastructure
 - Civic amenities – distribute resources more equitably
 - Built environment – place that fosters creativity and quality of life
- Affordable Housing: Joe Weisbord: Housing First!
 - Housing First! is a consortium of business, civic, and labor groups (much the Civic Alliance) that aims to expand public involvement in affordable housing.

- Housing is essential, universal and fundamental
- Housing provides the foundation for civic and community life
- Deteriorated housing conditions negatively affect the health and education of children.
- Housing fundamentally affects life chances
- Homelessness is costly to the city and state.
- Currently lack of housing creates negative spillovers and neighborhood, citywide and regional impacts
- Guiding Principles
 - Mixed use community – land, building, space
 - Mixed incomes – optimize spatial mobility
 - Ladder of housing opportunities – provide for all lifestyles, over time
 - Public investment -- to cover gap between cost and ability to pay
 - Sustainability – housing for service sector who are priced out of city they serve
- Economic Development: David Kallick: Fiscal Policy Institute
 - Most New York families did not experience income gains in the 1990s
 - New Policies
 - Diversified economy – beyond financial sector
 - Carefully examine decentralization within the city and region
 - Consider who is the receiving community
 - Allow them to participate in discussion
 - Downtown Business Growth
 - Investment rather than subsidy from public sector
 - Accommodate all sizes of businesses
 - Create job-training at all levels, entry through career development
 - Provide education – elementary, secondary, higher, 2-yr, 4-yr, vocational
 - Give priority attention to the sectors where jobs were lost
 - Mostly low-wage
- Environmental Quality, Protection and Justice: Cecil B. Corbin-Mark, West Harlem Environmental Action Coalition
 - Environmental air quality was unclear to residents, workers.
 - In the future, must coordinate and disseminate information to residents and workers
 - Regulations for rebuilding
 - Must be careful – unintended consequences of regulations
 - Environmental standards for worker health and safety
 - Standards that apply to both union and non-union workers
 - How to achieve environmental standards in a sensitive way?
 - Sustainability means a competitive region
 - Juncture between Equity, Economy, Environment: Justice

- These principles must be fully integrated into Civic Alliance work product
- These principles are inalienable – fundamental to the rebuilding process
- If followed, rebuilding process will be world model – their eyes are on us

3. Open Discussion

- Residents
 - have heard that decisions will be made at higher levels, concerns that these therapeutic meetings are a waste of time
 - are moving out of downtown because it is becoming clear what a long process rebuilding will be
- Bob Yaro's response
 - we all have reason to fear the possibility of private deals, this is the default mode
 - however, collectively we have a greater voice than individually
 - Civic Alliance must develop recommendations then become forceful advocates
 - work collectively
 - It's an election year: the Governor needs to listen
- Peggy Shepard
 - Must press for involvement and participation of those affected
- Paul Elston
 - General sentiment that everyone really is trying to do "the right thing"
 - Leading issues – Building #7 and transportation proposals
 - Civic Alliance must position itself to mediate between public and private interests
- Concerns about the Advisory Committee
 - Composition – Steve Weber monitoring and making recommendations
- Ron Shiffman
 - It is as important to invest in the human capital downtown as it is to compensate them financially.
- The leading issue right now is WTC 7. We should use this as a place to "cut our political teeth."
- Who is going to be at the table? Residents of Chinatown and the Lower East Side should also be included.
- There is a lot of talk about "mixed-use." In the 1970's, the artists and pioneers who moved downtown for its big inexpensive loft spaces helped make it mixed use because they were working out of lofts and starting small businesses. There weren't a lot of services or amenities back then. We have had to fight for a really long time to bring downtown to what it was pre-September 11. Now some people are sick of fighting.
- Ron Shiffman: We would like to hear from some of the co-chairs of the working groups with their response to the SEEJ presentation.
 - Jeff Zupan, Transportation Committee

- Transportation needs for residents including mobility and walkability are important. Also important: how the street system is connected to the transit system.
- How do we allocate space between buildings: vehicular space versus pedestrian space
- How do we get workers from all parts of the region to downtown. Currently we have crowding. Pre-September 11 the ferries played a limited role, now they play a huge role. But, since ferries are not government subsidized, they are only available to those who can afford to take them.
- The SOV rule has had a positive effect. How do we sustain it in the long run?
 - Comment: we also need to consider the movement of goods.
 - Chris Jones, Economic Development Committee.
 - Our group is looking closely at the diversification of the economy downtown and the possibilities for decentralization.
 - Does downtown need a core financial services industry?
 - How much can it be decentralized?

4. More Open Discussion:

- Comments from the floor:
 - We are in an unusual situation where it is not clear who is making the decisions. Normally there would be a SEQRA or EIS process.
 - How do we get the voice of the Civic Alliance to governmental leadership? The Civic Alliance has a responsibility to create a public liaison committee.
 - The Civic Alliance should send a letter advocating that federal funds be used for job training.
- Eva Handhardt, Municipal Art Society
 - MAS is sponsoring “Imagine New York” starting on March 14. For more information go to www.imaginewyork.org.

5. Letters for Consideration

- Letter to Governor Pataki requesting amendment to Green Buildings Tax Credit for Lower Manhattan
- Letter supporting the restoration of Floatbridge #4 at West 69th street to provide high speed Ferry service to Battery Park City.
 - For both these letters, please email Petra@rpa.org to sign on.

6. Closing

- Bob Yaro
 - Thank you to the SEEJ group for a thoughtful presentation.
 - When we get into the specifics of rebuilding, we will really see the results of your work. Going forward, we will need to ask such questions as:
 - What percentage of housing should be low income?
 - What percentage of retail business can be owned by minorities, women, etc?
 - The WTC7 issue will need to be heard sooner rather than later.
 - Next Civic Alliance Meeting is Monday, March 11 at 8:30 AM.

Attendance:

Alex Viado, Citizens Union
Arthur Fried, NYU Center for Excellence in New York City Governance
Beverly Willis, RDOT
Bob Yaro, RPA
Bruce Rosen, NYC Department of City Planning
Cara Griffin
Cecil D. Corbin-Mark, WEACTION Inc.
Charles Lai, Asian American Federation
Christopher Faulhaber, New York New Visions
Christopher Jones, RPA
Daniel I. Slippen, Pace University
David Kallick, Fiscal Policy Institute
Diana Balmori, New York New Visions
Edward L Falterman, New York Metro American Society for Public Administration
Ellie King, Women's City Club
Erin Donnely
Eva DeBuisson
Eva Handhardt, MAS
Gail Karlsson, Citizens Network for Sustainable Development
Gail Miller, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
George McAnanama, Transit Workers Union - Local 100
George Penesis, Konhem & Ketcham
Jeff Zupan, RPA
Jeremy Reiss
Joan Byron, PICCED
Joe Weisbord, Housing First!
Jonathon Ball, Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton
Kara Haily, Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton
Karen Kahn, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
Katherine Brower, PCAC to the MTA
Laura Engler, Manhattan Borough President's Office
Linda Stone Davidoff, Citizens Union
Margaret Hughes, Good Old Lower East Side
Maurice Paprin, Business Labor Community Coalition
Melissa Saunders, University of Pennsylvania
Micaela Birmingham, Municipal Art Society
Michael Bradley, Riverside South Planning Corporation
Nancy B Fray
Nancy Owens, Community Board One
Nicole Brown, NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund
Patricia Lancaster
Paul Elston, NY League Conservation Voters

Paul Epstein, NY Metro ASPA
Peggy Shepard, West Harlem Environmental Action Coalition
Peggy Shiller National Parenting Association
Peter Marcuse, Columbia University
Petra Todorovich, RPA
Rivka Mazar
Rocky Chin
Ron Shiffman, PICCED
Sandy Hornic, NYC Department of City Planning
Steve Weber, RPA
Tara Colton, NYU Center For Excellence in New York City Governance
Tom Dallesio, RPA
Tova Wang, The Century Foundation
Toya Williford, RPA