

Meeting Notes

Civic Alliance General Meeting

Tuesday, May 13, 2003

Pace University Multi-Purpose Room

The meeting opened with an update on the programmed public events of the Civic Alliance around the concept of "Beyond 16 acres" and key planning issues in downtown. The planned "civic summit" will now occur in the fall and is now to be preceded by a series of focused workshops such as the Fulton commercial corridor, Chinatown revitalization and housing in Lower Manhattan. These workshops and conference will be sponsored by a partnership of coalitions including the Civic Alliance, R.Dot, LCAN, Imagine New York and possibly New York New Visions.

The Civic Alliance and its partner coalitions will provide a forum for public input through this series of meetings. It will also serve to advance the agenda of revitalizing all of Lower Manhattan. The goals of the workshops are to move forward planning efforts in Lower Manhattan, and change the way public input is typically gathered by public agencies by providing forms that are interactive and consensus-building. Member organizations were asked what issues they will be addressing in the following months. R.Dot is leaning towards continuing its street management plan and developing studies around the issues of Arts and Culture for downtown, continuing its retail proposal and advancing a housing project with PICCED. Organizations such as Municipal Art Society and the Lower Manhattan Emergency Preservation Fund expressed their interest in historic preservation in Lower Manhattan. The Environmental Justice Alliance expressed its interest in assessing the environmental issues surrounding the rebuilding process and taking into consideration the city in general. LCAN expressed its continued interest in jobs and economic development and housing as issues to be undertaken in the upcoming months. The American Planning Association is to have its conference in the coming month focusing on overall issues for the reconstruction process. The CUNY Institute for Urban Systems expressed its interest in developing research around the topic of new technologies.

A presentation followed by Richard Schmalz, Project Director at NYS DOT on its Route 9A Project and his colleague, Heather Sporn. In response to public input at "Listening to the City", NYS DOT has rethought West Street from an arterial highway to an urban landscaped arterial adding more pedestrian elements in the design of the section south of Chambers Street. Route 9A or West Street is used daily by 100,000 passengers and is a key transportation corridor for mobility of buses, trucks, cars bicycles and pedestrians. About 40% of the traffic is non-passenger cars and around 10,000 pedestrians cross Route 9A on an east-west direction. The priorities for the project are to restore the 8-lane roadway, improve pedestrian access and provide for a facility compatible with a national monument and memorial. The alternatives proposed to address this issue are: 1- At Grade by replacing the 8 lanes at a cost of \$200 Million, 2- A Short Bypass where some travel lanes would go beneath the surface at a cost of \$860 Million and 3- A Long Tunnel from Vesey Street to Battery Park at a cost of \$2.5 Billion. The underlying concept for all the alternatives is that of a green space promenade in which a key element is the widening of the sidewalk at a cost of \$120 Million. The Promenade is a consistent element that is kept in all the alternatives whether the At Grade solution or the Short Bypass solution is chosen. Given the cost, time and community concerns associated with the long tunnel, this alternative is not currently being pursued. Next steps for the project are to reconstruct route 9A, relocation of utilities, and the implement an early action scheme including the construction of a pedestrian overpass to Vesey Street in time for the Path opening by the Port Authority.

There will be a public information meeting on the creation of the Promenade, the consistent element in all of the alternatives, on June 24, from 2:00 – 8:00 PM at the Customs House.

The meeting adjourned with an update from Gail Karlsson on the work of the Green Buildings committee, which is planning on meeting with the Libeskind team in the future, and also an

update by Darya Cowan of the Imagine NY Transportation workshop to take place on May 14th at Pace University in the Multi-Purpose room.

Notes prepared by:

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