

Civic Alliance General Meeting
Meeting Notes
July 8, 2003
Pace University

Civic Alliance procedure for decision-making and membership

The meeting began at approximately 8:45. Petra Todorovich reviewed the Civic Alliance draft procedure and asked for feedback on the document. Many attendees seemed in favor of clarifying the process in which decisions are made, but some were weary of the particular components of the document.

Paul Elston suggested the platform that organizations were being asked to sign onto was out of date. He advised against revisiting the mission and asking organizations to recommit, especially during the summer months. Instead, he suggested the Alliance disseminate a letter to its members announcing the new procedures. Other efforts to engage organizations can be pursued on an individual basis. Paul also proposed that information sharing should be included as one of the roles of the Civic Alliance. Because there are a variety of projects being conducted by different agencies, there is a need to coordinate the information and make it easily accessible to stakeholders.

Sally St. Amand was concerned that in developing formalized procedures the Alliance would lose its ability to provide a forum that generates new ideas. She believes the Alliance should be welcoming to both individuals and organizations to promote cross fertilization. Many people agreed that the Civic Alliance needs to continue to allow for technical input and idea generation by individuals or organizations not necessarily involved in advocacy. Joan suggested that the procedures document focused too heavily on advocacy policies. Petra said she would beef up the forum aspect in the document. Bob asked those who had suggestions for rephrasing or revising aspects of the procedures document to contact Petra. Comments will be received until the end of this week. A new draft will be disseminated by the end of next week.

A final concern that arose out of this conversation is the duplication of voting members on the steering committee. Some attendees suggested that the steering committee should be more diverse. Bob invited attendees to send nominations to the steering committee for consideration.

A few tangential issues were raised during the procedures discussion including the desire to reach out to everyone in the Lower Manhattan region including the less mobile and residents of the East Side. Robert Weber from the Rebuild Chinatown Initiative suggested that while the Civic Alliance does not always have direct representation from individuals, the organizations present at meetings represent the views of the local population. One woman suggested information kiosks be placed in transportation hubs, so residents are more aware of occurrences.

A vote to confirm Civic Alliance procedures will take place at the next meeting to be scheduled on either July 29 or July 30 (meeting date will be confirmed this week).

Coordinated Construction Act

Commissioner Gretchen Dykstra and Eileen Sullivan from the Department of Consumer Affairs of the City of New York reviewed the Coordinated Construction Act for Lower Manhattan Summary. The goal of the policy is to make construction fast, fair and safe. Many of the proposed provisions were adopted from existing state laws including provisions on apprenticeship programs and the 15 A diversity policy. The most contentious provision and one of the most important, according to Dykstra, is the Joint Bidding on infrastructure repair projects. It is hoped this provision will reduce the number of times streets are torn up. Individuals and businesses involved in the road construction industry oppose this provision because there would be fewer bidding processes. Most labor organizations have been supportive of the entire bill. The owner controlled insurance policy might be opposed by a consortium of insurance groups. The bill is currently at the governor's office. There is not a sponsor yet, but Bruno and Silver support the legislation.

Members of the Alliance raised a few issues they hoped Commissioner Dykstra would consider including (1) extending the provision regarding the use of ultra-low sulfur fuel to all delivery trucks, (2) strengthening the 15A provisions regarding diversity, (3) giving special preference to businesses in Lower Manhattan. Questions were also posed about the time limitation of the bill and workers' compensation benefits. Dykstra explained the expiration of the bill in 2014 was selected for both political and practical reasons. The primary reason seemed to be that federal funding for Lower Manhattan will end at this time. The workers' compensation concern was addressed by Ms. Sullivan who explained that under the OCIPs provision alternate dispute resolution for workers' compensation would be allowed through collective bargaining agreements. Workers' compensation benefits through Unions are regulated by state standards.

Concerns about the planning process that are not relevant to Ms. Dykstra's position were voiced during this discussion. Commissioner Dykstra pointed out that Roy Bahat in the Deputy Mayor's office is coordinating all of the agencies involved in physical construction projects. This group meets every Friday morning. She suggested we contact Josh Sirefmann at the EDC.

EIS processes

Paul Elston summarized the 5 different environmental review processes that are occurring in Lower Manhattan. He then went through the WTC site draft scope in more detail and reviewed the suggestions presented in the Civic Alliance Regulatory Committee document. The goals of the Civic Alliance should be to evaluate what is already in the scope and ensure that anything else that we may want is included.

Janine Bauer of the Tri-state Transportation Campaign pointed out that there is no purpose or needs statement for the project. The needs statement is useful in evaluating whether the range of alternatives is adequate. In addition, this Draft Scope relies heavily on the proposed action. It may be wiser to consider a range of alternatives, which is more commonplace today. Janine will draft a letter to LMDC expressing her concerns.

Pat Dillon brought up a few other concerns including the short shrift that is given to hazardous materials and air quality studies. She is concerned with the lack of testing locations for both traffic and air quality.

Bob asked that Pat and others send their concerns to Petra. Comments will be incorporated into Regulatory Committee document and discussed at the next Steering Committee.

Al Papp expressed his concern that the EIS process is not the best method for advocacy. Bob suggested that it is one venue that we have at this time, and that other political methods can be used.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:45.

Meeting Notes prepared by Sarah Jepson, RPA.