

Meeting Notes

November 5, 2001, 8:30 AM

Civic Alliance

New School University, 66 West 12th Street

Orozco Room, 7th Floor

Bob Yaro welcomed those in attendance to the third meeting of the Civic Alliance. He reiterated that the purpose of the Civic Alliance is to reach a broad consensus among the civic community on strategies and outcomes for rebuilding downtown. The Alliance will also designate working groups to address specific issues.

- A. Action Agenda. A new document was distributed at the meeting that outlines the process that the Civic Alliance has proposed. The Action Agenda is comprised of several tiers of activities. Most of these aim to conclude in the late spring or next summer. The floor was then opened up to comments on the Action Agenda.
1. Paul Elston, NY League of Conservation Voters voiced several concerns:
 - The Civic Alliance must engage the local community to take an active role in this process from start to finish.
 - The Prospectus for the Civic Initiative made reference to the relative low FAR of the World Trade Center site, implying that proposed development may be lower scale and thus, in Paul's estimation, having wider "foot prints." If so, we need to address issues of reduced open space. Elston would advocate for as much open space as possible.
 - Also, do not forget the importance of the waterfront and its connection to the WTC site. Elston volunteered to chair a subcommittee on waterfront issues.
 - Finally, there are social/ environmental justice issues connected to the disposal of the waste from the WTC site. Care should be taken that waste is disposed of responsibly and the siting of the waste disposal does not disproportionately affect communities of color or low income.
 2. Deborah Beck, Real Estate Board New York, strongly contended that a separate subcommittee should not be set up to treat waterfront issues. The waterfront issue should be integrated into all of our work.
 3. It was resolved that this difference of viewpoints should be settled outside the meeting.
 4. Madeline Wills, Community Board 1 appreciated and seconded Elston's comment that CB1 should be engaged. She welcomes the idea of expert roundtables but commented that no one knows the area like the residents and that their unique perspective is incredibly important to the process.
 5. David Kallick, Fiscal Policy Institute. His read on the Action Agenda is that it may be a case of too broad/ too narrow. The first tier may be too broad, while the activities in the second tier are too narrow in their scope. We may wish to look again at this document.
 6. Bob Yaro, RPA: In discussing this with my colleagues across the globe, it becomes clear that while this is a local issue, it is also a global issue.
 7. Ron Shiffman, Pratt Institute: But the local is very important!

8. Rita Schwartz, General Contractors Association: What is the Interaction between the State's proposed commission and the Civic Alliance?

Side Note: On Friday, Governor Pataki announced that he would convene a new authority to oversee the rebuilding process. It would be a subsidiary of the Empire State Development Corporation and would be made of six members appointed by the state, and three members appointed by New York City.

9. Paul Elston: The Governor is also setting up an advisory committee that would have more slots. Maybe that would be a place where the C.A. could be involved.
10. Bob Yaro: We have a meeting tomorrow with Charles Gargano, of ESDC, we will express to him our desire to participate.
11. Liz Abzug, R.DOT and Columbia University Center for Urban Research and Policy: I'm glad that Rita asked the question because the relationship between the C.A. and the Governor's commission is critical. I'm concerned that all the work we do here will get lost in the shuffle. I'm not sure that the State should take dominant status. Is this the right way to do it? It's also a City project.
12. Elliot Sander, Rudin Center for Transportation Policy & Management: ESDC has been very supportive and interactive with the C.A. leadership. However, some people were concerned about the Governor's announcement on Friday. Yet, we need to continue and do the best work we possibly can. I don't think that the C.A. should take a position on this issue.
13. Maurice Paprin, Business Labor Coalition: I am concerned about the bias in this meeting towards Manhattan, ignoring the four other boroughs. Also, I don't think that it is Pataki's mandate to lead the rebuilding effort; it is the peoples' mandate.
14. Laurence Frommer, CUNY: With the creation of this new authority, I was wondering, does this put the final nail on the coffin of a Redevelopment Commission?
15. Vishaan Chakraborti, Skidmore, Owings, Merrill: I am concerned about the reference to a "concept level plan" in the Action Agenda. A singular vision had the potential to get bogged down.
16. Bob Yaro, RPA: That is a good point and we should explore the options. There could be several different ways of pulling together different visions.
17. Madeline Wills, Community Board 1, I've said this before, and I'll say it at every meeting. The process must start downtown. You say the ESDC will work with the community, or with an advisory board, but I've seen how the ESDC didn't work with its advisory board when we were doing the Hudson River Park. If you think Giuliani is going to listen... From being down at Ground Zero, he has never been thoughtful, he always treats the local community as if we are an obstacle. We should say to the Governor and the Mayor that we need to be involved. Sometime it actually happens if you are persistent enough.
18. Paul Elston: We shouldn't spend a lot of time on the politics of this. In a few months they will have worked it out and we can continue. We should focus on the outcome. We can lobby, but first we need to get to an agreement around this table. Let's keep our focus.
19. Majora Carter, Sustainable South Bronx: A public communication campaign needs to stay front and center. Without that, we will slip out of view. We also need to create a more sustainable approach to waste disposal. The solid waste management plan might fall through and impact communities such as mine in the S. Bronx. A comprehensive

plan that includes all of New York as a city is essential. Many people in my community died in the tragedy, and they didn't have the income levels of people working at Cantor Fitzgerald.

20. Bonnie Harken, American Planning Association (APA): APA has been struggling with how to do that. Added to the process there needs to be focus groups. We are pleased to be working with the C.A. on this.
21. Margaret Helfand, American Institute of Architects (AIA): This needs to be a goal directed process. How can we coordinate all this input into the existing framework with alacrity? There is an existing, good, document. Let's look at this. We also cannot talk about 6 months to a year when the new commission will be in place within a month.
22. Eva Handhardt, Municipal Art Society: Who is on the commission? One representative should be from Community Board One, and one member should represent broader NYC communities.
23. Rick Bell, AIA: The document is very good. A specific activity along these lines that AIA is organizing on Friday, November 16 at Baruch College Vertical Campus. The program will be called "The Multi-Centered City."
24. Liz Abzug: It is critical that we have a representative on the State's authority.
25. Nancy Owens. We should stress that having a representative from CB1 or the Civic Alliance will facilitate the redevelopment process; it doesn't need to come across as a negative. Also, CB1 should do a formal presentation to the Civic Alliance before the roundtables begin, just as internal thing, to inform the process better.
26. Bill Shore: There is a conflict between speed and quality here.
27. Rita Schwartz: Who will be the executive director of the new authority? I hope that all the appointees will be people with experience in transportation, planning, etc.
28. Ray Gastil: When we look at the Call for Ideas, we need to recognize that this is a case of "special ownership." Silverstein has a special ownership, and foremost, the families have special ownership in regards to the memorial.
29. Richard Aspinwall: As an economist, I want to reiterate what Bill Shore has said. Small changes may have large consequences. We are constrained by decisions on process that are made but not immediately recognized. The group needs a process by which all these small decisions are highlighted and examined.

B. Transportation Presentation

- Steve Weber, of Regional Plan Association gave a PowerPoint presentation about Emergency Transportation Measures.

C. The meeting adjourned at 10:20 AM.