

**Civic Alliance Meeting Notes  
Pace University  
Tuesday, December 16, 2003**

Bob Yaro called the meeting to order at approximately 8:45 AM.

**Goods Movement and Waste Transfer:**

Paul Elston of the Waterfront Park Coalition introduced the first topic of discussion: goods movement and waste transfer at the World Trade Center site. The Civic Alliance has been interested in this issue since the very beginning of planning efforts for downtown, and has promoted the possibility of rebuilding the World Trade Center site with an alternative system for deliveries and goods movement in and out of the site to reduce truck traffic. Paul stated that approximately 97% of truck trips to and from the World Trade Center are for delivering goods, while only 3% was for transporting waste. Therefore, we should focus our attention on the delivery of goods.

In response to an August 2003 staff report written by the Port Authority entitled “Goods Delivery and Waste Management Options for the WTC Site” Paul proposed that the Civic Alliance pass a resolution calling on the Port Authority to examine alternative scenarios for goods movement in more detail and with more consideration than has been demonstrated in the report. Paul contended that the report summarily dismissed the options and concluded that the only logical way to proceed was to continue with 100% truck-based goods transfer, and to continue and augment recycling programs and waste reduction.

A draft resolution was circulated a week before the meeting that calls on the Port Authority to take a closer look at alternatives for goods movement, in particular evaluating a conceptual plan for using PATH tracks to bring goods into the site. The resolution also asks the Port Authority to discuss and quantify the benefits of using an off-site and sorting and consolidation center for reducing the amount of truck trips to the site. A discussion ensued regarding the draft resolution. Some of the comments touched on concern about using PATH for goods delivery – questions about the viability, federal work and transit rules, and conflicts with passenger service. Paul stressed that the resolution did not call on the Port Authority to pursue this option, but simply to explore a conceptual model since they do not do so in their report. Another question concerned whether water transport had been given much thought. Paul responded that it seemed to be among the least viable options at this time. There were some questions about environmental justice concerns – for example, if an off-site sorting and consolidation center were established, how this might impact local communities off-site. It was acknowledged that this was a concern, and also pointed out that the draft resolution specifically calls on the Port Authority to evaluate environmental justice implications of any option.

The resolution was put to a vote, and passed unanimously by the voting members present at the meeting. One voting member organization voted against supporting the resolution by email (Tri-State Transportation Campaign) for unstated reasons.

**Hudson River Park:**

The next item on the agenda was a proposed resolution to support the allocation of \$70 million in CDBG funding for the Hudson River Park Trust to build the Lower Manhattan/TriBeCa section of Hudson River Park. This proposal was introduced at the November Civic Alliance meeting in

which Al Butzel from the Friends of Hudson River Park gave a presentation on the proposed Lower Manhattan/TriBeCa section of the park and asked for the Civic Alliance's support.

Discussion of this issue at this week's meeting revealed the Civic Alliance was divided on whether or not to support the funding of the park. Beverly Dolinsky, of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA opened the discussion by reading a statement drafted by Gene Russianoff of the Straphangers Campaign (who was not at the meeting), which opposed to the resolution. The Straphangers Campaign statement cited two principal reasons for their opposition: one) the need for a better, more transparent process for CDBG funding, and two) their contention that the Hudson River Park Trust is an unaccountable authority, and that the Trust may use funding for environmentally destructive construction in and over the waters of the Hudson River. Beverly also registered her opposition to the resolution on behalf of her organization, agreeing with the reasons stated in the Straphanger's memo.

A lively discussion ensued. Some participants at the meeting felt uncomfortable with the idea of handing \$70 million over to an unaccountable public authority, although it was acknowledged that almost all the agencies we have been dealing with in the rebuilding process are public authorities, and that is not likely to change. Another significant concern expressed was the Hudson River Park Trust's current practice of employing Doe Fund workers – homeless workers who are paid \$5.15 an hour to clean the park – which undercuts what would otherwise be living-wage city jobs by the parks department if the park were run by the City of New York. Although the draft resolution specified that our support was contingent on the Hudson River Park ceasing this practice and instead paying living-wage jobs; several Civic Alliance voting members expressed a desire to see this language strengthened in some way.

A group of guests at the meeting expressed their concern over environmental impacts to the Hudson Rivers as a result of the planned park. Representatives of the Clean Air Campaign, the Sierra Club NYC chapter and Friends of the Earth claimed that the proposed Lower Manhattan/TriBeCa section of the park would damage a valuable waterfront habitat for aquatic life and in the Hudson River. They also reinforced the sentiment that the funding should not go to an unaccountable public authority, and that workers in the park should be paid a living wage. Two guests representing the group 9/11 Environmental Action stated their opposition to the resolution and their contention that CDBG funding should be used to finish the environmental cleanup of Lower Manhattan, and to pay for health care and health services for local residents impacted by the air and environmental pollution from 9/11. They also stated that the proposed plan would promote luxury development, creating a "pay to play" situation on the waterfront, and that CDBG funding should also be used for more important transit infrastructure.

Some Civic Alliance members restated their support for the project, and refuted the claims that the park would be harmful to the environment, pointing out that the plans have already completed an environmental impact statement. One member stated that all the major environmental organizations in New York City, with the exception of the local Sierra Club chapter, were in support of the project. As the discussion drew to a close, several voting members expressed their desire to see more details on the plan, including a budget for the project. Since it was clear that Civic Alliance members were divided on whether to support the resolution; there was a motion, a second, and a vote to "table" the issue until the next meeting. All voting members present at the meeting except for Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA voted to table the resolution.

As the conversation concluded, Petra Todorovich mentioned that it was clear that the time had come for the Civic Alliance to organize a strategy around encouraging more accountability and process for the distribution of the CDBG funding. The steering committee of the Civic Alliance will discuss this at their next meeting, and bring back a recommendation to the entire Civic Alliance in the January meeting.

## **Memorial Resolution:**

The next item on the agenda concerned the recent finalists of the memorial competition for the World Trade Center site. Michael Kuo of Imagine New York and the Municipal Art Society spoke briefly on the results of the Imagine New York workshops, co-sponsored by the Civic Alliance as part of the "Beyond 16 Acres" series. Michael distributed the Imagine New York report, released that day, and stressed that there was no clear consensus as a result of the workshops, on which memorial design should be chosen. He also explained how the discussions were structured at Imagine New York. Participants were asked three questions, "What is it about this particular design that appeals or does not appeal to you? "How well does each design interact with the Libeskind site plan and the surrounding neighborhood?" and "How might this memorial design be perceived and understood by future generations?"

Michael noted that there were a range of responses on all the designs, and that thousands of people took the time to submit thoughtful comments on the Imagine New York website. Peoples' comments were perceptive and often considered the long-range implications of the different designs, such as maintenance issues, "Who is going to clean all the glass?" Some also noted that certain underground spaces felt claustrophobic. There was much discussion over the ordering and group of victims' names.

After Michael's presentation, the floor was open for discussion. David Kallick of the Fiscal Policy Institute noted that the results of the competition reminded him of July 20, 2002; (implying that the eight options have been panned by the public). He wondered of this might push towards the competition in the direction of this being more like an Innovative Design Study, as opposed to an outright competition in which a design is chosen.

Rick Bell, of the AIA New York Chapter reported that the jury did not reach a decision when they met this weekend, and that they probably will not do so in December. He pointed out that they are not off sequestered somewhere in Nebraska, as some have suggested. They are here in New York and reading the papers, and listening to the public debate that is transpiring. He commented from his own perspective that all the plans are mutable. New York New Visions released a statement a week or so ago that asked the jury to review their analysis and consider 16 criteria in selecting a finalist. In Rick's opinion, no single scheme has captured the public's imagination. Finally, Rick proposed that the Civic Alliance consider endorsing the most recent New York New Visions statement on the memorial, dated December 15, as opposed to the November 26<sup>th</sup> statement that had been proposed for adoption.

Ethel Sheffer, of the APA NY Metro chapter noted that she was surprised at the unanimity that none of these schemes are very good. Ethel expressed her opinion that the whole process should slow down, and that the pressures of the schedule here have been politically determined. The memorial design must connect appropriately with the site plan. If we make a statement that the competition should slow down, it is important to do so not for delay's sake, but for the jury to undertake important deliberation.

Petra Todorovich, of Regional Plan Association remarked that she was hesitant to ever have the Civic Alliance make a statement that it was seeking delay in the rebuilding process, because it opens up the Civic Alliance for criticism that we are against rebuilding quickly, and that we just want a hole in the ground for a long time.

Several members disagreed vehemently and said that we should not be concerned about critics; and that if the right thing to do is to slow the memorial process down, then by all means we should go ahead and say it.

Bob Yaro offered his perspective on the subject. After "Listening to the City," the Civic Alliance urged the LMDC to pursue an integrated process for the memorial and the WTC site plan. However, the two processes proceeded with a fire wall between them. The Libeskind master plan

ignored this division, integrating symbolic memorial elements into his design, and thus capturing the public imagination. Now, New Yorkers have been underwhelmed by the eight memorial design finalists. Whether this is because the program for the memorial had a bit of a “kitchen sink” quality to it, or perhaps because we’re still too close to the event, is difficult to say. He suggested that we might make a statement that allows the jury to take the time they need, while supporting the most recent New York New Visions statement that offers criteria and suggestions for the jury to consider in selecting a final design.

After continued discussion along these lines, the sense of the room indicated that the Civic Alliance should adopt the New York New Visions statement, with several changes to the draft Civic Alliance resolution language adopting the statement. They included:

- the resolution now adopts the 12/15 statement as opposed to the 11/26 statement
- We added a phrase after the two first phrases, “Whereas the eight semi-finalist designs have failed to capture the public imagination;”
- We added a phrase at the end of the last paragraph to read, “We further urge the jury to take the necessary time to fully consider these concerns in selecting finalists for the memorial design.”

The Civic Alliance voting members voted unanimously to adopt the Civic Alliance resolution on the memorial, which endorses the (now) joint Civic Alliance-New York New Visions statement of December 15.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:40 AM.

Voting Member organizations present at the meeting:

9-11 Coalition of Families  
AFG Construction Management, Inc.  
American Institute of Architects, New York Chapter  
American Planning Association New York Chapter  
Consortium for Worker’s Education  
Environmental Defense  
Family Association of TriBeCa East (became voting member on 12/16 – after vote)  
Fiscal Policy Institute  
Municipal Art Society  
New York Metro American Society of Public Administration (ASPA)  
Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA  
Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development  
Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF) (became voting member on 12/16 – after vote)  
Rebuild Downtown Our Town  
Regional Plan Association  
ReHo  
TIME/ To Improve Municipal Efficiency  
University Settlement  
Waterfront Park Coalition  
Women’s City Club of New York