

LENOXFIVE 127 BLOCK ASSOCIATION

January 19, 2016

Meeting Minutes

1. Announcements

- **Thursday 1/21** - 32nd Precinct Community Council meeting @ Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Community Center, 34 W 134th Street
- **Wednesday 2/3** – CB 10 Meeting - 2nd floor art gallery of the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building (163 West 125th Street)
- **Wednesday 2/10** - 28th Precinct Community Council meeting – 6:30 p.m. @ Touro College – entrance on West 124th Street (between 7th and 8th Avenues – 4th Floor)
- Guests and New Neighbors
 - Jeremy, Actor
 - Patrick, Helping to represent Clyde Williams who is coming tonight
- \$3,000 grant - LenoxFive Summer Fest – Survey
 - We are applying by January 25th
 - We want to get ideas from the block for this grant.
 - We have 30 surveys that were filled out as a physical copy
 - 24 back from the online copy = 54 Total Surveys completed
 - We will tally all of the responses and incorporate into the grant application

2. 2016 Themes for LenoxFive 127th Street

- Board had a meeting before this one and we tried to develop some themes that the entire block can work on together
 - Build Community – works well with Membership and the CLC Committee
 - Improve Quality of Life
 - Overlaps with Sanitation and Beautification and other committees – goal is to get all committees to incorporate these two themes into their projects.
 - We are looking for volunteers to assist with Safety/Security
 - Speed Bumps, Street Lighting
 - Michael asked for volunteers to help with this new committee / goals

3. Treasury Report – Katharina

- Recently we have been consolidating and auditing our accounts
- We have \$1,826 in net profits for 2015.
- Income - We had \$2,302 in income mostly through Membership dues
 - 39 Paying Members
 - General Donations / Web Donations / T-Shirt Hoodie income

- Expenses come from things like Web, social committee and t-shirt/hoodie production, community watch signs
- Encouraged all BA attendees to become paying members
- No questions asked

4. Membership Committee Report – Marilyn

- Charter is that we want to grow overall membership, encourage dues paying membership which will go a long way to helping us do what we want to do (although payment is not required)
- Want to promote membership engagement 1) Meeting attendance 2) Event / Project Volunteers 3) Committee Membership
- Current activities
 - Tracking attendance
 - Tracking Dues Payment members
 - Send out welcome emails to new/existing members
 - 12 month goal:
 - Increase average number of attendees to BA meetings (From 32 to 40 or 25%).
 - Increase the number of dues paying members by 25% (35 to 45)
 - Get a better understanding of who lives on the block
 - Going to talk to people in the different buildings
 - Appointing building captains and making a survey about the needs of people who are on the block

5. Park Committee Report – Tal

- Helping Harlem Grown to take over the lot, almost done w/ Deed Transfer
- Harlem Grown plans to develop it into a Farm
- Asking Harlem Grown what else we can do to help them w/ the Lot
 - They are taking a \$200,000 hit, so we are looking as a committee to help with fundraisers for Harlem Grown to take care of the liens
 - Harlem Grown has asked us to help with their agenda
 - Document transition, Request for a Fall Festival for the neighborhood (Like a harvest day), they would like volunteers to help maintain the property, when farm beds are done they will need help, need help giving tours to people who want to know more about the property
 - Question: Is there a benchmark/timetable as to when construction would start?
 - Answer: last time we checked with Tony it was April/May. They have sketches, and they want input from the community. If you go to the LenoxFive website, and you click on the farm tab, you can see the sketches / renderings.

6. Sanitation/Beautification Committee – Sandy

- Accomplishments

- Committee formed in last part of 2015 but we have had good engagement and big plans for 2016
- Winners of \$1,000 “Love Your Block” Grant – we are planning to use it for the tree outside of the church
- Getting mulch for all of the tree guards on the block
- Organized a September 2015 cleanup event, with support from Harlem Grown and Lenox Coffee
 - Planning to continue quarterly
- Organizing ad hoc trash pickup from committee members
- Dog poop plastic bag receptacles now installed on block
- Goals
 - Execute the plan for the \$1,000 grant
 - Take advantage of city services
 - Parks and Rec, Tree Surveys, Tree stewardship, Dept of Sanitation helping with sanitation enforcement, Dept of Transportation for broken street lights, speed bumps, fire hydrant painting
 - Through winning the grant, we have priority w/ these departments and our requests go to the top of the list
 - Continue with quarterly cleanup and snow shoveling for vacant buildings
 - Work on growing membership
 - Spearheading the application for the \$3,000 neighborhood grant (same organization that we won the \$1,000 grant from, and since we already won before, we took the lead on writing the grant application)
 - Plan is to develop programming for the summer in the new Park that Harlem Grown is taking over
 - We want the programming to be developed by our community through the surveys that are getting passed out
 - If it goes through, the BA will need a lot of volunteers to help with programming
 - Plan to apply again for the \$1,000 “Love your Block” Grant
- Question: Does applying for the grant from the same organization does it lessen our chances of winning
 - Answer: Nope, we checked that already!

7. CLC Committee – Tiffani

- Accomplishments
 - Working closely with precinct to clean up NE side of block (corner)
 - Came together with neighbors to make sure 311 was dialed more to submit complaints
 - Installed the Crime Watch signs on the block
- Goals
 - We will continue to go to Precinct meetings and continue to posting notes from those meetings to the BA email
 - In the process of setting up meeting with CB10 and the 125th Street BID

- Engaging the merchants to operate around the block to help with cleanup
 - Continue to look into the Doe Fund to work w/ Sanitation on a regular basis
 - Working with 32nd Precinct on Ideascale to help deal with online feedback – you can still use 311 and 911, but we are going to be linking the new NYPD Ideascale onto the website so you can make complaints directly to the 32nd Precinct
 - Working on building community
 - Open to any ideas from the group on how we can do that for everyone
- Question: With the snow storm coming, you know if Harlem Grown will take care of the area in front of the park?
 - **Answer: Tal will find out from Tony what they plan to do**

8. Clyde Williams - Candidate for Congress - 13th Congressional District

- This congressional race is just as important as the presidential race for the long term viability of this neighborhood
- For the first time in a half-of-century we are electing someone new to this congressional chair
- Even with all of the changes that have happened over the years, there are still too many people living at or below the poverty level
- Schools have been failing very badly in our community and its unacceptable
- Health Care needs in this community are failing – especially for the black and brown populations, even if we have some of the best medical facilities in the country right here in this neighborhood
- Clyde wants to see things get better for this community.
 - Born in DC and raised by his mom who was a public school teacher for 26 years. He knows what it's like from a personal standpoint what it's like living in a 1-bedroom apartment with 10 people. He knows what it's like to be undereducated by the public school system before going to Brown University
 - Served on Bill Clinton's administration at the White House.
 - When Bill Clinton came to Harlem in 2001, he was domestic policy advisor. He stayed in this community by choice. Went back to DC and worked on Obama's campaign
 - Wants to limit the amount of meth rehab facilities that are located in the neighborhood
 - He can hit the ground running after he gets re-elected because he has experience
 - He does not play racial, regional, or ethnic politics, he wants us all to grow together
- Question: How do you feel about charter schools vs. public schools

- Anything to improve education in this neighborhood is a good thing. We need to see what works well for charter schools and public schools and implement both of those.
 - One of the major reasons why kids are not doing well in this neighborhood is because of Poverty and their conditions at home
- Q: Is City Health Works currently in existence?
 - Yes, it started a year ago. They are in several different buildings (Wagner, Douglass, Martin)
 - Will that effect all housing projects?
 - Eventually, but first we are testing the program out, and seeing how we can implement across the city. Once we show it works, then we can get more funding to expand the project.
- Q: Education- what can be done?
 - 82% of all money comes from state and local government. The state and city have more to do w/ Education than the federal government. We first need to fix the problem of poverty.
- Housing: Rents have increased 90% in this neighborhood, and the State and City governments really have the most influence
 - Columbia and Empowerment zone money needs to be appropriated toward affordable housing
 - Focus on warehouse buildings in East Harlem / Third Ave
 - Clyde needs to be elected so he can make these changes
- Question: What are your plans with the gentrification that is going on in the neighborhood? How can we bring everything together?
 - First of all make sure the people who have been here the longest can stay.
 - The current political team has not been able to keep the low and affordable housing in the neighborhood
 - Will use federal money to help out
- Question: Does affordable housing mean do you need to earn a certain amount of money in order to get the housing?
 - The calculation incorporates Nassau and Westchester incomes, so that needs to be changed
- Question: What can we do with landmarks to keep historical buildings in our neighborhood?
 - The city's landmarks committee is what controls this
- Question: What plans do you have for crime reduction? There are a lot of issues (gun shots, mugging, stabbing)
 - We need to try to prevent crime before it happens. Sy Vance the DA for NYC has done a great job.
 - Universal Pre-K will help and the STEM education method
 - Educating our children earlier
 - One of the most underutilized resources are public libraries that we might be able to use as a "daycare" center, to help teach kids how to read and write with some additional funding

- Need to make sure we do not have a “police” state. Need a better way for the community to communicate to the police department
- Question: Drug Policy. What would you do to address our current drug laws and imprisonment?
 - We need to look at drug addiction as an illness, instead of a crime
 - We need to rehabilitate people. It’s cheaper than incarceration
- Question: How do you propose to work with republicans to get anything done in Congress?
 - Criminal reform commonality
 - Tax reform commonality
 - Infrastructure building
 - Education
 - I won’t have to do everything through Congress. I could do a lot through the corporations that have a part in NYC and I can convince them to help our neighborhood.
- Question: Methadone clinics: do you have any specific plans to curb this?
 - There is a bill in Albany that can move forward, and it’s something he can do once he’s in congress.
 - For too long there are many things that have been allowed in this community that shouldn’t have been allowed. (1/3 of all Methadone clinics are above 96th street, and half of them are in East Harlem).
- Final Question: How can we get more engaged in the Congressional Race?
 - Best thing to do is for all of the community groups to get together and have a forum w/ the candidates to talk about the important issues

Michael wraps up the meeting until next time. Encourages everyone to contact us at lenoxfive127@gmail.com or on our website lenoxfive127.org.

The next LenoxFive 127th Street Block Association meeting will be:

Tuesday, February 9, 2016