

Civic Alliance General Meeting
July 30, 2003
Pace University

Bob Yaro opened the meeting at approximately 9:15 AM. The meeting began with a quick overview of the Civic Alliance Procedures document. All attendees seemed comfortable with the new process, introduced at the previous meeting. A motion was made to adopt the procedures and was unanimously passed by the group.

Following the adoption of the procedures, Bob Yaro directed attendees to the next item on the agenda, the Coordinated Construction Act of Lower Manhattan. A brief discussion about the act followed. Everyone seemed to support the bill, but the attendees agreed that it could be improved. A suggestion was made to vote on the resolution as is, but to include with it a cover letter that stated some other concerns we have about the construction process. Concerns included: in addition to the 6th point about the use of ultra-sulfur fuels, contractors and subcontractors should use best available retrofit technologies to control particulates (as is required at state level for the Lower Manhattan rebuilding process); City should adopt new centralized management system for delivery and waste management during construction; the schedule for construction should be made available to the public. A motion was made to vote on the resolution. Resolution passed unanimously.

Bob briefly explained the scope of the EIS for the World Trade Center Memorial and Redevelopment Plan. Rob Pirani then gave an overview of the comments drafted by the Regulatory Committee. He summarized the main points as follows:

1. Alternatives are insufficient. Unequal weight is given to the proposed action.
2. Lease information should be made public.
3. The methodology is flawed for the following reasons.
 - a. The Alliance agrees with the LMDC that the EIS process for transportation projects should be separate, but greater attention should be given to how the projects in the area relate.
 - b. The Draft Scope lacks a statement of purpose. The LMDC blueprint contains a statement of purpose that could possibly be used for the EIS.
 - c. The baseline conditions are inappropriate. Both pre-9/11 and current conditions should be used as baselines for all analyses.
4. Additional tasks should be considered. The comments specifically layout economic, environmental justice, and sustainability impacts that should be evaluated for each alternative.

The attendees had a few additions to the comments, which were shared both prior to and after Rob's comments. Petra agreed to incorporate these comments into the draft and send the final document out to everyone by Thursday at 1:00. If Voting Member Organizations would like to "opt out" after reading the final comments, they should contact Petra.

Language to be added will include:

- A provision in the Community Facilities section about fire codes and an evaluation of the safety and security implications of the proposed action.
- More specific use of the terms public, green, and open space. With particular attention to what will be public space.
- Specification of the term “affordable housing” as housing for persons at lower, moderate, and middle income levels.
- A provision under air quality to ensure the cumulative impacts of 24/7 exposure are considered.
- A statement about the Alliance’s concern for the economic impact of the development on live/work facilities and lofts.
- A request to expand the geographic scope when necessary to ensure historic resources, land-use, and other relevant factors are evaluated for all of Lower Manhattan.
- Comments on the baseline to ensure the pre 9/11 conditions take into account the cyclical nature of WTC occupation and the existence of unoccupied space.

Other comments and considerations discussed during this conversation are as follows. Should the Alliance ask the LMDC to delay the EIS process in order to complete all the studies we’ve requested? The group agreed that our suggestions might cause a delay; however, it is really the LMDC that has delayed the process by not initiating these studies earlier on. The group also expressed frustration over the “politicization” of the whole process to fit in with the governor’s timeline. The lack of discussion over space for the US Customs House also concerned one member, as did the lack of language in the scope about how the project would or should affect the zoning of the rest of Lower Manhattan. (If the dust from the project makes the area unlivable, then surrounding areas of Lower Manhattan should not be zoned residential.) These comments and ideas will not be incorporated in the comments on the EIS, but may be raised through other venues.

Paul Epstein concluded the discussion on the EIS draft comments by congratulating Petra and the rest of the Regulatory Committee on putting together a high quality document.

Following the EIS discussion, the meeting was opened for discussion of new business. Joanne Derwin thanked everyone who participated in the Liberty Jobs Town Hall Meeting on the use of CBDG funds for job creation and affordable housing. She encouraged attendees to continue to advocate for civic concern not just through the Alliance’s policy front, but also through grassroots initiatives. Both Joanne and David Kallick expressed some concern over the LMDC and City of New York Neighborhood Workshops, which are supposed to help generate public feedback over the use of CBDG funds. The workshops have not been open to the public and there is concern that this is a flawed public process. Petra suggested that the meeting be adjourned due to the time, and that those interested in having a more in depth conversation on the workshops stick around and discuss the issue with David and Joanne.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:45