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OFFICE OF NIGHTLIFE DROPS FIRST REPORT: OUTLINES INITIATIVES, FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Comprehensive review of first three years of new office designed to support industry that makes NYC nightlife capital of the world; also includes look ahead

NEW YORK, NY – The **Office of Nightlife** at the **NYC Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment** announces the first-ever **Office of Nightlife report**. The 162-page report offers a record of the activities of the first three years of this new office, including its response to COVID-19, as well as almost two dozen recommendations for the future. (For an overview of the report, please see the [Executive Summary](#) on page 14).

The report arrives as New York reopens from the pandemic, which shuttered or severely limited nightlife businesses and showed just how important this industry is to the city's identity, the daily lives of New Yorkers, and the local economy. [A groundbreaking 2019 analysis by the Office of Nightlife](#) found that New York City's nightlife industry included 25,000-plus venues and approximately 300,000 jobs generating around \$20 billion in economic impact per year.

"From keeping the industry safe and informed during the height of COVID-19, to resolving community disputes, to providing a trusted voice in City government for one of this city's most iconic economic engines, the Office of Nightlife has made a powerful impact in its first three years," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "As we build a recovery for all of us, I know this office will continue its innovative work to bring back the nightlife that makes New York City the most vibrant city in the world."

"Our City's Office of Nightlife has gone above and beyond during the COVID-19 Pandemic to connect with, inform, and support our nightlife industry," said **Deputy**

Mayor for Housing and Economic Development Vicki Been. “Their comprehensive report both captures the major successes and challenges of the past three years and sets forth a compelling vision for how to ensure safe, robust and diverse nightlife as New York City reopens fully. I commend the Office of the Nightlife and the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment for all the work they are doing to ensure that the City’s recovery prioritizes our iconic nightlife.”

The report details the first three years of efforts by the office, including:

- Conducting a comprehensive assessment of the state of the industry, including a five-borough listening tour, focus groups, and economic study
- Creating an ambitious agenda to support businesses; improve quality of life; promote safety, equity and harm reduction; elevate nightlife culture
- Fulfilling that agenda with a range of initiatives including:
 - Convening first interagency nightlife working group
 - Helping to create MEND NYC, a free mediation service to resolve conflicts between residents and venues
 - Sustaining multi-pronged effort to keeping venues informed and supported during pandemic
 - Implementing Quality of Life Improvement Plan for Lower East Side
 - Producing first-ever report on Multi Agency Response to Community Hotspots (MARCH) activity
 - Rolling out first substance use harm reduction campaign for nightlife
 - And more

The report also includes recommendations to support NYC nightlife in the future including:

- Offering a one-stop-shop approach to licensing venues
- Reforming how complaints are assessed
- Creating incentives for improved soundproofing
- Promoting consent awareness and harm reduction programs
- Creating programs to support DIY venues and events
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- Creating a nightlife museum

To read the entire report, please visit: <http://on.nyc.gov/NightlifeReport2021>.

“We’re proud to present the first-ever report by our Office of Nightlife,” said **the Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment, Anne del Castillo**. “This report tells the story of how our team created this new office and its

groundbreaking work, before and during the pandemic crisis, to preserve a critical piece of the city's identity.”

“Creating a dedicated Office of Nightlife was essential to support the depth and complexities of this vital industry. said **Ariel Palitz, the Senior Executive Director, of the Office of Nightlife at the NYC Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment.** “This report is a record of how we laid the foundation, established priorities, and set the trajectory for a strong future. We know this office will continue to fulfill its important purpose and thank everyone who contributed, especially those devoted to the art of hospitality and the magic of life at night.”

"The Office of Nightlife has truly been a tested resource for New York City's nightlife industries during this unprecedented year," said **Council Member Keith Powers.** “Over the three years since its creation, the office has done great work to support and solve problems for our city's world-famous nighttime economy and culture. After this year of staying at home, closures and curfews, I am confident the office will continue to lift up nightlife in New York City."

The Office of Nightlife has helped connect hospitality establishments and workers to government programs and partnerships in very important ways, especially during the pandemic, when the team worked hard to get financial resources and support services to the New York operators and residents that were among the hardest hit. As the city recovers, efforts to bring agencies, communities, and the industry together towards common goals will be even more essential. I thank Commissioner del Castillo and Director Palitz for publishing this summary of the office's proposals and accomplishments," said **Council Member Carlina Rivera.**

“OATH has seen firsthand the hard work and dedication put forward by the Office of Nightlife. The Office has been a pivotal program partner with OATH as our Center for Creative Conflict Resolution administers Mediating Establishment and Neighborhood Disputes (MEND NYC), a mediation program to help settle quality of life disputes between businesses and neighborhood residents which is an issue that the Office of Nightlife has been dedicated to solving since its inception,” said **Commissioner and Chief Administrative Law Judge Joni Kletter.** “Ariel Palitz and her team are hard-working, enthusiastic and creative problem solvers and we look forward to our continued partnership.”

“From boosting sanitation services on Sunday mornings in areas with concentrated nightlife to keeping our streets clean and safe as we transitioned to Open Restaurants, New York’s Strongest are proud to support this important industry and all who enjoy evening entertainment and culture. The New York City Department of Sanitation looks forward to ongoing collaboration with the Office of Nightlife as we work toward our shared mission of maintaining a safe, clean and vibrant city,” said **Edward Grayson, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Sanitation.**

“Nightlife is essential to New York City’s cultural identity and economic growth is inextricably linked to our world-renowned nightlife. It’s absolutely vital that we help this sector of our economy recover from COVID-19. The Department of City Planning is glad to do its part by exploring the removal of outdated zoning rules that still ban dancing in many areas of the city. Let’s get to work – and back on the dance floor!” said **Marisa Lago, Director, NYC Department of City Planning.**

“My team and I have been honored to work side-by-side with the Office of Nightlife, led by the indomitable Ariel Palitz, over the past 15 months in our efforts to help guide NYC hospitality businesses through the COVID pandemic and, hopefully and thankfully, out the other side. Our mutual belief in the creativity, spirit and tenacity of hospitality owners and operators kept us believing that these businesses, and our City, would come through the pandemic bruised but not defeated. We look forward to continuing our partnership with ONL in working to make doing business with the City of New York a more collaborative and supportive experience for Food & Beverage, and all other hospitality and nightlife, businesses across our city,” said **Steven Picker, Executive Director, NYC Food and Beverage Industry Partnership at the NYC Dept. of Small Business Services.**

“When I set out to create the office of nightlife it was clear that the city is New York had a lot of work to do to truly grasp and understand the needs and issues its most important industry was facing. Ariel Palitz has stepped up through the challenges of a global pandemic and effectively put the city’s finger on the pulse of its nightlife community to create a comprehensive report on how City Hall must move forward in order to ensure nightlife remains a vital part of our city’s economy’s. Small businesses, workers, artists and freelancers will all benefit from the work ahead. This report will help ensure NYC continues to be the financial and cultural capital of the world,” stated **Rafael Espinal, President, Freelancers Union.**

“As Chairperson of the Nightlife Advisory Board, I’ve witnessed firsthand the critical role the Office of Nightlife at the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment plays in supporting small business owners, workers, residents and all the diverse stakeholders of our city’s vital nightlife industry,” said **Andrew Rigie, Executive Director, New York City Hospitality Alliance.** “The office’s new report is essential reading for anyone in government or connected to nightlife who needs to know about planning, managing and developing policy for New York’s nighttime economy and nightlife sector, especially as we rebuild and recover post pandemic. I commend the nightlife team for their hard work and dedication, and I look forward to their continued partnership in supporting a nightlife for all.”

“The Office of Nightlife has made itself a staple in New York City. That it has only existed for three years will come as a surprise to many businesses already depending upon its resources, as its presence in the community is ubiquitous,” said **Rev. Moose, Executive Director/Co-Founder, NIVA and Managing Partner and Co-Founder, Marauder.** “This inaugural report is both a summation of the accomplishments to be celebrated from its first few years, and outlines the steps still

needed to support an industry often left to operate in the shadows. These businesses and the people that own, operate, work in, or frequent them are dependent upon the interconnectivity and success of the nightlife economy.”

“It’s invaluable to have an expert in the industry within the Mayor’s office, someone who understands our wins and losses and our day to day struggles to provide compelling entertainment in NYC. I am looking forward to a future where our industry is more deeply understood and valued in New York City. The Office of Nightlife is working hard to get us the recognition and relationships we need to continue to keep New York City creative and alive!” said **Jen Lyon, Owner MeanRed Productions and Co-Founder New York Independent Venue Association.**

“We applaud the Mayor’s Office of Nightlife for conducting a thorough examination of the state of the nightlife industry and making thoughtful and impactful recommendations to improve the current state of affairs. The New York State Latino Restaurant Bar & Lounge Association commends Senior Executive Director Ariel Palitz and her staff for being committed partners with the industry and working with us as we enter the next phase of our recovery,” said **Jeffrey Garcia, President of the New York State Latino Restaurant Bar and Lounge Association.**

“Covid-19 unleashed havoc and loss for the hospitality industry in ways we had never experienced before,” said **Megan Rickerson and Joanna Carpenter, Save NYC Bars.** “Save NYC Bars is a grassroots initiative created by bar and restaurant professionals to advocate for the good of the hospitality community during and after the destruction of the pandemic. We look forward to seeing the Office of Nightlife continue to evolve its role as a liaison, advocate, and information conduit in support of the rapidly-changing needs of our community.”

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About the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment

The mission of the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME) is to ensure New York City continues to be the creative capital of the world by supporting film, television, theatre, music, publishing, advertising and digital content and ensuring those industries work for New Yorkers. In 2019, the creative industries account for more than 500,000 local jobs and have an economic impact of \$150 billion annually. MOME comprises four divisions: The Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting; NYC Media; the Office of Nightlife; and educational and workforce development initiatives.

About the Office of Nightlife at the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment

The Office of Nightlife, at the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, is a non-enforcement liaison for New York City's nightlife industry and community to all City agencies. The Office works to establish and coordinate systemic solutions to support the nighttime economy, culture, and quality of life.