



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

June 7, 2006 Calendar No. 6

N 060415 BDM

IN THE MATTER of an application submitted by the Department of Small Business Services on behalf of the Village Alliance Business Improvement District Expansion pursuant to Section 25-405 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, as amended, concerning the amendment of the Village Alliance Business Improvement District, Borough of Manhattan, Community District 2.

On March 20, 2006, the Mayor authorized the preparation of a district plan for the expansion of the Village Alliance Business Improvement District (BID). On March 28, 2006, on behalf of the Village Alliance District Management Association (DMA), the Department of Small Business Services (DSBS) submitted the district plan for the BID, located in Community District 2 in the Borough of Manhattan.

BACKGROUND

The proposed Village Alliance BID expansion is located in the area generally known as Greenwich Village, in the Borough of Manhattan. The current boundaries of the BID extend along Sixth Avenue from West Fourth to West Eighth streets; on Eighth Street, between Sixth Avenue and Second Avenue; and on Astor Place, from Broadway to Third Avenue. The proposed expansion area seeks to include properties on Sixth Avenue, from West Eighth Street to West Twelfth and West Thirteenth streets; on University Place, from East Ninth to East Thirteenth streets and on Broadway, from East Ninth to East Tenth streets.

Currently, there are 129 properties in the BID, most of which are mixed-use buildings consisting of commercial use on the ground floor and residential units above. The District, including the expansion area, will represent 315 properties and 430 businesses.

The District has many distinct characteristics. It can be described as a tourist attraction and a popular destination for nightlife and culture. It is also known for its off-beat and trendy fashions and restaurants. The Union Square BID is located north of the Village Alliance BID, along 14th Street.

The services of the expanded BID will include sanitation and graffiti removal, public safety, promotion and marketing. The sanitation program may include cleaning and sweeping of sidewalks and gutters; maintenance of street trees and snow removal at bus shelters and crosswalks. The program will supplement the existing municipal sanitation program.

The budget for the first year of the BID, including the expansion is projected to be \$735,000. The budget will allocate \$288,467 to sanitation/graffiti removal, \$124,848 to public safety, \$46,000 to promotion and marketing, \$10,000 to capital improvements, \$8,000 to streetscape maintenance, \$2,000 to outreach services \$255,685 to administration.

The BID assessment method is based upon the assessed valuation

and linear front footage. All taxable properties, except wholly residential properties, will be assessed at a percentage of the Assessed Valuation Rate (AVR) and a percentage of the Front Footage Rate (FFR). Commercial properties will be assessed 90% of the AVR and 90% of the FFR. Within the BID expansion, 41% of the assessed properties will be assessed at under \$1,000, and 29% will be assessed between \$1,000 and \$2,000 dollars, annually. Government and not-for-profit owned properties devoted in whole to public and/or not-for-profit use will be exempt from assessment. The highest BID assessment would be \$23,901, and the lowest \$399.

Outreach to property owners, merchants and residents was done by the Village Alliance Steering Committee. The outreach efforts included ten meetings with property owners and merchants; twenty-four informational mailings; a merchant survey, over three hundred telephone calls and newspaper article announcements. The outreach for the BID was documented and submitted to City Planning.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The district plan was reviewed pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and the SEQRA regulations set forth in Volume 6 of the New York State Code of Rules and Regulations, Section 617.00 et seq., and the New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Rules of Procedure of

1991 and Executive Order No. 91 of 1977. The designated CEQR number is 06SBS002M. The lead agency is the Department of Small Business Services.

After a study of the potential environmental impact of the proposed action, a negative declaration was issued on September 13, 2005.

LAND USE REVIEW

On March 28, 2006 the Department of Small Business Services submitted the district plan for the Village Alliance Business Improvement District (BID) Expansion to the Department of City Planning. The plan was then transmitted for review to the Office of the Mayor, Office of the Manhattan Borough President, City Council Speaker, City Council Members of Community Districts 1,2,and 3 and Manhattan Community Board 2.

Community Board Public Hearing

On April 20, 2006, Community Board 2 adopted a resolution recommending approval of this application (N 060415 BDM).

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On April 26, 2006 (Calendar No. 7) the Commission scheduled May 10, 2006 for a public hearing on the district plan. On May 10, 2006 (Calendar No. 25), the hearing was duly held. There were three speakers in favor of the proposal and none in opposition.

The director of the Village Alliance BID noted that the BID was established in 1993 and that since its inception there have been two major improvements--façade repairs in 1998 and a sidewalk widening in 2003--as a result of the BIDs' efforts. A property owner stated that he was in favor of the BID because there is a need for supplemental sanitation and graffiti removal. A representative from Vornado Realty Trust stated that he is a participant in many New York City BIDs and that they are wonderful for the communities.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

Consideration

The Commission believes that the proposal to expand the Village Alliance Business Improvement District in Manhattan is appropriate.

The Commission has carefully reviewed the documents that the BID sponsor submitted regarding notification of stakeholders about the proposed BID expansion and believes that these outreach efforts for the BID were satisfactory.

BIDs are important to the City because they promote healthy economic development for the City and help retain and attract businesses to the District.

Resolution

The Commission supports the proposed plan and has adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the City Planning Commission certifies its unqualified approval of the proposed district plan expansion for the Village Alliance Business Improvement District.

The above resolution duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on June 7, 2006 (Calendar No. 6) is filed with the City Council and the City Clerk pursuant to Section 25-405 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York.

AMANDA M. BURDEN, AICP, Chair

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