

LOWER MANHATTAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Meeting of the Arts, Education & Tourism Advisory Council
Meeting Summary
Tuesday, April 23, 2002, 5:30 – 8:30pm
Held at the Offices of Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton
One Liberty Plaza
LMDC Board Members: Madelyn Wils and Howard Wilson

LMDC Board Member Howard Wilson gave opening remarks. New members to the LMDC staff and Council were made for the record. LMDC updates included an announcement of the newly created LMDC web-site – www.renewnyc.org.

Tara Snow, of the LMDC, introduced the discussion of the Draft Principles and Preliminary Blueprint and indicated that the LMDC had conducted initial meetings of all eight advisory councils. At each of these meetings the LMDC was in listening mode-allowing the groups to share their concerns and ideas. The Draft Principles and Preliminary Blueprint represent the results of these cumulative discussions and ideas.

Andrew Winters of the LMDC provided an outline of the Draft Principles and Preliminary Blueprint. The Blueprint for the future of Lower Manhattan articulates the goals and objectives of revitalization and outlines initial proposals for meeting those purposes.

A council member expressed support for the improvement of mass transportation in the downtown area, but noted we should pay close attention to the plans as they develop and be mindful of where buses are coming from and where they will be housed. Many streets in the downtown area are ill suited for bus traffic (often being narrow and cobbled). It was suggested we research alternatives to where the busses could be housed e.g. beyond the borders of Lower Manhattan. He further suggested we look to freight ships to carry in products and materials into Manhattan as opposed to trucks, so we could keep the traffic and downtown air/noise pollution down to a minimum.

With respect to an increase in residential housing, it was noted that this means to include all services that go with such residential growth, including recreational facilities, schools, parking and other residential services. A council member recommended we pay special attention to those peripheral areas including under-served populations e.g. Chinatown, Smith Housing etc., when planning the accessibility of the aforementioned services. On a whole, the Principles and Preliminary Blueprint were received favorably.

In light of the projects mentioned in the Blueprint, the Council began discussions for ideas about restoring the cultural dynamic of Lower Manhattan. There was overwhelming support for projects supporting creativity and cultural revitalization in the downtown area. The point was made to review those institutions and pedestrian areas that were successful prior to September 11th. Suggestions included: creating a museum dedicated to the invention, creativity and ingenuity of New York, past and present; recreating rehearsal spaces for artists and festivals; rebuilding Pier 15, and lastly, creating informational kiosks.

With respect to creating accessible and attractive park and open space systems for Lower Manhattan, members of the Council discussed the idea of tying together existing cultural sites to create a unified experience i.e. a “Freedom Park” linking Ellis Island, the Statue of Liberty, Native American Museum etc. A suggestion was made to replicate the Heritage Trail, which links city, state, & federal parks and recreational facilities throughout Lower Manhattan. The question was broached regarding the possibility of closing some of the streets downtown for pedestrian traffic. It was suggested that consideration should be given to doing something similar to what they do on some Parisian streets- closing them between the hours of 7pm-11pm.

A representative of the YMCA, mentioned their organization’s consideration of purchasing the building the Downtown Athletic club resides in to create a recreational facility focused on family, adult, teenage education, wellness and art programs. This idea was well received, as Lower Manhattan is one of the only areas in NY not to have its own recreational facility.

The Council discussed the LMDC’s meetings with the Mayor and Governor’s offices to discuss plans regarding what should be done at the year mark of September 11th. It was recommended that we have a series of events over the span of a few days, consisting of exhibits, events, etc. Suggestions included but were not limited to: concerts at Central Park, city “walk-thru’s” etc.

It was noted that while the long term is important, the LMDC and interested parties must remain cognizant of the needs of small local businesses and residents currently residing in Lower Manhattan.

Mr. Winters also presented the plans for the Viewing Wall. The LMDC working in operation with the the DDC and the OEM have come up with five main design goals: Quality & Durability, Dignity, Transparency, Communication and Flexibility (for easy reconfiguration). Public health and safety were considerations when planning the design and materials. Rather than have a standard construction fence the LMDC felt it was important to create a new type of enclosure that is respectful and dignified. The

Port Authority and New York New Visions worked together on the resulting innovative design, which is consistent with the aforementioned goals.

The proposed fence will consist - of galvanized steel with lit areas and alcoves for gathering and transparent enclosures around the entire site (made of high quality, durable materials). Along the perimeter of the Viewing Wall, which will be set back away from the curbs to allow for wide sidewalks, will be alcoves several feet deep. The alcoves should prevent bottlenecks and provide more personal space for people to stand away from pedestrian traffic.

Council concerns regarding this design focused around possible bottlenecks resulting from mixing pedestrian traffic with those wishing to look at the site for extended periods of time. Secondly, concerns were raised about creating an appropriate replacement of the viewing platform, now that the Millennium Hotel is planning on reopening in the near future.

Mr. Wilson thanked the Advisory Council members and the meeting adjourned.