

SoHo Broadway District Management Association, Inc.

Community Roundtable – October 21, 2020

## **Meeting Minutes**

Pursuant to a written notice via email, website, and social media, members of the public attended an information session (Community Roundtable) organized by the SoHo Broadway District Management Association, Inc. (dba SoHo Broadway Initiative) on Wednesday, October 21, 2020 remotely via Zoom at 8:30 a.m.

Executive Director Mark Dicus welcomed attendees and offered a briefing on conditions and events in the SoHo Broadway District, summarized below:

**Reopening Status:** In Phase 4 of NYS reopening process: Retail and office remain at 50% capacity, dining/bars are limited to 25% capacity indoors.

**Retail Snapshot:** 99 stores open with 54 vacancies; vacancy is something we are watching closely. Busier on the weekend

**Public Safety Trends:** Upticks in burglaries, robberies and grand larcenies in both precincts (small in number, but large percentage increase depending on the category). Also seeing some organized shoplifting. SoHo Broadway Initiative Response: Launching later afternoon/early evening security foot patrol.

**Election Preparedness:** NYPD put out service bulletin to be prepared in case of protests or other activity. NYPD prepared to locate personnel, restrict access to neighborhoods if needed. SBI sent message to retailers/property owners on how to prepare, including bringing trash out at latest possible time.

**Envision SoHo/NoHo:** Zoning process announced. First public event is a Public Information Session | October 26, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m: The Department of City Planning (DCP) will present information on how to participate in the upcoming public review process for the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan. The two-hour event will include a presentation by DCP staff and a question-and-answer session. Envision SoHo/NoHo was an inclusive process that included public meetings, advisory group and focus groups. Initiative needs to see what the proposal is, but there are long standing issues that require zoning changes. Will be comparing proposal to SBI Board-adopted Planning Goals (shared in chat)

**Public Realm Task Force:** Has been organized to develop a vision for SoHo Broadway's Public Realm and address long standing issues outlined in the Envision SoHo/NoHo report: sidewalk congestion, lack of open/green space, address conflicts with business

operations. Initiative is forming a task force and hiring a consultant to help us develop that vision that has widespread support.

All In NYC campaign: Initiative working on custom Banner Program featuring All In NYC branding and art from SoHo Renaissance Factory.

Following Mark's briefing, the floor was opened to questions and answers from attendees.

Resident noted lack of response to 311 calls on vendors, noise etc. by local precincts. SBI to follow up with NCOs; perhaps not a priority right now.

Retailer noted re: election response; boarding as last resort. Suggested better communication channels among retailers' plans. SBI to organize a call to allow retailers to share their plans.

Several questions and comments were aired regarding the City's zoning process. Concerns shared about density of new development, which was not proposed to same degree during Envision SoHo/NoHo. Anthony Drummond of CM Chin's office unclear where 3200 unit number came from; expressed need to compare proposal to Envision report. Hope to have scoping document prior to Monday's meeting, but timetable keeps changing. Concerns expressed that AMI calculation doesn't result in truly affordable housing. Comment that SoHo contributes a great deal to City tax coffers already. Objections expressed that no documents available to review prior to Monday DCP call.

Question about real vs. perceived crime (i.e. on Citizen app). Crime has increased over last year but still historically very low.