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**The City of New York**  
**Community Board 8 Manhattan**  
*Small Business Committee*  
*Tuesday, January 20, 2026 – 6:30pm*  
*This meeting was conducted via Zoom*

**MINUTES**

**Board Members Present:** Bill Angelos, Gayle Baron, Michele Birnbaum, Alida Camp, Barbara Rudder, \*Matthew Bauer, \*Jonathan Hartig

*\*Public Member*

**Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 26**

**Item 1: Legacy businesses, long-standing small businesses have supported our communities for decades. How can we better support them? Join us for a discussion on the importance of legacy businesses to neighborhood character and economic vitality.**

**A. Guest speakers include representatives from the San Francisco Legacy Business Program (the nation’s first), the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, and the NYC Department of Small Business Services.**

Rick Kurylo, Legacy Business Program Manager from the San Francisco Department of Small Business, discussed the legacy business program. In 2014, the importance of saving cultural heritage assets set the ground for the legacy business program. In 2015, the program was created. There are two grants, one for businesses and one for landlords, to promote educational and financial assistance. The eligibility criteria are available on YouTube at [\(5:11\)](#), with the application process found at [\(5:49\)](#), and the registration process is found at [\(7:36\)](#), with about 60 businesses, including non-profits, being included each year.

Benefits are found at [\(8:32\)](#), focusing on marketing and branding for the location, including a business map, legacy walk-ins at 10–12 neighborhoods, and happy hours at different legacy businesses for each month. This has also helped bring attention to legacy businesses on social media through such marketing and awareness. The program had also established business assistance and grants, including business assistance grants and rent stabilization grants, to those involved with the program. Legislation, including permit streamlining, encouraging city departments to patronize legacy businesses, commercial mortgages, down payment assistance for legacy businesses, and rent assistance from city-owned businesses, are ideas for future legislation.

Approximately 87% of legacy businesses have said the program has benefited them. It was clarified for legacy business that old grants were replaced by business stabilization grants.

Jason Adulley from New York City’s Small Business Services (SBS) spoke about NYC’s benefits and assistance to small businesses, although they don’t have a specific program for legacy businesses. Information may be found at [\(20:17\)](#). SBS’s goal is to support small businesses throughout the city, including seven (7) Business Solution Centers with education, pro bono legal assistance, financial

support to help with securing financing, industrial business service providers such as manufacturing and construction, an online funds marketplace to identify helpful financing tools, one-on-one guidance for financing; business education through online courses in English and other languages; NYC Business Express team to help small businesses avoid fines and fees to the extent possible and navigate different NYC agencies; legal assistance including the Commercial Lease Assistance Program (pre-litigation); support for certification as a Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE); accelerator program to provide information for contracting with government; connections for free or low-price legal advice; information about business cost-saving incentives; business resiliency workshops and on-site risk assessments; connecting businesses looking for talent; and a small business hotline for support.

Jason referred to the NYS Historic Business Preservation Registry at [\(39:27\)](#) that promotes historic businesses.

Andrew Berman and Juan Rivero from the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP) discussed the value of legacy businesses at [\(41:05\)](#), including protecting and preserving neighborhood character, contributing to a sense of community by serving as community hubs connecting neighborhood residents, and keeping money local within the community. He discussed threats to small businesses, such as chain-store competition, online commerce, rising rents (the most significant issue), tariffs, and demolition of their buildings, forcing them out of the neighborhood.

Juan discussed programs helping legacy businesses. Many strategies are promotional and part of preservation efforts to help small businesses better compete. GVSHP tries to connect residents and visitors to legacy businesses through promotional features. GVSHP writes about new businesses opening, Shop and Stroll (a tour of specific retail corridors), and the Village Awards, held annually, celebrating nominated businesses and individuals who have made significant neighborhood contributions. Some initiatives influence business dynamics, such as intervening when landlords raise rents to unaffordable levels to encourage negotiation. GVSHP supports other initiatives such as commercial rent regulation and the implementation of vacancy taxes.

The speakers took questions beginning at [\(57:38\)](#).

The Borough President's office keeps a list of small businesses.

Madison Avenue BID President and public member Matt Bauer talked about the walking tours conducted in the Madison Avenue Historic District in connection with AIA.

San Francisco has mostly small businesses on the legacy registry, but has a few larger businesses. They're working on getting Levi's to be part of the registry.

Elected officials must nominate businesses for inclusion in the New York State registry, and as proposed in the New York City registry.

There are about 30 programs around the country, some of which require elected official nominations and some of which don't. An advantage is that it keeps the nominating elected officials engaged in the process.

The San Francisco program has a lot of diversity, with large Chinese and Spanish-speaking populations. The San Francisco Small Business Commission is very supportive, helping with applications. Community groups encourage businesses to apply, bringing more diversity. San Francisco helps businesses at risk of displacement by connecting them with agencies. The registry helps businesses stay

open, although it is not a business rescue program. Retail and restaurants struggle more than other types of businesses. San Francisco recommends that businesses promote themselves as legacy businesses. In a couple of examples, such promotion has benefited businesses by giving them leverage with the press, the Board of Supervisors, and the public.

Businesses are encouraged to use the San Francisco logo on their doors. They are creating aluminum plaques that stores could place in their windows.

Lessons for New York City: Elected official nominations may not be necessary for this policy, and grant programs haven't succeeded as envisioned. There is a need for a dedicated source of funding for grant programs, but should non-profits be part of the program, and what length of time defines a legacy business?

San Francisco had worked with NYC SBS, which may explain former City Council Member Carolina Rivera's proposed legislation being similar to San Francisco's program. SBS will work closely as the legislation may move through the City Council in the future.

Rick suggested that different communities could begin their own legacy programs, encouraging New York City to adopt the idea.

**Item 2: Old Business** – None discussed.

**Item 3: New Business** – None discussed.

The meeting ended at approximately 8:30 pm.

**Bill Angelos and Alida Camp, Co-Chairs**