

New director picked to lead 82nd St. BID



Seth Taylor (c.) was named head of the 82nd Street BID last month. He is joined by Yoselin Genao (l.-r.), of City Councilwoman Julissa Ferreras' office; Laura Rothrock, of the city Department of Small Business Services; Ferreras; John Rapp, of the BID's board; and Small Businesses Commissioner Rob Walsh. Courtesy Small Business Services.

By Rebecca Henely

The 82nd Street Business Improvement District named Seth Taylor, who previously worked at three different business improvement partnerships throughout the city, as its executive director two weeks ago.

Taylor replaces Sharada Devi, who was fired from the BID's board in December due to incompetence, according to City Small Business Commissioner Robert Walsh. The commissioner said that in the wake of her firing, he and the new director would be working to drastically improve the commercial strip in Jackson Heights and Elmhurst over 100 days.

"I am extremely excited about the job and really looking forward to getting out there," Taylor said.

Walsh said Taylor's previous experience made him stand out among the seven people who were interviewed for the job. Taylor was a project manager for the 34th Street Partnership/Bryant Park Corp. in Manhattan, business services manager for the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership and director of economic development at the Union Square Partnership.

"There's not going to be much of a learning curve with Seth in going forward," Walsh said.

Taylor said he officially starts his job Jan. 9. He said a primary focus will be cleaning up 82nd Street by looking into the current sanitation services and seeing how to improve them. He and the BID will work on removing graffiti as well.

Taylor also wants to meet with all the merchants.

“I want to know what their concerns are, what their challenges are and figure out a way to help solve those,” Taylor said.

He said he would be doing daily inspections of the strip. On these walks Taylor will check all the problem conditions, like broken street furniture and light poles that need to be painted, then work with city agencies to fix them.

“Really, what it’s going to be about for me is walking the district every day,” he said.

Long-term Taylor said he wanted to work with the community to improve some public spaces.

“We really want to highlight all of the district’s assets and its strengths, and we really want to work with the community to do that,” he said.

City Councilwoman Julissa Ferreras (D-East Elmhurst), whose district covers the majority of the BID’s area, called Taylor’s hiring a step in the right direction.

“He comes with a whole wealth of experience, which I think is vital,” she said.

Ferreras said when she was growing up, 82nd Street was the place to shop in the community and many brand-name stores made their home there before the expansion of the Queens Center Mall in 2004.

She said she hopes the businesses in the area can be helped and that the Jackson Heights movie theater, where Ferreras had her first date, can be reinvigorated.

“I think it really is the heart of the community,” Ferreras said of the street.