

Jax Hts BID touts new look

By Rebecca Henely



Photo by Rebecca Henely

Small Business Services Commissioner Rob Walsh said the 82nd Street Partnership has hired a private firm to do sanitation.



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The newly christened 82nd Street Partnership has discussed revamping the Dunningham Triangle, among other improvements.

City Small Businesses Services Commissioner Robert Walsh said the 82nd Street Business Improvement District has a new name and a new sanitation contract as part of the ongoing campaign to turn the organization, and the business strip it serves, around.

“It’s a much more comprehensive approach on the neighborhood for removing graffiti and sanitation,” Walsh said of the contract.

The newly energized business organization decided to rechristen itself the 82nd Street Partnership at its board meeting Feb. 15. Walsh has been on the warpath to revitalize the organization after its board fired its former director, Sharada Devi, in December due to incompetence.

The storefronts within the organization’s borders — 82nd Street between 37th Avenue in Jackson Heights and Baxter Avenue in Elmhurst — were covered with graffiti, the organization’s directory was out of date and the street had missing trees, garbage bags placed next to garbage cans and missing solar compactors. Seth Taylor was appointed the new director later in the month.

To solve the street’s trash and graffiti problems, the board hired the national firm Block by Block to remove graffiti and plant and water trees for about \$65,000 a year, a cheaper price than the organization’s previous \$73,000 sanitation contract. The firm also provides sanitation for three BIDs in Jamaica: Jamaica Center, Sutphin Boulevard and the 165th Street Mall.

Walsh said the sanitation workers will have 82nd Street logos and will be a visible presence in the district.

“The difference now is people will be able to see who the workers are, they’ll be in uniforms,” Walsh said.

During the Feb. 15 meeting, the partnership’s board members and government representatives also discussed plans to revamp the organization’s website and Dunningham Triangle at 82nd and Ithaca streets and Baxter Avenue.

“It was a good group of people who came out, wanting to meet Seth and also talk about some issues,” Walsh said.

Other ideas discussed were replacing the parking meters with bike racks and installing Muni-Meters.

City Councilman Daniel Dromm (D-Jackson Heights), whose district shares the partnership’s borders along with Councilwoman Julissa Ferreras (D-East Elmhurst), also recommended the group partner with arts organizations or historical tours, Walsh said.

Walsh said merchants have reported to him that they are regaining their faith in the leadership of the district, and Taylor has done good work in engaging the store owners on a block-by-block basis.

“It’s just terrific to see that Seth is off to a great start,” he said.