



## The business of the Flatiron

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The Flatiron 23rd Street Partnership held its 3rd annual meeting on Thursday, June 4 in Baruch College's Vertical Campus. Speakers presented the partnership's contributions to the neighborhood over the past year and its initiatives for the upcoming year.

Baruch College's campus is located in the Flatiron District of Manhattan, a community of businesses, residents, and a tourist destination. The Flatiron Business Improvement District (BID), formally known as Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership DMA, Inc., is a non-for-profit organization that serves to make the Flatiron neighborhood attractive for businesses, residents, and visitors through various public projects.

"We are seeing many signs of growth in the Flatiron District," said Gregg Schenker, chairman of the board of directors of the partnership. New hotels and restaurants are opening up that will bring more commerce and traffic to the area.

Members present at the meeting included residents of the neighborhood, business owners, and Baruch President Kathleen Waldron.

Through the success of its projects and the positive impact on the community, the Flatiron BID "has truly become one of the best BID's in the city," said Robert W. Walsh, commissioner of the NYC Department of Small Business Services.

Since 2006, the Flatiron BID has worked to improve the physical environment of the community through initiatives such as the Clean Streets Program, the Public Safety Program, and the Social Services Program.

The 2008 BID Community Survey showed that 63 percent of respondents saw the district to be cleaner than it was a year ago and 78 percent of respondents rated the Public Safety Program as good or excellent.

The BID partners with NYPD and other organizations to assist homeless individuals and address illegal activities in the area.



Denis Gostev

Flatiron Business Improvement District's members learn about upcoming initiatives for the Partnership.

In addition to keeping the neighborhood safe, the BID beautifies the district through its Public Improvement Program. Beautification projects include “Greening the District” through hanging flower baskets on lampposts and the installing of bike racks.

The program’s highlight in the past year was the creation of public plazas at the intersections of Broadway, Fifth Avenue, and 23rd Street. The new public space allows visitors, residents, and workers to meet friends, take photographs, and enjoy the neighborhood’s architecture.

Baruch students play a big role in the community. “Students support the businesses in the area by being here and by going to them,” said Jennifer Brown, executive director of the Flatiron 23rd Street Partnership, “[Baruch] is an institution that is so community minded.”

Baruch College was awarded “Partner of the Year” during the annual meeting, which honored the college as a civic partner to the businesses in the area. According to Eric Zaretsky, director of Marketing and Economic Development for the Flatiron BID, the award was created to acknowledge organizations that work with the BID to “affect positive change in the district.”

To bridge the residential and business communities, the BID publishes a monthly e-newsletter that offers information about community events and new businesses in the area. Flatironbid.org, the district’s website, features sales in the district and other special reports.

The Flatiron BID also hosts a speaker series for property owners, businesses and residents to meet with elected officials. Speakers discuss keys issues that face the neighborhood and New York City at large.

To promote the district’s amenities, the BID offers a free weekly walking tour, a Flatiron Holiday Shopping Guide to promote shopping locations, and the Discover Flatiron Map. Students can obtain copies of the Discover Flatiron Map in the Office of Student Life located at VC 2-210.