

## FOR PUBLIC POSTING

www.haarlemvictoria.com  
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Haarlem Victoria Restoration Group  
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### **WHEN IS A HELPING HAND A SELL OUT?**

A sell out is when some of the local politicians back special interest groups to develop our community in the name of bringing it prosperity and yet there is still an unemployment rate of approximately 52%. We have no ownership, equity, or measurable income from our so-called second Renaissance!

Our last chance to own a meaningful piece of our own community is once again being sold out from under us. The development of the Victoria Theatre project has been an ongoing fiasco for far too long. It started with the Pataki administration. If the Haarlem Victoria Restoration Group in its efforts to save the Victoria Theatre from being demolished by gathering petitions and going to the media had not made an impact, the Empire State Development Corp., under the leadership of Mr. Gargano would probably not have turned the decision of choosing a developer over to the Harlem Community Development Corp. The former commissioner of ESDC, Charles Gargano, assured HVRG in front of the Victoria Theatre that ESDC had stepped back and would only act as advisor to HCDC. **We have that on film.**

Mr. Steven Williams of Danforth Development Partners LLC and Mr. Robert Jones a partner of Paul Williams of the Victoria Towers Development, both came to HVRG asking us to support them to be the last standing developer. The fact that neither one at that time could demonstrate that their project would absolutely benefit the community, left HVRG in a position of not being able to back either one. We give HCDC credit for sending Mr. Steven Williams back to the drawing board, but they have not gone far enough. How can you, HCDC permit anyone to demolish a viable theatre that has a history worthy of its restoration; why would HCDC allow it to be cut up into two glorified closets? How can they say that tourism will be enhanced by only providing space for small unknown art groups? When New York City was on the brink of bankruptcy, it was saved by tourism. The Broadway theatre district helped to save New York by putting on productions with well known stars; this attracted tourism. We have in our community world renowned groups, i.e., The Dance Theater of Harlem and others who have traveled the world acting as unofficial ambassadors for America. None of these icons have a home. Among letters of support received by HVRG, the DTH and many others in the arts such as Mrs. Ruby Dee-Davis stated that the community needs this theatre which is large enough to support our various art forms. Some of these groups have been

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in existence for 35 years or more. The community is also in need of artists' housing, which other more informed communities have provided for their indigenous population. Does HCDC feel that more high priced condominiums are going to help the community? We think not! Harlem Community Development Corporation, shame on you, if you permit this project to go further without having real community input.



HVRG had an organizational meeting at the Adam Clayton Powell State Office Building on Friday December 14, 2007. The meeting was to inform supportive organizations of the progress of obtaining the capital needed to bring the Victoria project to fruition for the benefit of a large portion of community members. We have a term sheet from a major investment firm stating that they have reviewed our proposal for the Victoria and they are willing to put their considerable resources at our disposal. A community, in order to grow economically, must have ownership. HVRG, along with other community based organizations, will make sure that the community has a controlling interest in the Victoria. This will be in writing – no more empty verbal promises. There will be a guaranteed number of jobs in the trades going to minority contractors, Artists' housing, a foundation to support small up and coming art groups, the restoration of the Victoria Theatre as well as forming affiliations with community based training programs. Among the attendees, at the December 14th meeting, were representatives from HCDC which included Assemblyman Keith Wright. Mr. Wright informed us once again, that Danforth Development Partners has been selected to develop the Victoria. However, one of our supporters Rev. Manning of Atlah World Ministries had given us a copy of a response to a letter sent to Commissioner Patrick Foye of Empire State Development Corporation. This letter clearly states that a contract "provisional" or otherwise cannot be consummated by a state agency without a public hearing; therefore should HCDC attempt to circumvent the law, the community is prepared to take the matter to the courts.

Our next meeting will take place:

**Friday, January 18, 2008 at a location to be announced via our press release; which will be sent out January 4, 2008 and posted on our website. We will be asking the media, the community and all interested parties to attend.**