

THE PARK SLOPE  
**MEETING HOUSE**

March 17, 2015

Dear Park Slope Neighbor:

As you are possibly aware, Park Slope's popular *Tea Lounge* closed unexpectedly in late December, and for many in our neighborhood, the loss has been tangible. As a customer for many years, I regularly jotted notes on how the space could be better purposed to serve the Slope's needs, and over time these notes became a comparatively complete action plan for a community space. Of course, at that point these notes were entirely conceptual.

The closing was a call to action, and so, with only a small window of available opportunity, I assembled an amazingly talented team of former *Tea Lounge* patrons to explore the feasibility of the establishment I had imagined. The owner of the building, Mr. Dixon (also the owner of *Dixon's Bike Shop*, on Union Street), became enamored of the plan, and chose to extend extremely favorable terms on the space, and a fairly open window of time to work out the many details involved with establishing such an institution.

Our team has developed what I believe is a *visionary* rewrite of the coffeehouse model — a model that has not required change for many centuries, but now needs to adapt in light of the global shift toward information work and the customer-driven repurposing of such spaces for work as much as for play.

Many of our local businesses — especially our restaurants and cafés — are now groaning under the weight of changing customer expectations and are struggling to remain financially viable. The many recent store closings in our neighborhood would indicate that our neighborhood's increasing commercial rents, changing demographics, and the city's demanding expectations of business owners are collectively producing untenable situations for many local shops. Through horizontal integration of services, a plan to partner with local businesses, and by adding a sophisticated application layer to the brick and mortar model, I believe we have written the revised framework: the outcome of our planning is a revolutionary, *hybrid* approach to the coffee house, workspace, venue, retail, and community center that we believe might prove a model for community invigoration and reformation.

The Meeting House would be a space where, on a typical morning, our children will learn how a telescope functions by building one by hand, while mom or dad focuses on work, benefitting from the technology we've carefully crafted to make available to patrons and members. It will be a space where patrons will be encouraged, with the aid of in-house software that virtualizes many aspects of the venue, to collaborate professionally and personally throughout the afternoons. It will be a place where community-planning events will be hosted and town-hall meetings with civic leaders will be moderated in the evenings, until the music strikes up, and we are exposed to a diverse assemblage of genres and styles into the late-night hours. Food and beverage services are entirely planned and are hunger-invoking, even on paper!

We are now at an opportune, but challenging juncture. We are putting the very final touches on a thorough business and operations plan that will answer neighbor and investor questions alike comprehensively. We have also built the framework to receive capital from multiple streams. We've built the model for a powerful, interactive Web layer entirely integrated with business operations in a logic and manner that itself is entirely original: just to begin, imagine creating your own favorite menu dish variations through a website, and then ordering your creations from your phone on your walk over.

We have established favorable relationships with vendors and suppliers, following an arduous vetting process. We've selected a top staff and management team. We've received commitments of support from many of the most influential social, civic and business group leaders in our area, including, among others, the Park Slope Food Coop, Park Slope Parents, Park Slope Neighbors, the Park Slope Civic Council, and the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce.

The community's demand for The Park Slope Meeting House is established, as well. We have received countless calls from local media outlets and expectant customers, indicating an interest in the promised service offerings. Financial modeling demonstrates viability, profitability and sustainability. We are, in effect and actuality, ready to move forward on every front. However, we come upon a time challenge; the landlord is under pressure to fill the space due to the unpausing expenses of property taxes, maintenance, etc. Other businesses are vying for the space, even without benefit of the lease discount being extended to us, and *not one* of these suitors' plans demonstrates a sensitivity to the neighborhood's needs as does The Meeting House's (we are privy to competing offers).

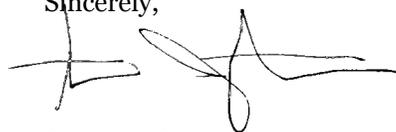
Planning has consumed a great amount of time and financial resource, and we now need to either seek bridge capital that will allow us to complete the lease, begin breaking ground, and to continue discussions with investors that are now just beginning, or to locate an additional partner or investor promptly. In an even more inspiring narrative, residents of our local community could reach out to pre-purchase memberships (membership will *always* be optional) at patron-level pricing, which would, by itself, provide the needed capital to take this special space forward. As with the Park Slope Food Coop, the world beyond Park Slope would once again look to our neighborhood in the years to come for a model of community teamwork and leadership.

*If it would please you to review our plans further, we have made documents publicly available at:*

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| <b>Introducing the Park Slope Meeting House</b> | <a href="http://www.meetinghousenyc.com/introduction.pdf">www.meetinghousenyc.com/introduction.pdf</a> |
| <b>FAQs from Local Community</b>                | <a href="http://www.meetinghousenyc.com/faq.pdf">www.meetinghousenyc.com/faq.pdf</a>                   |
| <b>Endorsement by Author Howard Bloom</b>       | <a href="http://www.meetinghousenyc.com/endorsement.pdf">www.meetinghousenyc.com/endorsement.pdf</a>   |
| <b>Meeting House Patron Trifold Brochure</b>    | <a href="http://www.meetinghousenyc.com/brochure.pdf">www.meetinghousenyc.com/brochure.pdf</a>         |

Given the opportunity, I am confident that the Park Slope Meeting House will become a foundational asset to our community. If you would like to become a patron-member, please review the accompanying brochure. If you have questions or comments, please write to [community@meetinghousenyc.com](mailto:community@meetinghousenyc.com), or contact me directly at the number listed below. If you, or someone you know, is interested in discussing additional ways of assisting or investing in The Park Slope Meeting House, it would be a pleasure.

Sincerely,



Steven J. Stromer