

Battery Park City's Anthony Peterson: Premier Advocate for MWBEs

Deteriorating shipping piers once upon a time dominated the panorama in The Hudson River in the Lower West Side of Manhattan, now the site of The Hugh L. Carey Battery Park City Authority (BPCA) that lies west of West Street, adjacent to our financial hub and lower Tribeca and is surrounded on three sides by the picturesque Hudson River. BPCA, which has attained global accolades as an exemplary model for community renewal, was officially established in 1968, and is a NYS public benefit corporation whose modus operandus is to plan, develop and maintain a community revolving around a commercial, residential, retail and park complex situated on a 92-acre parcel of land.

Anthony J. Peterson, the Director of Diversity Programs for BPCA and a longtime supporter of the New American Chamber of Commerce, has been honored with the distinction of being one of NYS's premier advocates for minority and women business owners (MWBEs). After embarking on his stellar career that stated while still in high school and culminated in his current position, he is empowered with the solemn responsibility of ascertaining that they are in compliance with Executive Article 15a. Under its auspices state governmental agencies are legally mandated to award a specific

percentage of their contracts to this population. BPCA is committed to providing guidance to those who are qualified to bid for contracts. Peterson's succinct reason for doing so is because "it's part of our mission. The Authority believes it's the right thing to do."

Since 2001, Peterson has been a major player in helping MWBEs obtain an astronomical \$750,000,000 in contract awards at BPCA, very easily exceeding the gubernatorial initiative. With Peterson at the helm it wasn't necessary for them to scramble to be in compliance. They wanted to correct the wrongs that deprived MWBEs of the chance to share the wealth.

As Peterson said, "Just to give you a little background. Back in 2010, when the governor came in, we set the goal of 20% [of contracts being awarded to MWBEs]. We were basically at 19% already. Then in 2014 when he announced the goal of 30%, we were basically up at the 26-29% range. So we were always ahead of the curve."

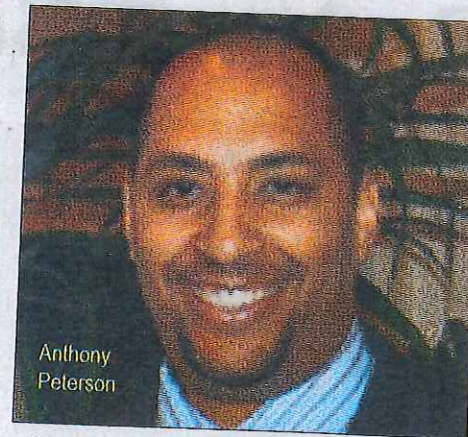
Entrepreneurs will readily attest to the fact that the bidding process is complex and laborious, but they can be confident that BPCA will help them navigate the labyrinthine bidding process which they do by "conducting workshops, for example, the one we did at the New American Chamber of

Commerce [International & Multicultural Business Expo]. At the workshop we help navigate the process especially the paper process which is mandatory." They endorse a competitive public bidding process and solicit bids based on such criteria as experience, credentials, availability and financial stability.

Peterson continued, "We have our Competitive Edge Conference. We work with about 20 city and state agencies. We were the ones that started it.... We do this every year to provide technical training for MWBEs. We help navigate the process."

Peterson added, "BPCA is working in conjunction with MWBEs in the following categories: services, construction and professional services, for example, park maintenance, office supplies, electrical companies, diving firms that do underwater work for us here at BPCA."

Two milestones define their history—first that it metamorphosed a dilapidated tract of land into a successful model for community renewal in 1968, and now it built its first green building built in 2003, the Solaire. As Peterson said, "Speaking of our green guidelines, we were one of the leaders—we built the first green building—the Solaire." This residential tower was the recipient of the Top Ten Green Award by the American Institute



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of Architects in 2004, and is the first building designed consistent with the environmental guidelines instituted by BPCA; it earned its green label by consuming less energy, reducing peak demand for electricity, fueling heating and air conditioning by using natural gas and is free of ozone-depleting refrigerants.

MWBEs should certainly have an equal opportunity to compete for the billions of dollars in goods and services procured by the government and the private sector annually—they should be full participants in our economic boom. But the shocking and deplorable reality is that, there still is disparity. But BPCA is committed to removing that disparity with Peterson at the helm. ■