



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins Participates in Chamber Economic Development Forum

JACK M. MARTINS May 9, 2011

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Senator Jack M. Martins answered questions and discussed economic development issues regarding Belmont Racetrack, Hempstead Turnpike and the Elmont-Franklin Square business corridor this past Thursday in a roundtable discussion sponsored by the Elmont Chamber of Commerce. Calling the forum, “an excellent opportunity to explore economic development and create jobs,” Senator Martins saluted the efforts of the Elmont Coalition

for Sustainable Development, the Elmont Chamber of Commerce and forum chair Muzzio Talini for being a driving force to revitalize the greater community.

The roundtable, moderated by Talini, an Elmont attorney and local businessman, highlighted different economic development opportunities facing the greater community. The roundtable also hosted NYRA President Charles Hayward who discussed racing issues and plans moving forward for Belmont. Also present were Elmont Coalition for Sustainable Development co-chairs Sandra Smith and Patrick Nicolosi. In addition, CCC President Joyce Stowe and Sewanhaka Central High School Superintendent Warren Meierdiercks were in attendance. Community members and civic leaders from Elmont, Franklin Square and South Floral Park gathered in the Elmont Memorial Library.

During the discussion, Senator Martins pointed out that there are several opportunities for economic development initiatives on Hempstead Turnpike. "Clearly, we need to do many things. We have to help business by cutting the red tape they have to go through so that when they are ready to build, develop and put the shovel in the ground, they can do it. Government can't stand in the way. We need to be a partner. Our goal has to be to create jobs and expand the tax base. We have to cut property taxes on homeowners and help small business. That has to be our goal," he said.

Several residents wanted to get a sense from Senator Martins on his vision for Belmont and what he would like to see at the facility. "I think the south lot has a lot of potential. I would like to see shopping, restaurants and an athletic component if it is possible. Many people have spoken about an athletic facility like soccer and I think there is great potential for that. A lot of people have spoken to me about the different options we have. One thing is for certain, we need to open the train station full time and let residents avail themselves to the trains. Do we need a hotel on the property? I think there is a very good argument for it," said Senator Martins. We have a partner in NYRA and I look forward to working with them."

Hempstead Turnpike's economic development challenges were also explored. "The economy certainly has been a real challenge for businesses throughout all of Long Island. The difference in Elmont, Franklin Square and throughout the Seventh Senate District is that we have prime locations on the busiest stretches of road just waiting to be utilized. Incentives for businesses who site their operations here should be explored. We need to help potential employers cut through the different challenges they have in building. We need proper zoning to address their needs. And, we need to have a business-friendly attitude."

Senator Martins also expressed his thanks to Hayward for his partnership with the community. "NYRA has signaled that they want to be a real partner and I am very happy about that. We need real investment in the greater community and develop Belmont to its full potential. I spoke with Charlie during the Senate hearing in Albany and he expressed his strong support for investment in Belmont. Just the other day, we spoke on the phone and talked about racing and Belmont. We have a lot of great things that can happen at Belmont. One thing is certain, the greater community will benefit from all of that," said Senator Martins.

Audience members asked Senator Martins if he supported the tax cap. "Yes," Martins replied. Another audience member asked if he would help NYRA and Hempstead Turnpike businesses with NYS Department of Transportation. Martins asked business leaders to "put together a list of your concerns and I will call myself."

Business leaders at the conclusion of the forum discussed local concerns with Senator Martins. Others present included JoAnn Adams of NYRA, Julie Marchesella, Paul Sapienza, Aubrey Phillips. Specifically, the group discussed the ongoing discussions over Belmont, the tax cap and revitalization efforts of the Hempstead Turnpike corridor from Elmont through Franklin Square.