



Brooklyn, 2nd quarter, 2010: Things are looking up, but we still have a long way to go...

July 13, 2010 - Spotlights

In May, the entire Ingram & Hebron Realty team attended the International Council of Shopping Center convention in Las Vegas. The show seemed as busy as it did during the boom times of four years ago with all of the big national brokerage houses having huge booths that appeared to have many conversations occurring at the "deal tables" they all set up within their confines.

Despite a recent report issued by a large Manhattan-based investment services firm that showed 279 stalled construction sites in Brooklyn (which was by far the highest number among all five boroughs), there was tremendous interest from all of the developers in attendance for any new Brooklyn opportunities. It seems that after years of everyone in the industry talking about the "smart money" sitting on the sidelines awaiting the bottom of the market that those buyers are beginning to stir. Our office is presently receiving more calls than usual from individuals "looking to buy."

I was not fortunate enough to win a new Porsche this trip though. Many of you will know of which I speak!

I also was honored to appear as a guest panelist at the June 16th "Brooklyn Real Estate Summit" hosted by Green Pearl Events and held at St. Francis College in downtown Brooklyn.

The well organized event was a sell out and featured speakers such as Joseph Sitt of Thor Equities, Seth Pinsky of the NYC Economic Development Corp. and Mary Anne Gilmartin of Forest City Ratner. The general tone of the day's sessions was that the worst is over although several speakers from the real estate investment arm of the business were not quite as optimistic. They stated that while things may be looking up, there is a long way to go and that the booms of a few years ago will not be seen again in our lifetimes.

The panel on which I appeared was titled "Is Brooklyn the New Manhattan?" When the question was posed to me I paraphrased an old country and western song the original lyrics of which were "I was country when country wasn't cool." I pointed out that many people in the room were, "Brooklyn when Brooklyn wasn't cool," as so many people in attendance there had the vision to see what this part of the world could become and they all staked everything on seeing that vision to its current exploding fruition. I also pointed out to much affirmative head nodding that Brooklyn doesn't want to be the "new Manhattan." It is an extraordinary place in its own right and does not need to emulate the successes of "Brooklyn East" as another speaker of the day, borough president Marty Markowitz, calls Manhattan.

Other news of the day included Seth Pinsky stating that there are \$5 billion in capital improvement funds committed to Brooklyn for bike lanes, and street improvements. Joseph Sitt discussed how as a native Brooklynite, his Coney Island acquisition was more of a personal fulfillment exercise than an arm's length real estate investment. Mary Anne Gilmartin of Forest City Ratner in discussing the oft-maligned and stalled Atlantic Yards project (now actually pouring concrete!) stated that, "If it's not

complex and difficult it's probably not interesting to us." This would seem to be the mindset of so many of the Brooklyn pioneers that were in attendance that day.

Our office remains quite busy: We are working on two exciting Atlantic Ave. leases that should be signed by press time. Both will be valuable and unique additions to that corridor which has become a very "in" spot to be for many legitimate reasons.

We are in active negotiations for over 30,000 s/f of office space, much of it a large government tenant that has taken almost two years to get to this point (and it still ain't done yet...). The phone rings regularly and we remain bullish for the real estate future of our beloved Brooklyn.

In other news of note, the long-awaited Brooklyn Bridge Park is now a reality and it would be impossible to find a more dramatic setting. The "new" Coney Island is up and running and looks pretty nice. A bike lane has been created on Prospect Park West and there are no reports yet of the sky having fallen.

Get out and do something "Brooklyn" this summer!

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