



Knight named president of Greater Jamaica Development Corporation

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According to the chairman of the board of directors of the Greater Jamaica Development Corp., Hope Knight, the chief operating officer of the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone, has been named to succeed Carlisle Towery as the president of GJDC.

"Hope has the background and experience to best project the Greater Jamaica Development Corp.'s mission," said Peter Kulka, the chairman of GJDC's board of directors and president of Jamaica-based KJL Property Management Corp. "She has proven herself extensively in her work at the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone and she is widely respected throughout circles dedicated to expanding economic development and opportunity in emerging urban communities."

"We are delighted she has accepted the challenge of succeeding Carlisle Towery and continuing his good work in bringing Jamaica to even greater heights as a community for people to live, work, visit and prosper," Kulka said.

Knight has led UMEZ's activities in leveraging public financing to drive private investment that led to the creation of hundreds of businesses and thousands of jobs in its service area. She is bringing her skills and commitment to continue downtown Jamaica's resurgence as a center of residential, commercial, institutional, academic, cultural life and economic development in Queens and beyond.

"I am excited at the prospect of joining the superb team at Greater Jamaica to build on the work they have done to lead the restoration of Downtown Jamaica to its historic central role in the economic vitality of Jamaica, Queens and beyond," said Knight. "I have large shoes to fill following Carlisle Towery's four decades of commitment to Jamaica. I am ready to roll up my sleeves and build on the progress to which he has contributed so much."

Knight said she looks forward to meeting with Jamaica's elected officials, including Congressman Greg Meeks, Borough president Melinda Katz, State Senators Leroy Comrie, James Sanders and Joseph Addabbo, Assemblymembers William Scarborough and Vivian Cook, Councilmembers Daneek Miller, Rory Lancman, Mark Weprin and Ruben Wills, as well as York College officials, community leaders, head of cultural organizations and officials from economic development and transportation agencies that are so central to Jamaica's progress.

"Whether it's York College, the Air Train and the transportation hub, the Jamaica Market or developers of the residential, commercial and hotel projects now underway or about to begin, Greater Jamaica is poised to achieve greater success as a place to live, work, visit and play," said Knight. "Mayor de Blasio's administration's embrace of Jamaica's potential to help him achieve his goals in affordable housing and jobs development means we have a partner in City Hall, and in the office of Borough President Melinda Katz, to work with on that path to success."

Towery, who is retiring after more than 40 years at the helm of GJDC, welcomed Knight's appointment.

"I could not be more delighted to leave Greater Jamaica Development Corporation in the capable and dedicated hands of Hope Knight," said Carlisle Towery, who is retiring after having led GJDC for more than four decades. "Jamaica is poised to reach even greater heights in the future, and everything about Hope's experience and commitment gives us reason to believe she will help take us there."

Kenneth J. Knuckles, the UMEZ Chief Executive Officer, congratulated Knight as he lamented her departure.

"Upper Manhattan's loss is Jamaica's gain, as Hope Knight is uniquely qualified to bringing the same energy and dedication to community empowerment and economic development in a prime Queens neighborhood that she demonstrated at UMEZ," said Knuckles.

Downtown Jamaica has seen a dramatic upsurge in development activities, especially around the transportation hub where the subway, Long Island Railroad and the Air Train converge. On either side of the transportation hub, a new hotel project by Abel Management and mixed-income residential-commercial development by BRP Companies are proceeding on sites assembled by GJDC. Blumenfeld Development Group, working with the City and GJDC, recently unveiled plans for major commercial development, with the return of the first major department store to the neighborhood in decades.

York College was the site of recent GJDC-assisted conferences hosted by City Hall and Borough President Katz to plan future growth in Jamaica, which has seen the return of major private investment following substantial public investment.

Knight, who has helped lead UMEZ since 2003, earlier served as a Vice President for Morgan Stanley in New York and in Tokyo. She serves on the boards of a number of corporate and non-profit entities, include the Carver Bank Community Development Corporation, Grameen America and Morgan Stanley New Markets, and is the Chair of the Board of Trustees of Marymount Manhattan College, where she earned her Bachelors degree in business management. She went on to earn a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Chicago.