



Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

HEARING DATE OCTOBER 24, 2016

ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK PIZZA

Application No.: LBR-2015-16-055
Business Name: Escape From New York Pizza
Business Address: 1737 Haight Street
District: District 5
Applicant: Timothy Parker, Owner
Nomination Date: March 9, 2016
Nominated By: Supervisor London Breed
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Escape from New York Pizza is a local pizza shop in the Haight-Ashbury founded in 1986 that prides itself in its New York style pizza, its unique business model and its practice of giving to local charities. The original location of the business is at 1737 Haight Street, and it has expanded to four other locations. Escape from New York Pizza has a unique slow-growth philosophy and business model that opts to share its success with employees. They also contribute to local charities and organizations that benefit the community and the greater San Francisco area. The business has regularly donated to Homeless Youth Outreach, United Playaz and McKinley Elementary School's afterschool programs.

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in SF for 30 or more years, with no break in SF operations exceeding two years?

Yes, the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

1737 Haight Street from 1986-Present (30 years)

Other locations:
333 Bush Street #104
715 Harrison Street
3242 22nd Street
2109 Polk Street

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes, the applicant has contributed to the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood's history and identity.



SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION

MARK DWIGHT, PRESIDENT
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

EDWIN M. LEE, MAYOR

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

- The business is associated with the craft of making New York style pizza and the tradition of following an employee-based business model that offers investment opportunities to employees.
- The original location at 1737 Haight Street is a 1910 property that has been evaluated by the Planning Department for potential historical significance. The property has been found to be a "Category A Property" that is located within the California Register-eligible Haight-Ashbury Historic District.
- The business has been cited in the following publications:
 - Say It Better Podcast, August 23, 2008, "The Art of Being Partners & Friends," by Kare Anderson
 - SF Gate, November 30, 2001, "An escape from the usual pizza places/Geffner brings bit of Big Apple to SF," by Lord Martine.

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

Yes, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that Escape From New York Pizza qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- The tradition of practicing a unique, employee centered business model which has proven to be both successful and beneficial to its employees and the community.

In addition, the following is recommended for safeguarding by Legacy Business Program staff:

- New York style pizza.
- 20 x 15 foot original mural in the Works Progress Administration) style at the Bush Street location.
- Unique designs and/or design themes for each of the restaurants.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include Escape from New York Pizza currently located at 1737 Haight Street in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo, Manager
Legacy Business Program



SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE CENTER / SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION
1 DR. CARLTON B. GOODLETT PLACE, ROOM 110, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94102-4681
Small Business Assistance Center (415) 554-6134 / Small Business Commission (415) 554-6481

SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION
MARK DWIGHT, PRESIDENT
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
EDWIN M. LEE, MAYOR

Small Business Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE OCTOBER 24, 2016

ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK PIZZA

LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY RESOLUTION NO. _____

Application No.: LBR-2015-16-055
Business Name: Escape From New York Pizza
Business Address: 1737 Haight Street
District: District 5
Applicant: Timothy Parker, Owner
Nomination Date: March 9, 2016
Nominated By: Supervisor London Breed
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS APPROVING THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY APPLICATION FOR ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK PIZZA, CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1737 HAIGHT STREET.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, and the Small Business Commission finds that the business has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, the business would face a significant risk of displacement; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on October 24, 2016, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore



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SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION

MARK DWIGHT, PRESIDENT
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

EDWIN M. LEE, MAYOR

BE IT RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission hereby includes Escape From New York Pizza in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at Escape From New York Pizza:

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- New York style pizza.
- The tradition of practicing a unique, employee centered business model which has proven to be both successful and beneficial to its employees and the community.
- 20 x 15 foot original mural in the Works Progress Administration) style at the Bush Street location.
- Unique designs and/or design themes for each of the restaurants.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on October 24, 2016.

Regina Dick-Endrizzi
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –



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1 DR. CARLTON B. GOODLETT PLACE, ROOM 110, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94102-4681
Small Business Assistance Center (415) 554-6134 / Small Business Commission (415) 554-6481



**Legacy
Business
Registry**

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2015-16-055
Business Name: Escape From New York Pizza
Business Address: 1737 Haight Street
District: District 5
Applicant: Timothy Parker, Owner
Nomination Date: March 9, 2016
Nominated By: Supervisor London Breed

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years? X Yes No

Operation start date verified in SF OpenData: August 29, 1986.

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community? X Yes No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms? X Yes No

NOTES: NA

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: September 3, 2016

Richard Kurylo
Manager, Legacy Business Program



President, Board of Supervisor
District 5



City and County of San Francisco

LONDON N. BREED

Wednesday, March 9th, 2016

Office of Small Business
Small Business Commission
City Hall, Suite 110
San Francisco, CA 94102

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to nominate Escape from New York Pizza at 1737 Haight Street for the Legacy Business Registry Program.

Escape from New York has been a staple of the Haight community since its founding in 1986. While many changes have occurred in the neighborhood since then, their restaurants continue to be known for their quality food and service.

They have proved themselves to be an asset to the community. Their business model emphasizes residents over profits, opting to share the company's successes with employees and the neighborhood. Many employees have become shareholders of the chain through their loyal service. As well, they are constantly thinking of ways to give back to the community. Regularly, they donate food to organizations such as Homeless Youth Outreach, United Playaz, and McKinley Elementary's afterschool programs.

I am proud to nominate Escape from New York Pizza for the Legacy Business Registry Program, and I know that they are excited about this opportunity as well. Their co-owner, Timothy Parker, can be contacted at: (415) 260-1028 or pepperoniface@gmail.com.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office at (415) 554-7630 or BreedStaff@sfgov.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "London Breed".

President London Breed
Board of Supervisors
City & County of San Francisco

APPLICATION FOR

Legacy Business Registration

Legacy Business registration is authorized by Section 2A.242 of the San Francisco Administrative Code. The registration process requires nomination by the Mayor or a member of the Board of Supervisors, a written application, and hearing the Historical Preservation Commission, hearing and recommendation of approval at the Small Business Commission.

1. Current Owner / Applicant Information

NAME OF BUSINESS:		
Escape From New York Pizza		
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)		
Paul Geffner Timothy Parker		
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:		TELEPHONE:
1737 Haight Street San Francisco, CA 94117		(415) 668-5577
		EMAIL:
		lisben@svn.net
WEBSITE:	FACEBOOK PAGE:	YELP PAGE:
escapefromnewyorkpizza.com	Escape From New York Pizza	(Yes)

APPLICANT'S NAME	
Timothy Parker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Same as Business Owner
APPLICANT'S TITLE	
Owner	
APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:
1620 48th Ave San Francisco, CA 94122	(415) 260-1028
	EMAIL:
	pepperoniface@gmail.com

SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:	SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):
061652	C1519068

NAME OF NOMINATOR:	DATE OF NOMINATION:

2. Business Addresses

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS:	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
1737 Haight St	94117	1/1/86 - present
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
333 Bush St #4	94104	1/1/98 - present

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
2109 Polk St	94109	12/1/06 - present

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
3242 22nd Street	94110	12/1/2008 - present

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
715 Harrison Street	94107	2/1/11 - present

3. Eligibility Criteria

Attach the business's historical narrative.

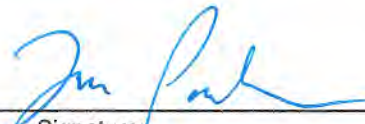
4. San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws, and Public Information Release

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.


Name (Print):

11/27/16
Date:


Signature:

Legacy Application for Escape From New York Pizza

Escape from New York Pizza is an iconic San Francisco business that was begun in 1986 by the original partners Paul Geffner and Joe Goldmark who are still active in the business.

Paul and Joe were both involved in starting Captain Video, the first chain of video rental stores in Northern California. Captain Video was founded in 1980. As the video business imploded, Paul and Joe recognized the need to be involved in a business that had less exposure to technological innovation. Paul had helped his brother Phil begin Escape From New York Pizza (named for Phil's favorite movie) in 1985. Together they created a recipe for great pizza using only fresh ingredients and handmade dough and a business that mirrored pizza by the slice restaurants in New York City, where they grew up. Joe Goldmark went on to become one of the founding partners of Amoeba Music, the seminal independent record store on Haight and Shrader streets.

Escape From New York Pizza has a slow growth philosophy, preferring to give opportunities to the best employees to expand the business in San Francisco, as opposed to reaching for outside money and pursuing growth for growth's sake.

The Haight Street store has weathered many changes in the neighborhood and has gone on to become famous world-wide for its great pizza and its entertaining celebrity "Wall of Fame." The store was built in 1986 with the unique corrugated metal exterior that is a pronounced landmark in the upper Haight. Inside, granite and corrugated metal were used to imply a sense of a New York City pizza store that landed in San Francisco.

More importantly, Escape From New York Pizza represents a set of business ideals that support the welfare of the community that it services. Although we do not publicize it, part of our business mission is to feed worthy groups in each neighborhood that we serve. These groups include hospices, schools, after school centers, rehabilitation centers, etc. We have included a separate list of the charities to which we donate.

At our Harrison Street location, we hosted a Christmas party for an underserved community of at-risk youth. We continue to feed the after school program of this program, United Playaz, weekly. Included in this application is a letter of recommendation from that organization.

At our Bush Street store, we have fed the Tenderloin After School Program since we opened the store 15 years ago. Like the Harrison store, we feed these at-risk children every Friday, something both the staff and the children look forward to. We've also included a letter from them in this application.

Our Bush Street location also hosted an event named "Poetry and Pizza," which hosted local poets on the second Friday of every month for a decade. Escape From New York Pizza donated tens of thousands of dollars to local charities as a consequence of this event. We provided free pizza to this event and 100% of the donations were sent to the charity of the poet's choice. Famous poets, including the San Francisco based Poet Laureate, Kay Ryan (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kay_Ryan) participated in our program. Escape From New York Pizza and Paul Geffner were featured in an article in the San Francisco Chronicle concerning this event (<http://www.sfgate.com/restaurants/article/An-escape-from-the-usual-pizza-places-Geffner-2847931.php>). That article is included in the package of historical items we are providing.

Escape From New York Pizza was instrumental in the creation of the Mission Community Market. The Market is a core event in the Mission community, happening every Thursday between 4:00 and 8:00 p.m. It not only brings healthy food to the Mission, it also supports educational and cultural events on a weekly basis. As a consequence, we were given the Certificate of Honor from Supervisor David Campos and the City of San Francisco in 2010. We continue to be active on the Mission Community Market board of directors. A letter of recommendation from Jeremy Shaw, its Executive Director, is included in this package.

Escape From New York Pizza's business model is unique. It is based on a benign business model, sharing profits with the employees and creating an environment where if the business succeeds, everyone succeeds. Many of our employees have gone on to earn a share of the business without investing any capital, solely because of their efforts. Of the five working partners, only the founder, Paul Geffner, invested in the business. The other four graduated from jobs such as cashiers, prep cooks, and even flier distributors to ownership positions solely through sweat equity. This has produced a loyal and productive workforce. An atmosphere of mutual respect between employees and employer creates a great customer environment that is the foundation for Escape's success.

The designs of our restaurants are unique. Some of the highlights at the different stores include the following:

Bush Street

- A 20 x 15 foot original mural in the WPA (Works Progress Administration) style
- A replica of an eagle from the Chrysler building
- King Kong holding a slice of pizza (created by ILM)
- A poem by Galway Kinnell

Harrison Street

- A collection of NY Giants paraphernalia
- Bobble heads
- Mineral crystal specimens

22nd Street

- Bartender hall of fame
- Murals by famous street artists
- A collection of extraordinarily bizarre and unique photos and instruments that are being curated by our store manager, Chewy Marzolo

Polk Street

- In the midst of a remodel based on an 80s theme

Our initial store at Haight and Shrader streets has been open for over 30 years, but we are one organization with five stores in five different neighborhoods with a singular philosophy of what's good for our employees and our neighbors is what is good for our business. We ask you to recognize this profoundly San Francisco sentiment and grant Escape From New York Pizza as a whole your Legacy Business designation.

Charities that Escape From New York Pizza contributes to (on a weekly and monthly basis):

Partial List:

Taking It To The Street (homeless street sweepers)

Contact: Christian (415) 933-3873

Haight Street Referral Center

(415) 522-1377

Homeless Youth Outreach

(415) 318-6384

Leukemia Foundation

Contact: Alison (925) 876-1571

United Playaz

Contact: Dante (650) 921-4901

Veteran Affairs

Contact: Richard (415) 235-2165

SFPD

Contact: Ray (415) 816-9253

First Exposures

Contact: Erik (415) 374-6657

McKinley School after school program

(415) 241-6300

Tenderloin after school program

Contact: Laura (415) 776-8400

Veteran's Administration

(415) 683-9917

Pictures from the Haight Street Location

NO OPEN
PALACE OF FINE ARTS
LIONSGATE

From New York
PIZZA



Hot Slices



NO PARKING
6 AM - 7 AM
TUES THURS
STREET CLEANING



NOW OPEN
LIONSGATE

THE HUNGER GAMES
THE EXHIBITION

Garage from New York
PIZZA

EVENTS
DAILY
HOP TUE

NO PARKING
6AM to 7AM
TUESDAYS
STREET CLEANING

NO PARKING
6AM to 7AM
TUESDAYS
STREET CLEANING

415.742.0800

The Slices

PIZZA
ALL OF THEM





PAY HERE



ORDER HERE

ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK PIZZA

SLICES	
CHEESE	4.00
PESTO	4.75
PEPPERONI	4.75
MUSHROOM	4.75
SLICE OF DAY	4.95
U SAY POTATO	5.50
GOURMET VEGGIE	5.50
DRINKS	
FOUNTAIN SODA	
SMALL	1.75
MEDIUM	2.15
LARGE	2.40
BOTTLED WATER	1.50
ORGANIC DRINKS	2.95

TAX INCLUDED ON ALL ITEMS
SEE MENU FOR WHOLE PIE SELECTIONS

LIBERTY SALAD	SM	6.50	LG	7.95
CAESAR SALAD		6.50		7.95
WITH CHICKEN ADD 2.00				
DRESSING: BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE				
RANCH BLUE CHEESE CAESAR				





ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK PIZZA

SLICES

CHEESE	4.00
PEZZO	4.75
PEPPERONI	4.75
MUSHROOM	4.75
SLICE OF DAY	4.50
1/2 DAY POTATO	5.50
GOURMET VEGGIE	5.50

DRINKS

FOUNTAIN SODA	
SMALL	1.75
MEDIUM	2.10
LARGE	2.40
BOTTLED WATER	1.50
ORGANIC DRINKS	2.15

SEE MENU FOR WHOLE PIE SELECTIONS

LIBERTY SALAD 5oz with 1/2 cup of CAESAR SALAD 4oz

1/2 DAY POTATO 5.50

1/2 DAY POTATO 5.50

1/2 DAY POTATO 5.50

1/2 DAY POTATO 5.50





ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK PIZZA	
SLICES	
CHEESE	4.00
PESTO	4.75
PEPPERONI	4.75
MUSHROOM	4.95
SLICE OF DAY	5.50
U-SAY POTATO	5.50
GOURMET VEGGIE	5.50
DRINKS	
FOUNTAIN SODA	
SMALL	1.75
MEDIUM	2.15
LARGE	2.50
BOTTLE WATER	1.50
ORGANIC	3.95
SEE MENU FOR WHOLE PIZZA SELECTION	

LIBERTY SALAD	
CAESAR SALAD	SM
PEPPERONI ACC	
CHESNOU BALZAMIC	
STANGI PIZZA	3.00





ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK PIZZA	
SLICES	
CHEESE	4.00
PESTO	4.75
PEPPERONI	4.75
MUSHROOM	4.75
SLICE OF DAY	4.95
U SAY POTATO	5.50
GOURMET VEGGIE	5.90
DRINKS	
FOUNTAIN SODA	
SMALL	1.75
MEDIUM	2.15
LARGE	2.40
BOTTLED WATER	1.50
ORGANIC DRINKS	2.95
TAX INCL. ON ALL ITEMS	
SEE MENU FOR WHOLE PIE SELECTION'S	

LIBERTY SALAD	SM	6.50	LG	7.95
CAESAR SALAD		6.50	7.95	
WITH ORZOTTO ADD 2.00				
DRESSING: BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE				
RANCH BLUE CHEESE CAESAR				

PAY HERE

ORDER HERE




NEW YORK PIZZA	
4.00	
4.75	
4.75	
4.75	
4.95	
5.50	
5.90	

ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK



Pictures from the Bush Street Location





If one day it happens
you find yourself with someone you love
in a cafe at one end
of the Point Mirafloas, at the zinc bar
where white wine stands in upward
spearing glasses,
and if you commit then, as we did, the error
of marking
one day all this will only be memory,
learn,
as you stand
at the end of the bridge which arcs,
from love, you mark, into enduring love,
mean to reach deeper
into the scrows
to come — to touch
the almost imaginary bones
under the face, to hear under the laughter
the wind crying across the black stones. Kiss
the mouth
which tells you, *love,*
love is the world. This mouth. This laughter.
These temple-bones.
The still undanced evidence of vanishing.

— Galway Kinnell

If one day it happens
you find yourself with someone you love
in a cafe at one end
of the Pont Mirabeau, at the zinc bar
where white wine stands in upward
opening glasses,
and if you commit then, as we did, the error
of thinking
one day all this will only be memory,
learn,
as you stand
at this end of the bridge which arcs,
from love, you think, into enduring love,
learn to reach deeper
into the sorrows
to come - to touch
the almost imaginary bones
under the face, to hear under the laughter
the wind crying across the black stones. Kiss
the mouth
which tells you, *here,*
here is the world. This mouth. This laughter.
These temple bones.

The still undanced cadence of vanishing.

— Galway Kinnell



Pictures from the 22nd Street Location

...NG WATER 1.5
PURITY DRINKS ?

EASTWOOD
LI WALLACH
VAN CLEEF



**JONO
UTTO
TTIVO**

OR - TECHNISCOPE

ALDO GIUFFRÈ

...O PETTO - LONGI PISTELLI - LIVIO LORENZA
...O - LORENZO RIBBLEO - ... MADIO BOREA
...ENZO - SERGIO LEONE

...EDONALDI ... P.L.L. ...
- PARADE 45 EPC 1800 - EPL 2000



Trash





THE PAULS
THE PAULS
THE PAULS
THE PAULS
THE PAULS
THE PAULS
THE PAULS



Employees Must Carry
Their ID Passes
Before Entering to Work



Pictures from the Harrison Street Location

NO PARKING
2 AM TO 6 AM
TUES THURS
STREET CLEANING*

ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK
PIZZA

896
0700





In 1957 the San Francisco Giants escaped from New York.





Pictures from the Polk Street Location



ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK PIZZA

BRUNO'S
PIZZA

PIZZA

2109

Say it Better

With *Kare* Anderson

HOME ABOUT TESTIMONIALS SPEAK CONSULT BOOKS BLOG FORBES HUFFINGTON POST TIPS VIA VIDEO

MovingFromMeToWe Succeed and Savor Life With Others

Share with your friends

Subscribe to Blog

The Art of Being Business Partners & Friends

Posted By Kare Anderson in Behavior, Friendship, Give Back, Play, Podcasts on August 23, 2008



For starters, a warped sense of humor helps. When he first came from New York, shortly after college, Paul Geffner began selling handmade leather bound journals, along with a crowd of other street vendors on the sidewalk near The Embarcadero in S.F. Even then people were drawn to him.

Soon, with childhood friends, he started Captain Video. They designed the first video rental display shelves, a style still used today. Video rentals popped up on many street corners back then yet his stores were packed, staff became like family. Some went on to be managers and then part owners.

With Blockbuster looming, he and his partners sold the rental outlets, with money from the sale flowing through to many employees. Along the way, he continued his weekly basketball games, read and wrote poetry, took friends on rock mining trips for Herkimer diamonds and amethysts and more – all pursuits he started in childhood. Longtime partners became



friends, split off and invested in each other's businesses, still staying in touch. Over the years the ones I recall include Amoeba Records, Escape From New York Pizza (pizza and poetry), Purity and (my favorite name) a chicken take-out place in S.F. called Poultry in

Motion.

Yes, he's made money, and deep friendships. He's happily married to Lisa Bennett. Along the way he's been a retail start-up helper, owner of several mines, board member, Big Brother, team mate, frequent best man, jokester, – and the rich source of a quirky, soulful life philosophy. He started a "do good" fund called For Love or Money. He launched a holiday that you, too, can celebrate simply by wearing your shirt inside out, an easy way to recognize others who're celebrating it, eh? I thought of Paul



when I first saw The Wire because I knew he'd love the brilliant script, chaotic storyline and true-to-life characters.



This has been a stellar year for him, even by his standards. I thought of him when I read Rita Carter's Multiplicity and Maici Alboher's Slash Life.

Paul embodies the spirit, generosity and ingenuity of the Me2We spirit in enjoying work and life – with others. Want an emotional lift, a few laughs and some insights on how to grow your business and live a life that takes in into different worlds, a life you can savor with steadfast friends? As Robin Sharma wrote, Who Will Cry When

Enter your first name

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Enter search

Blog Categories

Select Category

Blog Tag Cloud

Adam. M. Grant. barry schwartz
Bob Sutton Choice
collaboration
conference Dan Ariely Dan
Pink Frans Johansson
Gretchen Rubin
happiness IABC john
gottman John Hagel Maici
Alboher Marcus
Buckingham
mutuality matters
opportunity-makers Peter
Guber Peter Sims praise
Quantified Self quotability Seth
Godlin Sharing
SmartPartnering
Susan Cain teamwork TED
Teresa Amabile

You Die?

Categories: behavior, Friendship, Give Back, Play, Podcasts and tagged Amoeba Music, Escape From New York Pizza, Jackson Crossing, Marci Alboher, Paul Geffner, poetry, Retail, Rita Carter.
Bookmark the permalink.

Post a Comment.

Post a Comment

Your email is kept private. Required fields are marked (required)

Name (required)

Email (will not be published) (required)

Website

Post Comment

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Subject: recommendation for legacy business: escape from new york pizza

From: "Jeremy Shaw, Mission Community Market" <jeremy@missioncommunitymarket.org>

Date: 2/3/2016 9:00 PM

To: Paul Geffner <lisben@svn.net>

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to nominate Escape from New York Pizza as a legacy business of San Francisco. If there ever were a benevolent business model, EFNY Pizza would be it. While the shared owners of the business can better speak to their worker-ownership model; to their support of local artists inside (and muralists outside) the store; and to their sustainability practices; as a community member and customer I can definitively say that without EFNY on 22nd Street (and Mission) the neighborhood would be a far worse place.

Two owners of EFNY, Paul Geffner and Chewy Marzolo, were part of the original collaborative of community leaders, non-profits and business owners who came together to form the independent, non-profit Mission Community Market - on whose Board I currently serve. Paul and Chewy saw the enormous potential of a locally-owned farmers market that, in addition to creating opportunity for community-minded farms and other local businesses, could provide an array of services like bilingual health outreach, murals, music performances and safe spaces for local youth and families. Paul, Chewy and their partner Suzanne, brought all their resources to bear for the Community Market and other local initiatives. They continue to be vital partners in transforming Bartlett Street into a new public space, thanks to the support from the community, the Department of Public Works and Supervisor Campos. All on top of serving fantastic and fresh New York style pizza!

For the pizza and their partnership, the best I could wish for any other neighborhood would be a business like Escape from New York. I believe they should be a legacy business of San Francisco.

Sincerely,

Jeremy

Jeremy Shaw
Board President

[Mission Community Market](#) - Returns February 4th!
Mission and 22nd St - Thursdays - 4-8pm

Subject: recommendation for legacy business: escape from new york pizza

From: "Jeremy Shaw, Mission Community Market" <jeremy@missioncommunitymarket.org>

Date: 2/3/2016 9:00 PM

To: Paul Geffner <lisben@svn.net>

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Jeremy

Jeremy Shaw
Board President

Mission Community Market - Returns February 4th!
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SFGATE <http://www.sfgate.com/restaurants/article/An-escape-from-the-usual-pizza-places-Geffner-2847931.php>

An escape from the usual pizza places / Geffner brings bit of Big Apple to SF

Lord Martine Published 4:00 am, Friday, November 30, 2001



IMAGE 1 OF 2

"Escape from New York Pizza", 333 Bush St. San Francisco, CA Paul Geffner, has been in the pizza business for 13 years. A restaurant at Haight and Shrader Sts. (13 yrs), Castro & 18th Sts. (10 yrs), and 333 Bush ... [more](#)

Their slogan is: "Where the Golden Gate meets the Empire State." Strolling into Escape from New York Pizza is indeed like drifting into a Big Apple daydream -- with a flower in your hair

A fantasy mural at the downtown San Francisco location (333 Bush St. at Montgomery Street) by [Oenone Terrill](#), depicts Lady Liberty standing near the Transamerica Pyramid.

Two great cities. One love.

With passion, sparkling Coca-Cola-brown eyes, a healthy smile, expressive gestures and a charming pizza belly, Escape from New York Pizza proprietor **Paul Geffner**, 48, joined me for a slice to talk about his unusual interests and the unorthodox business philosophy behind his trio of restaurants in San Francisco. The sister spots are located at 508 Castro St. near 18th Street and 1737 Haight near Cole Street.

He nibbled on a combination he calls "Elementary My Dear Watsonville," which holds artichokes and tomatoes. I devoured the "**Andy Warhol**" -- pesto, tomato and mushroom and a slice of the "Big Meat Combo" -- pepperoni, sausage, green pepper and onion. Depending on the toppings, the price ranges from \$2.50 to \$3.50 a slice.

Amid lemon-yellow, periwinkle, sun-bleached brick and moss-colored cutouts of the New York City skyline, hand-crafted faux banisters (East Village style),

brushed-steel tables, and eagle gargoyles (modeled after those projecting from the Chrysler Building), Geffner began with what lured him to San Francisco from New York in 1974.

"I was a senior in **college** studying poetry," he said. "Having a degree in poetry and not having a degree in poetry probably amounted to the same thing. But, while visiting friends, I fell in love with San Francisco and moved here after graduation."

Geffner's San Francisco diary includes yarns of his work at a bead store on Market Street called Beadazzler, becoming a Fisherman's Wharf street artist in the '70s and opening Captain Video in 1981 with partners **Rob Friedman** and **Dave Prinz** (who went on to open Amoeba Music).

Geffner's spare time was, and still is, spent with his family, playing basketball and collecting minerals.

"It's a great hobby for people who don't have any courage but want adventure," he conceded. "I'll never climb Mount Everest, but if you get the opportunity to open up a crystal pocket that's been in the ground for a million years, it's a thrilling event. Once in a while, you find something that no one has ever seen before -- the **Mona Lisa** of nature."

In 1988, Geffner opened his first Escape from New York Pizza, in the Haight.

His experience to that date shaped his unconventional business style.

"When I first started, I had no business experience," he said. "I believe you learn more from failure than you do from success.

"We made human, not corporate decisions. And we paid people well. I think that basic business assumptions that most people have are incorrect. For instance: I think you should always do business with friends."

He cited the Mafia as designing the perfect business model. "They are like family and remain very loyal to each other," he said. "Unfortunately, they use it for evil."

Each Escape from New York Pizza location is characterized by personal flair and connection to the community. The Castro Street store displays autographed images of celebrities and makes regular donations to neighboring AIDS hospices.

In the Haight, it helps the [Haight Ashbury Free Clinic](#), among other groups. And downtown, the Tenderloin After-School Program gets its attention.

Downtown, the store places high rank on the word.

The restaurant's walls serve as stationery for poems by [Paul Zimmer](#) and [Galway Kinnell](#) -- Geffner's favorites. And on the first Friday night of every month, it hosts "Pizza and Poetry," which features all-you-can-eat pizza and verse by a local poet for \$5 -- which goes to the charity-of-choice of the headlining scribe.

For gut reaction, choose from novel pizza tosses such as "The Gourmet" -- fresh spinach, feta, sun-dried tomato and artichokes; the "Glorious Chicken" is topped with grilled chicken, cheddar cheese, tomato, fresh garlic and spinach; and the "You Say Potato" is made with sliced and roasted potatoes and garlic cloves on a bed of pesto sauce.

Whole pies are available.

At the noon hour, order up a lunch combo that offers a slice, a medium salad and a large soda for \$6.95. Or, chow down on a hot sub: meatball (\$4.95),

eggplant Parmesan (\$4.95) or spicy Italian sausage (\$5.95).

Geffner closes our lunch date with appreciation speak of his 5-year-old son,

Ben, his wife, **Lisa Bennett**, and life's blessings.

"There's a line by Galway Kinnell: 'The wages of dying is love.' That means,

the payment for mortality is that we have the capacity to love. That, in one sentence, is as complete an insight into the nature of things as I know."

Where to go

Escape to Escape from New York Pizza or call for delivery: 333 Bush St., (415) 421-0700; 508 Castro St., (415) 252-1515; 1737 Haight St., (415) 668- 5577.

John O'Hara / The Chronicle

Paul Geffner, above, opened his first Escape from New York Pizza more than a decade ago on Haight Street. Now he has two other locations and sells products such as toilet paper, left, along with pizza.

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HEARST

ADVERTISEMENT

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July 13, 2016

Suzanne Esser
Escape From New York Pizza
715 Harrison Street
San Francisco, CA 94107

Dear Suzanne,

On behalf of Frameline, we would like to thank you for your invaluable contribution to Frameline40 – San Francisco International LGBTQ Film Festival, June 16-26, 2016. Frameline40 was proud to partner with Escape From New York Pizza as a Hospitality Sponsor this year. We are extraordinarily grateful for your generous support in providing pizza credit for our weekly "Pizza Fridays."

Thanks to Escape From New York Pizza's contribution, Frameline's milestone 40th anniversary was a great success. With Festival attendance nearing 60,000, Frameline again retained its title as the world's largest LGBTQ film festival.

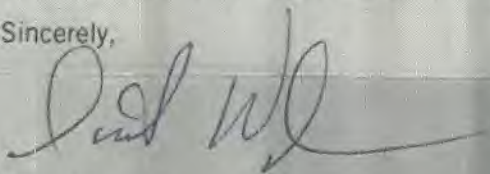
Frameline40 spanned 11 days of sold-out screenings, lively parties, social events, interactive panels, and special guest appearances. The Festival's 155 films, presented at five venues in San Francisco, Berkeley, and Oakland, were met with thunderous applause and thoughtful dialogue amongst the LGBTQ, independent film, and media arts communities.

The Festival also hosted over 400 filmmakers, industry professionals, and programmers from around the world, again giving audience members unparalleled access to these artists for lively and informative question-and-answer sessions about their work.

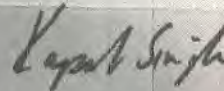
Frameline and the San Francisco International LGBTQ Film Festival continue to exist primarily because of the support of partners like you, who understand the importance of supporting LGBTQ media arts.

We sincerely thank Escape From New York Pizza for your generous sponsorship of Frameline's historic and highly successful 40th year. We hope that your overall experience with Frameline40 was a rewarding one. We welcome your feedback regarding your sponsorship experience. We wish you the best, and look forward to partnering with Escape From New York Pizza again in the future.

Sincerely,



David Warczak
Director of Marketing and Strategic Partnerships



Kapish Singla
Sponsorship Associate

Thanks a bunch for helping
Keep morale up for our
staff weekly pizza days!

Certificate of Honor

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS City and County of San Francisco

The Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco hereby issues, and authorizes the execution of, this Certificate of Honor in appreciative public recognition of distinction and merit for outstanding service to a significant portion of the people of the City and County of San Francisco by:

Escape from New York Pizza

For your leadership, energy and creativity in launching the Mission Community Market; for supporting community-building in the Mission district; and for providing the city of San Francisco with delicious pizza.



Supervisor David Campos

October 26, 2010





UNITED • PLAYAZ

1038 Howard Street • San Francisco, CA 94103

www.unitedplayaz.org

August 25, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Rudy Corpuz Jr. I am the Founder and Director of United Playaz, a violence prevention and leadership development organization committed to providing youth with positive role models and activities to engage in as an alternative to involvement with gangs, drugs and other high risk behaviors. Our organization began in 1994 and has been providing high impact services to youth from all over San Francisco.

I am writing this letter in support of Escape from New York Pizza in their pursuit to become a Legacy Business in San Francisco. Our relationship with Escape from New York Pizza began about seven years ago when we were approached by Paul to participate in a Holiday event at one of his locations. Escape from New York Pizza employees hosted 30 of our families, youth and parents, for an afternoon Christmas celebration where youth received gifts and everyone enjoyed pizza. We have enjoyed an amazing and supportive partnership every since.

Since that day, Escape from New York Pizza has been an awesome partner to our youth. We began as a very small organization with limited to no resources and Escape from New York Pizza has donated pizza weekly since that pizza party and more often when we have special events or celebrations. Many of our youth are low income and face serious food security issues. The generous donation that we receive from Escape from New York Pizza not only supports our young people but also has tremendously supported our organization in its growth. We also know that we are not the only youth organization or community entity that Escape from New York supports in this way.

Escape from New York Pizza has a long history in San Francisco as a great place to have a bite but an equally long history as a valuable community partner. Escape from New York is one of San Francisco's very important Legacy Businesses and we hope that they are approved. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or require additional information 415-573-6219.

In peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rudy Corpuz Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rudy Corpuz Jr.



08 August 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to formally thank Escape From New York for over two decades of pizza. Please allow me to expand on this fundamental partnership:

The Tenderloin After-school Program (TASP) provides an integral year-round service to at-risk youth and families living in the Tenderloin and other neighborhoods throughout San Francisco. A department of Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation (TNDC), TASP has been in operation since 1993, and serves over 250 children ages 7 – 18 years of age. Many of the participants at TASP attend Title I public schools, while many others live in TNDC's supportive housing.

Escape From New York has delivered pizza to TASP every Friday since we opened the doors to our first enrollees. For many of these children, that slice or two of pizza is their only meal of the day. Every participant, from the first graders to seniors in high school, look forward to Fridays at TASP for this very reason – they know that they can count on Escape From New York to deliver hot, fresh, delicious pizza each and every Friday. If any pizza is left over, TASP staff package it up and allow those families who are struggling financially to bring some home to enjoy.

Escape From New York provides more than just pizza to TASP participants; they provide comfort, safety, nourishment, and consistency. They are the personification of community service, offering what they can through this selfless, humble gesture. For over 20 years, we have counted on them, and they have never let us down. For this we are truly grateful – each and every one of us.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nanda Devi Rich", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nanda Devi Rich, MSW, LSW

Program Manager

TNDC's Tenderloin After-School Program

TENDERLOIN
NEIGHBORHOOD
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION

201 EDDY STREET
SAN FRANCISCO
CA 94102
p:(415) 776-2151
f:(415) 776-3952

WWW.TNDC.ORG

NeighborWorks®
CHARTERED MEMBER



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Legacy Business Registry Case Report HEARING DATE: OCTOBER 5, 2016

1650 Mission St.
Suite 400
San Francisco,
CA 94103-2479

Reception:
415.558.6378

Fax:
415.558.6409

Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

Filing Date: September 6, 2016
Case No.: 2016-011450LBR
Business Name: Escape from New York Pizza
Business Address: 1737 Haight Street
Zoning: NCD (Haight Street Neighborhood Commercial)/
40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 1248/023
Applicant: Timothy Parker, Owner
1737 Haight Street
San Francisco, CA 94117
Nominated By: Supervisor London Breed, District 5
Staff Contact: Stephanie Cisneros - (415) 575-9186
stephanie.cisneros@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
tim.frye@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Escape from New York Pizza is a local pizza shop in the Haight-Ashbury founded in 1986 that prides itself in its New York style pizza, its unique business model, and its practice of giving to local charities. Best known for its New York style pizza, the business has expanded to include five locations. The original location at 1737 Haight Street is housed within a one-story commercial space that belongs to a larger one-story building containing three separate commercial spaces. Escape from New York Pizza's growth is largely due to its unique slow-growth philosophy and business model that opts to share its success with employees, as well as its involvement with local charities and organizations that benefit the community and the greater San Francisco area. The business has regularly donated to local charities and organizations such as Homeless Youth Outreach, United Playaz, and McKinley Elementary School's afterschool programs.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*
1986
2. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

Yes, Escape from New York Pizza qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- i. Escape from New York Pizza has operated for 30 years.

- ii. Escape from New York Pizza has contributed to the Haight-Ashbury community's history and identity by serving as a local eatery and practicing a unique employee-based business model. The business upholds ideals that support the welfare of the community and a mission to feed groups such as hospices, schools, after-school centers, and rehabilitation centers among others and a variety of community and charity organizations.
- iii. Escape from New York Pizza is committed to maintaining its craft of making New York style pizza and the tradition of following a business model that offers investment opportunities to employees who have proven loyal to the business.

3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?*

Yes. The business is associated with the craft of making New York style pizza and the tradition of following an employee-based business model that offers investment opportunities to loyal employees first.

4. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?*

The original location at 1737 Haight Street is not associated with significant architecture as determined by the Neighborhood Commercial Buildings Historic Resource Survey (pending approval by the Historic Preservation Commission). Further research is required to determine whether the property is associated with significant events and/or persons.

5. *Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?*

The original location at 1737 Haight Street is a 1910 property that has been evaluated by the Planning Department for potential historical significance. The property has been found to be a "Category A Property" that is located within the California Register-eligible Haight Ashbury Historic District.

6. *Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?*

No. The business is not mentioned in a local historic context statement. However, the original location is part of a one-story building with three commercial spaces, one of which (1723 Haight Street, extant) is mentioned in the LGBTQ Historic Context Statement as being one of the earliest gay businesses in the Haight (the Golden Cask).

7. *Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?*

Yes. Say It Better Podcast, August 23, 2008, "The Art of Being Partners & Friends," by Kare Anderson; SF Gate, November 30, 2001, "An escape from the usual pizza places/Geffner brings bit of Big Apple to SF," by Lord Martine.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

- 1737 Haight Street (original location)

Recommended by Staff

- Staff recommends that the business maintain the tradition of practicing a unique, employee-

centered business model which has proven to be both successful and beneficial to its employees and the community.



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 794 HEARING DATE OCTOBER 5, 2016

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stephanie.cisneros@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye - (415) 575-6822
tim.frye@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK PIZZA, CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1737 HAIGHT STREET (BLOCK/LOT 1248/023).

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on October 5, 2016, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission** hereby recommends that Escape from New York Pizza qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated in the same location for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission** hereby recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for Escape from New York Pizza

Location (if applicable)

- 1737 Haight Street

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

- Staff recommends that the business maintain the tradition of practicing a unique, employee-centered business model which has proven to be both successful and beneficial to its employees and community

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations** are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission** hereby directs its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file 2016-011450LBR to the Office of Small Business.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was **ADOPTED** by the Historic Preservation Commission on October 5, 2016.



Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Hasz, Hyland, Johnck, Johns, Pearlman, Matsuda, Wolfram

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ADOPTED: October 5, 2016