

NEW YORK POST

Brooklyn Chamber, City to Help Coney Boardwalk Businesses Fighting to Keep Leases

With longtime Coney Island boardwalk businesses now sweating over having to come up with business models to justify returning next summer, the city and the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce today agreed to help them meet the tight Aug. 31 deadline set by Luna Park's operator.

The Chamber, the city's Coney Island Development Corp. and the **city's Small Business Services Department** say they'll devote staff and other resources to assist the 11 popular mainstays – including "Shoot the Freak," Lola Staar Boutique and Ruby's Bar – in drafting proposals for renewing leases. As a first step, a mobile outreach unit will be set up by the boardwalk Monday and Tuesday for business operators to meet with city and Chamber staff.

Those who miss the deadline or fail to impress Italian amusement designer Zamperla -- the business owners' landlord and Luna Park's operator -- with their business-improvement plans risk being booted.

"A lot of these businesses are family-owned and never had to do anything like this, so it seemed like a natural fit for us to help," said Carl Hum, the Chamber's president and a CIDC board member, who proposed the plan.

Some boardwalk business owners said Hum's actions give them hope that the city won't abandoned them, as they feared.

"It's a fantastic idea because it's free assistance to help my business grow," said Dianna Carlin, owner of Lola Staar Boutique.

The Post first reported Monday that Zamperla, the city's handpicked operator for Luna Park, is playing hardball with the 11 businesses by requiring them to submit business models with snappy marketing plans and proposed upgrades to justify remaining.

CIDC President Lynn Kelly said the city wants to help the businesses succeed but will leave it up to Zamperla to decide who should stay.