



Diane Collier
Chair

Angel D. Mescain
District Manager

COMMUNITY BOARD ELEVEN

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Land Use, Landmarks & Planning Committee
December 9, 2015 - 6:00 p.m.
Bonifacio Senior Center
7 East 116th Street, NY NY 10035

- Present: Adem Brija, Alvin Johnson, Holley Drakeford, Lashawn Henry, Alvin Johnson, Alex Kohen, Marissa Mack, Frances Mastrota, Xiomara Pedraza, Theresa Richardson, Candy Vives-Vasquez, Jemar Ward, Marie Winfield, Jonathan Winstone, Jesse Yang, Angel Mescain (staff)
- Excused: Beverly Alston
- Absent: Keith Massey, Vincent Torres, Steven Villanueva, Andre Vital
- Guests: Diane Collier (Chair, CB11)

1. Call to Order – Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 6:10pm.

2. Informational Updates

None.

3. Presentations/Discussions

- a. Update on East Harlem Education Center Construction Project

The update was rescheduled.

4. Old Business

- a. Continuing discussion of proposed Lexington Commons project at 102nd Street and Lexington Avenue (Block 1629, Lot 59)

Lashawn Henry and Angel Mescain explained that they discussed the Committee's concerns regarding the proposed "Letter of Support" with the New York City Housing Preservation and Development ("HPD"). It was explained that Board Chair Diane Collier did not bring the item to a vote at the November Full Board meeting pending a conversation with HPD. HPD confirmed that the letter is intended to permit the developer to engage in discussions with HPD and is not

interpreted or intended to serve as a letter in support of the project. It was further explained that the letter is intended to only last six months and only to be used for property owners whose property is adjacent to an HPD-owned lot. This was the same process used for two prior developers (specifically, Tahl-Propp Equities and Artimus).

Alvin Johnson asked what the developer has offered the Board in terms of the proposal. Angel explained that the developer had initially approached the prior Board Chair and the CB11 staff about a potential 80/20 project. After initial conversations, the developer reverted to HPD and then re-approached CB11 in the November meeting. Lashawn Henry noted that the process is at a very initial stage; the standard ULURP process and CB11 review would continue at a later stage once HPD and the developer have these initial conversations.

Candy Vives-Vasquez asked why the checklist and related processes were not used. Lashawn Henry noted that the checklist was intended for the later stage of a developer's proposal; at this stage, the checklist is inapplicable and that there was no intent to indicate support of any project. It was also mentioned that the Letter of Support could be described in another manner so as not to indicate "support." Angel Mescain further explained that the checklist is ineffective since one of the items on the checklist includes the possibility of the developer having site control, which could not happen at this stage. The e-mail response from HPD explaining their interpretation was read to the Committee.

In response to issues raised by the Committee, Lashawn Henry highlighted that the developer should still be providing some basic proposals for the Committee to better evaluate the appropriateness of a letter to HPD. Angel Mescain cautioned that specific proposals being presented could be interpreted as prompting the Committee to actually express support of a specific plan.

Candy Vives-Vasquez highlighted concerns that the process could lock-up site control for the developer. Alvin Johnson noted that the Tahl-Propp precedent included at least two different proposals at the same stage and therefore it could be appropriate for the developer to provide renderings.

Diane Collier noted that the specific item was being sent back to the Committee for further discussion.

Marie Winfield requested that the Committee consider standard wording for the letters that the Committee could tailor to each proposal. Frances Mastrotta proposed renaming the letter to a "Six Month Authorization Letter" so as to distinguish it from a Letter of Support.

In response to comments from Xiomara Pedraza and Jonathan Winstone, Lashawn Henry noted that this process began as a result of CB11's concerns with Tahl-Propp and, going forward, HPD wanted to know that CB11 would even be willing to consider a specific developer before beginning months of discussions. Adem Brija noted that it would be helpful to know that conversation is being

authorized to be brought up with HPD and, therefore, the Committee should know more specifics about the proposal.

Diane Collier wanted to know if the process outlined on the website had been met, including the HPD letter to CB11. Jonathan Winstone clarified that the HPD letter to CB11 followed the granting of the Committee's letter to HPD. Lashawn Henry noted that the Committee's processes probably do not need to be changed but that the letter's content could be changed and that we can request additional information from a developer. Marie Winfield further suggested that a process could be written whereby the Committee requires basic schematics and other items to make the initial conversation easier. Lashawn Henry agreed so long as whatever ultimate product still meets HPD's requirements. Angel Mescaïn read the language from prior letters and noted that the language did not express support. He further noted that the developer had not been asked to provide plans.

A member of the public noted that the similar letter for Artimus was almost up to its six months. Angel Mescaïn noted that the Committee could ask Artimus to return.

NOTE: After the conclusion of this meeting, the Board received notification that HPD had "recently granted Site Authorization to Artimus for Block 1751/lot 34".

Lashawn Henry summarized the next steps. The Committee should develop a specific procedure going forward and standard language for a letter with a disclaimer. With regard to the specific developer, Angel Mescaïn and Lashawn Henry can discuss further.

5. New Business

None

6. Announcements

- a. On January 13, 2016 CB11's Land Use, Landmarks & Planning Committee will host an informational presentation and request for feedback on the Zoning and Land Use recommendations of the East Harlem Neighborhood Plan.
 - i. Angel Mescaïn noted that the presentation would be shared once it was ready and made available by the Steering Committee
- b. Theresa Richardson announced that there would be the annual holiday tree lighting at 106th Street and 3rd Avenue on Friday, December 11 at around 7:30pm
- c. Angel Mescaïn announced that the NYC Department of Transportation presented to the Public Safety & Transportation Committee of CB11 the proposed locations of Citi Bike locations in East Harlem. The proposed placements are available on the CB11 website.

7. Adjournment

Theresa Richardson made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Candy Vives-Vasquez and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:15pm.