

## BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

### MINUTES OF THE LAND USE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 9, 2016 AT MANHATTAN COLLEGE

#### PRESENT

##### Community Board No. 8:

Committee Chair C. G. Moerdler, A. P. Creaney, L. Croft, P. Ellis, R. Fanuzzi, N. Friedman, D. Gellman, M. Goodman, J. O'Brien, D. Padernacht, A. J. Robateau, G. Santiago, L. Spalter, M. Wolpoff, M. Yamagata, H. Young

#### ABSENT

S. Alexander, R. Bender, L. Daub, M. Donato, P. Friedman, S. Froot, D. Fuchs, R. Ginty, A. Guzman, M. Heller, D. Kornbluh, I. Ladimer, R. Pochter Lowe, S. Marquez, D. McCord, O. Murray, L. Parker, K. Pesce, J. Rather, J. M. Reyes, S. Sarao, I. W. Stone, S. Villaverde

#### Staff

P. Manning, District Manager

#### Elected Officials/Representatives

Senator Klein, Assemblyman Dinowitz, Councilman Cohen, M. Dolgow, and C. Lang- Office of Senator Klein, J. Horstman- Department of City Planning

#### Guests/Community Members

M. Borden, Deputy Commissioner, and L. Molina, Special Security Advisor - Department of Homeless Services/Human Resources Administration, J. Horstman – Department of City Planning, J. Field – Building Studio Architect, H. Harris, A. Hmad – Johnathan Rose Company, E. Benson, N. Buffington, M. Capi, B. Clark, M. Cregan, A. Cunnergy, N. Danzig, G. Drum, J. Farrell, N. Fenarلمان, A. Heller, L. Herndon, A. Honan, G. Jensen – Horace Mann, G. Lendalee L. Liebman, A. Luciano, D. Malloy, J. P. McCaffney, T. McMaster, F. Monegro, M. Natoff, C. O'Hara, R. Press – Bronx Voice, K. Purtill, R. Spalter, I. Sugarman, E. Thompson

Committee Chair Moerdler convened the meeting at 7:45 PM.

1. Human Resources Administration – Placement of housing facility for homeless persons at Van Cortlandt Motel, 6393 Broadway

Deputy Commissioner Matthew Borden and Luis Molina, Special Advisor to Security gave an overview on the homeless program presently operating at the motel. The Department of Homeless Services (DHS) has been using the motel since October 2015. They will move out the end of September 2016 and will not return. They are utilizing 18 rooms for 54 employed/employable men. The men are checked for substance abuse and none are amongst them. DHS began moving the homeless out of shelters in the last two years to permanent housing. The City has been using hotels/motels for last few years and the Mayor has a plan to discontinue that practice. Van Cortlandt Motel is the first they are exiting. Security measures were reviewed and put into practice from the start. Three security officers are on duty at the motel 24/7 per shift and there is a social services staff on-site. A 10:00PM curfew is in place, except where work hours do not conform, and

they are checked. Deputy Commissioner Borden stressed that the elected officials and community voices have been heard. Hence DHS is moving out permanently. They understand the community and will bring back concerns and comments.

Committee Chair Moerdler discussed the issue of non-notification by DHS placement of the homeless at the motel. He made it clear that the board does not like being blindsided; rather, it would be best that the Board is kept informed in order that they could work together on finding locations. He noted that the particular area of the motel running to the City Line to West 242<sup>nd</sup> Street is an area that needs attention. It is an area that deserves upgrading and could readily be the "Central Park" of the Bronx, and had been rezoned for that purpose.

-The Deputy Commissioner advised that notice would be given going forward.

Committee Chair Moerdler credited Senator Klein, Assemblyman Dinowitz, and Councilman Cohen for their involvement having to do with DHS departure from Van Cortlandt Motel.

Floor was opened for questions and comments.

L. Spalter conveyed appreciation for drug screening. She asked what precautions are taken to guard against persons with criminal records or sex offenders from being placed in a motel type of setting.

-Screening for occupancy is done at the Intake Center on 30<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan. They are then sent to the Assessment Center where they spend about three weeks while they are checked for challenges. Persons with criminal and mental problems are placed in appropriate settings. Sex offenders are restricted from places near schools, etc. DHS work with NYPD assisting with management review. The average stay at shelters is 9 months.

D. Gellman asked about the number of employed.

- A response will be sent.

M. Wolpoff reiterated that the area is the worst for placement of this population. It is a strip that has targeted communities next door to each other. He asked if he could quote the Deputy Commissioner on his statement that notification would be given to the Board of any future shelter/hotel placements.

-Permission to quote given.

P. Ellis also asked about notification to the Board going forward for future hotel placements.

- The policy for the entire City is under review, however if there are any hotel placements slated for CB8 there will be prior notice.

Chair Padernacht asked for time frame for hearing back on the policy review and master leases.

-Will check and advise.

Assemblyman Dinowitz inquired about the non-notice with the private residence at 2810 Webb Avenue being used by the City to house 30 occupants. He questioned if the house size was even adequate for that number of occupants. He recommends assisting with rent arrears and keeping people in their own homes thereby eliminating some degree of homelessness.

-Will confer with HRA in this regard.

R. Spalter discussed community safety issues.

-Assigned case managers are at motel.

Other members of the audience spoke about various incidents that have been occurring that has made them feel unsafe in their own neighborhood since the homeless arrived at Van Cortlandt Motel.

Committee Chair Moerdler aired concern with overcrowding with 54 men living in 18 rooms.

Issue will be looked at.

Senator Klein further discussed the problem of non- notification of shelter placements. He advised of the Senate's passing of legislation with provisions for notifying community boards concerning placement of homeless facilities. Unfortunately the bill did not pass the Assembly. Senator Klein recently met with Commissioner Banks, HRA/DHS and received assurances that the motel/hotel homeless program is ending. The Senator is still trying to work out legislation for community boards to be notified of homeless placements and for hearings to be held within 30 days and provide the opportunity for community members to voice their opinions.

P. Ellis asked for solution to rectify complaints during the next three months.

-Will meet with case management and advise plan.

Committee Chair Moerdler asked about DHS approaching the 50<sup>th</sup> Precinct to set-up a post at the motel.

-DHS is willing to explore this option.

Committee Chair Moerdler thanked Senator Klein, Assemblyman Dinowitz, and Councilman Cohen for their involvement in this quality of life issue.

2. Commencement of work at Simone development site located at 3741 & 3755 Riverdale Avenue/ 3644 Oxford Avenue

Simone's representative appeared again with no information on plans for the site.

Committee Chair Moerdler warned that this will be placed on the agenda again in July and Simone should send someone who is able to provide answers.

3. City Planning Commission Application Nos. N 160345 ZAX, N 160346 ZAX, N 160347 ZAX and N 160348 ZAX for the grant of authorizations for a modification of topographic features on Tier I sites, for modification of a portion of a zoning lot having a steep slope or a steep slope buffer, for modification of botanic environment and tree preservation and planting requirements and for modification of lot coverage controls to allow the construction of a horizontal enlargement of an existing 3,627 sf single-family residence located at **4530 Livingston Avenue** (Block 5810, Lot 414) within the Special Natural Area District (NA-2).

J. Fields, Building Studio Architect presented. The plans are for kitchen addition of 236 sq. ft. to be built out over the rear deck. No trees will be removed. Special care will be taken to save all

trees. He stated that in the event of any tree damage, they will “replace with large caliper trees to the extent we can.” Committee Chair Moerdler asked that letter be sent to the Community Board confirming agreement for tree replacements minus the words “*to the extent we can.*”

Vote: 16 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions

In Favor -

A. P. Creaney, L. Croft, P. Ellis, R. Fanuzzi, N. Friedman, D. Gellman, M. Goodman, C. G. Moerdler, J. O’Brien, D. Padernacht, A. J. Robateau, G. Santiago, L. Spalter, M. Wolpoff, M. Yamagata, H. Young

4. Landmarks Preservation Commission application re 4680 Livingston Avenue, Fieldston Historic District, for minor modifications to existing residence including new windows, a side door and exterior lighting.

J. Fields, Building Studio Architect presented. Advised that construction trucks will be off-street and within property line. Fieldston Property Owners Association has been notified. Neighbors are in favor of lighting plan.

Vote: 16 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions

In favor -

A. P. Creaney, L. Croft, P. Ellis, R. Fanuzzi, N. Friedman, D. Gellman, M. Goodman, C. G. Moerdler, J. O’Brien, D. Padernacht, A. J. Robateau, G. Santiago, L. Spalter, M. Wolpoff, M. Yamagata, H. Young

5. City Planning Commission Application Nos. N 160350 ZAX, N 160354 ZAX and N 160355 ZAX for the grant of authorizations for a modification of topographic features on Tier I sites, alteration of rock outcrops and for modification of botanic environment and tree preservation and planting requirements to allow the construction of a vertical and horizontal enlargement of an existing 1,336 sf single-family residence located at **625 W. 246th Street** (Block 5913, Lot 860) within the Special Natural Area District (NA-2).

H. Harris, property owner presented. There are five existing trees on the lot with 19 tree credits. 14 new trees will be planted and 16 trees will remain for 19 credits. Proposed work includes: removal of portions of the existing structure, and the reinforcing of the remaining existing structure; construction of a new 2-story and attic addition to the southeast; construction of a new second story and attic to the northwest; enlargement of the cellar floor via excavation and new foundation walls; construction of a porch facing West 246<sup>th</sup> Street; construction of a porch facing Blackstone Place. Project should take about 8 months to complete.

Committee Chair Moerdler informed that he visited site earlier in the day and the rendering does not resemble what he saw, in particular with the slope of the property, nor does it depict what is really there now and what the new development will look like. He also noted that an abundance of emails from neighbors were received in opposition to the application.

D. Weisz resides at 7 Blackstone Place, and T. Haller resides at 1 Blackstone Place discussed the safety problems with parking on the cul-de-sac on Blackstone Place. Additionally, they discussed the problems that would result from the house address and entrance being changed to Blackstone Place. They also questioned whether or not the property's survey was official.

Chair Moerdler offered to lay-over the application to allow the applicant time to come back to the next meeting with an accurate rendering or for the Committee to vote at this meeting. The applicant turned down the offer to lay-over.

Chair Moerdler made a motion to deny the application.

The motion carried by a vote of 15 in favor, 0 opposed, and 1 abstention.

Vote to Disapprove:

A. P. Creaney, L. Croft, P. Ellis, R. Fanuzzi, N. Friedman, M. Goodman, C. G. Moerdler, J. O'Brien, D. Padernacht, A. J. Robateau, G. Santiago, L. Spalter, M. Wolpoff, M. Yamagata, H. Young

Abstention: D. Gellman

H. Harris asked for reconsideration of the vote to allow for adjournment.

Motion to withdraw the vote on the application passed unanimously.

Vote: 16 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions

In Favor -

A. P. Creaney, L. Croft, P. Ellis, R. Fanuzzi, N. Friedman, D. Gellman, M. Goodman, C. G. Moerdler, J. O'Brien, D. Padernacht, A. J. Robateau, G. Santiago, L. Spalter, M. Wolpoff, M. Yamagata, H. Young

Motion to lay-over application passed unanimously.

Vote: 16 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions

In Favor -

A. P. Creaney, L. Croft, P. Ellis, R. Fanuzzi, N. Friedman, D. Gellman, M. Goodman, C. G. Moerdler, J. O'Brien, D. Padernacht, A. J. Robateau, G. Santiago, L. Spalter, M. Wolpoff, M. Yamagata, H. Young

6. Ethical Culture Fieldston School, 3901 Fieldston Road – Presentation of scope of work and timeline for adding additional classrooms onto their existing Lower School building roof.

Committee Chair Moerdler asked for the School's Master Plan as has been requested in the past and ignored. Further, Fieldston School is the only institution that has not followed through. The applicant advised that she had only recently started at the School and would be sure to check on the Master Plan.

The project is verified an "As of Right" development. Will stage project from Greystone Avenue for access point to Lower School. Crane will be brought in for three days at the end of July which will take up three parking spaces. Lane on Greystone Avenue will be closed.

Chair Moerdler stated that this closure would impose on the community and in his view it is hubris. An alternative was discussed with no viable solution.

The applicant informed that the parking would impact 3900 Greystone and they have offered school campus parking. The start date is June 17, 2016.

Chair Moerdler warned that unless the Master Plan is received by the end of summer, that he would not support any applications from the School.

Meeting adjourned 10:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Manning  
District Manager