



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10

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CICELY HARRIS
Chairperson

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District Manager

July 12th 2019

Honorable Marisa Lago, Chair
NYC Department of City Planning
120 Broadway, 31st Floor
New York, New York 10271

**Re: NME III
207-209 West 140th Street (Block 2026 Lots 24 and 25)
304 -308 West 150th Street (Block 2045 Lot 98)**

Dear Commissioner Lago,

This letter is to confirm the decision made at the General Board meeting of June 5th 2019 declining to support the ULURP Application for the development of this scattered site initiative at the above referenced address(es) constructed by Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement (HCCI) and Exact Capital.

The vote was 12 (Yes) 17 (No) 0 (Abstentions).

Prior to the General Board meeting a vote by the Land Use Committee was also taken in *support* of this project. At the Land Use meeting held on May 16th 2019, a presentation was delivered by the HCCI Executive Director, Malcom Punter. Mr. Punter offered a comprehensive explanation of both the history of the site, the acquisition process and the need for moderate income housing; housing that targets civil service employees and/or employees of the non-profit community. Mr. Punter specifically indicated that the vision for this particular project emanated from the HCCI sponsored homeownership workshops held in the community and realized through discussion and engagement with workshop participants, that there was a need for moderate income housing.

The vote taken at the Land Use committee was 7 (Yes) 0 (No) 0 (Abstentions)

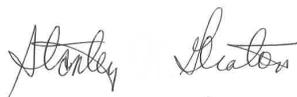
As you are well aware, both HCCI and Exact Capital have earned the distinguished reputation of building affordable housing in the Harlem community and CB 10 in particular targeting all income levels. The biggest opposition from the Community Board 10 members at-large was that the project did not target “low income” residents; community members felt the developer should be building more “deeply affordable” housing to serve what *they* know and collectively understand to be the CB 10 “community”.

During both the Land Use committee and the General Board meetings the developer did not offer specific price points for the apartments being developed, however he/his team assured the committee and the community board at large that prices would be below market as the bank would not lend on more than 3 times the income. The apartments for sale would be mortgageable. The developer also promised to research low down payment options for this project. Unfortunately, at the General Board meeting the HCCI presentation was placed on a meeting agenda with many agenda items and extensive discussion affording further clarification of the project, income targets and who the project was intended to serve was not warranted. Further, the HCCI Executive Director, Malcom Punter and project visionary, was absent from the presentation.

As leaders of Land Use Committee, we can only surmise by the outcome of the Community Board decision among other factors shared above that the rising housing costs and looming displacement of “Native Harlemites” in particular has sparked a growing sentiment that gentrification is going to have an adverse effect on Harlem’s long standing residents. Despite the community preference percentage required as part of the HPD housing lottery, this percentage does not secure homeownership opportunities for “native Harlem” residents *en masse*. Generally, HPD’s housing programs preference criteria *do not* distinguish a “community resident” that has lived in Harlem for more than 25 years or merely 10 years which raises the question “*affordable who?*”. For example, it has been cited that young professionals native to Harlem too find themselves also excluded from homeownership opportunities. Lastly, credit seems to continue to be the ongoing obstacle facing many Harlem residents in obtaining homeownership.

In closing, per our mention above, the developers as a result of their home ownership training programs have identified qualified candidates for their moderate income housing programs. Both HCCI and Exact Capital continue to serve as the bridge to economic prosperity and continue to serve Harlem residents at all income levels. Thank you in advance for your consideration to these matters.

Sincerely,



Stanley N Gleaton
Chair Land Use Committee
Manhattan Community Board 10



Lisa Downing
Vice- Chair Land Use Committee
Manhattan Community Board 10



Cicely Harris
Chairwoman
Manhattan Community Board 10

- CC Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman
- Hon. Brian Benjamin, New York State Senator
- Hon. Inez E. Dickens, Assembly District 70
- Hon. Al Taylor, Assembly District 71
- Hon. Bill de Blasio, New York City Mayor
- Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
- Hon. Bill Perkins, District 9 Councilmember