CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10
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HENRIETTA LYLE
Chairperson

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Joint Land Use/Landmarks & Housing Committee

Thursday, December 19, 2013 – 6:30 PM
215 West 125th Street, 3rd Floor Conference Room

Hon. Brian Benjamin, Land Use Chair
Hon. Austin Smith, Land Use Co-Chair
Hon. Betty Dubuisson, Landmarks Chair
Hon. Melvin Christian, Housing Chair
Hon. Barbara Nelson, Housing Co-Chair

Attendance: Brian Benjamin, Austin Smith, Melvin Christian, Barbara Nelson, Betty Dubuisson, Manny Rivera, Henrietta Lyle, Maria Garcia, Forrest Taylor, Keith Taylor, Lupe Moreno, Stanley Gleaton, Ibrahima Diafoune, Jennifer Jones, Dianne Henderson, Daniel Parcerisas

L&M/HCCI project -153rd Street

Housing Congregations for Community Improvement and L+M Development Partners are proposing the construction of 51 units of affordable housing, a 10,000 sf daycare facility and a new 6,000 sf central office for HCCI at 260 West 153rd Street. The site currently consists of two vacant lots owned by HPD which are adjacent to a lot with a two-story building that houses HCCI's Family Life Center. The project would require the building's demolition in order to merge the lot with the two HPD lots.

In 2004 CB10 unanimously voted in support of a ULURP application for a 20,000 sf daycare project on the site. The ULURP application was approved by the Manhattan Borough President and the City Council and the project was designated an Urban Development Action Area. In September 2012, HCCI and L+M presented the project to CB 10's Land Use Committee to get a site control letter from HPD and the general Board voted in favor (21 yes, 8 no). In May 2013 the project was awarded 9% tax credits from HCR, and in June 2013 the developers made an informational presentation to this Committee announcing that they would soon seek our support as they went back through the ULRP process to include the affordable housing component, which was not included in the original proposal (see June minutes at http://www.nyc.gov/html/mancb10/downloads/pdf/LULM_6_13.pdf). Today they are seeking a letter of support for their project from CB10.

There have been some minor changes in the housing component that was presented to the board in June 2013). The affordable housing component will include 8 studios, 33 1-bedrooms and 10 2-bedroom apartments (total of 51 units). 43 units will be affordable to people earning 50% of

AMI (approximate income ranges will be $23,897 to $42,950, depending on the size of the unit), of which people with HIV/AIDS will have preference for 8 units). Another 8 units will be affordable to people earning 30% of AMI receive project-based vouchers from DHCR. Rents for the units at 50% of AMI will be $685 for the studios, $715for the 1-bedrooms and $870 for the 2-bedrooms.

The committee votes to provide a letter of support for the project with 14 votes in favor, 0 in opposition and 1 abstention.

492 St. Nicholas Ave- Acquisition of privately owned property, disposition of city-owned property, UDAAP designation

The applicants originally presented the project in March 2013 and addressed some of the Committee's concerns again in May 2013 (See minutes from March and May 2013). GHHDC, an affiliate of the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce, owns a vacant lot at the southeast corner of West 135th Street and Saint Nicholas Avenue. GHHDC developed 117 units of affordable housing along 135th Street, but this particular lot remained undeveloped. Rising sewer and water costs and expiring tax abatements have put GHHDC's affordable housing under financial stress. GHHDC is seeking to shore up the finances for its housing on 135th Street and to this end is seeking to sell the lot for $1.2m which will be put back into the affordable housing it currently owns. The lot was initially transferred from the City to GHHDC under the Urban Development Action Area Program (UDAAP) and did not go through ULURP. In order to sell it, the Community Board must now approve the disposition of city-owned property.

In response to concerns over whether the sale of the lot will be sufficient to shore up GHHDC's finances, GHHDC explains that they are also pursuing other strategies, such as finding a joint venture partner and hiring new management. It is also using 8A loans for capital improvements that will increase energy efficiency and bring down energy costs, such as installing new boilers, replacing windows and redoing some roofs. It is also seeking to refinance its mortgage at a lower rate. Some Community Board members ask whether the sale of the lot is necessary for the housing on 135th Street to be preserved. GHHDC responds that the housing will be preserved no matter what, but that the sale of the lot will put it in a much better financial position and prevent it from having to make some difficult tradeoffs or defer maintenance. Some residents of GHHDC's buildings on 135th Street attest to the poor condition of the buildings and to the fact that HPD has issued numerous violations, and speak in support of the application.

The potential buyer for the lot is F-lot Development, which proposes a 9-12 units condo development with prices ranging from $490,000 for 1-bedrooms, $600,000 for 2-bedrooms and $900,000 for 3-bedrooms. The building would be 100ft tall, with a set back at 85ft, which is allowed as-of-right under existing R8 zoning. The developer provides renderings and elevations of the proposed building and some members express concern that the building is significantly taller than neighboring tenements along Saint Nicholas, which are 60-65ft tall. The developer points out that there are other taller buildings on the same block along 135th Street (Strivers Garden is 120ft), that CB-10 approved the current zoning and that given the small size of the lot it would not be possible to develop it without maximizing the allowable height. In addition to the

height of the proposed building, some Committee members express their concern that the proposed façade does not fit in well with the character of the neighborhood.

The committee votes to approve the sale of the lot with 10 votes in favor, 4 in opposition and 2 abstentions.

Artimus – seeking approval for a zoning change at an area along St. Nicholas Avenue/West 117th/West 118th Streets ULURP number 140070ZMM

Board members Stenley Gleaton and Manny Rivera disclose that they have a conflict of interest regarding this item and do not participate in the discussion or in the vote.

Artimus is seeking approval for a change to the zoning map which would designate the block formed by St. Nicholas Avenue, West 118th Street, Frederick Douglass Boulevard and West 117th Street as an R8A district. The frontage along Frederick Douglass Boulevard is currently already zoned R8A, but the rest of the block is R7A. Artimus previously gave an informational presentation on this project in April 2013 (http://www.nyc.gov/html/mancb10/downloads/pdf/lulm_minutes_201304.pdf).

The developer's project consists of 3 components: 1) converting the vacant church on West 118th into a community space while preserving its façade and interior; 2) adding floors onto St. Thomas school (on Saint Nicholas Avenue) to turn it into housing and 3) developing a vacant lot on West 117th into housing.

Current R7A zoning does not allow for community facilities and does not allow for the heights that the developer is seeking for the residential buildings. Several buildings on the block, however, currently exceed the maximum heights permitted under R7A zoning.

The plans for the community facility are to find a user in the performing or fine arts. To this end the developer has been in contact with potential users and is hosting a meeting on January 30 at 5.30pm to discuss with the community how the space can best be utilized. The space will be made available at a price that the community user can afford and will be available approximately 3 years after the zoning change takes effect. The developer has been working on stabilizing the structure and will continue to restore it and render it usable during this time.

The residential portion of the building will have 147 units, of which 74 will be in a newly constructed 10-story building on the West 117th Street lot and 73 will be in the converted St. Thomas School structure and a planned 4-story addition on top. The addition to the school will be set back at the current height of the school, and the new building will also have a setback as required under R8A zoning. 20% of the units will be affordable at 60% of AMI, in compliance with the requirements for receiving tax-except bond financing. The developer expects to have a mix of homeownership and rentals, thought this has not been finally determined. The school building is currently occupied by the Hebrew School, which has a 2-year lease with a 1-year option to extend.

The rectory next to the church on West 118th will also be preserved and will most likely be used as additional housing.

The project will also add 70 new parking spots under the new residential building.

A representative of Opus 118, one of the groups in conversations with Artimus over the potential use of the community space, attends the meeting and expresses their support for the project.

The Committee votes to approve the rezoning with 11 votes in favor, 2 in opposition and 2 members recusing themselves from the vote with the condition that Artimus' intentions and commitments discussed at the Committee Meeting, with regard to the project, are confirmed in writing.

Igor Jozsa 57 West 130th - restore it into a two family house and make one the two units our home

The owners of the property are seeking a letter of support from the Community Board for their application to HPD for a Certificate of No Harassment (CONH), required to convert a vacant SRO into a two-unit home. The applicants claim they applied for a CONH in 2004 and HPD denied their application.

The Committee explained that the Community Board is not a part of the CONH application process and that it cannot support such an application without a full understanding of the matter and hearing from the tenants.

As a result no action is taken on this item.

Landmarks – Abdou Diaw: Restoration of historic Porch at 56 west 130th Street (Block=1727 & Lot= 65)

The owner of the property attended the Landmarks Committee meeting in May 2013 (see minutes at http://www.nyc.gov/html/mancb10/downloads/pdf/LULM_min_5_13.pdf). The property is located in the Astor Row Historic District and is one of the few properties without a front porch. This application is to restore the front porch with the addition of a ramp for wheelchair access on the side of the porch. The owner intends to use the building for an afterschool program, which would require having wheelchair access. The ramp would not be visible from the street, as shown in the architectural renderings provided, and the materials and colors used to construct the porch would match those of neighboring houses.

A neighbor from the adjacent house attended the meeting to speak in support of the proposed porch restoration.

The Committee approves the proposed restoration of the porch with 16 votes in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions.