



CITY OF NEW YORK  
**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10**  
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**CICELY HARRIS**  
 Chairperson

**SHATIC MITCHELL**  
 District Manager

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10**  
**LAND USE COMMITTEE**  
**September 19, 2019**

**Present**

Cicely Harris, Chair  
 Lisa Downing, Chair  
 Karen Dixon, Vice Chair  
 Kevin Bitterman  
 Donna Gill  
 Stanley Gleaton  
 Delsenia Glover  
 Victoria Horsford

Mari Moss  
 Charles Powell  
 Keith Taylor  
 Raquel Vazquez  
 Shatic Mitchell

**Absent/Excused**

Dr. Hazel Dukes  
 Stephen Johnson  
 George Harrell

**PUBLIC HEARING**

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm. The meeting was held at **Touro College** located at **230 W. 125th, 2nd Floor Lecture Hall**

Cicely Harris, Chairperson of Manhattan Community Board opened the Public Hearing regarding the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) application for Lenox Terrace. The following instructions were shared with the attendees:

- Sign in sheet has been provided for members of an organization or community to make a statement. Only one person from each organization will be allowed to make a statement
- All speakers are directed to provide their name, speak clearly, and keep their remarks limited to the time allotted.

Chairperson Cicely Harris stated that the ULURP process initially required the full Land Use committee to conduct the public hearing and vote on the project with a short time span. The full board vote was initially scheduled for Wednesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>. However, the significance of the vote on the residents and the community at large, required more opportunity for all to be heard. Therefore, on October 17<sup>th</sup>, another public hearing will be held during the Land Use Committee meeting. During the general board meeting on November 6<sup>th</sup> the board will vote and submit our resolution to the Borough President’s office by Friday, November 8<sup>th</sup>.

Lisa Downing, Land Use Committee Chair provided opening remarks.

Charles Powell, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair of Community Board 10, Chair of the Housing Committee, and a member of the Land Use committee, recused himself from any discussions, deliberations, negotiations or vote on the ULURP

application due to his relationship with The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce (GHCC). The Board of Directors of GHCC voted to work with the Olnick Organization and local elected officials in the development of a Community Benefits package.

### **Olnick Organization – Presentation**

The Olnick Organization presented a PowerPoint presentation that included the following:

- History of the Lenox Terrace development dating back to the late 50s
- 15 years ago, the Olnick Organization decided to hire Jack Brown, one of the founding partners of Davis, Brody & Bond, to design concepts to modernize the development.
- The first goal of project is to strengthen the core of existing buildings for over 1700 families by renovating kitchens, bathrooms, hallways and lobbies. The second goal is the development of 6 new acres that includes 5 new buildings and new street retail throughout the property. (Note: Kitchen and bathrooms upgrades for apartments with kitchens and bathrooms that are older than 2000 at no charge to the tenant)
- Renovations to existing buildings cannot be completed without the development of new buildings. Conversely the development of new buildings will not happen without the upgrades to existing buildings.
- The Organization intends to create a legally enforceable document with tenant representatives that outlines their commitments.
- The 5 new buildings with over 1600 new housing units with 25% of the units with an average 60% AMI (income of about \$45,000 annually).
- Some of the new buildings will have amenities such as a gym, gathering and play rooms, and yoga studios. All amenities will be free to all tenants.
- Ground retailers with potential for second floor and some cellar use. Retailers would include high quality grocer, a 24-hour pharmacy, and possible return of former stores.
- Parking spaces would be moved to 3 garages underground and would be valet. All tenants are guaranteed parking. Paved parking area will be transformed into 6 acres of open space.
- Anticipates more than 4700 total direct and generated construction jobs, more than \$450 million in direct and generated construction wages, and 300 permanent jobs.

Olnick Organization is requesting the following in their ULURP application:

- Rezoning of the current R7-2/C1-4 with commercial overlay to C6-2 designation
- C district allows for second floor and for certain uses over 10,000 sq. ft.
- Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) for 25% of the units (411-493 units) with an average affordability of 60% AMI.
- Special Permit for Large Scale General Development (ZR 74-743): will provide height and set back relief and will control the envelope of buildings and the permitted uses and square footages
- Special Permit to reduce required parking to facilitate affordable housing (ZR 74-533)  
Authorization to modify curb cut requirements (ZR 25-631)

### **Community Board 10 Board members had the following questions and/or comments:**

- Clarified that the project is not yet certified.
- Questioned whether there were any commitments on the commercial spaces.
- Concerned about the type and length of tax exemptions Olnick would receive. Adding this project would raise the property value of the community including property taxes. Many home owners would be negatively impacted by the increase in property taxes in the community.
- Would Minority Women and Business Enterprises (MWBE) be considered. Suggested that MWBE requirements are 30-35% in the City.

- Concerned about health impact of prolonged construction on the community
- Requested not only affordable units but low-income units as well
- Questioned whether Olnick and LT-ACT met to discuss the issues
- Other members expressed concerns regarding Olnick's knowledge of the residents and the community and indicated that MIH of 25% affordable units is not sufficient for the community.

State Senator Brian Benjamin stated that he supports the tenants of Lenox Terrace and opposes the rezoning adding that the existing tenants have contributed to the new development and should be considered ongoing partners in any project.

### **Lenox Terrace Association of Concerned Tenants (LT-ACT)**

- President of LT-ACT, Len Shebar, stated that they oppose the rezoning because it would alter the residential community, add a significant number of residents, includes prolonged construction potentially impacting the health and quality of life of residents, as well as negatively impact neighboring properties.
- The C6-2 commercial zones are generally found in central business districts and regional commercial centers such as the Bronx Terminal Market.
- Transportation rates are generic city-wide rates and questions whether they are appropriate for this unique development. Actual impact of construction and additional residents on the 135<sup>th</sup> Street subway station not clearly identified.
- Upgrades to the apartments and buildings should not be a part of the benefit agreement in light of the fact that there are systemic issues that are not being addressed such as building basements, laundry rooms, and apartments that have asbestos-vinyl tile flooring that crumble easily due to cracks and breaks.
- Other challenges include plumbing issues resulting in ceilings falling in on residents' kitchens and bathrooms, some apartments having electrical panels while others have fuse boxes, and electrical outlets that are antiquated.
- Presently, Lenox Terrace provides inadequate security to the tenants with anywhere from 1-4 guards monitoring the 6 buildings at any one time. This concern is heightened by the thought of adding 6 acres of open green spaces to a property with little or no security in currently in place.
- LT-ACT also request air monitors to be installed to secure baseline information on air quality prior to the start of construction.
- LT-ACT highlighted the Park West Village project that exemplifies the use of the R7 zoning.

### **Community Organizations/Leadership Groups/Tenants**

- Service Employees International Union (SEIU) 32BJ supports the rezoning project as it will add 35 permanent jobs.
- Harlem Grown founder and executive director Tony Hillery stated that if the project is approved, the Olnick Organization has agreed to bring in them as an urban farm and to manage the green spaces. Harlem Grown provides organic produce in their free Saturday markets – this project would allow them to triple their production and offerings to the community.
- Youth Education Through Sports founder and chief executive Russell Shuler expressed concerns regarding the impact on transportation and traffic, the health and well-being of residents, and the continued affordability. Ms. Shuler expressed his support for the tenants of Lenox Terrace as he is a resident of the Riverton.
- Silicon Harlem highlighted the need for technological options in the buildings including digital literacy courses.
- Margo Adams raised concerns about affordability and the likelihood that our children can remain in Lenox Terrace post development and encouraged the exploration of a landmark designation.
- Another resident stated that community members should also attend city planning and city council hearings related to this ULURP application. The resident added that 60% AMI automatically results in a

low-income tax credit from the federal government. Finally, the resident requested that the construction project be monitored carefully to ensure that undocumented workers are not utilized in lieu of citizens.

- Corey Wesley, entrepreneur and resident of Lenox Terrace expressed concerns about the proposed development, specifically as it relates to the prolonged construction, potential health implications including those living with HIV/AIDS, and the preservation of the legacy of the community.
- Other residents raised concern about unanswered questions such as Olnick's lack of response to questions pertaining to MWBE and increased law enforcement due to increased population.
- Donald Glover, resident of Lenox Terrace stated that he has a recurring bed bug problem in his building that has not been addressed by building management.
- One resident of Lenox Terrace voiced her support of the rezoning while another resident stated that the annually incomes associated with a 60% AMI did not reflect the actual income levels in the community.
- A resident of the community encouraged LT-ACT to meet with Olnick to negotiate upgrades for the resident, stating that they will either build or raise their rents. The resident also stated that the issue of gentrification has been occurring throughout the Harlem community.

The Land Use Committee Chair reminded the audience that another public hearing would be held on Thursday, October 17<sup>th</sup>.

The Chairperson for Community Board 10 advised that the notes from the stenographer would be transcribed and made available. Follow-up questions should be sent to Shatic Mitchell, District Manager.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

