



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10**

215 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor—New York, NY 10027

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**Land Use/Landmarks Committee Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, March 21, 2013 6:30 PM

215 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room

**Attendees:** Stanley Gleaton, Betty Dubuisson, Brian Benjamin, Daniel Land Parcerisas, Keith Taylor, Jennifer Jones, Donna Gill

**Agenda:**

- 1) Welcome/Introductions
- 2) Presentation: Lucille McEwen/Emmet Causey from Greater Harlem Housing Development (GHHDC) – The development of a vacant lot at 318 West 135<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 3) New/Old Business:
  - a. Manhattan Borough President Resolution for Good Jobs and Responsible Development – formation of questions for developers.
  - b. Committee “wish-list”-discussion on the tangible wants and needs that may improve Committee effectiveness.
- 4) Questions and Answers
- 5) Announcements
- 6) Adjournment

**2. Presentation: Lucille McEwen/Emmet Causey from Greater Harlem Housing Development (GHHDC) – The development of a vacant lot at 318 West 135<sup>th</sup> Street.**

Lucille McEwen of Greater Harlem Housing Development Corporation (GHHDC) initiates the presentation. GHHDC, an affiliate of the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce, owns a vacant lot at the southeast corner of West 135<sup>th</sup> Street and Saint Nicholas Avenue. In 1993 GHHDC was tasked by the Mayor, the Manhattan Borough President’s Office and Community Board 10 with developing affordable housing around West 135<sup>th</sup> Street. GHHDC developed 117 units of affordable housing in the immediate surroundings of the lot in question, including adjacent as well as non adjacent properties. The vacant lot remained undeveloped so as not to cover the murals painted on the adjacent buildings but these murals were effaced when the walls of those buildings had to be waterproofed. Rising sewer and water costs and expiring tax

abatements have put GHHDC's affordable housing under financial stress. GHHDC has a buyer for the empty lot and plans to use the proceeds to shore up the finances for the surrounding 117 units of affordable housing. The seller and prospective buyer have conducted Environmental Impact Studies and were ready to close on the sale for \$1.2 million when they discovered that a ULURP action is required because the lot was initially transferred from the City to GHHDC under the Urban Development Action Area Program (UDAAP) and did not go through ULURP at that time. The buyer's plan for the lot is to construct a multiple family dwelling, but without a ULURP action a maximum of only 4 units can be constructed. The proposed development for the lot conforms to the area's zoning. The presenters come to the Land Use/Landmarks committee today to give CB10 advance notice of an impending ULURP action.

Tony Crusor, co-owner of F-Lot Development LLC continues the presentation. F-Lot Development LLC is the prospective buyer for the lot. Mr. Crusor is a local architect and developer with experience developing properties in Upper Manhattan. Mr. Crusor is also the architect for the project. F-Lot Development LLC has a mixed-use residential and commercial project under construction at 192 Lenox Avenue. Mr. Crusor's projects as an architect and developer have focused on quality housing and transit-oriented design. The proposed development would consist of a commercial condominium on the ground floor and 8-12 residential condominiums. The commercial space would be right next to the subway entrance that is next to the lot. The residential portion would consist of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units. The building would be 120ft high (9 stories) with a set back at 85ft. Total residential space would be approximately 17,000sqft. 1 bedroom units would sell for approximately \$490,000, 2 bedroom units for approximately \$539,000 and 3 bedroom units for approximately \$900,000. Mr. Crusor explains that anticipated construction costs are over \$300 per square foot and that the physical and zoning constraints of the site do not allow for more than the 8-12 units he has planned. Therefore construction costs cannot be spread over more units, driving up the price. A rental scenario was conducted and deemed unfeasible. Mr. Crusor is confident that there is a market for units at this price point and cites park views, easy subway access and proximity to Harlem Hospital as some of the project's selling points. The project will be financed entirely by private investors and will take on no debt.

Committee members express concern that the proposal would tower over existing buildings on Saint Nicholas Avenue, to which the presenters respond that there are already taller buildings on Saint Nicholas Avenue and in the immediate area, and that the proposal conforms to zoning regulations for the area. Committee members also express concerns over the affordability of the units for much of the existing community, though it is also acknowledged that there is a diversity of incomes in the district and that there are local residents who can afford the anticipated price points. Committee members express concern that the size of the units is very small. Finally, the Committee suggests that the developers propose an alternate development scenario in order to garner support from the full Board for a ULURP vote.

**This is a non-voting item.**

### **3.a. Manhattan Borough President Resolution for Good Jobs and Responsible Development – formation of questions for developers.**

It is agreed that the Committee should have a checklist of questions to ask every developer who makes a presentation. This will help with consistency and accountability. The following questions are agreed upon:

- Will this project include local or minority hiring?
- Will workers on this project be paid living wages?
- What is the general Contractor's history of safety violations?
- What has been the outcome of any violations? Have there been sanctions?
- Will the project include income-targeted housing?
- Will there be any type of give backs to the community?

Additionally, Brian Benjamin will research what requirements are made of privately versus publicly financed projects in order to pose additional questions. He will also research the possibility of demanding that large projects offer a Community Benefits Agreement and would the threshold should be for such a requirement.

### **3.b. Committee "wish-list"-discussion on the tangible wants and needs that may improve Committee effectiveness.**

The Manhattan Borough President's Office is asking Community Boards what they need in preparation for its budget. The Committee agrees to request the following items:

- Tape recorder
- Flat screen television for presentations
- Business cards
- Polycom for conference calls

### **4. Questions and Answers**

There are none.

### **5. Announcements**

Stanley Gleaton announces that Community Board 10 and Senator Bill Perkins will host a community forum on land use. The date has yet to be determined but it will most likely be in May.

### **6. Adjournment**

The meeting is adjourned at 8.40pm.