

## LAND USE COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES

January 7, 2020

### Committee Members Present

Wayne Benjamin, Chair  
James Berlin  
Osi Kaminer  
Chris Ventura, Asst. Chair  
Steve Simon  
Cindy Matos

### Committee Members Absent

Omar Tejada (Excused)

### Board Members Present

Sara Fisher (left before meeting began)

### Public Members Present

Vivian Ducat

### Public Members Absent

Staff: Paola Garcia

Guests: Denise Rickles, Rev. Dell (Holy Trinity Church-Inwood), Ryan Desso, Laurie Cohen (office of Congressman Espaillat), Pia Cattlin, Patricia Ahern, Payton C. Smith, Hector Tarrido-Picart (VivaCity), Jeannie Ruslin, Kerri Emerson, Cecilia Malam, Natalie Espino (MBPO), Adele Bartlett (MBPO), Annie White (City Planning), Ryan Cote (City Planning), Isiah Jenkins (Mayor's Office)

- 1) The meeting of the Land Use Committee (“Land Use,” “LU” or the “Committee”) of Community Board 12 Manhattan (“CB12M”) was called to order at 7:10 PM. Chair Benjamin greeted guests. Committee members introduced themselves. Chair Benjamin commented on the enhance building façade inspection rules proposed by the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB), the advantages of using drones to assist with façade inspections, and NYC and DOB laws and regulations that inhibit the use of drones. Various questions and comments were raised by Committee members and meeting attendees in the course of discussing the use of drones. LU will solicit more information on this matter and continue the discussion at a later date.
- 2) Hector Tarrido-Picart presented VivaCity, a new digital tool that helps residents and community boards to visualize the neighborhood impact of matters pertaining to zoning and air rights that result from new developments projects. . Mr. Tarrido-Picart stated that he is a resident of Washington Heights and Inwood. He also stated that VivaCity is a free, Google-like tool that allows the community board and community residents to take over the community development. VivaCity links to information available from DOB, the Department of City Planning (DCP), and the Department of Finance and allows users to search zoning-related issues and perform more efficient analysis of as-of-right development. VivaCity runs a script over data available from NYC sources to render 3D models of the building envelopes permissible under zoning. The VivaCity team includes Hector and four partners who are developers; they sought to make better use of technology in the development process. The Committee applauded Hector and his partners for creating VivaCity. While VivaCity is free to use, there is a charge for any reports generated through the system. The website is [www.vivacity.city](http://www.vivacity.city).
- 3) Rev. Dell provided an updated on the status of Holy Trinity Church Inwood’s development project since the last presentation to LU in November 2018. The sanctuary used for the last 90 years was deconsecrated and demolished subsequent to abatement work. Sidewalk bridging was erected to protect pedestrians. Garden plants were relocated, some to Wave Hill and the Ring Garden. The Parish House and Drill Hall, designed by John Russell Pope (architect of the Jefferson Memorial, National Archives, and National Gallery of Art’s West Wing – all in Washington D.C.), will be renovated as a multi-purpose sanctuary and performance space that will also include a residence for the Vicar. The pipe organ, built in 1928, was removed for restoration. A residential building will be constructed on the site of the demolished sanctuary. A term sheet was executed with the developer selected via an RFP to build the residential building, but the deal is not finalized and details on the building design, unit mix or affordability levels is not available. While Holy Trinity Church Inwood is not a partner in the residential development and has no role in or control over the project, it worked with Denham Wolf, a real estate consultant that specializes in working with non-profits, to select a financially feasible project and development partner consistent with the church’s vision. LU extended an invitation to Holy Trinity Church Inwood to return to the Committee with its developer once the deal is finalized to discuss the residential development project.

- 4) Annie White, DCP reintroduced herself and introduced Ryan Cote, who will be CB12M's point of contact with DCP. The Committee asked Annie and Ryan for their assistance in determining the status of the City's commitments associated with the Inwood Rezoning now that it has overturned and pending the Mayor's office response to the legal challenge as well as the status of the proposed new 30-story apartment building adjacent to the North Cove.
- 5) **Old Business.** Committee Member Simon inquired on the status of the development project proposed under a BSA zoning variance at Broadway and Fairview Avenue that was opposed by LU and CB12M. Chair Benjamin stated he has not received any update on the project and that the inquiry should be directed to the District Manager for follow up with BSA.
- 6) **New Business.** Natalie Espino of the MBPO announced that community board applications are due by January 21<sup>st</sup>, the MBPO's Religious Facilities Hearing will be held on January 14<sup>th</sup>, the Trash Talk Sustainability Forum will be held on January 16<sup>th</sup>, DOB representatives will attend a forum at the MBPO's uptown office on January 16<sup>th</sup>, and the DHCR Commissioner will attend a meeting at the MBPO's downtown office on January 10<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Submitted by Wayne Benjamin