

## LAND USE COMMITTEE

APRIL 4, 2012

**RESOLUTION: URGING THAT COMMUNITY BOARD 12-MANHATTAN OUTREACH TO AND ENGAGE THE NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH TO JOINTLY EXPLORE OPTIONS FOR THE RENOVATION AND REPURPOSING OF THE HISTORIC WILLIAM A. HURST HOUSE**

**Whereas:** In 2010 Inwood residents, organized as the Volunteers for Isham Park (“VIP”), submitted a successful application to the Historic Districts Council for its inaugural “Six to Celebrate” program to study the potential for designating historic districts in Inwood. VIP studied the potential for historic districts in Inwood, including a reconnaissance survey with photographs of all of the existing buildings or conditions on lots in Inwood above Dyckman Street to its boundaries at the Harlem and Hudson Rivers. VIP also made several public PowerPoint presentations describing progress in the process of defining potential districts, landmarks, and other related area conditions, including three to the Land Use Committee, on February 9, 2011, November 2, 2011 and on March 14, 2012, and to NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission on March 23, 2012; and

**Whereas:** In the course of its presentations VIP informed the Committee that architecturally and historically significant structures in Inwood have been demolished in the past, notably, the Dyckman Institute, formerly located in Inwood Hill Park, and the Isham family residence, originally given to the city as part of Isham Park, (both were demolished during the 1940s), and that it is important to critically examine resources in the neighborhood so that further losses might be prevented; and

**Whereas:** VIP specifically identified the William A. Hurst House, a historic residence located at 530 West 215<sup>th</sup> Street that was designed by AIA Fellow James Whitman O’Connor, as being endangered. The Hurst House was constructed in 1912, the same year Isham Park was dedicated, is located just north of the site of the former Isham residence, and is the only remaining historic residential home of its size and integrity in Inwood. Today it is connected physically to the Northeastern Academy, owned by the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, has been in deteriorated condition for many years, and is in need of emergency restoration; and

**Whereas:** At the April 4, 2012 meeting of the Land Use Committee VIP shared a conceptual plan for the Hurst House. The plan envisions the renovation, restoration, and re-purposing of the house to create a model environmental and educational facility with a small local history museum and library collection, which could become a beacon program for the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (“Parks”) and for New York City. The plan proposes that the restoration be accomplished by a consortium of groups, including, but not limited to, the Northeastern Academy, Columbia University, and Parks with funds raised from both private and public sources; and

**Whereas:** The Northeastern Academy could also benefit from funding directed to the improvement of the house, including shared handicapped access improvement in the form of an elevator situated and shared between the two structures, improved sidewalk conditions, restored windows, and structural repairs; and

**Whereas:** The Land Use Committee expressed support for the concept of renovating the Hurst House and putting it to a use that is beneficial to general community and encourages Community Board 12-Manhattan to commence an ongoing friendly dialogue with the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a community stakeholder, to explore how we might jointly move forward with a mutually beneficial renovation and repurposing plan. Now, therefore be it

**Resolved:** Community Board 12-Manhattan outreach to and engage the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as owner of the William A. Hurst House, and other parties as the church may recommend, to explore how we might jointly move forward with a mutually beneficial plan to renovate and repurpose the Hurst House and work to structure and realize an agreed-upon plan; and be it further

**Resolved:** Community Board 12-Manhattan requests that all elected officials who represent Washington Heights and Inwood support the efforts of the community board, the Seventh-day Adventist Church and other stakeholders who may become involved, to advance the aforementioned renovation and repurposing plan.

**The resolution was approved by the following votes:**

Land Use Members:	6-0-0
Other Board Members:	2-0-0
Members of the Public:	5-0-0