

LAND USE COMMITTEE

APRIL 4, 2012

RESOLUTION: REQUESTING THE NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION FURTHER STUDY INWOOD FOR THE POTENTIAL OF HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND INDIVIDUAL LANDMARKS

Whereas: In 2009 Community Board 12-Manhattan (“CB12-M”) supported the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (“LPC”)’s designation of the Audubon Park Historic District and the individual designation of Fort Washington Presbyterian Church. In 2010 CB12-M’s Land Use Committee (“Land Use” or the “Committee”) encouraged local residents to share with it their ideas for other potential historic districts and individual landmarks in Washington Heights and Inwood; and

Whereas: At the April 7, 2010 Land Use meeting, residents of Inwood presented two potential districts in Inwood, were encouraged by the Committee to the pursue the matter further, and received recommendations from a Historic Districts Council (“HDC”) staff member who attended the meeting on how further investigation into the two potential historic districts might proceed; and

Whereas: In autumn of 2010 Inwood residents, organized as the Volunteers for Isham Park (“VIP”), submitted a successful application to the HDC for its inaugural “Six to Celebrate” program to study the potential for designating historic districts in Inwood. The first public meeting was held on April 30, 2011 at the Inwood Branch of the New York Public Library. Throughout the remainder of 2011, VIP studied the potential for historic districts in Inwood, including a reconnaissance survey with photographs of all the existing buildings or conditions on lots in Inwood above Dyckman Street to its boundaries at the Harlem and Hudson Rivers; and

Whereas: VIP made several public PowerPoint presentations describing its progress in the process of defining potential districts, individual 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 LPC on March 23, 2012; and .

Whereas: In the course of its presentations VIP informed the Committee that it surveyed an area containing approximately 523 buildings, 35% of the buildings were constructed in the 1920s, the architectural styles present in the study area include Tudor Revival, Mediterranean Revival, Greek Revival, Romanesque and Art Deco, and that nine potential historic districts have been identified, including an Isham Park District, an Art Deco District, a Dyckman Street District, a Small House District and a West 204th Street District; and

Whereas: In the course of its presentations VIP also 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 215th 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, is 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: VIP submitted a Request for Evaluation to LPC for designation of the Hurst House as an individually landmarked building; and

Whereas: Through its advocacy VIP has increased interest in, and investigation of, local history and the built environment in Inwood, and has helped to demonstrate a level of interest and commitment to historic designation among members of the Inwood community. The work presented by VIP is a compelling argument for further consideration of Inwood on the basis of its architectural and historical significance. Now, therefore be it

Resolved: Community Board 12-Manhattan requests that the Landmarks Preservation Commission further study Inwood for the potential of individual landmarks as well as historic districts, and be it further

Resolved: Community Board 12-Manhattan also requests that the Landmarks Preservation Commission give special attention to the Request for Evaluation submitted by the Volunteers for Isham Park for the William A. Hurst House.

The resolution was approved by the following votes:

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