

## LAND USE COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES

November 6, 2019

### Committee Members Present

Wayne Benjamin, Chair  
James Berlin  
Osi Kaminer  
Steve Simon

### Committee Members Absent

Chris Ventura, Asst. Chair  
Cindy Matos  
Nicholas Martinez

### Board Members Present

### Public Members Present

Vivian Ducat

### Public Members Absent

### Staff:

Guests: Laurie Tobias-Cohen (Office of Congressman Espaillat), Matt Martinez, Adele Bartlett, Graham Ciraulo, Katherine O’Sullivan, Pat Courtney, Mary-Ann Talavera

- 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.
- 2) **Potential Inwood Historic House District:**

Chair Benjamin provided a brief overview of the discussion held at the October 2019 LU Meeting concerning the potential listing of an Inwood Apartment House District on the National Register of Historic Places and of the meeting organized by Congressman Espaillat on September 5<sup>th</sup> to discuss historic preservation in Inwood. He then introduced Laurie Tobias-Cohen of the Congressman’s office. Laurie stated that Congressman Espaillat is interested in supporting two designation efforts – the Inwood Apartment House District and Dominican History District.

The proposed Apartment House District is centered on Seaman Avenue and includes various side streets. Seaman Avenue is curved. The street wall of buildings formed by follow this curve contributes to creating the “sense of place” that is an important factor in defining the boundaries of an historic district.

The proposed Dominican History District would be a non-contiguous district, primarily east of Broadway, that includes structures of importance to the Dominican diaspora.

The Committee discussed the difference between National Register listing and designation by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC). National Register listing provides recognition but not the protection afforded by LPC designation. LPC designation is preferred, but LPC has not shown interest in pursuing additional designations in northern Manhattan; National Register listing is being pursued as a step towards LPC designation. LU also discussed how historic preservation can be used to protect and retain neighborhood character.

The Committee noted that some of the buildings along Seaman Avenue are architecturally similar to buildings along Fort Washington Avenue and that our attention to historic preservation should extend beyond Inwood, although Inwood should be a priority given the recent rezoning. Other topics discussed include obtaining assistance of architecture and historic preservation students at Columbia University and City College, obtaining a planning intern, obtaining grants to hire a consultant, what triggers consultation with LPC or the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) when a property owners wants to make alterations to a building in a designated area, and some of the misconceptions about the impact historic designation has on the cost of building maintenance and repair.

Next steps identified by LU to advance the potential historic districts include:

- Create a task force of volunteers (local resident and other stakeholders /interested parties)
- Create a map that notes the architectural style and completion date of buildings that may be included in the historic district
- Build upon the reconnaissance survey prepared as part of the Six-to-Celebrate initiative undertaken for Inwood
- Organize a Walking Tour

- Review the LPC designation report for the Grand Concourse (many of the architects of the buildings on the Grand Concourse also designed buildings in Inwood)
- Coordinate with the Art Deco Society to obtain a mailing list of Inwood residents who are members
- Activate local resident interest
- Follow up with the Historic Districts Council and the NYC Landmarks Conservancy for advice and assistance
- Review the National Register website for information on the listing process
- Get commitments from Columbia University and City College (students and other resources needed to undertake research, prepare maps and other documents)
- Explore obtaining grants from elected officials

3) **Old Business**

No Old Business

4) **New Business**

No New Business

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Submitted by Wayne Benjamin