



STATEMENT FROM COUNCIL MEMBER COREY JOHNSON REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING AT 493 11TH AVENUE BEFORE COMMUNITY BOARD 4 AND THE NEW YORK CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Wednesday, February 11, 2015

As the representative of Council District 3 in the New York City Council, which includes Manhattan's West Side, I want to thank the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) for working with Community Board 4 (CB4) on redeveloping the former Slaughterhouse site at 493 11th Avenue for affordable housing. Last year, CB4 answered Mayor de Blasio's call for potential affordable housing sites and brought this site to our attention. I thank them for that.

This is a critical discussion. For as far back as anyone can remember, Manhattan's West Side has been known as a quintessential melting pot. Diversity – economic, ethnic and cultural – is something that makes us who we are. In the coming years we will be faced with a choice. Are we going to be a neighborhood of luxury housing - with part-time residents from around the globe – or are we going to be a neighborhood of families, full-time residents who send their children to our schools, beautify our blocks and contribute to the fabric of New York?

Two weeks ago, during his State of the City address, Mayor de Blasio said it perfectly: we cannot allow our City to be defined by exclusivity, rather than opportunity. With thousands of units of luxury housing poised to come online on the West Side within the next few years, the challenge we face is to retain economic diversity in our neighborhood.

The Slaughterhouse site, a major component in CB4's Affordable Housing Plan, presents us with a major opportunity, but only if we maximize the amount of affordable housing it can offer. It's estimated that a building on this site could generate 322 permanently affordable housing units. This would benefit hundreds of families who are struggling to stay in this community – a necessity if we are to retain economic diversity in our community. In addition, the location of the Slaughterhouse can accommodate greater density and aligns with Mayor de Blasio's stated plan for constructing affordable housing in areas that can absorb such density.

We are fortunate to live in this community. We have high quality schools, low crime, and access to jobs. Our neighborhood can offer the greatest opportunity for middle and low-income New Yorkers. If we fail to build diverse neighborhoods, we continue to run the risk of creating even larger disparities between the rich and the poor.

Let's use this opportunity to make the Slaughterhouse site a model for creating an economically diverse community. Let's build a building that is affordable, covers a wide range of income bands, and is well connected to cultural and community amenities.

I look forward to working with EDC and CB4 to ensure that this project meets the needs of the community and advances Mayor de Blasio's goal of building 80,000 new affordable housing units over the next decade.

Thank you.