

Landmarks Preservation & Parks Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday June 4th, 2014 at Broadway Housing, 135th Street and Riverside Drive
Meeting called to order at 6:40pm

CB9 Landmarks Committee Members in attendance:

Joel Mentor (Chair), Gladys Tinsley, Daniel Marks Cohen, Michael Wells, Kimberly Cameron,
Jonathan Thomas

CB9 members in attendance:

Arnold Boatner, Padmore John

Presentations:

763 St. Nicholas Avenue – Tsion Café & Bakery

Padmore John (owner of Tsion Café and Bakery) and Mati Yaacobi, Architect, presented proposed changes to the interior, and minimal restoration work of the exterior of the building as they seek approval from the LPC. 763 St. Nicholas Ave lies in a historic district, and is itself a Class-A, landmarked building. It is currently being converted from an SRO. The Café will occupy the main floor and outdoor space. Questions were raised to the current condition of the interior of the building, and the owner's position on the work to be performed. Tsion Café and Bakery will serve as a community oriented hub for artists, and local organizations. The Committee voted (5 in favor, 1 abstention) to write a letter of support to the LPC.

Daniel Marks Cohen – Housing Partnership

Daniel Marks Cohen presented on a proposed project aimed at building affordable housing along Broadway, from W131st to W158th streets. This project will seek to convert and transfer air rights from undeveloped space above the uncovered rail lines, running from W123rd, to W158th Street (Approx. 1.7m sq ft) . Analysis of the zoning for the rail lines showed that more than half of the occupied space is zoned for residential use. By creating a Special Purpose District, these air rights can then be transferred to 16 commercial buildings along that stretch of Broadway. The proposal is to offer the air rights to current owners of these properties at less than market rate ~ \$100 sq ft, with a legal requirement that all new developments should go towards affordable housing. This plan would bring about 3,000 apartments at an average of 600 sq ft. Funds earned from the sale of these air rights would be used to build a new park, 20ft over the rail lines (Harlem Promenade). Similar projects have been built in Texas and Chicago. This unique proposal is being put forth to get community feedback, and support. There was a discussion around current zoning in the area, and Columbia's existing plans to build at some of the identified sites.

Ronnette Riley Architect – CCNY ADA compliant ramp on Gothic Quad

Ronnette Riley and Carlos Arredondo proposed a project to build a handicap ramp, connecting Convent Avenue to the Quad, and upper part of the plaza located between Wingate Hall, and Baskerville Hall. The project will be done in two phases, and will require cutting in to the landmarked low wall to the right of the south stairway. The plan is to follow the existing slope of the lawn, and use appropriate materials throughout the build (granite, concrete, and metal railing). During construction, the project will not impede, or disrupt use of the quad. Questions were raised around considerations for alternative approaches as in using a lift, or other location for the ramp. The topography of the site is limited, and does not allow adequate grading for a ramp. The committee voted unanimously in favor of writing a letter of support to the LPC.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm
Submitted by Joel Mentor