



Chairman Mohammed Mujumder - District Manager: William Rivera

Land & Zoning, Economic Development & Planning Committee Meeting Summary May 6, 2024

Board Members Present: Mitchell Halpern, Twywana Bush, Ahmat Jallo, Alizia McMyers, Andrea McLeod, Kristine Garcia

I. Introduction

- A. Committee Description:** The Land & Zoning, Economic Development & Planning Committee represents the community's interests with regard to the use of land, zoning, landmark, building, etc. and acts as a liaison between community members and Department of City Planning, Department of Buildings & the New York City Economic Development Corporation.

II. Speakers

A. Camber Property Group, Stevenson Square Update

- Presentation Overview: Bronx CB 9 Land Use Committee approval obtained June 17, 2021; Department of City Planning approval obtained October 6, 2021
Affordable Senior Housing: 116 Studio Units + amenities; 100% of residents will receive Project Based Vouchers; Partnership with Regional Aid for Interim Needs (R.A.I.N) to deliver on-site services. Only 12 parking spaces reserved.
Affordable Coops: 58 coops across two buildings; Affordable to households earning between 60%-80% AMI; Partnering with Habitat for Humanity NYC for homebuyer education and support. 42 parking spaces available on first come, first serve basis.
This is a 4 story building with NO elevator which was met with objection by those in attendance. The lack of adequate parking for the 3 buildings is also a concern for our committee. The representatives explained that creating additional parking units is costly and takes away from space that could be used to create apartments. The same explanation was given for lack of elevators in the coop buildings. Committee argued that these are much needed amenities which best serves residents.
Construction Update: Construction began January 2024; Completion expected December 2025
Housing lottery expected to open in the Summer of 2025 for all three buildings
<https://stevensonsquare.info/>
 - First Time Home Buyers Programs such as State of New York Mortgage Agency (SONYMA) programs assist low-income homebuyers, by providing reduced down payment and/ or a below market interest rates. As the lottery opening grows closer, Camber Property Group plans to host information sessions for potential homebuyers in the area to review the particulars of these products. Committee to be kept abreast of these info sessions.
 - MWBE Goals: the project has already surpassed the City & State M/WBE requirements with over \$6M in contracts going towards MWBE and SDVOB consultants and subcontractors. The project is 80% bought out, however, Camber Property Group is always open to learning about new M/WBE contractors. BXC9 to send them a list of any known M/WBE contractors for review.
- B. Kristen Roche, DCP - City of Yes for Housing Opportunity Public Review**
- Presentation Overview: City of Yes for Housing Opportunity - This citywide text amendment would make it possible to build a little bit more housing in every neighborhood. New York City faces a severe housing shortage that makes homes scarce and expensive;

NYC is not building enough housing to meet New Yorkers' needs; New housing is concentrated in just a few neighborhoods; When tenants have few options, landlords gain leverage; The housing shortage has direct human consequences; The housing crisis hurts the local economy; Zoning is one tool to address NYC's housing shortage; DCP aims to update zoning rules to create more housing and more types of housing across all NYC neighborhoods.

Proposal overview:

Low-density proposals: DCP want to allow for the creation of a little more housing across low-density areas, in ways that won't impact neighborhood look and feel

- Allow for "missing middle" housing, including town center zoning and transit-oriented apartment buildings
- Help homeowners by providing additional flexibility and allowing accessory dwelling units

Medium- and high-density proposals:

- Create a Universal Affordability Preference (UAP) will allow buildings to add at least 20% more housing if the additional homes are permanently affordable housing, including supportive housing. UAP will have an affordability requirement of 60% AMI.

Parking proposals: End parking mandates

- Lift costly parking mandates for new housing; Two parking spaces take up nearly the same space as a studio apartment

Other citywide actions to enable conversions (expand adaptive reuse regulations citywide, move the eligibility date from 1961 to 1991): small and shared apartments (Remove arbitrary zoning rules to allow small and shared apartments in central locations, easing pressure on family-size units); and infill (Allow new contextual housing on sites in non-contextual districts, including campuses and irregular sites)

Email the project team at HousingOpportunity@planning.nyc.gov with questions, concerns, and to be signed up for email alerts on this project.

Committee Questions & DCP Answers:

- How does the city potentially want to roll this out?

The zoning changes to support shared housing models go through extensive public review (including all 59 CBs, BBs/BPs, and the CPC) and get to City Council for a hearing and vote toward the end of 2024. The core of the shared housing proposal would support 100% affordable HPD projects. Further changes to the Housing Maintenance Code would be required to enable "market-rate" shared housing and the administration will discuss acceptable changes with City Council in the year ahead.

- What other laws/regulations would be put in place for this? Would new development be needed, additional fire escapes, precautions, etc?

As mentioned above, changes to the Housing Maintenance Code would be required to legalize privately financed shared housing. (In particular, these changes would have to lift the ban on most types of shared housing that exists in HMC 27-2077.) In order to legalize shared housing in a safe and effective manner, changes to the HMC would also include limits on, for instance, the number of bedrooms per bathroom and per refrigerator. The city is also looking to other cities for regulations that support sound management practices. Basic health and safety, such as fire safety requirements, is covered by other bodies of law such as fire code and building code.

- These types of living arrangements already exist, what are some of the concerns that have arisen?

Shared housing is a type of housing that can serve an important market niche. In the absence of a legal pathway, we've seen a proliferation of illegal and informal shared housing arrangements. Because these exist outside the regulated housing market, these arrangements can present health and safety issues. Because tenant complaints can lead to a vacate order of illegal housing, the situation can leave tenants vulnerable to exploitation and abuse by landlords. One big reason to legalize shared housing is to create formal pathways that avoid these dangers.

- Some seniors have already started doing this to assist with their rent payments. Noting that some of these types of housing that exist may be illegal.

Yes, this is consistent with what we've seen as well.

This type of housing is typically managed by an outside company that manages the whole process from start to end. PadSplits is one of these companies that already serves other

states in managing these types of SROs, locating tenants, collecting rent, etc.

As mentioned above, the interagency shared housing team has looked to other cities that have legalized shared housing and companies that have successfully managed shared housing. Many cities include regulations to support best practices around management to minimize potential frictions in shared housing with individual leases for each bedroom. The baseline rules and regulations will exist outside the zoning (in places like the HMC) to support the proposed changes to the zoning.

- This type of housing offers another potential opportunity for people that may not be able to afford a full rental?

That's right. Done well, shared housing can provide homes for younger households, older households, and marginally housed populations.

- Leases would be involved, and residents would be considered legal tenants?

Yes, enabling tenants to be legal tenants with a lease will avoid many of the problems we see with the existing informal shared housing market.

- Parking may be a concern with limited city parking availability already?

In general, residents who occupy shared housing in NYC tend not to be automobile owners.

III. New Business

A. L&Z Chair Articles Summary

<https://www.brownstoner.com/real-estate-market/what-is-affordable-housing-nyc/>

- Definition of Affordable Housing: Affordable housing is housing that costs 30 percent or less of a household's income. In New York City, it encompasses various programs and types, including naturally occurring and regulated housing.

Types of Affordable Housing:

- Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing: Below market-rate housing not part of any official program. Typically found in older buildings and may be substandard or rented below market rates.
- Regulated Affordable Housing Programs: Rent control, rent stabilization, NYCHA housing, 421-a, Mandatory Inclusionary Housing, Mitchell-Lama, HDFC, Habitat for Humanity, among others. Regulated under different programs with varying income restrictions and rent stabilization measures.
- Challenges and Controversies: Officially regulated affordable housing may not always be below market rate. Programs like 421-a have been criticized for not producing genuinely affordable housing. Developers argue that certain tax breaks are necessary for construction viability, particularly in upzoned areas.
- Solutions and Initiatives: Calls for more fully subsidized housing to meet the demand for genuinely affordable units. Various programs, including ELLA and SARA, aim to provide 100 percent affordable housing to low-income households. Partnerships between private and publicly funded nonprofits often involved in creating genuinely affordable housing.
- Examples of Affordable Housing Initiatives: Development projects such as those by East Brooklyn Housing Development Corporation and St. Nick's Alliance targeting formerly homeless individuals and low-income seniors; City-initiated projects like the Mother Gaston Hinsdale Homes in Brownsville aimed at providing workforce housing for first-time home buyers; Owned affordable townhouses initiatives like Nehemiah Houses and modern townhouses in Bushwick.
- Conclusion: Affordable housing in New York City is a complex landscape comprising various programs, initiatives, and challenges, requiring a mix of government subsidies, private investment, and community involvement to address effectively.

B. June Agenda Items

Committee will review City of Yes for Housing Opportunity in upcoming June committee meeting (committee members were provided a worksheet outlining various sections which they will need to vote on) and will vote in anticipation of the June Full Board vote at GB.

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