

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD #16 – JULY 15, 2008

Attendance

David Alexander (A)	Shawn Lewis (A)
Renee Archer (A)	Deborah Mack (A)
Orlando Aupont	James Mack
Octavius Bamberg (A)	Yolanda Matthews
Sissi Benitez (A)	Sadie McNamara (E)
Josephine Blakeley (E)	Ted McQueen (A)
Patricia Boone (E)	Rev. Joseph Norton
James A. Bowens (E)	Marie Pierre (E)
Essie Duggan	Elder Devon Ponds
Samantha Dunn (A)	Mattie Pusey
Ivory Ellison (A)	Melaine Rochford
Helen Giles	Linda Sanders (E)
Shirley Gonsalves	Lashon Segar (A)
Sarah Hall	Tyrone Thomas
Henry Hill	Ernestine Turner
Jessie Hilliard	Rev. Miran Ukaegbu
Kofi Hormeku (E)	Alice Vines (E)
Michael Howard (A)	Annie Walkes
Allene Ingram	Herman Winston
Daisy Jackson (E)	Hazel Younger
Javonn Johnson (A)	Viola D. Greene-Walker, DM
Troy Johnson (A)	E. Jane Coleman-Assistant ADM
Dr. Cade Jones, III (E)	Jimmi Brevil, Community Assistant
Pamela Junior (A)	Latrice Walker for Hon. Yvette Clarke
Eula Key	R. Hermon for Hon. William F. Boyland, Jr.
Danny King (A)	Christopher James for Hon. Darlene Mealy
Bettie Kollock-Wallace	William Whitaker for Hon. Marty Markowitz

MEETING HELD AT BROWNSVILLE MULTI-SERVICE CENTER, 444 THOMAS S. BOYLAND STREET, BROOKLYN

PUBLIC HEARING

Chairperson Hazel Younger called the Public Hearing to order at 7:01 p.m.. An invocation was said by Rev. Joseph Norton.

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD):

- 1) pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal Law of New York State for:
 - a. the designation of property located at 1511, 1505, 1503, and 1501 St. Mark's Avenue (Block 1452, Lots 59, and 62-65), Bergen Street (Block 1452, Lot 138), and Saratoga Avenue (Block 1452, Lot 147), as an Urban Development Action Area; and
 - b. an Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; and
- 2) pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the disposition of such property to a developer selected by HPD;

to facilitate development of a residential building, tentatively known as Common Ground Senior Housing, with approximately 71 units, to be developed under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 202 Supportive Housing Program for the Elderly.

A delegation from Common Ground was asked to step forward and give a brief overview of their proposal.

Ms. Olga Jobe, Senior Project Manager for Common Ground, disseminated an information packet to members of the Board. Graphics were displayed of the site and proposed development.

Ms. Jobe stated that the development will be known as the Domenech in honor of the late Irving Domenech. The project will be funded through Low-income Housing Tax Credits and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 202 capital. Construction costs are estimated at \$18,000,000. They project a construction loan closing in November 2008 and a construction completion date of October 2010.

The building will be seven-stories with 55 one-bedroom units ranging in size from 466 square feet to 476 square feet, 16 studio units ranging from 290 to 320 square feet, and a unit for the superintendent of the building. Schematics of the project were displayed.

The apartments will be available to persons sixty-two years old or older. Forty percent of the units will be set aside for formerly homeless individuals.

A chart indicating income levels was displayed - seniors earning between 30% and 60% of the "Area Median Income"

The architect for the project stated that he has been involved in designing supportive housing facilities since 1991.

The dimensional configuration of the lot required a non-standard shape building which resulted in the "C" shaped building they are presenting this evening. There will be an elevated platform referred to as a garden-terrace and a second floor reading room will accentuate some of the program space provided in the building. The garden-terrace will provide a space where the tenants can gather and socialize.

The building is designed to be silver LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified and will incorporate a "green" roof. Other environmentally friendly features will include energy efficient elevators, a state-of-the-art heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system, and Energy Star appliances throughout the complex.

There will be fifteen underground parking spaces - as is required by federal regulation.

The elevation view of the building will feature a visually appealing brick façade that incorporates well into the neighborhood.

Mr. Tyrone Thomas stated that it appears the income from each unit will be approximately \$800. Will that amount be enough to manage the complex properly?

Ms. Jobe stated that they can apply for a "TDY" for each unit to cover increased operating cost.

Ms. Ry-Ann Hermon asked what happens if the application is declined?

Ms. Jobe stated that the applications are rarely declined. Should one be declined there is an appeal process that would allow them to present their reasons for requesting the increase.

Ms. Hermon asked what will be the rent on the studio and small square footage apartments and how does a senior citizen qualify for an apartment?

Ms. Jobe stated that the apartment pricing is based upon the income of the renter and not on the size of the apartment.

Ms. Hermon asked if they would be looking at the credit worthiness of individual applicants on a case by case basis or will there be strict guidelines?

Ms. Jobe stated that they are seeking to fill as many apartments as possible with people from this community and will look at an individual's circumstances.

Rev. Joseph Norton asked if the apartments will be accessible to wheelchair-bound persons?

Ms. Jobe stated that 5% of the apartments will be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant and the remaining apartments will be ADA adaptable.

Mr. Tyrone Thomas stated in the calculations for staff, he only sees a superintendant listed. Will there be any other supportive staff?

Ms. Jobe stated that Common Ground operates other facilities in Brownsville and some of the resources will be shared, but there will be full-time coverage for this facility.

Ms. Essie Duggan asked if the construction jobs will be made available to the community?

Ms. Jobe stated that they have a commitment by the contractor to hire sub-contractors from the community whenever possible.

Ms. Duggan stated that she would like to see a commitment for them to have the actual workers be from the community as well.

Ms. Jobe stated that they will continue to negotiate with the contractors to obtain as many jobs in the community as possible.

Rev. Norton expressed concern about lack of windows in the cellar of the building.

The architect stated that it is not necessary for there to be windows for the cellar since there are no living units there, it is considered accessory space. There will be translucent ceiling panels in the community room that will allow natural light from the ground level to pass through.

Chairperson Younger asked what will the room sizes be?

The architect stated that the bedrooms will be approximately 10 feet by 11 ½ feet, the living spaces (living room, dining room, and kitchen) will be approximately 12 feet by 20 feet.

Ms. Latrice Walker stated that the green spaces occupy a large area. Can the project be designed so that some of that space can be used to increase the size of the apartments?

The architect stated that due to the size and configuration of the lots, the amount of green space is at the absolute minimum that is allowed by law. They have done all that they can to achieve efficient use of the site, including obtaining waivers to decrease the hallway spaces. He is in agreement with the audience concerning the apartment being small, however, he feels that the efficiency of the layouts will give the occupants a sense of living in a larger space.

Mr. Thomas asked for clarification on the types of materials that will be used to construct the units.

The architect stated that flooring will be red oak strip wood flooring, solid oak doors for the closets, and ¾ inch concrete tiles in the hallways. All materials will be long lasting products and none will emit any volatile organic compounds.

Chairperson Younger stated that she noticed that there is no cross-ventilation in the apartments. How will this affect the comfort of the tenants?

The architect stated that there will be a fan-pull system in each unit that will provide ample ventilation.

Mr. Christopher James, representing Councilmember Darlene Mealy, stated that Councilmember Mealy is requesting that the Board table this matter because the developer has not met with her to discuss this project.

Chairperson Younger stated that the request is out of order. Councilmember Mealy will have an opportunity to make her views known when the matter is brought before the City Council.

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD):

- 1) pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal Law of New York State for:
 - a. the designation of property located at 1612 Park Place (Block 1468, Lot 56); and 404A, 408, 414, and 416 Hopkinson Avenue (Block 1468, Lots 58, 60, 63, and 64), as an Urban Development Action Area; and
 - b. an Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; and
- 2) pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the disposition of such property to a developer selected by HPD;

to facilitate development of a residential building, tentatively known as Hopkinson/Park Place, with approximately 25 units, to be developed under the Department of Housing Preservation and Development's New Foundations Program.

Chairperson Younger recognized members of the group developing the aforementioned properties on Park Place and Thomas S. Boyland Street (Hopkinson Avenue).

Ms. Karla Rothstein stated that Latent Development recently won a request for proposal from the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) to develop five vacant City-owned lots. The lots are being developed for homeownership.

Schematic drawings of the project were displayed. The drawings showed five new buildings with 25 condominium units combined. The units will share many amenities, including a common courtyard, laundry, and a community room. The units will range from one- to three-bedrooms with the majority being two-bedroom units.

HPD's target income-level for ownership is 80% of area median income (AMI) for 1/3 of the units, thereby allowing eligible applicants to earn no more than that amount to be able to purchase a unit. The development team has established two additional tiers of affordability. This was not required of them, but they wanted to make the entire project affordable to members of the community.

Mr. Sal Perry stated that there are a number of environmental facets to the project that will help it meet LEED silver certification qualifications. They are working with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to ensure Energy Star compliancy. The project will be 20% more energy efficient than a conventional project of its scope. This will reflect directly to the owners' energy bills.

Chairperson Younger stated that NYSERDA usually assists developers by providing resources to build energy efficient buildings. How will this help the unit owners?

Mr. Perry agreed that the NYSERDA resources are targeted to developers, but it also requires that savings be passed along to the unit owners. This is accomplished through the energy cost savings derived from more efficient use of energy.

Someone asked why the project was not given to a local developer?

Chairperson Younger stated that while we do not know who applied and who did not, experience has shown that oftentimes no qualified persons from the community apply for these projects. One of the roles of these procedures is to promote economic growth. As such, the Board must entertain any serious proposals for development, no matter who is presenting them.

Ms. Hermon asked for a clarification on the affordability of the units.

Ms. Rothstein stated that HPD's requirements are that one-third of the units go to persons earning no more than 80% of AMI, which for a two person household is less than \$49,000. Additionally, Latent Developers has placed a self-imposed limitation of 110% and 130% for each of the remaining two-thirds.

Ms. Hermon asked if the applicants are free to obtain their own financing?

Mr. Perry stated that they are.

Ms. Rothstein stated that the units will be made available through an open lottery, however, there will be a fifty percent preference given to current residents of Community District #16. One unit in the first lottery will be set aside for an applicant who is a New York City Police Officer and a unit will be set aside for a New York City municipal employee.

There being no further questions, the hearing was adjourned.

A motion was made by Rev. Miran Ukaegbu, seconded by Elder Devon Ponds and carried to waive the reading of last month's minutes. Everyone was encouraged to read the minutes at home.

Ms. Bettie Kollock-Wallace, Chairperson of the Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committee, reported that earlier this evening, the Committee met with representatives from Calvary Church of God, Inc. who are proposing to construct 120 units of housing for senior citizens on Riverdale Avenue (Block 3603, Lot 25) at Rockaway Avenue in a 7-story building with at least 27 parking spaces.

The Committee recommends that the Board supports this proposal as it will create 120 units of affordable housing for senior citizens.

Calvary Church is also proposing to develop a commercial building on Livonia Avenue (Block 3566, Lot 6) between Howard Avenue and Grafton Street. Potential tenants will be a day care center and an after school program.

The Committee recommends that the Board supports this proposal.

During tonight's public hearing you heard a proposal by Latent Productions to develop twenty-five condominium units in five buildings on vacant lots along Park Place and Thomas S. Boyland Street.

The Committee is recommending that the Board also support this proposal.

A motion was made by Mr. James Mack, seconded by Elder Devon Ponds and carried to accept the report of the Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committee and its recommendations.

A motion was made by Mr. James Mack, seconded by Elder Devon Ponds and carried by a vote of 22 - for, 0 - against, and 0 - abstentions to support the proposal by Common Ground of their proposal to develop 71 supportive housing units for the elderly at 1511, 1505, 1503, and 1501 St. Mark's Avenue (Block 1452, Lots 59, and 62-65), Bergen Street (Block 1452, Lot 138), and Saratoga Avenue (Block 1452, Lot 147).

A motion was made by Rev. Miran Ukaegbu, seconded by Ms. Mattie Pusey and carried by a vote of 20 - for, 1 - against, and 0 - abstentions to support the proposal by Latent Development for their proposal to develop 25 affordable condominium units on property designated as 1612 Park Place (Block 1468, Lot 56); and 404A, 408, 414, and 416 Hopkinson Avenue (Block 1468, Lots 58, 60, 63, and 64).

There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Ms. Sarah Hall, seconded by Ms. Annie Walkes and carried to adjourn the hearing.