

Community Board 1, Queens – Board Meeting Minutes

January 19, 2021

Meeting opens with Chairperson, Marie Torniali at 6:30 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEM:

The New York City Department of City Planning

30-02 Newtown Avenue Rezoning

Proposed applications by MEDREP Associates, LLC certified December 14, 2020:

- a) **C 200282 ZMQ** Rezone from C4-4A to C4-4D property located on the south side of Newtown Avenue between 30th and 31st streets (Block 595, Lots 19, 26, 27, portion of Lot 10) and
- b) **N 200283 ZRQ** Amend Appendix F of the Zoning Resolution to establish the project area as a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Area.

Gerry Caliendo reported that he is involved in the project therefore has a Conflict of Interest.

The Chair, Marie Torniali acknowledged.

Thomas Ryan reported that his wife works for Akerman, so he must do his due diligence.

Lauren George, Constantinople & Vallone Consulting, LLC reported that they are representing the Finkelstein family for the rezoning proposal at 30-02 Newtown Avenue. She said the family has been doing business in Astoria for more than 100 years and the Finkelstein family is excited to bringing the rezoning forward trying to produce a beneficial use for the Community.

Frank St. Jacques, Associate, Akerman LLP reported he is joined by several members of the project team including Ms. George. Mr. St. Jacques presented the rezoning proposal. (See Presentation Attached)

The Chair, Marie Torniali asked Elizabeth Erion if the Committee had any questions.

Elizabeth Erion stated she wanted to summarize the issues that the Committee spoke about with the applicant during the 2 meetings they had. We first met in July and then again in January after the applications were certified. During the review the Committee talked about a number of topics. The need for family sized units and more affordable rentals that is within Option 1 category of MIH. There were discussions about the height of the building and the neighborhood context itself. The future of the tire business, and the site on the ground floor. We talked about the new use of the Community facility which was a theater. The applicant can speak to that directly as to what is happening, bring us up to date on that since the original APAC decided to lease elsewhere. We talked about how the parking garage is going to be operated, whether or not there would be electrical charging stations there and accommodations for deliveries and roof gardens and whether or not the applicant or the owner of the building could help lessen the impact of new residents in the area on Athens Square Park which is just up the block. Since the time of the January 4th meeting, we had a virtual meeting and members of the public were able to listen in. The District office received 3 emails concerning the project. One was in support, enumerating the community benefits and the environmental benefits of the proposal. Two were in opposition to the proposal. One because of additional traffic with parking that was being proposed. The other stated negative impact because of height and size of the building. A negative impact on the aesthetics of the neighborhood. At that point, at the January 4th meeting the Committee voted 6 to 2. A Motion was made to approve the recommendation to approve the project, to establish the project area under Option 1 MIH program. There were no conditions that were proposed, there were no stipulations. It was a straight approval of the project that was a recommendation.

Marie Torniali, the Chair asked if any Board Members had a question about the project.

George Alexiou asked how many parking spots there will be.

Frank St. Jacques responded 30 parking spaces will be provided and attended in the cellar parking garage.

Amin Mehedi asked if they have any plans to control the traffic. It is already overcrowded, the traffic. What is the plan? Any plan for extending the road? How are you going to do that? Including the parking situation and the traffic on 30th Avenue and Newtown Avenue.

Frank St. Jacques responded; the site is highly transit oriented. It is within a block of the subway station and there is great service there. In order to put this project, forward we had to do a full environmental assessment statement to determine it would not negatively impact the traffic or parking in the area. We believe that the parking provided will be sufficient and meets what is required by zoning. We are not anticipating any problems with traffic based on the project.

Daniel Aliberti stated he had a question about the auditorium. Since one group has already backed out of leasing it, what if the current proposed lease backs out of leasing it. Do you have plans to use that space for something other than an auditorium? How crucial is it that leasing of the auditorium to the project?

Frank St. Jacques responded that the project was designed with a performing arts theater space in mind. The goal is to replace it with another similar user to essentially be able to use that building design. If that is not the case, the applicant is committed to finding another community facility user that would provide a benefit to the Community. Example, it would include a medical office, a day care, or a non-profit office. So, in addition to the ground floor retail there is a commitment of approximately 2000 square feet of above grade and an additional 2500 square feet of below grade. That would be dedicated to another community facility user.

Daniel Aliberti asked when they say medical offices, does that include clinics of all sorts?

Frank St. Jacques responded yes, medical offices is a pretty broad definition these days. The idea is to find a medical office that would be complimentary to the active ground floor retail use. The tenant group would be smaller than the entire range of medical offices.

Lauren George said the property owner's interest is to find a community facility user that is preferably a non-profit or some beneficial community use, like more of an educational day care facility or a non-profit cultural institution is what they are going for. Again, it is part of the family's commitment to provide a benefit at this site that is something they will be working on, ongoing. There was a very promising early conversation with a non-profit called Windy Seas that are amenable to pursue.

Mackenzi Farquer I am on the Board. The space that was originally in talks with the Finkelsteins' for the theater space. I just want to say we did pursue a very difficult negotiation with the Finkelsteins'. Ultimately could not budge them from above market rate, we were able to find a cheaper home especially now during COVID so would just say that I am but one person but my perception from being on that board of non-profit was not positive. I would encourage whatever we could do to nudge the price down or encourage the pricing if it is going to be for a non-profit to be less than market rate or free.

Jacob Entel, owner involved with negotiations said, I would say politely that is not how it happened. We had a signed LOI, that was a letter of intent with the theater. We came to an agreement and APAC went through a leadership change. COVID happened, APAC made the best decision for themselves, they had to find a space that was readily available. I was in charge of that. There was no negotiations or discussions of any rent negotiations after we signed our letter of intent. It was in our best interest. Our family has been here 120 years; we want to bring a theater or something that would benefit the property.

Richard Khuzami asked, could you go over the surrounding neighborhood building heights and densities. I know that this structure was designed as a step down basically, the higher portion on 31st Street going down on 30th Street to a lesser height and how does that fit with the context of the neighboring buildings?

Frank St. Jacques responded, most significantly, the building that is caddy corner at 31-19 Newtown is 120-foot, 10 story building which is one floor lower than the proposed development that is just across 31st Street. The building steps down from that 11-story height at 31st Street moving westwards dropping down to 6 stories. The building immediately north of the site is 70 feet tall at 30-15 Newtown Avenue. Again 70-foot, 6-story building. Northwest of the site is a 77-foot 7 story building at 26-80 30th Street. Just west of 28th Street and north side of Newtown is 25-25 Newtown Avenue is a 104-foot 9 story building, further to the north is the HANAC building, that is a few blocks north that is a 50 story 136-foot building. There is precedent for height. The land use rationale is locating potential development at a transit-oriented site on a wide street, 31st Street. There is a transit infrastructure, elevated rail. It lends support for concentrating the height on that portion of the lot. The design is intended to concentrate height along 31st Street and drop down to more consistent to the adjacent multifamily buildings that are closer in height to that 6-story portion.

Irak Dahir Cehonski I need to disclose I cannot vote for this Land Use proposal. I work for someone who works at the City Council who is on the Land Use Committee. But I do have a question on the retail area. What is the square footage you are thinking of and what type of retail are you thinking of reaching out when you do your lease?

Frank St. Jacques responded; it is about 8,400 square feet total of retail. The idea is that it would likely be divided into smaller retail spaces for commercial spaces similar to along the context you see further to the south along 31st Street. There is a lot of neighborhood type uses. Food and beverage are a really popular use. Local retail breaking up that 8,400 feet.

Antonella Di Saverio asked, how many people do they expect to occupy this building? She said she is also more interested in the not so positive parts of the impact statements. Sewer, the load on subway, which is already, during Non-COVID times like a sardine can if you are going into Manhattan. Please go into a little bit on that environmental impact study.

Frank St. Jacques the environmental assessment statement found that there would be no negative impact with respect to infrastructure or transportation. I am happy to get more into detail there but the overall determination was that there would be no significant adverse impact related to with respect to any of the areas adverse impact related to with respect to any of the areas of analysis but in particular the subway or public transportation or infrastructure that you are asking about.

Antonella Di Saverio asked, were there any negative impacts on that environmental study.

Frank St. Jacques responded no; this was an environmental assessment statement which determined there was no significant adverse environmental impact. Were there to be any adverse impacts we would have had to do a much larger, more comprehensive environmental impact statement but because of the size of this project and the nature of the development it was determined based on the analysis that were performed that there would be no negative impact.

Antonella Di Saverio asked how many people are going to occupy the building?

Frank St. Jacques said he does not know the number off hand but there are 104 units, he will look it up and get back with an answer.

Andy Aujla said, I want to confirm like many other buildings, is this only a rental building? And none of the units will be for sale and given the answer is likely yes, what made you decide on 11 stories in this area? Was it all just financial feasibility? Any other consideration?

Frank St. Jacques responded; obviously financial feasibility is a huge part of development. What we did was work with the Department of City Planning on determining a zoning district that would be appropriate for this part of town and this site with the condition presented here. A validated train, the surrounding context, it is adjacent to transit and the fact that given in the last 10 years there has not really been any of the type of development that the City was hoping to promote with the 2010 Astoria rezoning at least for this zoning district that was established back in 2010. Working with the City and the applicant to meet that rationale. The building, it is 11 stories on one portion and that 11-story portion of the building is at 31st Street near the elevated train. One other thing that this project does is it will require Mandatory Inclusionary Housing, 26 of the units will be permanently restricted constructed

and that is part of city policy is allowing more density and height at transit-oriented sites. These will be permanently restricted that are created without any city subsidy, so this is all private development money that will result in the creation of 25% of the residential floor area so that is 26 units at a weighted average of 60% AMI.

Andy Aujla said, that is a little contradictory, you mentioned that you wanted to look at the surrounding areas. The height was chosen based on the surrounding area, but you also said there were no other buildings within this side of the Community of Astoria met the 2010 Astoria zoning changes.

Frank St. Jacques responded; I understand what you are saying. Let me say it again. There is an 11-story portion of the building, it steps down to 6 stories. The context surrounding this site supports this building. There are a number of multifamily buildings ranging in size from 7 stories to 10 stories across the street. The way this building is designed is such that the height is concentrated on 31st Street where it steps down to meet the surrounding context with a bit lower toward the west. We did this in combination to the surrounding context to concentrate the height along 31st Street so it was more consistent with the surrounding context.

Evie Hantzopoulos said, this was just rezoned in 2010, it was up zoned to that point, correct?

Frank St. Jacques responded correct.

Evie Hantzopoulos asked how you are coming back to us with another up zoning as well and you are only going to be providing the bare minimum in terms of the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing that is supposed to be built?

Frank St. Jacques responded we are providing the required Mandatory Inclusionary Housing under the lowest level of affordability, Option 1.

Evie Hantzopoulos said there is a lower level – but you are doing Option 1. There are other levels, there are the deeply affordable option as well, but you are doing Option 1.

Frank St. Jacques responded you are correct.

Evie Hantzopoulos asked about a community facility.

Frank St. Jacques responded the intention is to use that space for a community facility.

Evie Hantzopoulos but you are not bound by it, right?

Frank St. Jacques responded no.

Evie Hantzopoulos said, zoning now it is the 31st Street side with 11 stories. How high can you actually go?

Frank St. Jacques said the proposal district allow a 14-story building. It is not a feasible building at this site to go 14 stories which is why this building will be 11 stories at 31st Street dropping down to 6 stories.

Evie Hantzopoulos asked why it is not feasible for 14 stories.

Frank St. Jacques said I just see the constructability of a 14 story building is a tower of a site it is a more efficient building to use the corner lot actually, 2 corner lot so a larger floor plate with less height is a much more feasible building vs a tower. It is not consistent with the surrounding context. We max out the lower area with the full building.

Evie Hantzopoulos said but again if you get the rezoning whoever develops this property is not bound by the plans you are submitting today.

Frank St. Jacques said the applicant is developing the building. We are maxing out the lower area because there is not a year requirement on this corner site.

Evie Hantzopoulos said we do not know for sure if the applicant is going to develop.

Steve Sinacori, Akerman LLP is the co-counsel for the project. He stated the Finskelstein family has been at this location for 120 years. He said it is their intention to develop the building and they are very happy to provide the Community Board with a letter that they will maintain the envelope of the building that is being shown. As far as the Community facility space we have spoken with the Committee. We are very happy to come back to the Committee as we work with the tenant, the final tenant who will rent that. We are having a very good conversation with a not-for-profit who helps find affordable space for performing arts, not-for-profits and theaters. We are happy to come back and report to the Committee post this meeting, and we are happy to provide the committee with a letter that we will maintain the envelop we are proposing. Furthermore, we used up all of our Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) in the current configuration so at the end of the day, it is not possible to go up any further and it does not work from an architectural point of view given the very odd shape of the lot and its shallow depths. We can commit to those items, and we are happy to provide the Board tomorrow morning to that effect.

Evie Hantzopoulos said, you have mentioned you are not getting city subsidies, are you getting any state subsidies or tax breaks.

Steve Sinacori responded; we will not be getting any subsidies from the City of New York. We would apply under the affordable New York program for tax abatement in conjunction with the affordable housing that we are providing but that is not considered a subsidy. The City does not have any subsidies. These units are privately financed. 10% of the units, just for your information will be at 40% of the area median income. So, you have 25%, 15% will be on average 60 and 10% at an average of 40, so this is low affordable units. I just wanted to clarify that.

Evie Hantzopoulos said so, the tax abatement is for 20 years or 30 years?

Steve Sinacori said, I believe it is for 30 years, but the units are permanently affordable so even if the tax abatement expires the units will remain permanently affordable pursuant to a regulatory agreement that is recorded against the property in perpetuity.

The Chair, Marie Torniali asked if any members of the public would like to speak for or against the project.

Jade Oliver (Constituent) – Spoke against the project because she disagrees with the height of the building and the affordability for residential and commercial.

Jeremy Welsh-Love (Constituent) - Spoke in favor of the project because we can build ourselves out of the housing crisis.

Julia Forman (Constituent) – Is against the project and asked multiple questions about the height of building.

Frank St. Jacques (shared screen). He stated, after the rezoning there could be an 8-story building built here within the C4-4A today. As I mentioned within the last 10 years since the 2010 Astoria rezoning established the current C4-4A current zoning district and an inclusionary designated housing area. Over the past 10 years, no none has taken advantage of the C4-4A zoning district which was established to promote development at this site because of its transit-oriented nature. The C4-4A and the inclusionary housing designated area and the voluntary inclusionary housing program we established here to promote development with an affordable housing component and that just has not happened in over the last 10 years. What this rezoning seeks to do is increase the density to C4-4A to allow a development that is 11 story building at this 31st Street frontage. This is consistent with the 10-story building directly across the street and then to context of the surrounding neighborhood.

Mr. St. Jacques further explained the step-down of the building.

Evie Hantzopoulos asked, if you were to build as of right would you get the 30-year tax abatement.

Frank St. Jacques said, presumably if there would be an as of right development that the owner would have to provide voluntary inclusionary housing also apply for the affordable New York program 421A for that tax abatement.

Evie Hantzopoulos stated even if they build it as of right with the zoning that is already there.

Steve Sinacori stated they would be able to probably avail themselves of the tax abatement but under that there would be no Mandatory Inclusionary Housing so the actual rents would be significantly higher because the 421A tax abatement allows some of the rent to go higher. Because you have Mandatory Inclusionary Housing when you avail yourself to the tax abatement you are locked into the 40% AMI and the 60% AMI. Which in fact the 40% AMI is the lowest AMI that the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing program covers. So the answer is the rezoned or proposed development you get lower affordability than you would as an as of right development wanted to clarify that and as for as the units, there is a healthy number of units that include ones, twos and threes as well as some studios so it covers family sized units as well.

Frank St. Jacques follow up to that, 100% market rate building could be built as of right today.

Alexandra Sandra (Constituent) - Spoke against the project because there is no benefit to the Community.

Jennifer Lopez (Constituent) - Spoke against the project and affordability.

Frank St. Jacques (shared screen). He reviewed numbers and breakdown financially by unit sizes. He said the applicant is required to identify a non-profit which is an AMI administrator, it is an arm's length non-profit that runs the lottery process in order to find tenants that meet the income requirements for the building, so to find MIH tenants for the MIH units. They are also required to do marketing and 50% of those units are required to be set aside for residents of Community District 1, so 13 of the 26 units would be reserved for residents of Community District 1.

The Chair, Marie Torniali thanked them for the presentation and thanked everyone for their comments and questions. She stated it will be voted on during the business section.

Frank St. Jacques thanked everyone.

ELECTED OFFICIALS/REPRESENTATIVES – Announcements:

Joseph Nocerino, Office of Queens Borough President Donovan Richards

- Stated the Borough President sends well wishes
- He said the Borough President is truly making changes and his vision is all encompassing
- Introduced Katherine Brezler as the new Deputy Director of Community Boards and stated she will be reaching out on their vision to streamline all the Boards

Katherine Brezler, Deputy Director of Community Boards, Office of Queens Borough President Donovan Richards

- Asked for people to consider applying to become a Community Board Member
- Stated she would add a link in the Chat for the application and to note, there is no Notary requirement needed anymore
- Stated, if you are seeking a Council Member nomination, contact them and they will have a conversation with the Borough President
- You can apply directly through the Borough President's Office to be nominated for a Community Board position
- Announced that the City in partnership with the Borough President announced a Small Business grant to provide resources to small businesses impacted by COVID-19 through a generous \$17.5 million dollar donation from Steve Cohen
- They will partner with community-based organizations to offer \$15 million dollars' worth of grants to Queens Small Businesses in need of up to \$20,000 to support operational expenses
- The link will be provided in the Chat

The Chair, Marie Torniali thanked them and introduced Council Member Costa Constantinides.

Council Member Costa Constantinides – Happy New Year to everyone. Hope everyone is staying healthy and safe. I wanted to reiterate my strong congratulation to Judy and Caryn Schwab on their retirement. Your roles at Mount Sinai Queens, you both were a huge part of making Mt. Sinai Queens what it is. Regarding the new building

of truly affordable housing at the site of 31st and Broadway. It will be 135 units of truly affordable housing at 0 AMI to 50 AMI at the top. It is going to be done through the HPD's Senior Affordable Rental Apartments (SARA) Program, guarantees affordability in perpetuity and it is going to be with HANAC, who is also going to have a community center on site as well as retail. So, to be able to have permanently affordable housing on this site is what we really needed. We have been the epicenter for the need of affordable housing. There are over 20,000 seniors on a list in our part of Queens for truly affordable housing. Not just affordable housing but also appropriate housing. HANAC will have all the amenities needed that not only make it senior affordable but senior appropriate housing. Now that HANAC has been chosen as the non-profit developer this is going to go a long way. This is assuring we are going to have 135 units of affordable housing for seniors through the HPD's Senior Affordable Rental Apartments (SARA) Program. It is totally affordable. There are a lot of questions tonight about different buildings. This building is 100% affordable at 0 to 50 AMI. The Governor talked about an equitable wind project last week. The Beacon Wind Project is going to bring 1200 Mega Watts of power, not fossil fuel, wind power. Astoria has always been known for the stacks. I was a member of the UCCA Board. We have been fighting about the stacks for as long as I have been alive. We have been fighting the stacks because we also have an asphalt problem that is directly connected to the stacks. We have an opportunity to have truly renewable energy. The Beacon Wind Project is going to bring Astoria 1200 Mega Watts. This can give us the opportunity to close down fossil fuel infrastructure. We need to do more of this. I know we just saw the Ravenswood generated plans talk about the possibility of moving to a renewable model as well. Though they are not closing their face load turbines which I think they need to do. We need to ensure we are building as much renewable energy infrastructure as possible. I want to highlight this particular Equinor Project as something that is going to be a great win for Astoria. We are going to see battery storage we are going to have the largest battery coming into our neighborhood, but what goes into those batteries is so very important. So as we see more battery storage come through Astoria as we have projects like Equinor or Beacon Wind, we can still provide the City with 55% of its power, but it can be renewable energy power and not these polluting stacks that we see continuously in our communities for over 100 years, giving us asthma and respiratory illness. That is why we need this opportunity, that is what I wanted to bring it to your attention. I want to thank you all for your service to the neighborhood. This is my last year as Council Member, only one more person is going to succeed me but I am going to share with you the same job that we all have which is more important than Council Member which is citizen of the neighborhood. We are all part of what makes this community great part of what makes this community an amazing place to live. I lived here long before I was a Council Member. I plan on living here long after I am a Council Member. I want to thank you all for the service to the neighborhood and thank you for being a part of the Community discussion this evening.

The Chair, Marie Torniali thanked Council Member Constantinides.

Assemblywoman Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas – Greeted everyone and shared she was with a colleague from her team, Shamina Rahman. She said she is the newly elected member of the 34th Assembly District which includes Jackson Heights, East Elmhurst, Corona and Woodside. Assemblywoman Gonzalez-Rojas said, we just have a little bit of Community Board 1, but we intend to be active and present in the meetings so that we can continue to be a pipeline of information to the Community and serve the community. Our office is up and running. We are at 75-35 31st Avenue in the Jackson Heights Shopping Center in East Elmhurst. Our phone number and email are up and running. Shamina posted the information in the Chat. I will be serving on the Committees for Children and Families a Committee on Cities, Environmental Conservation. I just heard Costa so I will be following in your footsteps and fight for the environment here in Queens. Also, the Committee on Social Services and I am most excited about the Committee of Corporations Authorities and Commissions. The reason why is because that Committee oversees the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) which I know, we all know, that the bus and train service is a critical issue for our community. Thank you all so much for your service, we look forward to working with all of you and serving the Community and working alongside the Community Board.

The Chair, Marie Torniali thanked her and welcomed other elected officials wish to make a statement.

Ernest Brooks, Office of Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney

- She is eager to get going with the fully Democratic Congress for the first time in a long time and possibly get some more legislation passed
- She is going to have a telephone Town Hall on Thursday at 6:00 p.m.
- People can call in with questions about the relief package that was passed before Christmas
- There will be a lot of information going out on how to apply for loans, there is one specifically for Queens

- Information for vaccination appointments is available on their website

Daniel Bonthius, Office of Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

- Happy New Year and Happy MLK Day
- In the early morning on January 7th, Congress certified the results of the 2020 Presidential election, despite the violent disruption and threat to our democratic institutions. We are thankful for the safety of our lawmakers and colleagues in DC and appreciate the concern from all who have reached out to our office during this time. The Congresswoman voted in support of impeachment last week and supports Rep. Bush's resolution to censure the members of Congress who incited the violence.
- First Town Hall of the second term on Friday, January 15th. To see the recordings of this and previous Town Halls you can visit our YouTube page: @RepAOC (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6XBnYptBnproA_ydn-b0A)
- Sign up for our newsletter in English or Spanish.
 - English Newsletter: <https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/contact/newsletter-subscribe>
 - Spanish Newsletter: <https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/contact/boletin-espanol>
- The House passed a second stimulus including: \$600 stimulus payments, extended UI, PPP, EIDL and eviction/foreclosure moratorium.
- You can now check the status of both stimulus payments at the Get My Payment site. For any eligible constituents who still haven't received the first stimulus, or don't receive the second, the IRS has announced the addition of the Recovery Rebate Credit to next year's tax return.
- We will be hosting a Wounded Warrior Fellow. To apply and review eligibility requirements visit USAJOBS - Job Announcement.
- The Small Business Development Center at LaGuardia Community College is able to assist with the SBA PPP and the SBA EIDL applications. You can reach out at sbdc@lagcc.cuny.edu or 718-482-5962.
- CrownCatch by Michael Batavia won the 2020 Congressional App Challenge for NY-14. A video demonstration of the app is available here.

The Chair, Marie Torniali thanked him.

Haris Khan, Office of Comptroller Scott M. Stringer

- Need for Federal Government to send more doses of the vaccine
- The Borough President with the Comptroller and Public Advocate stated that the administration could have rolled out the vaccines better
- The website has 3 different systems to log into and is complex
- They released a document on January 13th about the PPE Loan Program on how the City can do better this time
- Asking for help from the Federal Government on many issues that include the MTA and NYCHA
- CB1 has one of the highest concentrations of NYCHA buildings
- They have released a Federal Aide plan, the information will be in the Chat
- They are happy to assist with any issues, his information will be placed in the Chat

The Chair introduced the new Assembly Member, Zohran Mamdani.

Assembly Member Zohran Mamdani introduced himself. He stated, he is excited and elated to be your Assembly Member to represent you and serve you in Albany and also at home in our District in Astoria. My team member is also on the call and will be providing information on how to get in touch with me and with our office. I want to let you know it has been about 2 weeks in office so far and I have been assigned to the following committees: Energy, Aging, Election Law, Real Property Tax Reform and will also be the Co-Chair of the Asian-American Pacific Islander Task Force. I would love to hear from all of you. We currently do not have people coming into our office physically due to the Pandemic, but we would love to hear from you over the phone as well as over email. I would love to get in touch to hear about the issues that are impacting you and the ways I and my office can be of assistance. Thank you and I cannot wait to work with you all.

The Chair, Marie Torniali, thanked him and stated his office will put the information in the Chat.

Jessica Schabowski, Queens Borough Director, Community Affairs Unit - Office of the Mayor

- The City's vaccination pace is picking up quickly, but we are not getting enough doses from the Federal government and the manufacturers. We've opened large-scale vaccination centers, which will operate 24 hours, 7 days a week. 220,000 vaccines were administered in New York City last week and over 100,000 were administered the week before. Without a resupply of doses from the federal government, the City will begin to close vaccination sites on Thursday. The Mayor continues to advocate for the Federal government to invoke the Defense Production Act.
- Older New Yorkers age 65 and over who make an appointment for vaccine at a City-operated site will be asked whether they have a way to get to and from their appointment and if they require transportation, they will be screened and directed to transportation options. The City is opening vaccination clinics in NYCHA developments, providing on-site vaccinations for residents 65 or older. Clinics opened in NYCHA developments in Brooklyn, Staten Island, and Manhattan this past weekend, with plans to move to different sites across the city in the coming weeks.
- Eligible New Yorkers can reserve their appointment by calling 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692) or visiting vaccinefinder.nyc.gov
- The Consortium for Worker Education initiated the Astoria Workers Project with a network of Astoria based partners. They have organized a survey to measure how COVID-19 has impacted workers and their families in Astoria: bit.ly/astoriaworker

The Chair, Marie Torniali thanked Jessica as well as all the Elected Officials and Representatives.

BUSINESS SESSION:

Adoption of December 2020 Minutes

Motioned by Edward Babor; Seconded by Rose Anne Alafogiannis

The Chair stated it is Unanimous, no one has a correction.

Chair Report:

I will speak tonight on Ranked-Choice Voting, which is the new voting system that will be for citywide offices during the Primaries only and Special Elections. In other words, the Mayor, the Borough President and the City Council. The Primary Election will be Ranked-Choice Voting. Donovan Richards had a seminar on it. Hopefully he might have another one. I am going to ask Florence to contact them so that perhaps they can do an overview because it is something very new and something very confusing which we will be using pretty soon, in June during the Primaries.

District Manager Report:

I attended the Borough Cabinet with Borough President Richards. The Department of Education spoke about school admissions and the changes needed for fall 2021. Middle schools will see some changes, applications opened on January 11, 2021 for middle schools, over 2 years phase out of geographic priorities will occur. The academic data is posted on <https://www.myschools.nyc/en/> which is the DOE website. Schools which require auditions will occur virtually. Applications for January 19, 2021 citywide for High School choices. SHSAT tests will occur in middle schools and had to be submitted by January 15th, the schools will be open on January 27, 2021 for the SHSAT test.

Committee Reports:

RoseMarie Poveromo, Airport Committee – Reported the following:

2020 Updates from LGA Redevelopment.

Construction Updates

- More than 50 percent of 'A whole New LGA' is now open

- The new Terminal B Arrivals and Departures Hall and half of Terminal B West Concourse opened in 2020
- 70% of the airport roads are complete and open, including the roads serving the new Terminal B
- Steel for the new Terminal C Arrivals and Departures Hall is complete

Community Updates

- More than \$1.5 billion in contracts awarded to certified M/WBEs – largest amount award for any P3 project in NYS history
- More than \$600 million in contracts awarded to local, Queens-based businesses
- 5 four-year, full-tuition scholarships awarded in 2019 and 2020
- Second Annual Aviation STEM Education Program, in partnership with the Langston Hughes Community Library
- Sustainability Mini-Camp, in partnership with Eastern Queens Alliance
- More than 100 webinars focused on providing business development and workforce development trainings and resources
- Distribution of PPE to airport customers, local community residents, and businesses
- COVID-19 test site at LGA Terminal B Garage, in partnership with NYC Health & Hospitals – open to travelers, employees, and the Community (including free parking)

AirTrain LGA Updates

- FAA published Draft Environmental Impact Statement in August 2020. 60-day public comment period, including 2 virtual public workshops and 3 virtual public hearings that were very well attended
- Next step is the publication of the Final Environmental Impact Statement by the FAA, expected in April 2021

Avninder Aujla (subbing for Eric Mouchette), Consumer Affairs Committee – Hello everyone. Most of you already know the drill. The Liquor License Application spread sheet was sent via e-mail by Florence on Friday. If you can please take a look, these entities that have applied for renewal or new applications over December and please note that several of them also received stipulations. We as usual check the application with the 114th Precinct to make sure there were no entities that had significant negative consequences within the Community such as 911 calls, things of that nature. Being none, we are asking for approval on these applications that were submitted. I ask if there are any objections.

The Chair, Marie Torniali reiterated if there were any objections. Hearing none, the list is approved.

Antonella Di Saverio, Environmental Protection Committee – On January 12th we had a presentation from the Department of Environmental Protection. They described the installation construction of a 3rd city water tunnel. This tunnel will alleviate some of the impact from the increased development it is like having a well in our area. We will be getting that water first before it travels on to Flushing. They went through the lasting implication on environmental impact to the area. They were very well organized and at the end of the day this project will be very beneficial to our area. The other thing that we talked about was to update on the Astoria Promenade. We are still waiting for a letter of support from one of the local partners in order to start a study with respect to the environmental impact from future storms. In the meantime, construction is going to be starting on the repair of the fencing and some of the cavities in the cement on the Promenade is making for a very unsafe condition in the area. We are hoping that the construction is going to go smooth within the next month. That is just my estimate at least from what I am hearing so far. It might be a little after that.

Judy Trilivas, Health & Human Services Committee – Happy New Year. Judy Trilivas spoke about vaccinating. Jessica just went over the information on the Vaccine finder and the phone number, she put it in the Chat. When they get more vaccines, it is important to call the number. I actually tried and called it today and I did get an answer pretty quickly, I was surprised. Also, today, Dr. Jay Varma, he is the Senior Public Health Advisor to the Mayor, had a Town Hall and answered questions. The key takeaways are to continue with all the safety precautions. I think everyone is seeing and that, it is touching everyone's lives that there is a resurgence in the virus. I can tell you firsthand, it just spread through my family. It is everywhere, and it is so important to wear masks, wash hands and socially distance. A lot of questions arose about vaccine safety and his recommendation was that the vaccines are well studied, they are safe. He is advising everyone, when their turn comes to please get your vaccine. Lastly, he went over the side effects that everyone knows has been posted. He did say, that if you do get the vaccine that you will practice the safety precautions because you still can be a carrier of the virus even though you are vaccinated. So

even if you have gotten the vaccines, 2 doses, please make sure you are still following the safety precautions that was the take-away from the Town Hall.

Evie Hantzopoulos, Housing Committee – We are going to have our next meeting in a week, on the 25th at 6:30 p.m. We are going to have a speaker from the Coalitions on the Homeless as well as speakers from the Astoria Tenant Union. I welcome everybody to come. We will be talking about issues that are facing housing.

Elizabeth Erion, Land Use & Zoning Committee – At this point the hearing has been closed for 30-02 Newtown Avenue. What we have to do now is have a Motion on the floor for discussion concerning how the Board will vote. As I had mentioned before the Committee had recommended approval. If someone from the Community Board would like to issue a motion, we can begin discussion after it is passed.

Richard Khuzami Motioned to approve based on the report that was issued by the Land Use & Zoning Committee to Community Board 1; Ed Babor Seconded the Motion.

Roll Call made by Amy Hau

Yes: 19; No: 11; Abstentions: 3

The Chair, Marie Torniali stated the Motion Carried.

Katie Ellman, Parks/Recreation/Cultural Committee – There is a Visioning Session, Justin Green put it in the Chat, for Baby Queensbridge Parks on January 28th at 6:30 p.m. You can register on the Parks website. I wanted to acknowledge the service of Martha Lopez-Gilpin who was Chair and then a member of the Board of the Astoria Park Alliance. She is stepping back and retiring from that role. Many of us have witnessed her and admire her service. I wanted to publicly acknowledge her service.

The Chair, Marie Torniali stated she was wonderful and will be missed.

Antonio Meloni, Public Safety Committee – Happy Healthy New Year to everyone, Madame Chair. The new Captain of the 114th Precinct, is Captain Jenkins. He has been there a couple of months. We no longer have our Community Affairs Officer Mashriqi. His post is being taken over by the old Crime Prevention Officer Gabriel Tovar. Chacon is still there so if you need to contact the 114th for anything.

Mitch Waxman, Transportation Committee – We had a meeting with NYC Department Transportation Queens Borough Planner John O'Neill. A number of issues in the neighborhood were brought up and discussed including the race car situation on the North side of Astoria. Some tweaks that need to be made to the southern end of the Crescent Street bike lane. We also discussed the Astoria Boulevard North and South and the Northern Boulevard bike lane which lost its barriers due to snow removal. I can report for those of you who live on Astoria Boulevard North or South between 33rd Street and 49th Street you are going to be seeing some activity in the next year. They are going to be repainting crosswalks and doing maintenance on street lighting. The conversation on Astoria Boulevard is going to continue.

Old/New Business:

PUBLIC SESSION:

Ann S. (Constituent) – Complaint regarding the bike lanes on Crescent Street. She stated they sent letter to the Community Board Office as well as asked the Department of Transportation to come in with a compromise or something that could be done to help.

Alex (Constituent) – Complaint regarding the bike lanes on Crescent Street. He says it is a disaster, but he supports bike lanes. He asked what we can do as a community. Alex said he will put it in writing and send to the Community Board.

Gil Lopez, the Big Reuse - We are a non-profit organization that does environmental things. We are on the border of Community Board 1 and Community Board 2, underneath the Queensbridge. We have a community scale composting site and have been there for 3 years. Before that we were in a different site under the Queensbridge for about 7 years. We process about 1.5 million pounds of food scraps in New York City. As some of you know some of the NYC composting was canceled at the beginning of COVID due to budget cuts. Supporters and residents rallied and got the City Council to fund 10% of the budget needed to continue the program through Discretionary Funding. It has stripped down the services, so we are basically just operating for composting sites and picking up what are now volunteer run food scrap drop offs throughout the City. We are now in a situation where the Parks Department is trying to evict us from their land. We are asking to be able to present our case to the Land Use Review Committee. We are also asking the Land Use Committee to help find a different place to have Parks Department park their vehicles and store their equipment.

The Chair, Marie Torniali asked him to put his information in the Chat.

Josephine Andolfi (Constituent) – Ongoing unresolved complaint regarding the bike lanes on Crescent Street.

Jennifer Lopez (Constituent) – New resident of Astoria complaining about the cars racing down Astoria Boulevard and extreme noise they cause.

Niamh Smyth, Sophomore; Housan Elroubi, Junior; Mia Giusiano, Junior; Ariana Tzanos, Sophomore; Ariba Azad, Sophomore; Karolina Klaudinowski, Junior and Madjola Ymeraja, Sophomore students from the Academy of American Studies shared their experiences at the school, expressed their appreciation for the Academy and all it offers. They voiced their gratitude for any intervention on behalf of Community Board 1 to assist in maintaining funds to assure the completion date of the new building for February 2022.

Antonella Di Saverio stated the kids are going from the smaller building to the old LIC building during their day. That is not very safe when they are crossing to switch from class to class. Is there anyway our Community Board can get them into that building sooner?

The Chair, Marie Torniali suggested to write a letter of support.

Mario D'Antoni (Constituent) - Complaint regarding the bike lanes on Crescent Street. Asking Department of Transportation and local officials to reassess it.

Jeremy Welsh-Love (Constituent) – Complaint regarding loud cars and asking the Transportation Committee to look into a solution.

Nichola Saunders/Billy's Galaxy Tab 56 (Constituent/Inaudible) - Complaint regarding Citi Bikes that are going to be installed on 43rd Street and 23rd Avenue. He also shared that he has petition letters to public officials as well as DOT and has not heard back from anyone. He is concerned about what would legally happen if there is a fatal accident.

Antoni K. (Constituent) – Complaint about the control of the barriers for time they are placed and removed on the 31st Street Open Street. He also complained about DOT not being present to hear complaints for the Citi Bikes and Open Street.

Max Nazario (Constituent) – Spoke in favor of the bike lanes on Crescent Street.

Steve F./Wife (Constituents) - Spoke against the Citi Bikes being placed on 43rd Street and 23rd Avenue and dangerous conditions it will create.

Justin Green, Executive Director, Big Reuse – Reiterated comments made by Gil Lopez from Big Reuse. Asking the Community Board to allow them to make a presentation to the Land Use & Zoning or the Environmental Protection Committees.

Rob (Constituent) – Acknowledged changes happening in the neighborhood with bicycles and scooters. He suggested placing registration, plates and insurance on all the bicycles and scooters as well as sending people for training much like you have to do for a driver's license.

Kate Peterson (Constituent) – Expressed on how she would like Community Board 1 to have a Sanitation Committee.

Noush (Constituent) – Complained about United Auto Body located at 42nd Street and Astoria Boulevard. There are many traffic violations taking place in this vicinity as well as being caused by the lack of management from this business. She has made calls to 311, 114th Precinct as well as the Board office. She is also concerned for the safety of the children that travel to P.S. 84.

The Chair, Marie Torniali thanked everyone for their comments, concerns and bringing issues to the Board's attention.

The Chairperson, Marie Torniali asked for a Motion to Adjourn

Motioned by Amy Hau; Seconded by Thomas Ryan

The Chair said thank you, see you in February. Wished everyone to stay safe and to wear a mask.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:00 p.m.

Who We Are

Meet the Team

Owner & Reps

Jerry Finkelstein (2nd Gen)
David Schiff (3rd Gen)
Jacob Entel (4th Gen)

Constantinople & Vallone

Lauren George
Perry Vallone

Architect

Gerry Caliendo

Akerman LLP

Steven Sinacori
Frank St. Jacques

2

Good evening, my name is Frank St. Jacques, I am an associate with Akerman LLP. I am joined several members of the project team. I will present the project and members of the team will be available for questions afterward.

**The Finkelstein Family has
been in Astoria for 100+ years,
over 6 generations.**

1919

3

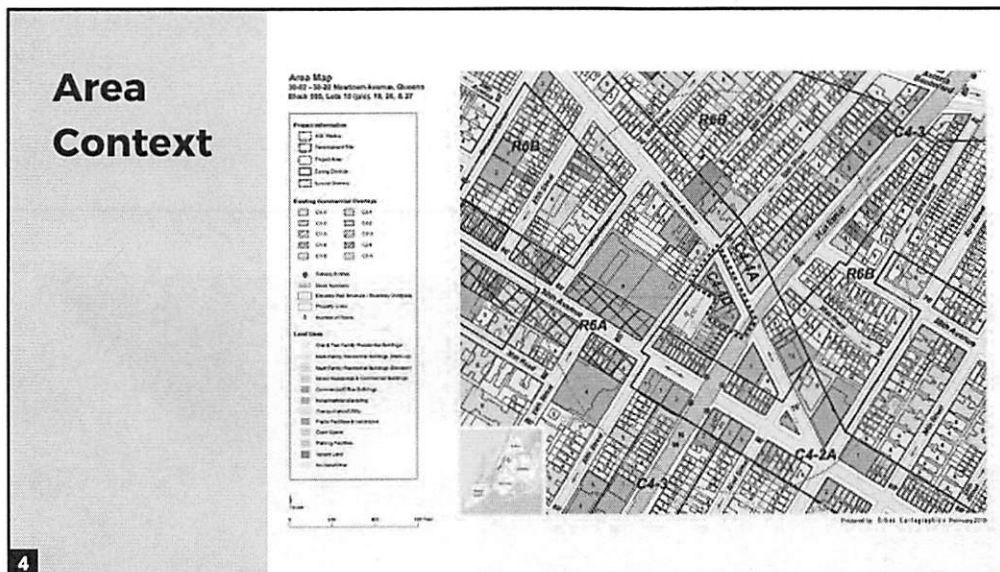
Max and Irving Finkelstein.



Jerry, Harold, and Irving Finkelstein.



The Finkelstein family has been in Astoria for over 100 years and have run their business from 30-02 Newtown Avenue since 1919. Every family member has grown up either working themselves or coming to work with their parents here. The family business is now on the fourth generation and excited they have the opportunity to grow and work on a project that benefits the communities and keeps the family part of the Astoria community.

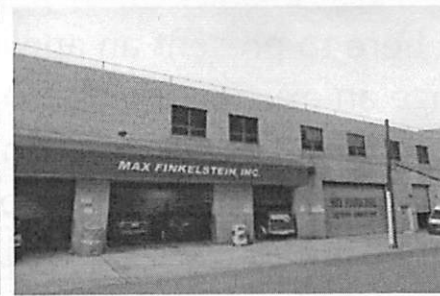
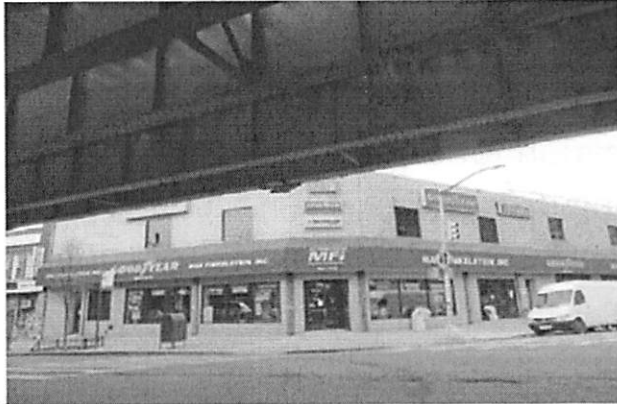


We are here to present an application for a zoning map amendment to change an existing C4-4A zoning district to a C4-4D zoning district and a zoning text amendment to establish the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing program or MIH within the rezoning area. The purpose of the zoning map and text amendments is to facilitate the redevelopment of an 30-02 Newtown Avenue located between 31st Street and 30th Street.

As shown on this area map, the Surrounding Area is a mix of residential (shown in yellow), commercial (shown in red), mixed residential and commercial (shown in orange) and community facility or institutional uses (shown in blue) with some industrial uses. The built context is also varied with both lower and higher density multi-family and commercial buildings surrounding the site.

The area is very well-served by public transportation, including the 30th Avenue N/W subway station at the intersection of 30th Avenue and 31st Street, as well as the Q18 and Q102 bus routes along 30th Avenue, one block south of the site.

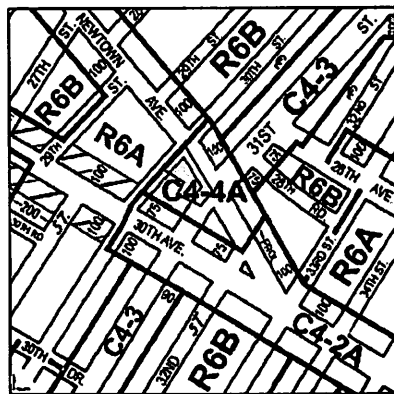
Today's Site Conditions



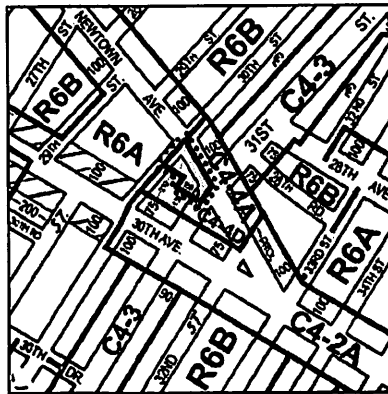
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These photographs show the site's current conditions. Due to the nature of the Max Finklestein Inc. tire business, this corner is not pedestrian friendly in contrast to the surrounding blocks that have more active local retail uses.

Zoning Change Map



Current Zoning Map (9a)



Proposed Zoning Map (9a) - Area being rezoned is outlined with dotted lines
Rezoning from C4-4A to C4-4D

The proposed rezoning is shown on the zoning change map - replacing the current C4-4A with a C4-4D district along Newtown Avenue between 31st Street and 30th Street.

The 2010 Astoria Rezoning mapped a C4-4A on portions of 4 blocks facing Newtown Avenue between 30th Street and 32nd Street. An Inclusionary Housing Designated Area was also mapped to encourage development of new market rate and affordable housing at this transit hub with an FAR bonus for providing Inclusionary Housing under the voluntary program.

This indicates that the City Planning Commission identified this as an area for growth with new development. However, over the past 10 years no new buildings have been developed within the C4-4A that utilize the Voluntary Inclusionary Housing Program. We note that the current C4-4A district allows an 8-story building as-of right.

Project Overview

11- and 6-STORY MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

The building consists of 104 units.

26 PERMANENTLY INCOME-RESTRICTED UNITS

MIH Option 1 brings deeper affordability to Astoria.

8,400 SF OF ACTIVE GROUND FLOOR RETAIL

Local retail brings an energetic boost and more jobs to the neighborhood.

2,031+ SF OF COMMUNITY FACILITY SPACE

Finkelstein family is working with stakeholders to find a user to benefit the neighborhood.



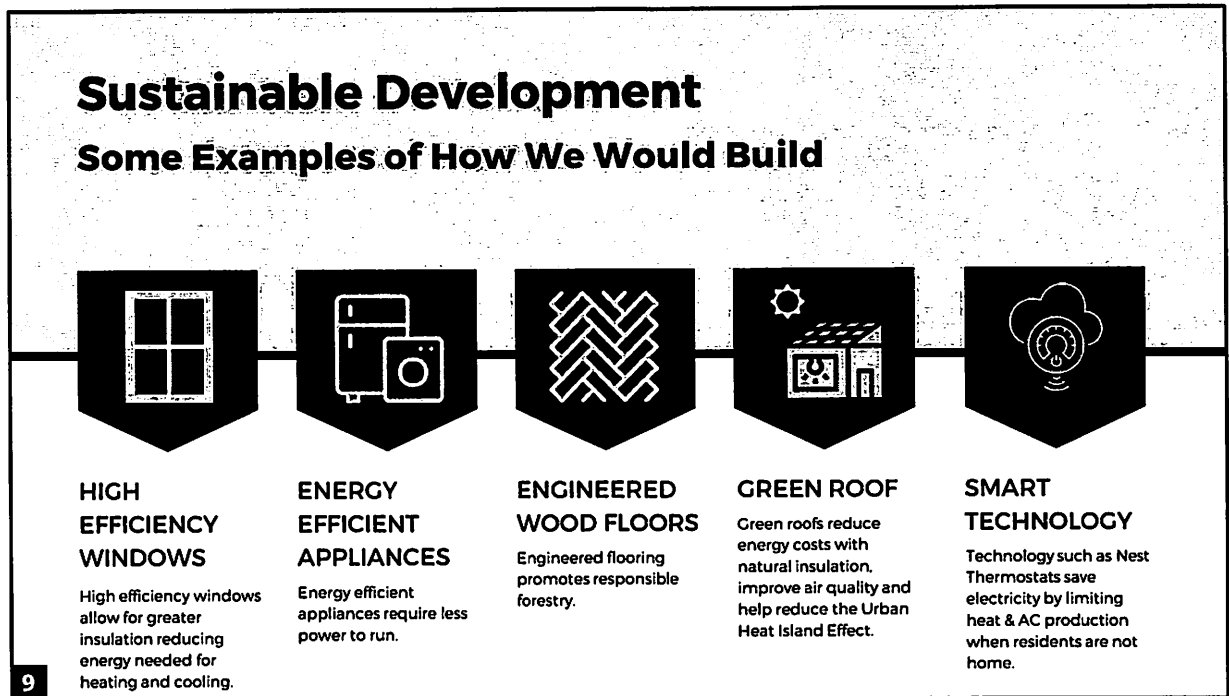
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The proposed rezoning would facilitate the development of an 11-story building with 104 apartments, including 26 permanently income-restricted units, and new ground floor commercial and community facility uses. Envision local retail similar to surrounding uses along 31st Street and are intalks to identify tenant for Community facility space.

The proposed rezoning would:

- activate and improve the streetscape on this corner and help stitch it into the surrounding blocks
- it also creates new income-restricted housing in Queens Community District 1, where, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 37.4 percent of households are rent burdened.

We note that that the community facility space was designed for the Astoria Performing Arts Center or APAC as a tenant. However, APAC's needs changed due to the pandemic and they decided to move to an existing space that became available in Long Island City. The applicant has continued to explore beneficial community facility uses for the space (*including performing arts space, non-profit offices, daycare*). Just this week, thanks to feedback from Community Board 1, the applicant has had preliminary conversations with an exciting potential non-profit tenant that provides support and affordable space for local independent theaters and performing artists to preserve the cultural life of NYC.



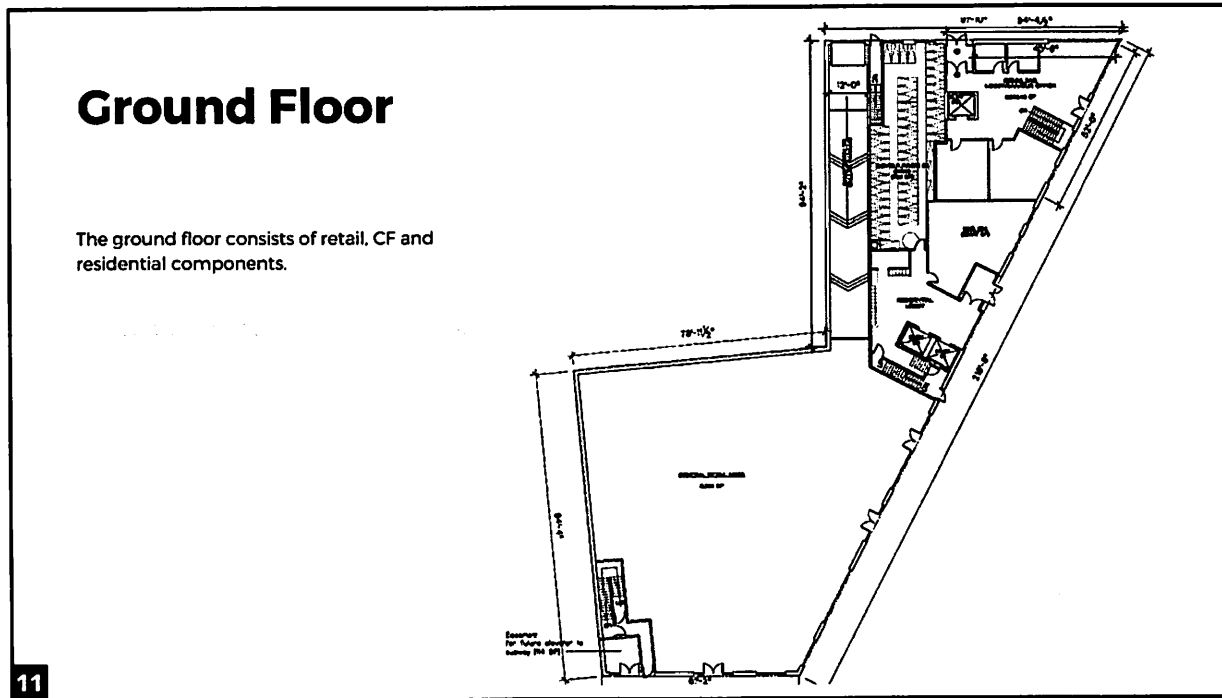
The applicant intends to incorporate several sustainability measures into the development including that will improve efficiency and reduce emissions.

The building will comply with all Building Code energy requirements and the Climate Mobilization Act requirements with respect to building emissions and providing a green roof.

Site Plan

Dual corner layout allows for a large footprint, which decreases the overall building height

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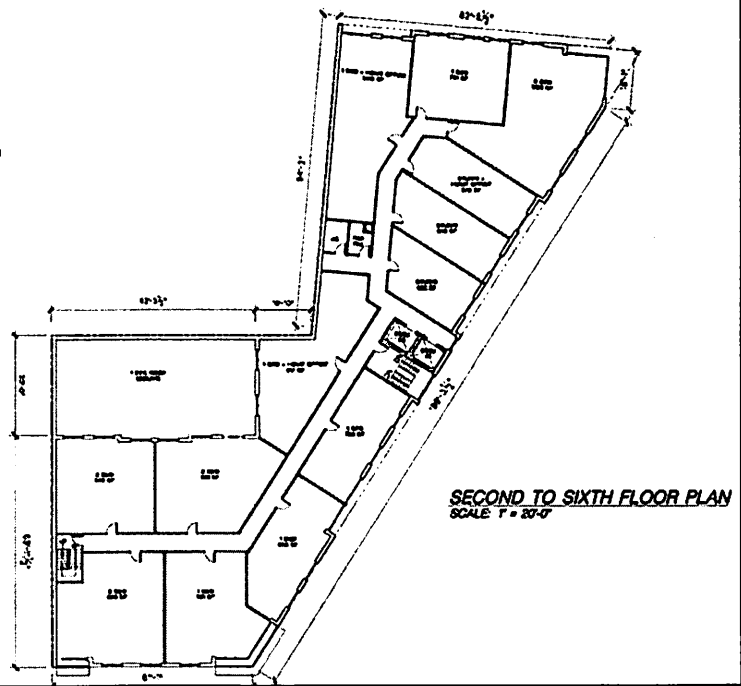


31st Street frontage and eastern portion of Newtown Avenue will be occupied by local retail uses. The residential lobby and a recreation room are midway between 31st and 30th Streets on Newtown Avenue. The Community facility portion is at the corner of Newtown Avenue and 30th Street. A large bicycle parking room and the ramp to the cellar parking are on 31st Street.

Sample Residential Floor

The typical residential floor plate provides a wide range of unit types.

ALL UNITS WITHIN THESE FLOORS ARE IDENTICAL

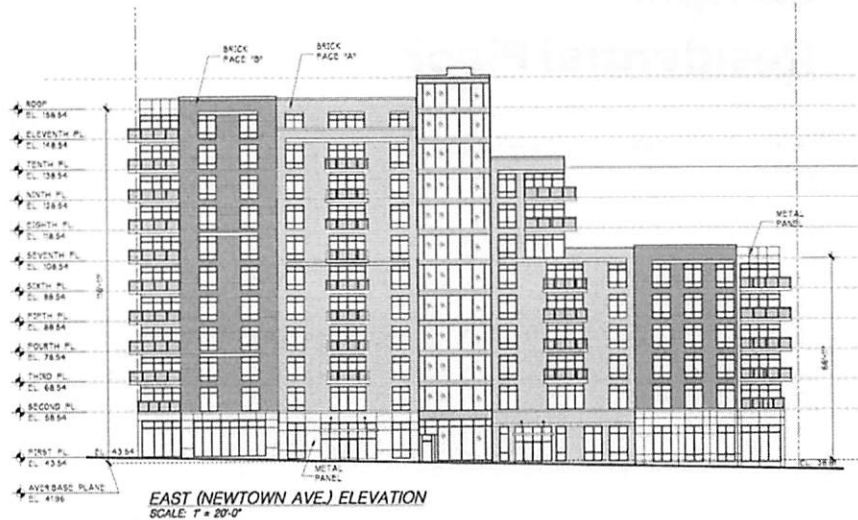


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The residential floors all have double loaded corridors with a mix of unit sizes.

Newtown Elevation

11 stories high on 31st Street,
stepping down to 6 stories
facing 30th Street.



13

This elevation drawing showing the Newtown Avenue façade of the building shows that height is concentrated at 31st Street, a wide street with elevated subway tracks, the building steps down to a height of nine stories then six stories on the western portion.

BIRDS EYE VIEW - FACING NORTHWEST



This illustrative rendering shows the building in the context of the surrounding neighborhood. You can see the elevated subway line and station along 31st Street and some of the precedent for height in the area.

31-19 Newtown Ave is 120 feet (10 stories)

30-15 Newtown Ave is 70 feet (6 stories) immediately north of site

26-80 30th Street is 77 feet (7 stories) to northwest of site

25-25 Newtown Ave is 104 feet (9 stories) just west of 28th Street (north side Newtown)

Hanac building to the north is 136 feet (15 stories)

27-18 HOYT AVENUE SOUTH adjacent to Hanac blg is 120 feet (11 stories)

**MIH OPTION 1
INCOME-
RESTRICTED
UNIT
BREAKDOWN**

Unit Size	Count	40% AMI	60% AMI	80% AMI
Studio	8	\$567	\$909	\$1,250
One-bedroom	7	\$717	\$1,143	\$1,570
Two-bedroom	6	\$854	\$1,366	\$1,878
Three-bedroom	5	\$978	\$1,570	\$2,161

Family Size	40% AMI	60% AMI	80% AMI
1	\$31,840	\$47,760	\$63,680
2	\$36,400	\$54,600	\$72,800
3	\$40,960	\$61,440	\$81,920
4	\$45,480	\$68,220	\$90,960
5	\$49,120	\$73,680	\$98,240
6	\$52,760	\$79,140	\$105,520

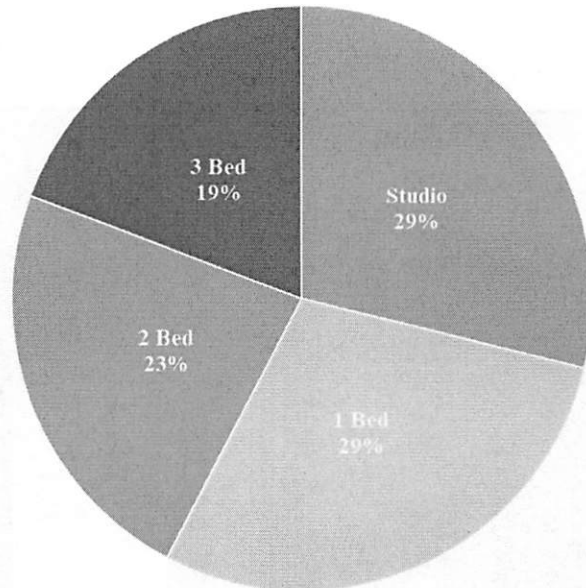
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This chart shows the unit breakdown and income limits for the 26 permanently income-restricted units required under Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Option 1. MIH Option 1 requires a weighted average AMI of 60% for 25% of the residential floor area.

Property Unit Mix

Residence Types

Unit Type	Units (MIH)	Percent
Studio	30 (8)	29%
1-Bed	30 (7)	29%
2-Bed	24 (6)	23%
3-Bed	20 (5)	19%
Total	104 (26)	100%



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The proposed development provides a good mix of unit types with

Studio (29%)

30 total 22 mkt 8 MIH

1 Bed (29%)

30 total 23 mkt 7 MIH

2 Bed (23%)

24 total 18 mkt 6 MIH

3 Bed (19%)

20 total 15 mkt 5 MIH

Total

104 78 mkt 26 MIH



These renderings show that the building steps down from the 31st Street frontage to the 30th Street frontage. The ground floor will be activated with new commercial and community facility use, improving the pedestrian experience along 31st Street, Newtown Avenue and 30th Street.

Newtown



Looking southwest this rendering shows the active ground floor and how the building steps down from 31st Street to 30th Street.