

Community Board 1, Queens – Board Meeting Minutes

October 10, 2019

Meeting opens with Chairperson, Marie Torniali at 6:30 p.m. – Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Chair, Marie Torniali introduced New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer.

Comptroller Scott M. Stringer – Stated that he has a few updates that are relevant to Astoria and the City. He started by sharing that his office released their retail vacancy report last week. The City now has 11 million square feet of vacant retail space, it is up 5.7 million since 2007. In the last 10 years vacant stores are throughout our communities. Rents are up by over 55% in Astoria, from the last few years. You see the correlation between rising rents and the crisis in terms with vacancies. This is playing out all over the City and stated he left copies of the reports. The decisions you make as a Community and a Community Board will matter, we have to start thinking about the Amazon effect on retail, why do we have stores that are vacant, retail space, how we are going to support businesses to actually come here and not get sacrificed by various city agencies. Also leaving a report called NYC under 3, it is his plan to build out a child care program for Children 0-3. Pre-k is a great success but 80% of brain development happens for children 0-3, he shared that he has introduced legislation to State Senator Jessica Ramos to call for a tax on the wealthiest companies of the City to fund childcare expansion around the city. Lastly, he spoke about lead paint and the scandal at NYCHA. He said they have also released an investigation showing that the Department of Health never shared vital information on the thousands of buildings that had lead paint in children and their buildings were never inspected by HPD. One agency was not talking to the other and now as a result, we have an additional 2,700 children that have lead poisoning.

Chair Torniali introduced the next speakers from Transportation Alternatives, Macartney Morris and Juan Restrepo.

Presentation:

Transportation Alternatives (TA) – North/South Bridge-to-Bridge Protected Bike Lane

Juan Restrepo, TransAlt Queens Organizer for Transportation Alternatives and said he was joined by Macartney Morris, Queens Committee Chair. He started by saying that they had a talk about a recent vote that Community Board 1 took at the Transportation Committee meeting which they attended. He said the Committee passed a resolution supporting a “North/South Protected Bridge-to-Bridge Bike Lane”. He said the Chair invited him to make the presentation. Mr. Restrepo stated he gave the Board a copy of the presentation on paper. He read the data in CB1 which is shown: 384 cyclists, 637 pedestrians and 2,375 motorists have been injured within a 3 year period. There is a crisis in terms of how safe it is to bike throughout the city. They have a plan called the Green Wave, it is how they can build out a fully protected bike network throughout the city. They have selected a street they feel would make the most sense to make a north/south bike lane which is on Crescent Street. They did a lot of polling within Astoria, the consensus was that they would like to see a protected bike lane on Crescent. Why a protected bike lane? It is to make streets safer for pedestrians, drivers and cyclists. It increases alternatives for people that cannot afford to drive, people that do not drive and do not want to drive, there are many statistics that you can review in the presentation. Why north/south? There are many amazing amenities that can be connected with the north/south lane. They want to connect people to work, to the bridges, to Astoria Park, to cultural amenities, to businesses and they want everyone to feel safe. Crescent Street feels like a highway, it does not feel like a residential road. There are people who live there, there are daycare centers and churches. A comprehensive street change can really make the street feel more livable neighborhood for everyone that lives here. They have over 2,000 petition signatures, and about 1,300 are from zip codes along Crescent Street, Ditmars, Astoria and Dutch Kills. There are plenty of supporters. They have support from most of the elected officials including: Council Member Constantinides, Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer, Assembly Member Simotas and Senator Gianaris. He stated that the Transportation Committee wants to see a protected bike lane going north/south bridge-to-bridge in Astoria. Mr. Restrepo said they welcome the Board to join them for a bike ride. He mentioned they have some free Citi Bike’s that they can lend out. It is a great opportunity to see what it is like for the constituents/residents that have to commute every single day. They would like to hear how they feel/like it if they have ideas/comments on how they can improve on it. This is the beginning of the process. Mr. Restrepo thanked the Chair, Marie Torniali as well as the District Manager, Florence Koulouris.

The Chair, announced that they can answer 3 questions from the Board.

Ann Bruno asked if he lives on Crescent Street.

Macartney Morris answered that he does.

Juan Restrepo answered that his parents live very close and that he grew up in Astoria.

Ann Bruno indicated that she lives on Crescent Street and that she is the President of the 114th Community Council. She shared that she has received many phone calls about the bicycle lane and no one wants it, it is terrible. The traffic on Crescent is horrendous, the ambulances cannot get through.

RoseMarie Poveromo stated that Crescent Street is a main drag not only to Mt. Sinai but to the Bridge. She asked how many parking spots have to be eliminated.

Marie Torniali, Chairperson indicated that DOT is currently doing a study to find out which route will be best for the community. They will also be doing public outreach in the late fall, early winter.

Macartney Morris stated he is a resident of Crescent Street. He said Crescent is crowded, congested, they have 2 lanes and is over built. He mentioned Miguel Hernandez an 88 year old senior citizen who lived in Astoria most of his life was killed on Broadway and Crescent in January and added that there have been about 7-8 people killed in the District.

Evie Hantzopoulos said everyone should keep an open mind. She said there is no proposal in front of us, there is a study that is going to be done. She shared that she is not a bike rider but that her daughter is and she is concerned for her safety. Ms. Hantzopoulos said she wants to know how people are getting from north to south.

Macartney Morris – Responded that many are using Crescent Street already and are using the Class 2 bike lane on 28th and 29th Streets. He said they are now being used, these lanes would be protected and she would be safe. Mr. Morris thanked everyone.

The Chair introduced the next item and announced that everyone has a copy of the presentation.

The District Manager indicated that there are 2 different documents, in the folder there is a Committee report with a letter for the Board Members and the presenters gave a print out of the PowerPoint to follow along.

Department of City Planning

C190267 ZMQ, 22-60 46th Street, Astoria - Presentation by Mega Realty Holding LLC/Pancyprian Association, Inc.

Ms. Nora Martins, Land Use Counsel, Akerman LLP – Ms. Martins stated she is representing this proposed rezoning in Astoria of block 769 which will make existing residential use development around the block conforming and will also facilitate the development of a new mix used building that includes affordable housing. Ms. Martins introduced Hercules Argyriou from Mega, the project developer.

Mr. Hercules Argyriou stated he is one of the partners of Mega. He stated they are in partnership with the Pancyprian Association which is a 45 year old Astoria based cultural organization and with Dattner Architects a leading firm in New York City with over 50 years of experience in residential and commercial projects. He said Mega has been in business for 30 years and successfully completed about 6,000 apartments, mostly affordable and over 75 buildings in New York City, many of them in Astoria including the HANAC building on 31st Street. He stated that representatives from the organizations are there to answer questions that anyone may have. He started by saying the site is surrounded by 46th Street Ditmars Boulevard, 45th Street and below 23rd Avenue. The actual site they are asking to rezone is on the corner of 46th Street and 23rd Avenue. Discussed the diagrams shown in the PowerPoint. He said they own the 46th Street warehouse shown in the diagram and it used to be their warehouse and offices. Mr. Argyriou said when they moved to the neighborhood, they thought it was an industrial neighborhood. He referred to the photos in the presentation where Schaller & Weber was located which the storage facility (CubeSmart) is now and where The Pistilli Manor is where the Sterns warehouse was located. It was very much an industrial area. He said when Pistilli came

in and they became a residential building they were left isolated and it was no longer industrial, they felt they were becoming a nuisance to the neighbors. They decided to move to a new home still in Community Board 1 on the other side of the highway with their own parking on the property. As soon as they moved out people offered to buy the property to build another storage facility. They felt that was not the best use for the neighborhood. They wanted to give some life to the area and develop a building and came up with this design to enhance the community with this theater for local organizations. A space that will be used occasionally for community purposes. They came up with the plan for the theater and residences above. They have been builders for 30 years, they work a lot with non-for-profit organizations, and they have made their name, reputation and stand behind their project. They are not going to put something on their property that will not fill them with pride and that would not make the community happy. Their immediate neighbors are actually very supportive of the project. He then turned it over to Nora Martins, Akerman to explain the zoning requirements.

Nora Martins, Akerman LLP - Started by indicating that the slide in front of them shows the existing developments. She thinks it is important to clarify that they are rezoning the entire block. The developments are 2 sites on the block, they are used for manufacturing use, and the remainder of the block is residential with a small commercial use, Joe's Garage Bar on the corner of 23rd Avenue and 45th Street. The presentation is the front of 45th and 46th Streets of the proposed development site which will be replaced by the proposed mix use development. She said the area map shows the proposed zoning, the current existing zoning is M1-1 for the southern portion of the site and R4 for the northern portion of the site where The Pistilli building is located. From the area map, this block seeking to rezone is overwhelmingly residential, The Pistilli building takes up more than ½ of the block, 200 units of housing, the remainder of the block is 1 and 2 family homes with 2 sites that are of the development site. The zoning change map illustrates the existing zoning on left and proposed zoning on the right, the existing zoning is R4 for 525 feet of the block and M1-1 is the remainder. The proposed zoning working closely with the Department of City Planning identified zoning that made sense for the existing development to legalize existing non-conforming residential uses and also to make The Pistilli building more complying with zoning, it is currently zoned R4 but it is overbuilt so they are vamping an R6 zoning district which makes The Pistilli building more complying but does not allow additional development on that site. They are mapping an R4 on the southern end of the site which matches the existing 1-2 family residential developments without redevelopment of those sites and then mapping a commercial overlay from 275 feet in from 23rd on 45th Street. The reason they only mapped the commercial overlay along that frontage is because there is existing commercial use on the corner and the LaGuardia Shopping Center across the street, so there is that commercial context on 45th Street and does not exist on 46th Street. In addition to the rezoning action, the other land use action they are seeking is a Text Amendment to map a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) designated area. This would require that any residential development in the future in the rezoned area complies with the city's MIH program which is a permanent affordability program. They are mapping 2 different affordability options, Option 2 which requires 30% of the floor area at an average of 80% AMI also the Workforce Housing Option which requires 30% of the residential floor area be permanently affordable at an average of 115% AMI and has further breakdowns in there 5% at 70% AMI, 5% at 90% AMI and the remainder cannot exceed 135% AMI, can be somewhere in between. The applicant is proposing the Workforce Housing Option which is a moderate income option. They want to make it clear they are mapping both options. Either of them is permitted, should the action be approved. One of the reasons the applicant is proposing the Workforce Housing Option is based on some analysis of the incomes in the area although the median household income in Astoria in general is approximately \$60,000 per household that does include 5 of the city's largest NYCHA developments. The AMI for the Census tract which is a smaller area that the project is located in has a median household income closer to \$70,000 which is approximately 70% AMI important to note nearly 60% of the population in the Census tract makes between \$47,000 - \$163,000 per household in income which is the broad range of incomes that the Workforce Housing would serve. Turning it over to Mr. Emanuel Kokinakis to discuss the proposed development that would be facilitated by the rezoning and the Workforce Housing.

Mr. Emanuel Kokinakis – Stated he would be going into more detail about the proposed project. It is a single building, it will have 2 sections, residential sections above a common base, the base will include a parking garage, the community facility, theater, mechanical spaces for the residential above rising 6 stories above the common base for residential and setting back going up and additional 2 stories which is a total of 8 story building of residential. He stated they had multiple meetings with the Land Use Committee and got very valuable feedback, so their initial proposal included 135 units initially and that is a lot of the information people received. We heard the Land Use Committees concerns about the desire to have family units which now they eliminated all studios and now only have 1/2/3 bedroom units, it is about 60% 2-3 family units and down to 88 total units, of the total amount, 28 will be affordable for the Workforce Housing. The building amenities include a fitness center, residents lounge, player room, party room, office center and landscaped terraces. They will be working with 32BJ for the building services employees

of the project. The project will also include 6,300 square feet of commercial space along 45th Street. It will be next door to Joe's Garage Bar and across the street of the LaGuardia Shopping Center which has a pharmacy, a supermarket and other uses. Important to note that they like to put complimentary residential uses and community uses in their retail space. They developed a site off of Broadway and 31st Street and their tenants there are Orangetheory Fitness, a daycare center, a pediatrician's office as well as a dental office. These are the types of retail uses they will be targeting for the retail space here. It will be a complimentary community use for this location. Given the change in the unit mix going from 135 to 88 units their initial proposal for 105 parking spots got reduced to 70. By zoning they are required to only provide 40 spots, they are providing 70. Again, responding to the Land Use Committee being that parking is a major consideration they will also have the community theater that will need additional parking. The parking will be attended and open to the public and offer discounted rates to the building residents so that they have the incentive to park within the building as opposed to parking on the street. The cultural component to the project is the 250 seat community theater, the entrance will be off of 46th Street, the theater is 11,000 square feet, and they are designing it in such a way that it will have a wide host of uses - recitals, dance exhibits, film festivals, and theatrical performances, as well as hosting art exhibitions in the foyer area. It will be operated by the Pancyprian Association of America, they have been in Astoria for over 45 years and are currently located on 31st Street. On a weekly basis, 3 main groups will utilize the space, a theater dance and choir group use it 3 times a week from 7-9pm with about 20 children, they have about 4 main large events a year. The theater has typically 2 main performances a year and they typically rehearse 2 times a week in the months leading up to the performances. The Pancyprian Association will make the space available to other local organizations to utilize. Many groups have expressed interest in utilizing the space and many local schools that have theater programs that expressed an interest as well. The other feedback from the Land Use Committee is the parking on the nights where they have major performances for the Pancyprian Association. They have reached out to local stakeholders that have large parking lots for example CubeSmart and The Pistilli building to arrange for a valet system on those specific nights. The unit mix was discussed, what they proposed: 60% studios, 30% 1 bedrooms and a small portion of 2 and 3 bedrooms and now they have reduced it, which now it is: 60% 2-3 bedrooms and 40% 1 bedrooms, it is certainly more of a family mix. The units are going to be 70% AMI, 90% AMI and 135% AMI, this is the Workforce Option, this is not a typical rezoning option that is given to a project, and typically they grant Option 1 and 2 which have lower affordability levels. The reason they are proposing the Workforce Option is because they are providing a fully built out theater and at an extremely discounted rate to a local not-for-profit so they need to offset the cost and loss of income from that community space with a higher tier of affordable units. They feel, however, the affordability within these levels are well needed, will be well absorbed, 60% of the residents fall within these income tiers, they do cater to a wide range of income levels starting with \$46,000 to households of up to \$163,000. This is middle class housing for families. Households with dual incomes are not going to be disqualified and will not be over the income limits, they will qualify for these units. The administrating agent for the project is going to be HANAC. HANAC will also manage the lottery process so the lottery will have a 50% preference for local community board members, of the 28 units, 14 must come from the local community board. This is a rendering of the proposed project. He said their architect is Mike, from Dattner Architects. They gave them the direction to make sure this building is as contextual as possible, obviously given the homes and the character of the neighborhood they want it to blend in and not stick out/too modern out of place type of looking building. He shared they used a mix of red brick and put some artistic aesthetic creating a basket weave to the facade to give it some elegance. There are multiple sustainability features that are going to be part of the project, for the HVAC they are going to use a DRF system, those are the cassettes, on the roof. They are highly energy efficient, for the summertime. Every unit will have an energy efficient washer/dryer as well as all the affordable units. There will be LED lighting throughout the building with occupancy sensors for water, plumbing fixtures and also floatable tanks on the roof. Another component from the Land Use Committee is to create more public green space, so what they did from their initial proposal, they set it back 10 feet from the property line so they have wide sidewalks in front and an additional 10 feet further back, they will be in line with neighboring houses as well as The Pistilli building they have lawn in front of the parking structure. They will be able to have a front yard, they will have it landscaped and have benches that will be publicly accessible. They are going to propose a very senior friendly design to the building. They will have a total of 5 elevators, 4 for residential use, 1 for the community theater, 3 of them will be in compliance. All the units will ADA adaptable. 4 of the units will be constructed especially for mobility impaired individuals. 2 of the units will be constructed for the visual and hearing impaired individuals. He demonstrated a view of the courtyard that stands in-between the 2 buildings. Another large component was greenspace. The 2nd floor courtyard that is over the parking and theater space will be fully landscaped and available for the residents to use, they see it as a good gathering center for families and seniors as well. The 2 rooftops on either side will be landscaped and accessible to the residents, the 3 rooftops will be greenspaces. To the southwest, the heights of the building rise approximately 65 feet to the setback floor, then they rise another 2 feet at the street line, a portion of the building at the street line does rise to 85 feet, the majority is setback 15 feet off of the street line to go to the 85 feet full height. The Pistilli

building is at the street line and rises 70 feet. Both sides is 65 feet and rising to 85. Pistilli is 70, their front entrance on Ditmars is about 90, and their highest point goes about 95-100 feet with the mechanical bulk heads which are not visible, located in the back. They are in the ULURP process, they were certified in late August. This is the first step in the ULURP process if all is approved at the community board level, they hope to start construction in the spring of next year. It takes approximately about 2 years to construct the building and then 6 months prior to the completion of the construction they would start the marketing of the lottery process. They have done a great deal of community outreach and getting feedback about the project. They have over 1,000 petitions signed for the project from local neighbors and community members and received letters of support from other local cultural groups that are considering using the theater space including the Bangladeshi Institute, the Queens Chamber of Commerce, the Greek-American Homeowners Association and the Ecuadorian-American Cultural Center. They made it a point to make their immediate neighbors on the block aware of what they plan on doing and answering any questions and concerns that they may have to date. Their responses have been relatively positive. They have reached to the local schools, P.S. 84 and I.S. 141 about teaming in and about them using their theater space, they understand they have a theater program and do not have a home to have performances. They have floor plans if anyone would like to review. Mr. Kokinakis concluded the presentation.

The Chair thanked him and turned it over to the Land Use & Zoning Chairs Elizabeth Erion or Gerry Caliando for any clarifications or questions.

Elizabeth Erion asked them to clarify the commercial overlay, does it extend to the building on 45th Street.

Mr. Kokinakis responded it is from the corner of 45th Street and 23rd Avenue, it extends over Joe's Garage which is 100 feet and their project which is another 175 and that is where it ends.

Elizabeth Erion commented, so it covers the ground floor of the building on 45th Street.

Mr. Kokinakis responded, correct.

Elizabeth Erion asked if they had fully informed the Borough President's office and City Planning about these changes they are proposing.

Nora Martins, Akerman – She said the changes they are proposing are all to the designing program of the proposed building which are not subject to the land use approval process. They have not proposed any changes to the proposed zoning district or to the MIH designation text amendment. Obviously, they will present, these changes as they continue through the process with the Borough President and with City Planning. They are not proposing any changes to the actions that are before you.

Elizabeth Erion said that they understand what the actions were and the design is not within purview of City Planning but as a courtesy to know what their intentions are.

Nora Martins responded this has been a work in progress up through yesterday as they were preparing for the meeting and they just met with the Land Use Committee last week. There are representatives from the Queens Borough President's office as well as City Planning so they will definitely be sharing with them the outcome of this meeting.

Gerry Caliando commented his concern and question is about the theater, relative to the number of people attending at one time for these events and how they will handle the parking. He said at the Land Use Committee meeting they mentioned that they would be reaching out to Pistilli and possibly to the storage facility to have valet parking and use their facilities on their off hours. Have they given you any feedback or a letter of commitment?

Mr. Kokinakis - Responded they do not have any letters at this time but they are open to discussion. They have reached out to other groups and they seemed interested but could not commit until this process has reached a conclusion.

Gerry Caliando responded that he hopes they understand their concern with the one family homes across the street, on the block and around the block, how a large group of cars come in one time for an event and how it will be disbursed and the traffic control. It is a major concern.

Mr. Kokinakis responded it is an absolute concern of theirs, they will address it. To find an offsite source is critical to the function of the theater space otherwise it would not be viable. That is a solution they intend and will resolve.

Andy Aujla commented that he is very interested in this project because he lives close by. He said that he knows The Pistilli building has units for sale. Asked if there is any type consideration making this building not just rental units but also condos for sale.

Mr. Kokinakis responded they are not opposed to it but they are proposing it to be a rental building at this time.

Richard Khuzami asked, is it possible to go over the actual uses, viable now and if for some reason it is not approved what can go into that space.

Mr. Kokinakis responded it is currently zoned M1-1, there are 2 existing warehouses there could be industrial uses that could happen. He referred to a list, use groups for community facility uses for example: churches, medical facilities, retail and commercial uses and manufacturing uses such as woodworking shops, self-storage facility, repair shops, general retail eating and drinking establishments, commercial office, medical offices, homeless shelters and houses of worship.

Dominic Stiller confirmed it is on a R4 zone for the majority of the property, correct.

Mr. Kokinakis responded, no.

Dominic Stiller asked is the M1 in the 350 dimension line you have R4 on the entire East side of the block.

Mr. Kokinakis responded R4 extends for The Pistilli building, the existing 1-2 family homes on the block are zoned M1-1. Those homes cannot be rebuilt as residential.

Dominic Stiller asked where is the R4 that you put in the proposal that you are changing in item 1.

Mr. Kokinakis responded along 23rd Avenue 100 feet off of 45th Street and 125 feet off of 46th Street, the existing homes.

Dominic Stiller asked if they are offering 60% to affordable housing.

Mr. Kokinakis said it is 30%.

Loren Amor indicated he also lives nearby so he has great interest in this development. In regards to him mentioning the parking for the community theater but he also mentioned providing a discount for the residents of the facility. One of the main concerns for people who live in the area is that they will not use the parking and take up spaces in the street which are already scarce. Do you have any specifics about the parking?

Mr. Kokinakis responded what they typically do when they have a 3rd party operator which they don't have any interest at this time but may have a manager, they would dictate a discount of 25% for residents. It would be an attended parking lot so it has high operating costs so having it vacant is not of interest as land owner because they do have to pay an attendant regardless of the occupancy so if they have to drop prices to fill it up, they will.

Loren Amor asked 25% off what?

Mr. Kokinakis responded the market parking in the area is about \$200 a month for off street interior covered parking.

Hannah Lupien said she lives in The Pistilli building and they charge \$300 a month, she does not use it and parks in the street.

Rudy Sarchese – Read his statement denouncing the project (**document attached**).

Nora Martins – Thanked him for his testimony and they understand the concerns of the homeowners. She indicated she is pointing out that on this block they are placing manufacturing use with a residential building, the majority of

the block is The Pistilli building which is not 1 or 2 family homes. The proposed use is more compatible with the existing residential nature of the block which they recognize it is a residential block, there are 2 manufacturing sites that they are rezoning and proposing to build residential are more compatible.

Mr. Kokinakis stated that the warehouse does not belong there and agrees with that it is a residential neighborhood which is why they are proposing the project. He added that he is excited to hear the local residents, he understands their concerns, people that live on the block have safety concerns, and it is desolate at night, not well lit, no occupancy at night, not a safe area.

Evie Hantzopoulos said she had a question about the MIH and the rents with the Workforce Option which was chosen or Option 2, it would be 30%, let's talk about the 70% of the non-affordable which is not affordable at all. What will be the going rate for a 2 bedroom?

Mr. Kokinakis responded they will be marketing this project in about 2 years, roughly they expect something in the range of \$3,500 for a 2 bedroom.

Evie Hantzopoulos said so that is actually lower than what they are charging at Astoria Central now, the other project that they have. There I see you are charging \$3,900-\$4,000 for a 2 bedroom.

Mr. Kokinakis responded it is a different location.

Evie Hantzopoulos she stated there are 28, required by law, affordable housing units, 18 of them will be at 135% of the Area Median Income (AMI). Basically, most of the units that are required to be affordable are going to be greater than the AMI. It seems like it is going to be pretty close to what the market rate is going to be. Why can't you go to Option 1? What is being built now in Astoria is either as of right or through rezoning is more than what the community can afford. I know you say 60% of the people, the residents, they fit within these income tiers, I am thinking of the people who are priced out. There is a lot being built for people of middle income and upper income. Actually, even the people of middle income are being priced out because this is not affordable to them. Why can't you go to Option 1 and actually build something that is completely lacking here in Astoria in terms of all the development that is going on. I know you said because you are building a theater. She does want the Pancyprian Theater, it is a good thing for the community and is not opposing it. The real need here in Astoria is affordable housing, not luxury housing. Why can't you do better in that respect, particularly, because you have built other buildings maybe there has been 100% affordable housing? Why can't we do that here?

Mr. Kokinakis responded it is a great question. This is not a publicly financed project, it is fully privately financed, private equity, and it is not tax payer's dollars going into it.

Evie Hantzopoulos said she wouldn't mind some public dollars going to building affordable housing.

Mr. Kokinakis said they have built a lot of affordable housing and have built affordable housing in Astoria. The income levels, if they had another site that had greater bulk, they may be able to accommodate it, but on this site given it is only 88 units and the fact they have the theater component, it makes the project financially infeasible to have Option 1.

Mitchell Waxman said his question involves the transit scenario, the Q69 bus on Ditmars. He said in the paperwork they describe as a .7 mile, 15 block trip to 31st Street. What is the nature of the Q69 bus as far as being a 24 hour service, what frequency does it run on weekends and so on.

Mr. Kokinakis said it was a great question but does not have that answer on hand of how the bus runs. He knows it runs along Ditmars and goes to 31st Street.

Vanessa Jones-Hall stated a lot of times with the affordable developments they have found out that a lot of the residents when the leases are up their rent goes up and they are not able to stay there. A lot of developers come in and she hardly ever hears people speak about the infrastructure. The developers come in and they include themselves in the water system, electricity and in a lot of things, the system is very old and no one is looking at trying to bringing it up to par. They have a very big problem with Con Ed already, not being able to sustain what is going on in Astoria. Astoria had a big blow out recently. The concern is that every time a new development comes on site they tap in to

the system but never mention how they are going to improve it. We have been bombarded not just with residential developments/buildings but also hotels and no one talks about how they are going to improve that, it needs to be addressed because every time someone comes in the problems increase, everyone is blaming Con Ed but the developers should also be blamed, not looking on how this affects everyone that are using the same supply and it should be looked at.

Mr. Kokinakis he said it is a great point. The way the buildings are currently built any water that drops on the site goes directly into the sewer system. They will have on site, a detention tank, any ground water that flows onto the building during rain events will be maintained within the building structure for 30 minutes and then goes slowly into the local sewer supply, it is an improvement to the existing condition related to sewer and runoff. As far as the electricity, they do have existing manufacturing uses that have high electrical outlets existing. They go for CB new use. They had Schaller & Weber up the street that had a lot of refrigeration, highly electrically intense within that area because of the food preparation but no longer there. They feel there is ample electricity on the block. They have to submit a load letter to Con Ed. Against their belief there is not sufficient load Con Ed has to improve and increase the service to the block and will benefit the whole block.

Eddie Cadiz questioned, when toilets flush it is not running water, it is using flushing water. Then you have people from the apartments as well as the private homes flushing at the same time you are not taking care of the sewer you are making it worse. In the Bronx, he visited a site just like this project, beautiful and is now a homeless shelter because they could not get enough people to rent. Like all the hotels in Long Island City, a 1/3 rooms are homeless shelters. If you cannot get it rented, can it become a homeless shelter?

Mr. Kokinakis stated this is a residential building. Under the existing zoning, a homeless shelter is as of right. A homeless shelter under the M1 zone is as of right, it does not require any community board approval. We don't have interests in renting to formerly homeless individuals at this location. They do a lot of affordable housing in support of housing throughout the city and are very familiar with the process. This is a rental building for permanent residents.

Daniel Aliberti said they originally were going to have 135 apartments and with the modifications made they are now going to have 88 apartments and sees they are willing to make changes/cooperate with the community. The zoning change is not a part of the apartments, if they do not get the zoning they are requesting what is Plan B, what would they do?

Mr. Kokinakis responded, they would sell the properties.

Daniel Aliberti asked who would be a potential buyer.

Mr. Kokinakis responded there is a wide range of uses that would have the warehouse from the development perspective, from his own perspective, the redevelopment opportunities for this site are a storage facility, a homeless shelter or someone would use it under its existing structure for a warehouse manufacturing use.

Daniel Aliberti asked if he has spoken to anyone about it, just in case.

Mr. Kokinakis said they had storage facilities interested for the site.

Antonella Di Saverio stated she knows they are certified for Option 2. How much less would the rents be if they chose Option 2?

Nora Martins responded that Option 2 is the same amount of floor area. At an average of 80% AMI. A 1 bedroom at 80% AMI would be \$1,600 a month, a 2 bedroom would be \$1,900 and a 3 bedroom would be \$2,200.

Marie Torniali, Chairperson asked if any other board member wanted to ask any other questions/comments. She indicated that Thomas Ryan would be calling out the names on the list of people/constituents that want to speak pro/con on the project/development. Unfortunately, not everyone will be speaking/commenting due to the amount of people.

Speakers: Public Comment on the Project

Al Rizzo, Resident of Astoria, Member of Astoria Homeowners Association - Spoke *against* the project describing concerns with over population, infrastructure and traffic.

Eleni Maroulleti, has 2 cultural organizations for over 30 years - Spoke *in favor* of the project describing benefits to the community and the arts.

Tony Mazzara, President of the Astoria Homeowners, Tenants and Business Association – Spoke *against* the project describing concerns of infrastructure and the building is too big for this residential neighborhood.

Kyriakos Papastyliaou, President, Cypress Federation (representing 28 Chapters) – Spoke *in favor* of the project discussing benefits to the community and the need for a community theatre.

Luigi Farina, Executive Chairman, Astoria Homeowners, Tenants and Business Association - Spoke *against* the project noting that homeowners in the neighborhood area are opposed.

Philip Christopher, President of Pancypriot Association – Spoke *in favor* of the project discussing benefits to the community noting that 80% of his members live in Astoria.

Elizabeth Finnerty – Spoke *against* the project, concerned about Impending gas supply and usage how will it factor in, I am curious.

Theana Iordanou, born in Astoria and has a daughter that lives in the community - Spoke *in favor* of the project discussing benefits to the community.

Frank Scavetta, Born in Astoria, raising his family here and has multiple homes within 100 feet of the project - Spoke *in favor* of the project discussing benefits to the community.

John Cilanto, lives close to the project and longtime resident - Spoke *against* the project describing that it will no longer feel like the same neighborhood, we don't need an 8 story building.

Tatiana Constantinople, Speaking (Testimony) on behalf of her neighbor Eddie Masterson, lives next door to the proposed development (20+ years) - Spoke *in favor* of the project discussing benefits to the community.

Peter Podaras, has lived here for 53 years - Spoke *against* the project describing that it will ruin the neighborhood.

Phytos Stratis, Artistic Director and Music Director of the choir at the Pancypriot Association - Spoke *in favor* of the project discussing benefits to the community.

Joanna Tetra, Lifelong resident and Teacher in the community – Spoke *in favor* of the project discussing its potential as a long term investment and jobs.

Selima Ashret, Member of the Bangladesh Performing Arts and Cultural Group - Spoke *in favor* of the project discussing benefits to the community and the arts for future generations.

Charles Sciberria – Spoke *against* the project, their 31st Street building outside investor. Do you think they will keep it? Build it and then sell because if this is what you do, it is malarkey.

Plinia Sarchese, lives on 49th Street for 22 years - Spoke *against* the project describing detriments to the community.

Following is a synopsis of comments *in favor*:

- Arts/Culture
- Neighbors/Community
- Nice Looking Building

- Good Landlord
- Parking a lot Cheaper than Pistilli Parking Fee
- Theater mainly benefits the children/women/families
- Keeping the Families/Community Together
- Improves the Economy
- Benefits the Schools in the Area

Following is a synopsis of comments against:

- Building too big for the Community's layout
- Building too tall/height of 8 stories does not fit
- Infrastructure: Sewers, Electricity, etc.
- Overcrowding
- Parking
- Mass Transportation Impact
- Traffic
- Prices/Very Expensive Rent

Marie Torniali, Chairperson asked the public for a show of hands in favor or opposed to the project.

The Chairperson announced that a visual count indicated that approximately 60 were opposed and 30 in favor. The Chairperson then announced they were closing the hearing and the Land Use and Zoning Committee would have a Breakout Session, they will come back with their decision or recommendation.

Land Use and Zoning Committee Breakout Session

Elected Officials/Representatives:

Joe Nocerino, Community Coordinator, Queens Borough President's Office – Borough President, Melinda Katz sends her regards. Announced that it is a shame that the room did not stay as full as it was before because the 50 Board Members who sit there that volunteer day in and day out their time to give the community their services and the life that they live sometimes goes unappreciated as well as to the Chairwoman and the District Manager. He then announced the Service Awards for: Rose Anne Alafogiannis, 15 years; Rodolfo Sarchese, 20 years and Jose Batista, 25 years. Mr. Nocerino also announced a Veteran's Day service at Borough Hall on November 7th at 11 a.m., please RSVP. He thanked everyone.

The Chair, Marie Torniali asked for a Motion to adopt the September 2019 Minutes.

Motioned by Dino Panagoulas; Seconded by Vanessa Jones-Hall

The Chair and the District Manager waived their reports in the essence of saving time.

Committee Reports:

Marie Torniali Chairperson said it was time for Committee reports and they would start with the Land Use & Zoning Committee and introduced Elizabeth Erion and Gerry Caliendo, Co-Chairs.

Elizabeth Erion, Co-Chair started by saying that they have spent hours of discussion on this project prior to tonight but because they were getting all of the information at the last minute and the summer months, they did not have time to review it right away. She said the committee has a recommendation. Ms. Erion said the Committee recommends there be a motion to disapprove the project unless they meet the conditions that have been outlined, that follow with respect to the zoning district. They support R4 zoning district that is being proposed to bring everything to conformance, however, they believe that they should reduce the height of the building to reflect the surrounding, the residential context and excluding The Pistilli building from being considered as contextual, consider using the lower zoning district, also consider redesigning the building so that it is not high to reflect the surrounding context. The other point with regard to the zoning is that the height is set back of the front wall and should not exceed 6 stories with

no penetration of the street wall. The second application for the text amendment which is the MIH Option selection, they support Option 1 with 30% of the AMI, they do not want the Workforce Proposal. The other conditions would be regarding the density, to limit the number of units to no more than 88, the unit mix to be provided would be comprised of no studios, 40% - 1 bedroom, 42% - 2 bedroom and 18% - 3 bedroom as outlined in the applicants letter. With regard to open space, providing landscape for public use and pass of open space, with regard to parking, we support a preset the number of spaces within the building to avoid attended parking if possible and also to provide discounted rates for the tenants as well as validation for any attendees of the theater performances. With regard to the theater use, we support limiting the theater use and rental of the theater to non-profit community and cultural groups so that would be considered. The recommendation is to disapprove of this application unless these conditions are met.

She stated if you are in support of these conditions, you will vote, yes.

Chair Torniali clarified if you are voting yes, you are voting to disapprove the application unless the conditions of the Chair of the Committee are met.

The Chair said this is a roll call vote.

Elizabeth Erion Motioned; Seconded by Gerry Caliendo

The Chair asked if they have any discussion on this motion.

Antonella Di Saverio asked for clarification if there will be 88 units and a proposed decrease in height, would it not make it less units.

Dominic Stiller commented she said we are supporting R4.

Elizabeth Erion responded that there is a component in the rezoning where they are putting R4, where there is existing residential, it would support it and it would bring those units into conformance. She said that they don't support R4 for the whole thing, just for that portion of the proposal.

George Alexiou said there is confusion, and asked did they ask the builder.

Marie Torniali, Chairperson responded that the Community Board is voting on the application as they presented it, after, they can decide if they want to follow the recommendation.

Elizabeth Erion stated she was going to clarify that what they are voting on is the zoning district that they requested which is a small portion of an R4 along 23rd Avenue and a larger portion of an R6A which is mid-block and a small portion of a lot which is covered by a C2-3 that is one part, the other is the MIH Option that will determine the income levels that are eligible to live in the affordable units. The things in discussion, a lot of it are not part of what City Planning will do, they do not design the building, they do not say how many units are going to be in it, they just have an overall zoning that dictates how big the building can be. In this case, we are saying we do not want it this big, we would like a cap on it and we don't want it going up to 80 feet at one point in the center, on the side street (narrow street). These are recommendations we are making because these issues will come up when it goes to the Borough President's Office and when it goes to the City Council, most of it will be determined at the Council level, we are just looking at the zoning that is being requested and the type of MIH option that is being used.

Rodolfo Sarchese stated the most the community wants to accept is 4 stories high. The height is the problem.

Evie Hantzopoulos stated that these are just plans. Even if the Board approves the plans, they can completely change the design of the building, change the distributions. Things they cannot change are the zoning and the MIH option. These plans are not binding anyway, if the Board approves them.

Elizabeth Erion said this is something that becomes binding when they go to the Council. The Council can make these suggestions.

The Chair reiterated these are the Board's recommendations for this project.
Nancy Silverman calls the question to a vote.

Rod Townsend asked if a yes vote is in support of the recommendation made by the Land Use Committee and what does a no vote indicate?

Chair Torniali said that a yes vote indicates we disapprove (not support the application) unless those conditions are met.

Elizabeth Erion said the motion on the table is to disapprove unless the following conditions are met.

The Chair said if you vote yes you are supporting the motion of the Land Use Committee and a no means you are not supporting the recommendation, you are opposing the recommendation.

Elizabeth Erion said if this motion gets defeated then you can make another motion.

Roll call made by Jean Marie D'Alleva

Motion carried: 21 in favor; 12 against; 1 abstained for cause

The Chair thanked everyone for their hard work.

Andy Aujla, Chair, Consumer Affairs Committee – Announced that he was making his own motion that they approve of the stipulations per the spreadsheet that is in everyone's folder.

Motioned by Vanessa Jones-Hall; Seconded by Nancy Silverman

Elizabeth Erion, Co-Chair, Land Use & Zoning Committee – She stated there is one more item in the folders she would like the Board to support, a letter to the Landmarks Preservation Commission for repairs to the Queens Clock Tower Building (the four clock faces) located at 29-27 41st Avenue. She said this is a hand vote, this is not a ULURP, and the Board has to vote. Motion carries; Seconded by Nancy Silverman; 1 Opposition

Antonella Di Saverio, Chair, Environmental Protection Committee – She announced they are having a meeting on the 17th, the guests are DEP and someone from the Mayor's office to talk about Greenhouse Gases.

Richard Khuzami announced that the projected Capital & Expense Budget is included in the folders which has been sent to everyone and hopefully they had a chance to review it. He asked if anyone has any additions, questions, anything they would like to bring up on this budget.

Marie Torniali, Chairperson clarified if anyone would like to change any of the priorities.

RoseMarie Poveromo stated she would like to add an exit and an egress from the Grand Central Parkway going west at the homeless shelter on Astoria Boulevard north.

The Chair responded that they checked on this but it does not belong on the Capital budget because it is Federal item/dollars. The parkway is State the funding is Federal, it is not City funding.

Antonella Di Saverio asked about voting for the repairs of the Sea Wall at Astoria Houses.

The District Manager, Florence Koulouris responded it is done, out to procurement and waiting to start putting the bids in for the contractors, working on it.

Marie Torniali, Chairperson asked if everyone is in favor of approving the Budget as presented.

She announced the Motion carries; 1 Opposition

Public Comment:

Neil Herdan, Whitey Ford Field – Announced that he will give his report next month due to the long night.

Blake Montieth, Department of City Planning – Announced that their agency is having a Training Session for Community Board Members to learn about zoning, ULURP, public review process, and environmental review process. He stated he has fliers, it is taking place on October 23rd and October 24th. The 23rd is a Beginner night, the same agenda as they had last year for those that made it, it is a great opportunity if you are a new Board Member or new to the process, recommends you start on that night. On the 24th, it is a more advanced night, they are calling it a Zoning 201 night for everyone who is on the Land Use Committee, you spend so much time working on these projects he recommends you attend that night or welcome to attend both nights. Please see him at the end of the meeting if you are interested in attending or email Kathi Ko, the training is being held at Queens Borough Hall, the parking lot will be open to the Board Members. The trainings are on the 23rd from 5:00 – 9:00 p.m. and the 24th 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Mabel Tso, Field Representative from Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's office, standing in for Daniel Bonthius – Announced they had a Town Hall in Lefrak City last week and Congresswoman shared a recent package of bills entitled, "A Just Society", you can view the entire event on their Facebook and C-Span. Spoke about Cortez's accomplishments on income inequality, poverty line, rent protections, access to public benefits despite of immigration status or prior criminal records, worker protection and resolution on economic social and cultural rights. Accepting applications for individuals who want to be nominated to a Service Academy which includes: the Military Academy, the Airforce as well as Merchant Marine, you can find it on their website and they are looking for members of the community to join their Service Academy Nomination Committee if you know individuals who have prior experience with the Service Academy please have them contact their office also spread the word that they are looking for middle school and high school students to submit their Apps for their Congressional App Challenge, due November 1st.

Dino Panagoulis, Board Member – Rental Cap, are there considerations to also stop the rising real estate taxes that we are faced with as building owners, that is the one concern on assessments and the subsequent real estate taxes often times a lot of property owners is that they are looking at specifically capping the payments tenants are giving to landlords and yes, they are high but not talking at all the increasing costs of real estate taxes, insurance. The second thing he finds really interesting about the people that have criminal records. If he was a criminal and committed welfare fraud, served his time to society, he can go back on welfare, finds it very interesting. Are there exclusions to certain things like that or specific crimes because he has not seen the details specifically for that?

The Chair, Marie Torniali suggested he send the Congresswoman an email.

Mabel Tso, responded that she will bring back his comments/questions to their Legislative team.

George Alexiou made comments about Landlords fixing apartments.

Marie Torniali, Chairperson asked for a Motion to Adjourn

Motioned by Thomas Ryan; Seconded by Jean Marie D'Alleva

The Chair thanked everyone.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:15 p.m.

COMMUNITY BOARD 1, Queens

DATE 10/10/19

Full Board Meeting

Community Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.	Community Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.
Rose Anne Alafogiannis	✓		E	Jerry Kril	✓		
George Alexiou	✓			Joel Lock	✓	✓	
Daniel Aliberti	✓			Hannah Lupien	✓		
Loren Amor	✓			Jeffrey Martin	✓	✓	
Avninder Aujla	✓			Antonio Meloni	✓	✓	
Edward Babor			E	Prabir Mitra	✓	✓	
Jose Batista	✓		E	Eric Mouchette	✓	✓	
Ann Bruno	✓			Stella Nicolaou	✓	✓	
Edwin Cadiz	✓			Norma Nieves-Blas	✓	✓	
Gerald Caliendo	✓			Mary O'Hara	✓		
Jean Marie D'Alleva	✓			Dino Panagoulas	✓		
Antonella Di Saverio	✓			Robert Piazza	✓		
Katerina Duarte			E	RoseMarie Poveromo	✓		
Katie Ellman	✓			Yawne Robinson	✓	✓	
Elizabeth Erion	✓			Thomas Ryan	✓		
Mackenzi Farquer			E	Rodolfo Sarchese	✓		
Dean Feratovic			E	Nancy Silverman	✓		
Evie Hantzopoulos	✓			Dominic Stiller	✓	✓	
Amy Hau	✓			Andre Stith	✓	✓	
Helen Ho	✓			Marie Torniali	✓		
Pauline Jannelli	✓			Rod Townsend	✓		
Vanessa Jones-Hall	✓			Judy Trilivas	✓		
George Kalergios	✓			Kathleen Warnock	✓		E
Richard Khuzami	✓			Mitchell Waxman	✓		
Nancy Konipol		✓					
Number Board Members Present <u>35</u>							
Present <u>35</u>				Absent <u>7</u> Excused <u>7</u>			
May 19							

Chairwoman Torniali and members of Community Board One,

I am Rudy Sarchese, member of the Community Board for over 20 years, and previous President of the Astoria, Homeowners, Tenants & Business Civic Association for 23 years. I am also an active member of many organizations in the community.

I believe it is the responsibility of all members of this Community Board to give their advice on what is good for the community and vote against a project that will have a negative effect on the community. We all have seen the presentation from the developer and this proposed project of two buildings, one on 45th St. and one on 46th Street, both between 23rd Avenue and Ditmars Blvd., which will be 8 stories high, with 88 units and a theatre, and is surrounded by a residential area consisting of one and two family homes, this not only would change the character of the neighborhood but it will destroy this residential area.

Let's look at all the people that are here tonight. Most are resident, homeowners and family members with children. All of them have worked very hard in order to own their own home to live the American Dream of living in a nice residential area in order to raise their children and their grandchildren for a better future for them as well.

I, myself, immigrated to this country for the American Dream. I worked for many years two jobs in order to have a home and raise my family and today with 8 grandchildren in this residential area of Astoria.

I believe I may be the only Board Member that lives close to this proposed project. I know the area first hand very well from living here and being an extremely involved community member and activist. I personally know all the homeowners and their families that live around this area and I know their concerns and reasons for opposing this project.

I want to bring to the attention of Chairwoman Torniali, all the Board Members and the Land Use and Zoning Committee that Mega Construction has supplied a petition with only 88 signatures for the approval of the building and 500 signatures for the approval of the Theatre. These are not local residents. After I reviewed it, I see that 95% of the signatures are from people that live outside of the proposed project area. There are signatures from people in Bayside, Whitestone, Long Island, and from 31st Street up to Shore Blvd. These people would not be directly affected by this project.

Me and members of the Astoria Homeowners, Tenants & Business Civic Association have obtained signed petitions against this project from

over 500 people that are homeowners and people that live within the surrounding area of this project. Please look carefully at the lists of signatures supplied.

Before we vote for this, we have to realize the negative impact this Mega project would have on our community, it will only benefit the developer and allow them to gain even more wealth than they already have.

Please, Chairwoman Torniali and Board Members, we are here to protect the community where we live, not to destroy this beautiful residential community. Just look around at how many homeowners and families are here tonight because they are concerned. I urge you, let's all stand together and reject this Mega project.

Thank you Chairwoman Torniali, all the Board Members, all homeowners and concerned residents here tonight.

Thank you all for hearing my concerns regarding this project, God bless America