



The City of New York

Queens Community Board 11

Serving the Communities of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston, Hollis Hills
Little Neck and Oakland Gardens

Paul DiBenedetto Chairperson / **Joseph Marziliano** District Manager

To: All Board Members

From: Eileen Miller, Central/South Bayside Zoning Committee Chair

Date: November 21, 2024

Re: Proposed Height Authorization
Windsor Park Cooperative

Committee Members

Eileen Miller, Committee Chair

Paul DiBenedetto, Board Chair

Henry Euler, 2nd Vice Chair*

Fleur Martino, 3rd Vice Chair

Albert Galatan

Rob Liatto*

Steve Pivawer*

John Sullivan

Kenneth O'Keefe

Tim Hao

George Hadjiconstantinou

CB11 Staff

Joseph Marziliano, District Manager

Jane Bentivenga, Community Coordinator*

Christina Coutinho, Community Associate

Guests

Larry Kinitsky, Windsor Park Co-op Board President

Michael Zoltan, applicant's attorney

*Via Zoom

Mrs. Miller started the meeting by announcing that the Committee was going to review and discuss an application to the NYC Dept. of City Planning (DCP) for a proposed height authorization on the Windsor Park Cooperative (WP) property in Oakland Gardens. Mr. Marziliano reviewed the meetings CB11 is required to have and stated that the public will have the chance

to sign up and speak at our public hearing regarding this application on Monday, December 2, 2024. Mr. Marziliano gave the floor to Mr. Kinitsky, Windsor Park Co-op Board President and his representative, Mr. Zoltan, and screen-shared their plans.

Mr. Kinitsky gave an overview of the Windsor Park Cooperative community which sits on 46 acres and then described the proposal to DCP. He also stated that this proposal is vital to the long-term financial viability of the Cooperative. They are facing rising capital costs and maintenance fees. Their operating budget has grown from \$21M to \$27M in the past three years. Their capital needs over the next few years will be \$20M. Mr. Kinitsky said the proposal would benefit not only the co-op community, but the nearby businesses and schools. He also stated they have received a letter of support for this project from CM Lee.

The proposed development would be in the southwest corner of the property site on tax lot 400 and would replace a 43-space, surface parking lot (which is rarely used). It would contain approximately 82 market rate dwelling units over 109,866 sf of floor area (resulting in an overall FAR of 1.00 on the Zoning Lot – less than the permitted 1.25 FAR). The proposed development would have a required 18-foot front yard, as well as a 30-foot rear yard. It would be 71 feet tall (7 stories) without setting back, which does not comply with height and setback requirements, therefore, requiring the proposed height authorization. There are currently 851 parking spaces on the site. A 43-space surface parking lot would be eliminated to construct the proposed building and 32 spaces would be added to the parking “circle” on Windsor Park’s northern boundary for a total of 840 planned parking spaces.

The proposed building would be only slightly taller than the two 7-story existing residences (each 70 feet tall) and the seven 6-story existing residences (ranging from 57- to 60-feet tall). Instead of constructing two smaller buildings on two sites on the zoning lot, the applicant seeks to concentrate bulk on the proposed site, thereby preserving existing vegetation (trees), open space, and view corridors with aesthetic value to residents of Windsor Park and the public. The request for a 71-foot-tall building is the least modification required to achieve the purpose of constructing the 82-unit proposed building, with reasonable floor plans and floor-to-ceiling heights. Two 4-story buildings could be built as-of-right.

Mr. Hadjiconstantinou made a motion to approve the proposed height authorization for Windsor Park Cooperative. Mr. O’Keefe seconded the motion.

Mr. DiBenedetto asked how many trees would have to be removed to facilitate this construction. Mr. Zoltan believes it is 10 to 12 trees. He also asked how many parking spots will be lost. Mr. Zoltan said there will be additional spots; they will be shifted slightly from where they are now. The distance between the buildings is 65 feet. Mr. DiBenedetto asked what if they decide to build the other buildings anyway. Mr. Zoltan said they would not; it doesn’t make sense for them to do that and it would disrupt the character of the complex. Some discussion ensued regarding the height with the bulkhead. This building will be 71’ high. Only DCP must approve this application. It does not have to go to the City Council.

Mr. Kinitsky said they have had no negative feedback from their residents but said there may be some who are not happy about this proposal. Mrs. Miller expressed her concern this may set a precedent.

Mr. Marziliano asked about the financial need for this. The co-op is facing a capital need over the next few years of \$20M. New roofs are needed and complying with local laws is quite costly. Their current mortgage which runs through 2031 is at 3.3%. Rates will likely be in the 5%-6% range after 2031. Once the new building is constructed, it will generate \$1.5M in revenue through maintenance fees net to the co-op, therefore, reducing costs. They will also make some money through the sales of new units. The first pre-offer would go to current residents. The new units will be two or three bedrooms with multiple baths. There will be at least one parking spot for all new units in addition to the existing parking spaces. Currently, about 80% of their spots are rented. There will not be underground parking at this site. Mr. Euler commented that CB11 usually hears what nearby residents think about such a project. Mr. Kinitsky said they had approximately 100 residents in person and 150 on Zoom at their meeting last month and had no negative feedback. Mr. Galatan inquired if they spoke to any residents on Richland Avenue. Mr. Kinitsky said they did not. However, he stated that there is a buffer of trees on the Vanderbilt Motor Parkway (VMP) side between their property and Richland Avenue. Mr. Galatan also remarked on the “shading” this building will create on the VMP. He also commented on residents who park in the area rather than paying for a spot in the co-op’s lot. Ms. Martino asked if they had investigated relocating trees rather than removing them. They will be planting new trees. She also asked if the rendering was accurate. Mr. Zoltan said no, they do not have the final design yet.

Mr. Kinitsky stated that if they get this approval from DCP, they then must go to the Attorney General because technically they are selling stock. This will be the 21st building in Windsor Park. The revenue from this will go into the general operating fund which benefits residents of all buildings. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding that sale of co-op apartments and the revenue that is generated from that. He said they transfer approximately 80 apartments every year. This project will not increase anyone’s maintenance fees. The revenue that is made from the sale of new units will go into the capital reserves which pays for new roofs, etc. The developer they have partnered with will get a piece of the profits. Mr. Kinitsky said once they have the final design, they will display it in the community room. Residents will be welcome to provide their feedback and/or suggestions.

Mr. Liatto commented regarding the impact extra vehicles would have on residents of Richland Avenue. He also commented on the proposed tree removal and asked what the benefit of a higher, single building is compared to two lower buildings. Mr. Zoltan said they cannot remove any trees from VMP; it is not their property. If they build two buildings, more trees will have to be removed and having two buildings will take away from the open space WP provides. Two buildings would be more money to build. They would most likely make less money and get less maintenance as the apartments would be smaller. Mr. Kinitsky said, ultimately, it is about having WP look uniform. One of the residents stated she just found out about this proposal. She stopped going to WP Board meetings because there was never an opportunity to be recognized or say anything. She feels they are more concerned about the aesthetics of the buildings and property than they are about maintenance. Mr. DiBenedetto advised all who wish to speak about this

project, sign up for speaking time at CB11's Public Hearing regarding this item on Monday, December 2, 2024.

During Board Member discussion, Mr. Galatan reiterated his concerns about the VMP; there will be dust and debris during construction and parking in the area will be affected. NYC Dept. of Parks will not clean the construction dirt and debris. He is not in favor of the construction; however, the two lower buildings would have less of an effect on VMP. He is not in favor of this proposal. Ms. Martino reiterated what the resident said earlier; there is never an opportunity to ask questions or make comments at the shareholder's meeting. Not much information was given about this project at the last meeting. Ms. Martino also feels it will affect the ecology of the VMP. She thinks it will be chaotic and is concerned about the parking issue. She also mentioned the construction will affect the shortcut residents use to get to the nearby bus stop. Mr. Sullivan also expressed his concern with the construction abutting the VMP. Mr. Zoltan said there is 30' to 36' rear yard. Mr. O'Keefe is in favor since it will keep residents' costs down. Mr. Hadjiconstantinou feels the development will be good for small businesses and keep the population from becoming stagnant. He will vote yes. Mr. Pivawer urged everyone to remember this proposal is strictly to allow for the height of the building. This building will fit into the character of the development. Mr. DiBenedetto stated he is always against overdevelopment. However, he feels that this proposal fits into the WP site. Although he is not in favor of it being adjacent to the VMP, he feels this is better than two lower buildings. He is in favor of supporting it.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion to approve this application resulting in 4 yes, 6 no and 2 abstentions. The motion was denied.

The public hearing for this item will be held on Monday, December 2, 2024. The Committee's recommendation **not** to approve this application will be conveyed to the full Board.

The meeting adjourned at 8:47.

Respectfully submitted November 22, 2024