



The City of New York

Queens Community Board 11

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

Michael Budabin Chairperson / Joseph Marziliano District Manager

TO: All Board Members

FROM: Douglas Montgomery

DATE: June 18, 2020

**RE: 242 61 Avenue
Proposed AIRS, LTC
and Health Facility**

On Wednesday, June 17, 2020, the CB11 Douglaston Zoning Committee met via Zoom teleconference to discuss the above-referenced proposal to the NYC Department of City Planning. Participating were Douglas Montgomery, Committee Chair, Michael Budabin, Board Chair, Victor Dadras, 2nd Vice Chair, Henry Euler, 3rd Vice Chair, Committee Members Bernard Haber, Rosemarie Guidice, Jyothi Sriram, Susan Cerezo, and Michael Golia. In addition, CB 11 Board Members Stephan Popa, Allan Palzer, Akshar Patel and Eileen Miller also attended as did CB 11 District Manager, Joseph Marziliano, and staff members Christina Coutinho and Jane Bentivenga. CM Barry Grodenchik and his staff member Susan Seinfeld also participated along with David Fischer who represented AM Edward Braunstein and Scott Solomon representing the Department of City Planning. Eric Palatnik, David Slifkin and Oz Cetin represented Marx Development. Residents Mindy Stein and Janice Schreiber attended as well.

The application will seek a zoning height authorization from the NYC Department of City Planning (DCP) pursuant to ZR 23-631K of the Zoning Resolution. Mr. Palatnik screen-shared a copy of the proposed plans for an Affordable Independent Residence for Seniors (AIRS), a Long-Term Care (LTC) facility and a medical facility. He explained that the proposed buildings are to be constructed on a narrow piece of land directly behind the Douglaston Shopping Center. They have lowered the proposed buildings several stories from the original proposal made last year. Building A is proposed to be 60' higher than allowed and building B is proposed to be 113' higher. Mr. Palatnik stressed that everyone consider the incline of the ravine; a large portion of the height is measured from the bottom of the ravine to ground level.

Stephan Popa asked how many jobs will be available and what the mode of transportation will be for those employees. Mr. Palatnik stated that many of the employees will be utilizing mass transit,

but there will be ample on-site parking. Mr. Slifkin anticipates there will be 90 to 110 employees for the senior housing portion of the facility and 15 to 30 employees in the medical facility excluding doctors and medical staff.

Rosemarie Guidice questioned the change in the proposal; previously the proposal was only for assisted living and long-term care. Now it includes senior affordable housing. Building A was lowered, but building B increased in height. She reiterated that there will be 130 market-rate units and 60 affordable senior units. Where will 190 residents park? Ms. Guidice also commented that 61 Avenue is quite a heavily trafficked road. Mr. Palatnik said there will be 195 parking spaces; the zoning requires 194. Ms. Guidice does not feel this proposal is right for the community.

Stephan Popa asked how many residential car owners will be there. Mr. Palatnik stated the shopping center with a shopping center next door and on-site medical office, he does not expect a high percentage of tenants to own cars; he does not expect a high visitation rate either. Mr. Slifkin stated that in their other facilities, car ownership is 3% - 4%. Mr. Popa asked if a shuttle bus service would be provided not to overburden the Q30 bus. Mr. Slifkin said there will be a shuttle bus. The vehicles will be privately owned, and the drivers will be employees by the facility. Jyothi Sriram questioned the use of union labor. Mr. Slifkin explained their working relationships with the unions in their other 2 facilities. Bernard Haber asked where the proposal stands with DCP. Have they commented on the length of the building (it is 3 City blocks long)? Scott Solomon of DCP stated the application will have to be refiled with the height and length revisions along with another Environmental Impact Study. He emphasized this application is seeking approval of the height and nothing else. Akshar Patel questioned the height allowance in an R4 zone. Henry Euler inquired as to the stability of the site and the Environmental Impact Study. Mr. Palatnik averred that his clients are going to spend the money necessary to make this project work.

Christina Coutinho asked if the units will be 100% private pay. The assisted living portion will be private pay. Mr. Palatnik said it is not a government-assisted program. Michael Budabin asked if residents of the district will get priority for the affordable units. There is currently a lottery system for these types of units, however, Mr. Palatnik advised that this is under challenge at the present time. Mr. Budabin also asked if the jobs that will be available (140) are new jobs. Mr. Slifkin advised they are new. Stephan Popa questioned the private pay issue and how residents of the AIRS would get care without Medicare or Medicaid. AIRS sets the rent that can be charged. Physician services will be available to all types of insurance. Long-term care would not.

At this point in the meeting, CM Grodenchik was recognized. He expressed his exception to the presentation and general dissatisfaction with this proposal.

Susan Cerezo voiced her disapproval of the proposal citing the many nursing facilities in nearby Great Neck and many health-related facilities such as Northwell that are near this location. Henry Euler is worried that a zoning change could be made for the entire lot. Michael Golia spoke about nursing homes being forced to receive COVID-19 patients during the pandemic. No Assisted Living Facility received any COVID-19 patients.

Resident Janice Schreiber expressed that she felt that this presentation disparaged their community. She inquired how much the assisted living will cost. Mr. Palatnik will get the rates and advise. Resident Mindy Stein spoke about how there is an approximate fifteen-minute drive to some of the best medical care anywhere with North Shore/LIJ.

Michael Budabin stated that CB 11 should keep this all in perspective. Bernard Haber stated that hopefully we can come to some sort of compromise. Development had previously been proposed on this site over 40 years ago. Michael Budabin said Board Members must in keep in mind what the best outcome will be for the community and asked if any height above the as-of-right allowance would be acceptable to them. Douglas Montgomery and Rosemarie Guidice pointed out that there was no discussion regarding the weight of the proposed building in that hillside. Victor Dadras added that they are proposing 100% and 250%-300% additional height. He also mentioned that there are already transportation issues in that immediate area.

Joseph Marziliano reminded the committee members to keep their comments to the height authorization. He also reminded the members that the nearby co-ops and apartments came out en masse against this the first time they presented this proposal.

Bernard Haber suggested the Board let DCP know its position before the application gets certified. Douglas Montgomery agreed and would like CB 11 to write to DCP. Scott Solomon said it will probably be about a year before the application is certified.

Rosemarie Guidice inquired about what can be constructed there. Stephan Popa said CB 11 can't support anything other than what is as-of-right. The transit infrastructure wouldn't support it.

Douglas Montgomery requested that Committee Members email their issues, comments etc. to the Board office so that something could be put together for when the Board reconvenes in the Fall. Michael Budabin feels that having the full Board's support for these ideas is vital. The Committee can meet again in about 6 weeks. Victor Dadras echoed that the comments need to pertain to the height of the buildings.

Respectfully submitted June 19,2020