



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, Chair / **Joseph Marziliano**, District Manager

TO: All Board Members
FROM: Douglas Montgomery, Douglaston Zoning Committee Chair
DATE: September 5, 2022
RE: BSA Cal. No. 2017-299 BZ – 242-02 61 Avenue – Douglaston Shopping Center

On Wednesday, August 31, 2022, a meeting of the CB11 Douglaston Zoning Committee was held via Zoom teleconference to discuss the extension of the above referenced previously granted Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) variance.

Present

Douglas Montgomery, Committee Chair
Henry Euler, 3rd Vice Chair
Stephan Popa – Board Member
Joan Garippa - Board Member
Yosef Lee – Committee Member
Susan Cerezo – Committee Member

CB11 Staff

Joseph Marziliano, District Manager
Jane Bentivenga – Community Coordinator
Christina Coutinho, Community Associate

Elected Officials

Sola Olosunde, representing Council Member Paladino

Applicant

Jon Popin, Duane Morris, LLP, representing Ashkenazy Acquisition Corporation.

The meeting opened with Mr. Popin explaining that this proposal is to seek an additional 4-year extension to meet the conditions of a previously granted variance. The Board had approved this variance in May 2018 which provided for an enlargement of the sublevel of the shopping center to accommodate Lowes's store. Lowes will not be occupying the site due to the layout of the building and new management. Lowes's representatives felt the site was comprised for the development of their store.

The extension is to complete construction, meet the conditions of the 2017 resolution and obtain a certificate of Occupancy. Mr. Popin said that this process has two parts. The first is to extend and the second is when they have an anchor tenant to amend the variance to accommodate the tenant. The completion of construction will be when they have a new anchor tenant.

Mr. Popin said that they are deeply committed to finding an anchor to occupy the former Macy's space. He said that it is a difficult site due to the floor to ceiling ratio, centered between two large shopping centers, and lack of signage. The proposed extension will allow them to attract new tenants and to make improvements to accommodate them. This will benefit the community to have a thriving shopping center.

Mr. Popin said that the following improvements have been made to the site over the last 4 years; the site of former Macy's has been gutted, escaladers removed, new transformers, and the parking lot has been milled and repaved. Currently there is still work being done on the ramps and platforms.

There were no comments from the public. Mr. Euler asked if the number of parking spaces were reduced? Mr. Popin said that Lowes had to remove parking spaces for additional floor space. Mr. Popa inquired about the parking lot and if the potholes will be repaired. Mr. Popin said that it is very difficult now because there is no revenue coming in but improvements are being done in phases. Mr. Lee asked what does substantial construction consist of? Mr. Popin said it is just the area approved by the variance and depends on the new tenant. If there is no tenant in four years, they would be back to ask for an additional 4-year extension. Ms. Cerezo asked if they found a junior anchor, would they start construction. Mr. Popin said a junior anchor, most likely, would not occupy space before an anchor. Junior anchors rely on the anchor to bring in foot traffic. There are no known issues with construction of the medical facility behind the site. Ms. Garippa inquired about the parking spaces. There is only a loss of 8% of parking spaces. The loss was for floor space for Lowes exterior garden area. Mr. Montgomery said that the housing development next to the site is in favor of the application.

A motion was made to approve the application by Mr. Montgomery. The motion was seconded by Mr. Euler. The Committee voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed and will be voted on at the September public hearing.

The meeting adjourned.