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*Anatole Ashraf
Chairperson
Debra Markell Kleinert
District Manager*

March 19, 2025

Land Use & Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

This meeting was held in person and teleconferenced on Zoom

Land Use & Housing Committee Members – Present

Christine Hunter, Prameet Kumar, Ann Marie Baranowski, Kareisa Batan (PV), Danielle Brecker, Lisa Deller, Morry Galonoy (PV), Kenneth Greenberg (PV), Diana Kichler, Patrick Martinez, Lauren Springer, Michael Zoorob (PV)

Land Use & Housing Committee Members – Absent

Nicholas Berkowitz, Tannia Chavez, Stephen Cooper, Sheila Lewandowski,

Community Board 2 Board Members - Present

Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos (PV), Eric Narburgh (PV)

Land Use & Housing Public Members – Present

Stephanie Carr

Community Board 2 Staff

MaryAnn Gurrado, Community Coordinator, Rafael Nava, Community Assistant

Elected Officials/Representatives

Lily Zaballos, Representing Council Member Julie Won (PV)

Department of City Planning

Katie Crawford, Hye-Kyung Yang, Lara Merida, Feigele Lechtchiner (PV)

Guests

William Jourdain, Woodside on The Move

Danielle Bastardi, Camari Wallace

Angel Gil Orrios

Christine Hunter welcomed everyone to the Land Use and Housing Committee Meeting.

Several modifications are proposed in the Long Island City Neighborhood Plan to reconnect the community with Anable Basin and the East River along the waterfront.

Proposed Street modifications include:

- Narrowing 44th Drive west of Vernon Boulevard from 100 feet to 85 feet.
- Widening 45th Avenue west of Vernon Boulevard from 30 feet to 46 feet.
- Eliminating 44th Drive west of 5th Street.
- Eliminating 44th Road west of Vernon Boulevard.
- Eliminating 44th Avenue west of Vernon Boulevard.

This project will create a 'loop road.' The following street extensions are proposed to create this loop road:

- An extension of 5th Street running north from 44th Drive.
- An extension of 44th Avenue, running west of Vernon Boulevard.
- An extension of 44th Road, running west of Vernon Boulevard.

A portion of the 'loop road' on 44th Road and west of Vernon Boulevard will be slightly curved to adhere to property lines.

Christine Hunter suggested increasing the width of the proposed new 60-foot north-south street extension from 5th Street running north to 44th Drive and west of Vernon Boulevard.

The Land Use & Housing committee members agreed to write a letter to the Department of City Planning stating that they want to ensure the streets are wide enough to comfortably accommodate multimodal transportation, including protected bike lanes, wide pedestrian sidewalks, and city street trees.

Prameet Kumar suggested that the committee include in the letter to DCP a request for the Department of Transportation (DOT) to engage with the committee to decide where street signs and speed bumps will be placed along the proposed loop Road.

Eric Narburgh, Vice-Chair of the Arts and Cultural Affairs Committee, provided an update on the Historic Districts Council's 'Six to Celebrate' designation for Sunnyside / Woodside. He reported the following:

- The official recipient of the recognition is Sunnyside Shines, which will maintain communication with the Historic District's Council.

- Sunnyside Shines' application included holistic information, such as its interest in preserving specific buildings, the architecture of homes, and artistic and cultural resources within the community.
- Eric Narburgh is also a member of the Sunnyside Shines Community Advisory Board and, as a member, will attend a meeting with the Historic Districts Council (HDC) on April 2, 2025. He extended an invitation to Land Use & Housing Committee Members to attend, and Ann Marie Baronowski confirmed she would attend.

Karesia Batan also provided an update on the Bliss Theater. She provided the following information:

- She spoke with the developer who purchased the Bliss Theater site and expressed the theater's importance to arts and culture to the community.
- The developer is open to having conversations with the Land Use Committee and the Arts and Cultural Affairs Committee. She noted that it would be wise not to pressure the developer to engage.
- The developer has not yet contacted an architect or designer to work on the Bliss Theater site, but Karesia Batan noted that based on their conversation, it appears the developer plans to demolish the Bliss Theater.

Christine Hunter suggested that the Community Board advocate for the preservation of the Bliss Theater's single-story entrance facade with the art deco that faces Greenpoint Avenue.

There was a discussion about writing a letter by June 2025 to address the situation regarding Bliss Theater.

Katie Crawford from the Department of City Planning provided the following information:

- The Industrial Plan, in accordance with Local Law 172 of 2023, will see DCP, EDC, and SBS launch the City's first industrial development plan.
- The law requires the plan to be completed every 8 years. It provides a comprehensive look at the industrial economy and land use, including research on current conditions, trending patterns, feedback from industrial business stakeholders, and the identification of Primary Industrial Areas, which is a new legislative tool for classifying industrial zones in New York City.
- This plan will offer recommendations on incentives, programs, and policies coupled with other land use tools. The plan is in the engagement phase and is required to be released by the end of 2025.
- There will be an upcoming virtual info session in April.

Katie Crawford stated said the population data City Planning is using for the projected area comes from the Census Tract Block Group. The following figures provide population information.

- 1990 - 22,400 residents
- 2000 - 14% growth to 25,500 residents
- 2010 - 12% growth to 28,000 residents
- 2020 - 102% growth to 56,500 residents.

With the two zoning proposals, the rezoning is projected to create between 14,000 - 16,000 units.

Katie Crawford provided clarifications on the proposal for the IBZ and shared additional facts about the rezoning proposal.

- The Long Island City IBZ is composed of five separate areas scattered throughout the neighborhood. One of those areas is located within the project area and is under consideration for land use changes. Currently, the IBZ within the project area is zoned M1-4 and M1-5, which permit light manufacturing and commercial and community facility uses. This IBZ is surrounded by growing residential areas that are not permitted in the IBZ.
- The draft zoning proposal would allow the area within this IBZ to maintain its manufacturing designation while permitting higher densities than are currently allowed. No residential districts are proposed, and this area will not permit residential uses.
- The Department of City Planning (DCP) is proposing a mix of M1 contextual districts along the outside of the IBZ with an M2-3A district located towards the middle of the IBZ centered along 11th Street.

There was an update on interagency activities:

- The City responded to the community recommendations report from the summer of 2024 with a draft strategy booklet. The LIC team continues to coordinate across agencies to further define strategies for capital improvements, programs, services, and policies that would benefit the community. City Planning works with agencies, including SBS and EDC, to further draft strategies through policies, programs, services, and projects.
- Christine Hunter stated that there are environmental issues along the waterfront, and that there have been only very limited conversations on strategies and alternatives for developing the WAP or coastline interventions to withstand storm surges in a sustainable way.

- DCP is working with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Borough Coastal Resiliency team, but they work most closely with Parks regarding the waterfront.

Katie Crawford added that it is not possible to postpone the effective date for the zoning proposal, as it's laid out in the City Charter Section 197-C, and Section 200 Subdivision 2. The anticipated date of certification is before June 2025. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be released at the same time as the certification as a draft EIS.

Christine Hunter spoke of the need to obtain technical assistance for the CB 2 Office. She said there are many organizations, including graduate departments, that can provide interns. Christine Hunter added that some organizations can provide funding to support internships through grants or pro bono. There is also a possibility of receiving funding from Council Members.

William Jourdain, executive director from Woodside on the Move, said that St. Paul's Episcopal Church, located on 61st Street and 39th Avenue, was the first church built in Woodside, and it was sold last year. He is concerned that the community risks losing an important piece of history, so he is urging the community to landmark the site to preserve its architectural and historical significance.

Prameet Kumar suggested that William Jourdain complete an LCP Request for Evaluation form.

Karesia Batan said the committee should start studying what historical landmarks in the district are important to the community and have not been sold so that the committee could begin the landmarking process for them. She added that it's important to have a community relationship with the owners of those buildings throughout the district.

Patrick Martinez made a motion to adjourn

Respectfully submitted by:
Rafael Nava

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