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Anatole Ashraf
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September 17, 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, Nicholas Berkowitz, Danielle Brecker, Tannia Chavez (PV), Lisa Deller, Morry Galonoy, Kenneth Greenberg (PV), Sheila Lewandowski (PV), Lauren Springer, Michael Zoorob (PV)

Land Use & Housing Committee Members – Absent

Karesia Batan, Stephen Cooper, Bradford Leibin

Community Board Members – Present

Anatole Ashraf, Queens Community Board 2 Chair (PV)
Patrick Martinez

Community Board 2 Staff

Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager
MaryAnn Gurrado, Community Coordinator

Department of City Planning

Hye-Kyung Yang
Feigele Lechtiner

Guests

Colleen Alderson, NYC Parks
Julia Dowling, NYC Parks
Gabriella Cappelletti, NYC Parks (PV)
Ankit Mehta, Developer, Applicant for the 63-12 Broadway Rezoning
Richard Lobel (PV), Sheldon Lobel Pc for the 63-12 Broadway Rezoning
Fayanne Betan, Sheldon Lobel Pc for the 63-12 Broadway Rezoning
Ximing Tam, Architect for the 63-12 Broadway Rezoning
Christine Zapansky, Environmental Consultant for the 63-12 Broadway Rezoning
James Schaefer, Applicant for the Landmark Application for 44-72 23rd Street
Marty Klain, Architect for the Revocable Consent at 43-01 22nd Street

Christine Hunter, Chair of the Land Use Committee, welcomed everyone to the committee meeting.

PARKS DEPARTMENT ULURP INITIATIVE

Colleen Alderson, Julia Dowling, and Gabriella Cappel from the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks) attended the committee meeting to discuss A Neighborhood-Scale ULURP Initiative: Parkland Acquisition in Queens Community Board 2's District (CB2). They provided a PowerPoint presentation (Attachment 1), which outlines the project overview, next steps, and timelines. The following information was provided:

- Despite initiatives to expand park access and reduce the number of New Yorkers living beyond walking distance to a park, there are significant hurdles to creating open space, particularly the length of the ULURP process.
- Property owners interested in selling their property must go through ULURP, which can take several years. Many property owners are unwilling to wait, resulting in lost opportunities for parkland acquisition.
- Parks is seeking to accelerate the acquisition process by developing a new type of ULURP application, created in close coordination with the Department of City Planning (DCP), that allows for both site selection and acquisition approval. This approach is intended to reduce the lengthy ULURP timeline.
- This ULURP project was prompted by the Get Stuff Built Initiative. Through this project, Parks aims to provide the required acquisition land use approval for a number of pre-identified sites suitable for parkland development and to enable Parks to enter directly into negotiations with willing sellers. Should the application be approved, it is expected to create efficiencies and facilitate the creation of new parks in underserved communities.
- Community gardens are not considered parks. Open spaces are defined as public resources that are available to the community. Parks will confirm whether Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) are counted as open spaces.
- If a potential park is contaminated and there is a willing seller, Parks will conduct a Phase One Environmental Site Assessment. All city agencies are required to complete this assessment before acquiring property, as it informs them of site conditions and may affect the fair market value. If remediation is required, once the property is acquired, a capital project will be initiated to address the remediation in coordination with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).
- In collaboration with DCP, Parks developed primary and secondary criteria to identify sites suitable for park development. Parks identified eight primary sites and twenty-three secondary sites within CB2's district.

- Primary sites aim to improve the district's low open space ratio. Secondary sites aim to fill the Walk to a Park gaps.
 - Christine Hunter, Chair of the Committee, noted that in areas such as eastern Woodside and Sunnyside south of Queens Boulevard, there is a lack of parks, yet sites within these areas have not been designated as either primary or secondary sites.
 - Kenny Greenburg noted that with high property values in the western part of CB2's district, and with sites languishing for years, such as the property that was part of OCA between 5th Street and Vernon Boulevard, and between 47th Avenue and 46th Road, the costs may not be justified for Parks. He asked whether parks would be willing to partner with another agency to develop a potential site, even if it would require it to serve multiple purposes.
 - If the ULURP application is approved, Parks will have a ten-year sunset clause. If the clause expires, Parks will need to submit a new ULURP application.
 - Colleen Alderson shared that if the Community Board identifies a site they believe meets the criteria for parkland acquisition, they should share it with her so Parks can review it.
 - Since several Community Board districts were selected as part of this program, each district will have its own ULURP application.
 - A committee member noted that, based on her experience with an acquisition process, it can take two to three years and is often difficult. She asked whether there have been discussions about providing incentives, such as waiving real estate taxes during the contract period until closing, or waiving penalties if the sale does not close. Parks responded that there is currently no flexibility on this issue but said they would raise the concern with the city.
- Hye-Kyung Yang of City Planning noted that the filed application can be revised to include additional sites

63-12 BROADWAY REZONING

Richard Lobel of Sheldon Lobel PC, along with Ankit Mehta, the developer, and other individuals associated with the proposed rezoning at 63-12 Broadway, discussed the application. They provided a PowerPoint presentation (Attachment 2), which includes a description of the proposed project. The following clarifying points and details were provided:

- The rezoning involves nine lots, one of which is the development site owned and controlled by Ankit Mehta.
- The proposal seeks to rezone the area from an R5/C2-2 Zoning District to an R7A/C4 Zoning District, with a portion of the site rezoned to R5/C2-4.

- The proposed rezoning would permit the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a 55,000-square-foot mixed-use building with a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 5.0. The project would create 67 housing units, including 22 affordable units under Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) Option 2, which the developer is pursuing.
- The proposed unit mix includes 42 one-bedroom units, 23 two-bedroom units, and 2 three-bedroom units.
- The proposed building will be nine stories tall, with a 15-foot setback at the ninth story.
- The area is well served by public transportation. The M and R train lines are within one block of the site, while the 7 train, Long Island Rail Road, and several bus lines are within four-tenths of a mile.
- The development will include 23 bicycle parking spaces and no vehicular parking spaces.
- Christine Hunter, Chair of the Committee, reaffirmed the Community Board's strong preference for family-sized units.
- The City of Yes policy increased the allowable FAR from 4.6 to 5.0, expanding available square footage without significantly changing the unit mix.
- In response to the selection of MIH Option 2, Mr. Lobel explained that while the developer wanted to map Options 1 and 2 for flexibility, the developer determined that Option 2 would be the most beneficial as it would allow for tax abatement applications and accommodate a wider range of units, particularly between 60% and 80% of AMI.
- MIH Option 2 requires that 30% of units be affordable at an average of 80% AMI. Mr. Lobel noted that this would allow for three income bands within the affordable units, enabling a greater number of units to be affordable at slightly higher AMIs, which would allow more low and middle-income units.
- Patrick Martinez and other committee members reaffirmed their general preference for fewer affordable units but more deeply affordable units.
- Two rezoning actions are included in the application, including areas that don't belong to the developer. Mr. Lobel explained that this prevents spot zoning, which could solely benefit the developer. Additionally, DCP requested that the developer include adjacent parcels in the rezoning. Out of approximately 28,000 square feet, 11,000 square feet is applicant-owned, while 17,000 square feet is not. The R7 zoning would apply to the lots fronting Broadway.
- Planned building amenities include a second-floor terrace accessible to tenants, a rooftop with solar panels, and a green roof with landscaping for tenant use.

- There are currently four commercial tenants at the development site, including La Abundancia Bakery, and a bodega. The developer expressed interest in helping these businesses relocate during construction and allowing them to return to the building upon completion if they are interested.
- Rental buildings under 485x are eligible for tax abatements if they comply with MIH requirements, which generally mandate that 25% to 30% of units be affordable. That affordability would enable the building to apply for the 485x tax abatement for the life of the building. Assurances include living wages for construction workers, and maintaining the affordability component for the units for the life of the building.
- The rear of the building is designed to accommodate a loading area, and while not required, it could fit a loading dock. There will also be a 14-foot rear yard that could serve for trash disposal.
- Although the proposed building is taller than surrounding structures, it will not cast shadows on nearby residences to the south or the playground to the east, as intervening buildings prevent shadows.
- Tax abatement requires living wages to be paid, but does not require union labor.
- Tannia Chavez requested that the developer add more greenery along the street. While street trees cannot be planted along Broadway because the subway runs under it, Lisa Deller requested that the developer place planters on the sidewalk to add more greenery. Christine Hunter requested that the site plan be updated to accurately reflect what the developer intends to include, noting that the street trees shown on the current plan appeared like ghosts.
- A motion was made by Michael Zoorob to grant conditional approval of the application, with the following conditions:
 - Use of union labor.
 - Addition of street planters.
 - Inclusion of MIH Options 1,2, and 3 to ensure flexibility for future development on adjacent lots, which could allow for deeper affordability.
- Morry Galonoy proposed a friendly amendment to increase the proportion of two and three-bedroom units, noting that this could be achieved by converting some one-bedroom units to studios.
- Sheila Lewandowski proposed a friendly amendment to designate an appropriately sized loading area, a trash and composting receptacle area.
- Both friendly amendments were adopted.
- The finalized motion included the following conditions:
 - Inclusion of MIH options 1,2, and 3 to allow deeper, affordable options in the future.
 - Use of union labor.

- Addition of Street greenery through street planters, and have them reflected accurately on the site plan.
- Increase the proportion of two and three-bedroom units.
- Designation of an appropriately sized loading area. and trash and receptable area.

All were in favor with one opposed and no abstentions. The rezoning application will be recommended to Queens Community Board 2 for approval.

LANDMARK APPLICATION AT 44-72 23RD STREET

James Schaefer, an architect working on the renovation of a house at 44-72 23rd Street, provided the following information:

- He applied to change a window and door on the rear facade, which is oblique, on the second floor.
- He is proposing to replace the existing door and window with a bigger assembly of a pair of doors and a sidelight.
- Many surrounding buildings have altered rear facades, undergone rear extensions, and added larger windows.

A motion was made by Nicholas Berkowitz not to oppose, and it was seconded by Patrick Martinez. All were in favor of the motion, with none opposed and no abstentions.

REVOCABLE CONSENT APPLICATION AT 43-01 22ND STREET

Marty Klain, the architect for the project, provided the following information:

- The building at the location serves as a combined office and art studio.
- The applicant seeks to make the building handicap accessible.
- The platform is located outside the building's entrance on a sidewalk that is 15 feet wide. One side of the platform includes a ramp with a handrail, and the other side has a single step that's five inches.
- Mr. Klain is seeking to legalize the platform.
- After contacting the Department of Transportation (DOT) to legalize the platform, DOT reached out to other city agencies, including the Department of Buildings (DOB). DOB raised two objections:
- DOB wants the applicant to install a guardrail on the side opposite the existing handrail.
- DOB wants the applicant to paint a yellow line along the edge of the platform.
- DOB also noted that the existing handrail isn't necessary and should be removed.

- The committee expressed that they do not have expertise in reviewing applications such as this type and discussed informing city agencies not to send them similar applications to review.

A motion was made by Lisa Deller not to oppose the application, which was seconded by Patrick Martinez.

- However, after further discussion, Ms. Deller withdrew her motion.
- Sheila Lewandowski requested that the existing handrail remain as a condition for no objection.

All were in favor to not oppose, none opposed and there were no abstentions, they recommended that the existing handrail remain.

DCP UPDATE

Hye-Kyung Yang and Feigle Lechtiner of DCP provided the following updates:

- A City Council hearing took place on September 17, 2025, where Council Member Won asked follow-up questions to city agencies and expressed concerns.
- On September 15, 2025, the Newtown Creek Combined Sewer Overflow Tunnel project was certified. The ULURP clock will begin on September 24, 2025, and run through November 24, 2025. BP is the applicant and will reach out to CB2 to attend a committee meeting and provide an info session. They will potentially attend the October Land Use Committee meeting, and the Environment, Parks, and Recreation Committee could be involved. A vote is anticipated in the November board meeting, which will fall within the 60-day review period.
- The Draft Industrial Plan was released a few days before September 17, 2025. City Planning is conducting public town halls in every borough. The Queens Town Hall will be held at the CUNY School of Law on October 23, 2025, at 6:30 PM, and it will include an info session about the plan.

BOARD 2 BUDGET PROCESS

Christine Hunter, Chair of the Committee, spoke about the budget process and provided the following updates:

- She reached out to Kevin Paris at the Department of Housing Preservation (HPD) to discuss potential housing budget items, but has not heard back.
- She will send the committee a list of possible budget actions. She noted that she previously shared a budget list with Michael Zoorob, the Treasurer, and she will email several budget ideas to the committee members, and they can provide suggestions as well.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION

- Nicholas Berkowitz told committee members that they can send him by September 28, 2025, a list of sites that could potentially be included in the Parks Parkland Acquisition Initiative.
- A committee member expressed a desire for greater transparency from Parks as their site selection for the Parkland Acquisition Initiative did not receive input from CB2.

A motion was made by Patrick Martinez to adjourn, and it was seconded by Anatole Ashraf.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rafael Nava