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Anatole Ashraf
Chairperson

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April 16, 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 (PV), Kareisa Batan, Nicholas Berkowitz (PV), Danielle Brecker, Lisa Deller, Morry Galonoy (PV), Kenneth Greenberg, Sheila Lewandowski, Lauren Springer, Patrick Martinez, Michael Zoorob (PV)

Land Use & Housing Committee Members – Absent

Tannia Chavez, Stephen Cooper, Diana Kichler

Community Board 2 Board Members - Present

Eric Narburgh (PV), Brad Leibin, Randy Plemen (PV)

Land Use & Housing Public Members – Present

Community Board 2 Staff

Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager

MaryAnn Gurrado, Community Coordinator

Elected Officials/Representatives

Lily Zaballos, Representing Council Member Julie Won (PV) Nick Gulotta, Representing Council Member Julie Won (PV)

Department of City Planning

Katie Crawford (PV), Lara Merida (PV), Lin Zeng (PV)

Guests

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

Katie Crawford provided an overview of the Last Mile Facility Text Amendment. The following points were made:

- The Department of City Planning (DCP) is proposing a zoning change to establish a CPC special permit for new last-mile facilities. This is a citywide project focused on regulating last-mile distribution facilities throughout New York City.
- The goal of the special permit is to ensure that facilities undergo a substantial review process and don't create significant conflicts with surrounding areas.
- Last-mile facilities are typically warehouses that have a lot of packages that need to be sorted quickly before arriving at their final destination. These facilities are usually located close to residential areas.
- DCP announced a virtual public hearing session that will serve as a scoping session on April 24, 2025, at 6:30 PM.
- DCP stated that they don't have a timeline for the certification of the special permit. Lara Merida added that there's usually a 9-month period between scoping and any certification.

Katie Crawford provided an update on the New York City Industrial Plan. The following points were made:

- The industrial plan is a citywide plan. Given the numerous industrial areas located within Queens Community Board 2, Katie Crawford encouraged all committee members to participate.
- A virtual workshop will be held on April 28, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

Katie Crawford provided information about regulations that control building height, mass, and density through methods other than traditional height limits. The following points were said:

- When a district does not have a specified height limit, the size of the building is regulated by other factors such as FAR or the sky exposure plane.
- Additionally, building form is shaped by setback distances from the street, which can create the feeling of an expanded public realm. Wider streets also allow more light and air to reach the ground level.

- DCP regulates maximum base heights, which may be controlled through block coverage. A smaller building footprint can leave more open space for public plazas or other types of park amenities at the ground level.
- Towers in the area must also receive approval from the FAA to ensure they do not interfere with flight paths, which further limits overall height.

Katie Crawford provided information on paired districts, as they are applicable in Long Island City (LIC). The following points were said:

- Paired districts occur when a manufacturing zoning district is mapped over the exact same area as a residential zoning district. These are generally found in mixed-use special districts, such as the Special Long Island City Mixed Use District.
- The goal is to encourage a broader mix of uses. Pairing M districts with R districts permits manufacturing, residential, commercial, and community facility uses all to be located within the same building.

Katie Crawford stated the following points about the Special LIC Mixed-Use District:

- The Special LIC Mixed-Use District only applies to a small portion of the overall project area.
- Unlike other parts of the city with similar density, where developers can receive a bonus for providing public space at the ground level, there are no incentives in LIC to encourage the creation of that kind of open space.

Katie Crawford provided clarification on unlimited height districts, which Christine Hunter raised after attending CB 1's Land Use Committee meeting in April 2025. The following points were made:

- The area basically around Court Square, ignoring the IBZ, and just looking at the project area east of the IBZ in-between the IBZ and Court Square, those will see M16R9 and M16R10 districts. They will be continuations of those districts outside of the project area through the project area. The other location where it would be mapped is along the waterfront, specifically around the Basin Area. Those areas would be limited by FAR and other regulations.
- The PowerPoint slide presentation from CB 1's Land Use Committee meeting is attached to the minutes as Attachment One.

Katie Crawford provided responses to DEIS-related inquiries:

- The environmental review process is used to identify potential negative impacts and ways to reduce or eliminate them.
- DEIS is a disclosure document meant to inform decision-makers about how proposed changes may affect the area.
- She noted that environmental review findings are not the only source guiding DCP's conversations with city agencies. DCP also relies on input gathered through engagement with the community and the community board.
- Regarding school capacity, DCP is working with agencies such as SCA and the DOE to find a solution to identify areas where they could potentially deliver schools in the community.

Regarding the construction of schools in the community, Katie Crawford shared the following:

- There is limited availability of public sites for schools to be built.
- DCP is exploring opportunities for future school development on private sites.
- DCP is considering an incentive to encourage school development by using a floor area exemption when "space for schools are built out" so that the floor area would be exempt from the overall FAR.

At the end of the ULURP process, there will be a list of city commitments, which will be included on the New York City Rezoning Commitment Tracker, available online.

Christine Hunter stated that many schools in the community lack open recreational space, which increases pressure on public parks to meet demands such as providing space for sports fields. She wants to know if there is a possibility of pooling open space bonuses from private sites to create big enough, multi-purpose open spaces that could accommodate the community's needs.

Bradford Leibin raised questions on the implications of having privately owned public spaces (POPS), such as their hours of operation and their accessibility.

Sheila Lewandowski said it's worth considering adding a text amendment on POPS to create some criteria and definitions on the baselines for POPS.

Katie Crawford provided clarification on POPS and potential open space mechanisms in Long Island City:

- POPS does not currently exist in Long Island City.

- While the bonus language proposes mechanisms similar to POPS, such as incentivizing open space through zoning, it would not fall under the POPS program. Instead, these concepts would be incorporated through new special district regulations specific to LIC.

Nick Gulotta from Council Member Julie Won's office provided background information on the Heart of the District Study, which the council member funded. The following points were made:

- Council Member Won's office launched the study in October 2023 to better understand community priorities and preferences. The study focused on a portion of District 26 along Northern Boulevard and Roosevelt Avenue.
- The council member's office engaged with residents through town halls with language access, tabling sessions, outreach events, and mailers sent to 11,000 households across the study area. Engagement was conducted in six languages.
- Nick Gulotta added that the findings will help guide Council Member Won's office throughout her term. For example, when developers come forward with ULURP applications, the study will help inform coordination with agencies such as the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department of Small Business Services (SBS), ensuring that commercial uses and street safety improvements reflect community input.

Following feedback from residents in areas of Northern Boulevard and Roosevelt Avenue that Council Member Won represents, the study provided recommendations across four topic areas:

- Affordable housing and development
 - Community, commercial, and industrial uses
 - Street safety and transportation
 - Environment and resiliency
- Residents from these communities expressed a desire to ensure that new large-scale developments include adequate infrastructure to support additional population growth. They also prioritized preserving and creating entertainment and cultural institutions, improving street lighting, and increasing access to publicly accessible green spaces, particularly by activating underutilized lots and incorporating open space into new developments.
- The study also identified certain issues that the two communities prioritized differently.

Since the plan was released and outlined key community priorities, Council Member Won's office has taken several steps to advance those priorities.

- The council member's office has worked with Woodside Houses to address flooding and stormwater resiliency. Council Member Julie Won advocated during the City of Yes negotiations to secure budget allocations to support the rehabilitation of NYCHA units in poor condition, with the goal of restoring and preserving them.
- Nick Gulotta added that if the city were to initiate a formal rezoning process in the area, this document and the study would serve as a reference point for established community priorities.
- The Heart of the District Study is available on the Council Member's website and can be downloaded by the public.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rafael Nava