



# Community Board No. 2

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*Lisa Deller*

*Chairperson*

*Debra Markell Kleinert*

*District Manager*

**April 21, 2021**

## **Land Use Committee Meeting Minutes**

**This meeting was teleconferenced on Zoom**

### **Land Use Committee Members – Present**

Lisa Deller, Chairperson  
Christine Hunter, Co-Chair, Land Use Committee  
Karesia Batan  
Nicholas Berkowitz  
Danielle Brecker  
Tannia Chavez  
Stephen Cooper  
Sally Frank  
Morry Galonoy  
Kenneth Greenberg  
Benjamin Guttmann  
Elliot Park  
Katherine Sabal  
Laura Shepard  
Lauren Springer

### **CB 2 Staff**

Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager  
MaryAnn Gurrado

### **Department of City Planning**

Teal Delys

### **Elected Officials/Representatives**

Jack Bernatovicz, Representing Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer  
Vicky Garvey, Representing Queens Borough President Donavan Richards

### **Guests**

Eric Palatnik, EPPC  
Sean Campbell  
Ryan Karben  
David Shteierman  
Jeff Reuben

Austin Coury  
Luke DePalma  
Lucille Songhai  
Sarit Platkin  
Jordan Press  
Luigi Moto  
Carita Reynolds

Ms. Deller welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Landmark Application – 39-26 44<sup>th</sup> Street**

Discussion of the Applicant seeking approval to install a solar system on the roof. CB2 has not yet received an LPC Application for this project and the applicant was not present at the meeting.

The representatives from the solar company representing the applicant provided the following information:

- This is the Sunnyside Gardens Historic District.
- Faces 43<sup>rd</sup> Street and is visible.
- 10 solar panels 350 watts.
- 2 rows of 5 panels.
- The next meeting will take place on May 18, 2021 at the Landmark Commission
- The project manager showed the plans to Landmarks who is waiting for CB 2 Approval.
- CB 2 will reach out to the homeowner (David Champa).

Stephen Cooper requested the name of the Landmark Representative.

Stephen Cooper made a recommendation to table the application.

A discussion followed.

Ms. Deller stated that CB 2 will reach out to Landmarks regarding this Application.

*Note: After the Land Use Committee meeting, the Chairperson spoke with the LPC and the Applicant has been instructed to provide a full presentation to CB2. This application will be held over to a June LPC meeting date.*

Christine Hunter made a recommendation, and it was seconded by Kenny Greenberg to support the homeowner's application for renewable energy. The design and installation of the proposed rooftop solar array should be undertaken with as much sensitivity as possible to Landmarks Preservation Commission requirements and the historic character of the neighborhood. The Land Use Committee acknowledges the urgency of the climate crisis and supports the efforts of building owners throughout CB2 to create new sources of renewable energy, thereby reducing the use of fossil fuels.

All were in favor of the motion with none opposed and no abstentions.

**ULURP Application**

48-18 Van Dam Street – Teamsters – ULURP Application 1902260ZMQ

Discussion of rezoning of 48-18 Van Dam Street. The zoning map amendment would facilitate a four-story enlargement to an existing two-story building located at the development site.

Eric Palatnik provided a presentation on 48-18 Van Dam Street and discussed the following:

#### **Background/Existing Conditions**

- Application has now been certified by the Department of City Planning.
- The size of the proposed building is like a series of taller industrial/manufacturing/commercial buildings closer to LaGuardia Community College and Thomson Avenue.
- Property is at the intersection of Hunters Point Avenue and Van Dam Street,

The project is located just to the north of the Long Island Expressway, and just to the south of Queens Boulevard (and the approach to the Queensboro Bridge).

- Lot is 29,000 sf
- Building was originally built for rope manufacturing and has very large internal columns, designed to accommodate much more than its current weight, so it can accommodate the additional floors.
- Property owners have already undertaken some interior renovations during the rezoning process, and the use in the building will all be union oriented.
  - Interior of building has historic Long Island City artwork

#### **Proposed Conditions**

- Proposal is to rezone the block from an M2-1 district to an M1-5 district.
  - Property owner only owns and plans to develop on Lot 1.
  - The rezoning proposal extends beyond the property owner's site. Rezoning would include the taxi stand site.
  - The other property on the block is operated by Best Buy but has no affiliation with property owners.
- Would allow for the property owners to go from 2.0 FAR to 5.0 FAR to enlarge the existing building.
- Project would entail a 4-story enlargement for office use (for the union) and training spaces, as well as a common space for conferences, meetings, and potentially public events.
  - Building was designed for all of the union's needs, to ensure they're not an imposition on the community.
- 49 accessory parking spaces to be added on the second floor (none required).
  - It is self-parking for now, but spaces could almost be doubled if a valet is provided
- Proposed building would have a total FAR of 4.08 FAR and a total square footage of 121,459 sf and rise to a height of 85 feet.
  - 94,000+ sf will be office space.
  - 27,000 sf will be commercial space (retail space on the ground floor).
  - This development would be more analogous to the older warehouses in the area and would also be a better fit for modern office use.
- There will be a 700+ square foot pocket park along the building's Hunters Point Avenue frontage

- There is a restrictive declaration to create this park.
- Proposed building will have art on the side of the exterior wall.
- There will be two curb cuts and driveways along Hunters Point Avenue that lead to the second-floor parking.
- There will be a light well in the rear of the property to allow for light to enter the building from all sides.
- There will be four separate retail spaces primarily along the Van Dam Street frontage.
  - Property owners have positive leads on ground floor commercial spaces.
- The property owner doesn't anticipate too much of a need for the loading berth other than for retail, but it's required.
- Even with a full build-out on the entire block (including non-applicant owned sites), the subject block would look very similar to other blocks in the area.

### **CB Comments/Questions**

- How did COVID change the thinking about programming and layout of the building?
  - Property owners were hit hard by COVID, but tenants are starting to return
    - However, there is still a shortage of union space.
  - With increased public health and time, applicant team projects the full additional space to be necessary.
- What are some of the environmental features of the project?
  - Highly insulated windows, high albedo roofs, lighting controls, water conservation fixtures, bioswales, etc.
- Will applicant team comply with green roofs law?
  - Applicant team will meet the requirement.
- Is the applicant team willing to write a restrictive declaration to provide artwork on the outside of the building?
  - Applicant team will review the proposed exterior conditions and get back to CB about a more formal commitment.
  - Applicant team eager to work with local artists.
- Could proposed building be taller than what is currently shown?
  - No, the building couldn't be any taller as the maximum height is 85 feet
- Is this project being financed by the union pension fund, or is it being privately financed?
  - As of now, the project financing is coming from the pension fund, but this could change going forward.
- Is there any bicycle parking, and where would it be accessed?
  - Yes, the proposed development complies with the bicycle parking required by zoning.
  - CB member clarifies that bicycle parking is required by zoning to be in the building interior.
- Would applicant team be amenable to CitiBike and a potential bike lane?
  - The plaza would need to be eliminated for a CitiBike station
- Could bicycle racks be added to the outside of the building for more ease of access?
  - Yes, applicant team can continue the bicycle discussion with the CB going forward

- What is keeping the union in this space, and is there anything to ensure the union will be in this space in the foreseeable future?
  - For unions, there needs to be a place for storage and a centralized place for members to meet and discuss needs, so they do anticipate making full use of this site.
  - It is important for the union to own and control their own space for the convenience, happiness, and comfort of members.
- Is the public space a POPS plaza?
  - No, it is not but was added due a DOT request to help mitigate pollution on Van Dam
- Is it necessary to have so much parking space in the building?
  - This building is custom-built for custom users, with union members who come to the site routinely
    - Members of all ages, capacities, and employment status need to have a variety of options to get to site, including on-site parking.
- CB member suggests possibility of adding more art space on the second floor instead of using all the space for parking.
- Has there been discussion with any neighboring owners about their intent to potentially re-develop their properties?
  - No, applicant team has not discussed future conditions with the other property owners
- Will there be a loading zone in the front of the building for quicker interactions?
  - There is an actual loading area in front of the garage doors on Hunters Point Avenue, but there are no big trucks that will come in front of the building.
- CB would like applicant team to come to present to the full board in early May.

#### **Next Steps**

- Applicant team to internally discuss artwork to be provided on the exterior of the proposed building and provide a more formal commitment to the CB going forward.
- Applicant team to discuss potential bicycle infrastructure on the exterior of the building

There will be a public hearing for this application at the May 6<sup>th</sup> Full Board Meeting. The Applicant team said that they would be prepared to present proposal on May 6, 2021.

Kenny Greenberg discussed that this is a zoning action that affects the entire block and that we need to hear from the neighbors in the area. It is preferable not to have the hearing and vote at the May meeting. Nick Berkowitz discussed how big the size of the rezoning is and that we need to hear from other folks.

Ms. Deller stated that the public hearing will be held at the May meeting and that the Board has sufficient time to vote at the June full board meeting. She requested that a public hearing notice go out to the community.

#### **62-04 Roosevelt Avenue – ULURP Application N200069ZRQ**

Ms. Deller discussed the following:

- Announced the public hearing has been scheduled on April 28, 2021 at 6:30 pm and will be virtual. The Public Hearing Notice has been sent out.
- Ms. Deller stated that after the public hearing, if there is something we need to discuss, the applicant will be invited to come back to the Land Use Committee. They will go to the full board in June.

#### **Zoning for Accessibility Text Amendment – ULURP Application N210270ZRY**

Zoning for Accessibility - The MTA and DCP are proposing a citywide zoning text amendment that will allow the MTA to work more efficiently with private developers to help achieve systemwide accessibility. The proposal includes a system-wide transit easement certification and an authorization for transit improvement bonuses in high density areas to facilitate the implementation of ADA access at stations throughout the city more quickly and efficiently.

Lucille Songhai provided a presentation a copy is attached (Attachment #1).

Sarit Platkin and Howie Levine entertained questions.

Teal Delys discussed the application and entertained questions.

Ms. Deller invited the team to provide this presentation to the full board in May.

Sally Frank made a motion, and it was seconded by Benjamin Guttmann to support the Zoning for Accessibility Text Amendment and encourage the MTA and DCP to eligible area to ensure that other parts of the City in lower density districts than those covered by this text amendment also have access to public transit, and to include bathrooms, bike parking, water fountains and mobility improvements.

All were in favor with none opposed and no abstentions.

Teal Delys reminded everyone of the citywide text amendments that are expected to certify in Mid-May:

- Citywide Hotel Special Permit
- Health & Fitness Text Amendment
- BSA Permit for Physical Culture Establishment
- Open Restaurants Text Amendment

Teal Delys reported that CB's will be able to put out their recommendations up until the date the project goes to the City Planning Commission, so it is potentially a bit longer than 60 days.

Ms. Deller discussed the issue on 43<sup>rd</sup> Street between Skillman and Barnett Avenues. City Harvest representatives reached out about a month ago and reported that they would be here temporarily. Ms.

Deller reported that ever since they moved in, there are trucks and noise. DOT installed No Standing Anytime Signs, and this is of great concern to homeowners.

Mr. Bernatovicz, representing Council Member Van Bramer's office reported their office has been in contact with DOT and City Harvest and they are continuing to work on this issue.

Nick Berkowitz made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:  
MA Gurrado

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