

Queens Borough President Recommendation

APPLICATION: ULURP #180385 PPQ

COMMUNITY BOARD: Q02

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), pursuant to Section 197-c of the NYC Charter, for the disposition of city-owned property located on the north side of Jackson Avenue between 43rd Avenue and 42nd Road (Block 432 Lots 18 & 29), pursuant to zoning, in Long Island City, Borough of Queens. (Related applications ULURP Nos. 180382 ZSQ, 180383 ZSQ)

PUBLIC HEARING

A Public Hearing was held in the Borough President's Conference Room at 120-55 Queens Boulevard on Thursday, June 21, 2018, at 10:30 A.M. pursuant to Section 82(5) of the New York City Charter and was duly advertised in the manner specified in Section 197-c (i) of the New York City Charter. The applicant made a presentation. There were six (6) speakers against. The hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

Subsequent to a review of the application and consideration of testimony received at the public hearing, the following issues and impacts have been identified:

- DCAS and HPD are proposing disposition of city-owned property to a developer to facilitate construction of a 27-story mixed use building that includes affordable housing;
- The transfer of development rights from the lots under the approach ramps to the Queensboro Bridge was offered in a Request for Proposals issued by the NYC Economic Development Corporation. This offer was only available to adjacent property owners. The City retains ownership of the property and will enter into a zoning lot development agreement with the developer. In return for the transfer of city-owned development rights the developer is obligated to provide permanently affordable housing. The applicant owns this lot and another directly across Jackson Avenue. The applicant has committed to provide a total of 152 permanently affordable housing between the two building sites;
- The applicant is proposing to build a 26-story, 139,981 sf mixed use building. The first two floors have 10,686 sf of retail, 91 parking spaces on the 3rd and 4th floors, mechanical space on the 5th floor, residential amenities on the 6th and 25th floors, residential units on the 7th to 24th floors. There will be a total of 120 residential dwelling units in this building of which 40 will be affordable at a weighted average of 115% AML;
- In addition, applications have been filed by the developer for a special permit to allow a public parking garage in this building, and another has been filed for a special permit for modification of streetwall and setback requirements to develop this site;
- The areas under the approach ramps to the Queensboro Bridge are currently under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transportation. The city-owned lot is currently used for storage of materials and vehicles. The applicant's lot is currently developed with a former warehouse building. Both the applicant's and city-owned lots are located within an M1-5/R9 District (8 FAR) in the Special Long Island Mixed Use District/Queens Plaza Subdistrict Area B;
- Community Board 2 (CB2) disapproved this application by a vote of thirty-three (33) against with one (1) in favor and none (0) abstaining at a public hearing held on June 7, 2018. CB 2's reasons for disapproval were as follows: the transfer of development rights would nearly triple the density of the project in an area already overburdened by development; the transfer of the city-owned development rights for development will significantly benefit the developer without an equal benefit to the community in terms of the ratio of affordable to market rate units and the depth of affordability; the Court Square neighborhood lacks adequate infrastructure, schools community and open space, affordable artists space and medical facilities; the transfer of publicly owned development right should be used for the public such as a community center. CB 2 also said that space under the ramps would be better used to provide park and open space, opportunities for artists rather than storage for the Department of Transportation especially in an area with a growing population and not enough open or green space.

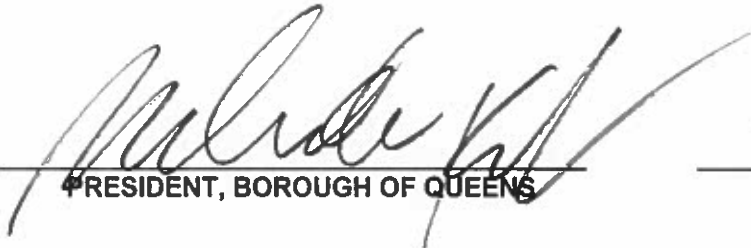
- Subsequent to the Borough President's Land Use Public Hearing, the applicant submitted a letter to the Borough President recognizing and acknowledging concerns that have been raised during the public review process to date. The applicant has committed to working with the community, elected officials and the city to address these concerns.

RECOMMENDATION

The building proposed in this application and the proposed building across Jackson Avenue will gain considerable development rights derived from public property. The development of these buildings should in return help provide needed services for the surrounding community.

Based on the above consideration, I hereby recommend disapproval of this application unless the following conditions are met:

- Use of the space under the ramps has been a longstanding request by the local community. It should be reclaimed for uses to benefit the community including the creation of much needed open space. Any such use should be implemented with contributions for operations and maintenance from the developer;
- Space should be provided in the proposed building for services needed by the community such as a standalone emergency room, early childhood care or space for artists and cultural programs;
- There is no rezoning to facilitate this project, therefore, it is not bound by the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Program regulations. However, the developer is proposing the equivalent of Option 4 of the MIH Program which has a required 115% AMI weighted average. The developer should find a way to offer deeper affordability in this building by using the deeper affordability MIH options.



PRESIDENT, BOROUGH OF QUEENS

7/23/18
DATE