

1 **Clinton\Hell's Kitchen Land Use and Zoning Committee**

Item#: 04

2
3 May XX, 2015

4
5 Kyle Kimball
6 President
7 New York City Economic Development Corporation
8 110 William Street
9 100 Gold Street
10 New York, NY 10038

11
12 Vicki Been
13 Commissioner
14 Department of Housing Preservation & Development
15 100 Gold Street 10038

16
17 Re: Slaughterhouse
18 493 Eleventh Avenue, New York, NY
19 Request For Proposal

20
21 Dear Mr. Kimball and Commissioner Been:

22
23 On March 11, 2015, the Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use and Zoning Committee of Manhattan
24 Community Board 4 (MCB4) along with the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC)
25 and The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) completed a two month public
26 process to discuss the Request for Proposal (RFP) to be prepared for the Old Slaughterhouse site (The
27 Site) at 493 Eleventh Avenue (39th/40th).

28
29 At the forums EDC and HPD provided a presentation detailing the Slaughterhouse Site and the
30 surrounding area, discussed possible development opportunities for the Site, and heard from community
31 and Board members on what should be included in the RFP.

32
33 **HISTORY Of Site**

34 The New York Butchers' Dressed Meat Company's "Slaughterhouse" was a block-long building and built
35 in two sections – the 39th Street corner in 1903-1905 and the 40th Street corner in 1917-1919. The New
36 York Butchers' Company was formed by local butchers and provisioners to break the monopoly held by
37 the midwestern "beef trust" which dictated meat prices. At that time, with its close proximity to water
38 transport as well as to the freight rail yards, the West Side was an important industrial center for the City.

39
40 The original six-story Neo-Renaissance style building of steel and masonry was designed by Horgan &
41 Slattery with lower floors faced with limestone and upper floors with dark orange brick and white terra
42 cotta. It looked like an imposing civic building. But there was no mistaking its purpose: six giant
43 sculptures of rams and steers jutted from the exterior of the sixth floor. A "roof garden" for livestock was
44 accessed by a seven-floor ramp visible only from the west. The killing floor was one floor down.

45
46 The Slaughterhouse remained in operation until the late 1950s. The City took title to the building in 1975
47 following a lengthy period of unpaid taxes by the owner. At that time, a private developer planned to erect
48 an office building on the site but the vote to allow it was delayed by the Manhattan Borough President,
49 David Dinkins.

1
2 **MCB4 EFFORTS TO DEVELOP SITE**

3 During the late 1980s MCB4 urged the Landmarks Preservation Commission to designate the property as
4 a landmark. The Commission was unable to do so and the building deteriorated until it was considered
5 structurally unsound and finally demolished. It took 18 months to complete the demolition.
6

7 Between the time of demolition until the late 1990s there was no plan put forth to develop the Site and the
8 vacant lot was turned into car parking for the New York City Police Department.
9

10 The Site was again brought to the attention of the City by MCB4 as a possible affordable housing
11 development site when the Western Railyards Points of Agreement was agreed upon by the City Council
12 and Administration in December 2009. The Site was identified as a "Proposed Development" site in
13 MCB4's 2014 Affordable Housing Plan with preliminary analysis identifying the Site being able to
14 provide 322 apartments, 100% of which would be affordable to a range of income bands.
15

16 **COMMUNITY REQUESTS FOR RFP**

17 Following the March 11 presentation by EDC, community and MCB4 members made the following
18 recommendations for the development of the Site to be included within the RFP.
19

20 **1. 100% Permanently Affordable**

21 There was unanimity from both community and MCB4 members that a 100% permanently affordable
22 building should be developed on the Site. With rising rents in the Hell's Kitchen/Clinton neighborhood
23 and the increase of high-end market rate residential units threatening the economic diversity of the
24 District, the need for 100% affordability on a City-owned site is considered crucial.
25

26 **2. Range of Incomes**

27 To sustain economic diversity in the District, a range of income bands for the affordable housing units
28 (80/100/125/165% Average Median Income) should be the goal.
29

30 **3. Family-Size Units**

31 MCB4 and the community recommend that a preponderance of the units be two- and three-bedroom
32 apartments with 50% of the units two-bedroom units.
33

34 **4. Commercial Space**

35 The community suggested a number of options for a commercial space at the ground level including:

- 36 • an affordable supermarket or fresh market;
- 37 • a daycare facility;
- 38 • a senior center;
- 39 • a theater or dance and theater rehearsal studios;
- 40 • a community computer room.

41 The community and the MCB4 insisted that no commercial space requiring a liquor license should be
42 considered.
43

44 **4. Design Considerations**

45 When it comes to design and bulk considerations, the community's and MCB4's desires are clear: the
46 building should have a maximum height of 45 floors and a residential Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 12. The
47 community also wants a "green" building with a roof top deck accessible to all tenants. The building's
48 design should include façade articulation and avoid looking like dystopian glass box.
49
50

1 The community and the Board also want pedestrian safety and traffic management initiatives on the
2 streets around the development.

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4 MCB4 would like to thank the EDC\HPD project team for its engagement with the community to discuss
5 the RFP being prepared for such an important site within the district. The Board looks forward to
6 continuing to work with both agencies to prepare an RFP which reflects the current and future needs of
7 the community.

8

9 Sincerely,

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11 Christine, JD

12

13 cc

14 Electeds

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DRAFT