



**THE CITY OF NEW YORK
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 6**

1932 Arthur Avenue, Room 403-A, Bronx, NY 10457

Honorable Vanessa L. Gibson, Bronx Borough President

Honorable Oswald Feliz, New York City Council Member, 15th District

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MS. EVONNE CAPERS
Board Chairperson

MR. RAFAEL MOURE-PUNNETT
District Manager

January 12, 2024

Jessenia Aponte
Bronx Borough Commissioner
NYC Parks
1 Bronx River Parkway, Bronx NY 10462

Bronx Community Board 6 asks that the NYC Parks Department seek funding to purchase 439 Devoe Avenue, a vacant land parcel on the Bronx River. The lot is adjacent to River Garden, a community garden with an active volunteer base and community activities. The owner of the lot, Abingdon Square Partners (Devoe ASP LLC), began the process of a ULURP action to rezone the lot for housing, but has not completed the ULURP process to submit the action for public review. The rezoning application has laid dormant since April 2022. Without any movement on this application, we are concerned that the lot could remain vacant indefinitely.

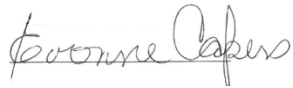
If the ULURP were to move forward, the Environment Impact Statement released by Abingdon Square Partners reveals dire consequences for the neighborhood. The proposed building is a 13-story residential building, which the developer has shown will block almost all direct sunlight from River Garden. The proposed building would essentially kill all the current vegetation growing in the Garden and dramatically impact the garden's future ability to operate. In addition, the developer has indicated chromium, copper, lead and zinc in the soil of this lot (in excess of NYSDEC guidelines), which Board 6 is concerned could leak into the Bronx River if residential construction were to occur.

We ask that NYC Parks purchase 439 Devoe Avenue from the developer to expand River Garden and ensure the garden can continue to exist in the future. Turning this lot into parkland or an extension of the garden would protect the future of the Bronx River and the public's access to the river. We ask that NYC Parks pursue three avenues for funding this purchase, including:

- NYC Council Capital Funding from NYC Council Member Feliz
- Congressional earmark funding from Congressman Ritchie Torres
- NYS Funding from the Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act. This funding is intended to protect natural resources in New York State like the Bronx River.

Bronx Community Board 6 is happy to support these requests in any way possible. We look forward to working with NYC Parks to secure more public green space along the Bronx River for Bronx residents.

Regards,



Evonne Capers
Chair
Bronx Community Board 6



Nilka Martell
Chair
On behalf of
Bronx River Alliance
Board of Directors

CC: Iris Rodriguez-Rosa, First Deputy Commissioner, NYC Parks
CC: NYC Council Member Oswald Feliz
CC: Congress Member Ritchie Torres