

(Pending Committee Approval)
Land Use Committee Meeting Minutes
Bronx Community Board 8
January 6, 2025
[Meeting Recording](#)

1. Welcome Committee Members and Guests – Roll Call

Land Use Committee Members:

Present (7): Charles Moerdler, Martin Wolpoff (ADA), Bob Bender, Lee Chong (ADA), Daniel Rowen, Jessica Sosa, Laura Spalter

Absent (2): O. Murray, Adiana Rivera

Board Members & Staff: David Gellman, Farrah Kule Rubin (District Manager)

Guests: Denis Gjini (Owner, Innovative), Endi Ulaj (Innovative Development), Camila Thomas (DCP), Abba Leffler, Gary Axelbank

2. Approval of December 2, 2024 Committee Minutes: Unanimously Approved

In Favor (6): C. Moerdler, M. Wolpoff, B. Bender, L. Chong, J. Sosa, L. SPalter

Opposed (0)

Abstain (0)

3. SNAD Application: 3111 Henry Hudson Parkway SNAD Botanic Modification
Non-ULURP

- Innovative Development - Applicant
 - Removing a number of trees on the property replacing with the acquired number of tree credits. Trees to be removed because of the locations of driveways. Plans to remove all trees ranging in size from 30 inch to 8 inch and plant new 3-inch trees.
 - Committee asked if had discussion with the NYC Parks Department, as requested at the last meeting, about street trees removal and replacement? They have not.
- Bob Bender - What if the Parks Department says these street trees cannot be removed? How do you know that will not be their position? If Parks determined removal is permitted, then I want to hear it. Is he allowed to proceed or why taking so long to resolve this question?
- Daniel Rowen – In Parks Protocol Manual, Tree removal must be justified as last resort. What is the justification for this? Believes it wouldn't be approved due to regulation that all new developments have to allow for a street tree every 25ft.

- Committee cannot move forward in vote of SNAD Application: 3111 Henry Hudson Parkway SNAD Botanic Modification Non-ULURP without knowledge of the street tree replacement plan.
- Denis Gjini, applicant for 3111 Henry Hudson Parkway SNAD Botanic Modification
 - Applicant Insists they cannot go to the parks department until the application is approved. 7 Town homes in R6 zone. Dwelling unit has right to have a driveway. entitled for 7 curb cuts and driveways and have reduced number to 4 curb cuts and driveways. One is in conflict of tree and no other way around it. Claims Tree in question not part of application and is not inside SNAD area.
- Chair stated this is about environmental preservation and conservation. Is this the only way to build these buildings? Any governmental entity funding these buildings? No this is not part of any subsidy program. It is a private market rate development. Have you taken any steps to try to preserve these trees by way of design or to replace them in a manner that is meaningful? No Change to design on the application.
- Denis said this is the best outcome they could do for the 18-foot-wide lots.
- Committee frustrated that this could have been resolved three months ago if developer stated would work with them and respond if willing to replace large caliper trees, not with 3" caliper, but with a larger 6" caliper tree.
- Vote to Disapprove the application - Unanimously Approved.

WHEREAS, the developer for 3111 Henry Hudson Parkway, Denis Gjini, presented the project on demolishing a single home to construct 7 new single-family townhomes with 4 curb cuts, and **WHEREAS**, applicant confirmed multiple trees of large and small caliper and topography will be removed or affected by the project to place driveways and curb cuts, among them trees that appear to be on public property, and,

WHEREAS, Bronx Community Board 8 Land Use Committee requested the developer to reach out to NYC Parks to determine whether it would approve the removal of street trees and to confirm size of trees and placement of trees they are going to replace on the City Sidewalk, and **WHEREAS**, committee requested the developer to offer an alternative to removing the trees to examine whether or not to minimize the damage to large caliper trees on property wherever possible, or provide some mitigation report, and

WHEREAS, Applicant insisted that he would not meet with the Parks Department to discuss the trees nor could he submit a full mitigation report until after the community board approves the project and it is submitted to the City Planning Commission, and

WHEREAS, there is a consistent pattern on developers refusal to cooperate on this project and prior refusal on another project.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, for the reasons set forth above, the Land Use Committee unanimously DISAPPROVES this application.

In Favor (7): C. Moerdler, M. Wolpoff, B. Bender, L. Chong, D. Rowen, J. Sosa,
L. Spalter
Opposed (0)
Abstain (0)

4. Subcommittee Report on Van Cortlandt Village:

Marty stated he tried to work with owner who does not like the nature of the meetings which are public. Sought to serve as an intermediary between the developer and the community residents. Neighbors have serious questions many of which can be resolved with simple discussions about concerns of the neighbors, the rights of the developers, the future of the Van Cortlandt Jewish Center and how this impacts the community. Marty Wolpoff asked Abba Leffler and neighbors to pose questions to ask the Developer.

5. Old Business/New Business

Gary Axelbank came to speak on issues he has with the Van Cortlandt Jewish Center (VCJC) property.

Asking for Innovative with MBD Housing and VCJC center to work to develop public private partnership to develop affordable housing and get the congregation what it needs.

States VCJC does not want to consider alternatives other than sale to Innovative Development. Urges board to reject any application that comes from this process.

Chair asked Department of City Planning (DCP) are there any prospective studies concerning suitability in that area for affordable housing. Is anything under consideration? DCP will follow up on this.

Abba Leffler wanted to thank Innovative about responding to request to add fences around Sedgewick trees on construction and were very responsive.

Area continues to be quite dirty and filed 311 complaints with Sanitation.

Wish had open channel for communication puzzled 3870 and 3874 Sedgwick totally raised yet no work going on. What's happening at this stage? Corner 3862 Sedgwick is subject of deep feeling with 60–80-foot trees on it. Concerns on plans for the trees and site. Please preserve these irreplaceable natural features.

Contact has been made with

- DEP concerning the runoff and relationship to the reservoir wall with construction. – No response on this yet
- Notified Police 3 times of possible drug sales on Stevenson PL. -still awaiting their findings on this
- Department of Sanitation about leaves laying around -They issued warning and will come back and issue summons if it is still an issue next time.
- DOT about what the impact might be on traffic -Will do a study and give response end of February.

6. Adjournment 8:03 PM - Next Meeting Monday, February 3, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

Farrah Kule Rubin, District Manager