

Land Use Committee Meeting Minutes
Bronx Community Board 8
Tuesday, June 10, 2025 at 7:00 PM
Board Office – 5676 Riverdale Ave, Suite 100, Bronx, NY 10471

[Meeting Recording](#)

1. Welcome Committee Members and Guests – Roll Call

Land Use Committee Members:

Present (6): Charles Moerdler, Martin Wolpoff (ADA), Bob Bender, Adiana Rivera, Daniel Rowen, Jessica Sosa

Absent (2): Lee Chong, Laura Spalter

Quorum is present

Board Members & Staff: Chairperson Julie Reyes (Zoom), Farrah Kule Rubin (District Manager)

Guests: Chantal McLaughlin and residents (135 E. 225th), Michelle Mullen (Riverdale Press) James Burke (Chief of Staff CM Del La Rosa), Abba Leffler, David Gellman, Sherida Paulsen (Riverdale Nature Preservancy)

2. Approval of May 5, 2025 Committee Minutes: Unanimously Approved

In Favor (6): C. Moerdler, B. Bender, A. Rivera, D. Rowen, J. Sosa, M. Wolpoff

Opposed (0)

Abstain (0)

3. Discussion of Marble Hill Landmark – Caro Building 135 West 225th Street Historic Art Deco Window Replacement

- Building in the process of removing and trying to replace the historic windows with windows not in character with the design and quality of the building
- The manager of NOMA Mgmt., Joseph Grubner, of 135 West 225th Street submitted a statement since he could not attend the meeting confirming our interest in building that consists of 82 apts. of which 72 are rent-stabilized. Existing windows are single paned and lack any insulation making it impossible to keep heat in the apts. Building subject to LL97 Law from 2019 with respect to energy conservation. Scheduled to be completed Mid July and Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) is aware of the work.
- Chantal McLaughlin filed for landmark status in 2021 with LPC and response from LPC said it merited further study.
- Windows original from 1937 art deco windows. Got two days' notice before replacement of windows. Residents want the windows to be visually in keeping with the style of the building.

- Sherida Paulsen commented these Steel Casement windows fail to meet current sustainability standards but there are many manufacturers of windows similar to this that meet the requirements.
- Chair Recommends we notify LPC immediately to have status quo maintained and on emergency basis review the Landmark status of this building. Can advise the Department of Buildings (DOB) that the community and residents reject this proposal. Ask LPC for this to be put on Calendar for consideration at earliest meeting possible.
- Chair asks LU Formally request LPC grant on an emergency basis review of an application to preserve and maintain the windows in the event landmarks concludes that they are historic and warrant preservation.
- Developers are doing this type of building all over the area. Have money to buy the windows that are energy efficient and meet local law 97 requirements.
- Tenants will email a statement of concerns that we will send to LPC.
- Frampton Tolbert, Director Historic Districts Council, will submit a letter of support as well.

Land Use Committee Resolution:

WHEREAS, Caro Building tenants of 135 West 225th Street presented and representatives from Council Member Carmen De La Rosa's office came to hear the presentation on the replacement of the historic windows and application to Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) for landmark consideration; and

WHEREAS, The Caro building is an Historic Art Deco building designed by Architect Horace Ginsbern and essential to the character of the neighborhood and anchor for rent stabilization that should be preserved; and

WHEREAS, the proposed new double hung windows feel insensitive to the design of the building, do not respect the aesthetics of the property and the materials used will not age well;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Land Use committee respectfully request that Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) considers the tenants request for designation, to act quickly to add this application to the calendar for consideration of Landmark Status; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, LPC grant, on an emergency basis, review on preserving and maintaining the windows in the event you conclude it is historic or to act quickly to designate any commercially available aesthetic choices of similar looking windows that comply with LPC requirements and LL97 requirements.

In Favor (6) C. Moerdler, B. Bender, A. Rivera, D. Rowen, J. Sosa, M. Wolpoff
 Opposed (0)
 Abstained (0)

The resolution is approved.

4. Discussion on Charter Revision Commission Proposal to remove Community Boards and City Council from ULURP Process:

Chair Moerdler will testify at the Charter Revision Commission hearing regarding attempt to undermine and eliminate any meaningful role the Community Boards and City Council will have on development in our district. This is regarding The Mayor's Charter Revision Commission proposal to bar community boards and City Council from participating in the ULURP process on applications for housing.

Chair is creating letter to testify at hearing.

5. Discussion on Failure of SNAD Enforcement by DOB and DCP and Next Steps

Bronx, Staten Island and small strip in Queens have Special Natural Area Districts (SNAD) to preserve natural features, trees, topography vegetation and the like. These can be changed and altered but must get a permit from DCP, DOB and review from Bronx CB8. SNAD violations are enforced by DOB.

City Planning Commission seeking to undermine SNAD as evident with City of Yes where they tried to repeal it. City Council declined to do this. Administration now wants to remove City Council and Community Boards from overview on urban renewal and community input on future housing developments.

Found many failures of enforcement on SNAD violations with DOB:

- 355 West 246th Street – Multiple SNAD Violations with photos
- 3111 Henry Hudson Parkway – Denied application but DCP approved anyway -removal of many Trees
- 3040 Scenic Place - Multiple SNAD Violations with video and photos

Chair asked representative, Jeffrey Pena, from District Attorney Clarks office to formally investigate agencies, DOB, for lack of enforcement on SNAD. Bronx Boro Commissioner spoke with Chair Moerdler and stated referred to Inspector General.

Suggestions to reform make up of City Planning Commission (CPC) – currently commissioners are comprised of appointees by Borough President and Mayor. Chair should be elected and subject to approval of NYC council so review of qualifications is done and have served for one year on the community planning board. All members of the commission should be reviewed by City Council for qualifications. Discuss this more over the summer.

Bob suggests we focus on the issues with enforcement on the properties discussed.

Sherida Paulson mentions there are 11 members of the Landmarks Preservation Commission who go before City Council for review to explain their qualifications and they are unpaid. The CPC members should have to do the same.

There are loopholes in SNAD. DOB goes not always go to site to review or do due diligence. DOB looks at original permit plans to review if there is a violation on removal of trees or topography instead. DOB should use our photographic and video evidence on this. Residents should keep complaining, cc CB and City Council.

There is Legislation by Council Member Eric Dinowitz that allows for photographic evidence to be considered for investigating SNAD Violations. Needs to be voted on.

Marty Wolpoff comments he cannot comprehend how when complaints are made for tree removals, if the investigator does not see the actual tree being removed than there is no violation given. LPC issued permits on the applications but this does not override SNAD requirements.

Chair Propose Resolutions for the following:

1. City Planning Dept. (DCP) and Commission (CPC), including Chair of Commission and Director of City Planning, be subject to review and approval by City Council
2. Call upon City of NY to reconstitute CPC and DCP or advise on the way it is selected and their qualifications and install a Community Board Ombudsman in DCP
3. Landmarks Commission likewise be subject to review and approval by the City Council
4. District Attorney to look into DOB functioning in this fashion and conduct in investigations of SNAD

Unanimously approve.

In Favor (6) C. Moerdler, B. Bender, A. Rivera, D. Rowen, J. Sosa, M. Wolpoff

Opposed (0)

Abstained (0)

Chair will present to the Executive committee about this to get approval to testify at the City Charter Revision hearing June 23, 2025 on this.

6. Subcommittee Report on Van Cortlandt Village: Marty Wolpoff Chair

Abba Leffler, resident of Van Cortlandt Village area, stated 30% City tree cover on Private property. How do we balance development with the possible disappearance of 30% of our tree cover.

Marty - nothing to report but asked Abba if there are any changes that he is not aware of.

Abba – Issues in the area:

- It appears that Innovative Development at 3870 Sedwgick Ave. has exceeded height allowed to build up to 71 feet. What can be done?
-Chair said he needs to Submit 311 on this to DOB and send to us to follow up.
- Seeing a rapid increase in the number of crime and QOL events. Does it correlate with high rate of development in area?
- 2 Robbed on Cannon and Orloff

- 69 Stevenson Pl. micro-unit building -neighbor reported beating with pipe, reports of prostitution occurring here.
 - Open air drug market on Bailey and West 238th Street. What can we do?
- Need to keep in touch with police and go to public safety Committee meetings to keep on top of this.

8. Old Business/New Business

9. Adjournment: 8:15 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Farrah Kule Rubin, District Manager