

*(Pending Committee Approval)*

**Land Use Committee Minutes  
December 7, 2021 at 7pm  
Meeting held virtually via Zoom**

**Attendance:**

Committee Members: Charles G. Moerdler (chair), Sylvia Alexander, Marty Wolpoff, Bob Bender, Bob Fanuzzi, David Gellman, Rosemary Ginty, Camelia Tepelus, Omar Murray, Julie Reyes, Paul Ellis, Laura Spalter (ex-officio)

Absent members: Tracy Pardo, Dan Padernacht, Nick Fazio

Guests: Erin Drinkwater (DHS), Leslye Oquendo Thomas (Yonkers City Council Staff), Matthew Okebiyi (AACPI), Douglas Apple (AAPCI), Council Member Eric Dinowitz, Lorenzo Manzano (Council Member Dinowitz Office), Smyra Brandon (NYS Senator Stewart Cousins Office), Santiago Caceres (Westchester County Rep. David Tubiolo's Office), Nicole Hollaway (School Construction Authority), Zeeshawn Ott (SCA), Valerie Rojas Infante (DOE), Gayle Madero (SCA), Ciara Gannon (District Manager)

C. Moerdler called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

Department of Homeless Services: Discussion of Proposal of 130 Single Men Shelter to be located at 6661 Broadway

C. Moerdler introduced Erin Drinkwater, Deputy Commissioner for Intergovernmental and Legislative Affairs for the Department of Social Services. C. Moerdler asked Ms. Drinkwater where the answers were to questions that CB8 sent weeks prior. C. Gannon stated that the office received responses at 6:57 pm. C. Moerdler asked for the site selection process. Ms. Drinkwater will get back to CB8 about the date of review on the Open Ended Request for Proposals.

C. Moerdler raised concerns of nepotism and salaries at the African American Planning Commission Inc (AAPCI). E. Drinkwater stated that DHS has worked with AAPCI at other locations and this organization submitted an RFP, went through a rating and review process and met with the Community Board. C. Moerdler raised a question about the salaries at AAPC; A salary analysis was conducted and is in line with other organizations. C. Moerdler asked what DHS will do about concerns about nepotism. C. Moerdler asked what sort of investigation is done of the operators that DHS contracts with.

Leslye Oquendo Thomas, representing Yonkers Council Majority Leader, stated that their office is being inundated with concerns about the proposed shelter. DM Gannon will send their office the answers sent by DHS.

Council Member Dinowitz stated concerns about this proposed shelter and the DHS contract process. His office has been in touch with the Mayor's Office of Contract Services (MOCS), The Comptroller's Office for more answers. CM Dinowitz stated that DHS is disregarding community input. He is doing a site visit with Elected Officials from Yonkers. With a contract of almost \$200 Million we should expect more information from DHS. All we know so far is that this proposed shelter will house 130 single men, six to a room. There is no information on services and how the shelter will be run. Nepotism and salaries are of concern to the Council Member. CM Dinowitz was only able to see the contract after the MOCS hearing and only had thirty minutes virtually to review the several hundred page document. C. Moerdler stated that all the important information was redacted and/or missing. D. Padernacht reviewed the contract in person and R. Ginty has been working to make an appointment. C. Moerdler raised concerns about transparency.

L. Spalter stated that the owner has listed this property for over \$4.4 Million which is over market price by \$1-2 Million. Has DHS done their due diligence in the site selection process? How are AACPI securing the funds to buy this property and construct it? This process is creating a windfall for the owner. Matthew Okebiyi, CEO of AACPI, stated that his organization spoke with several landlords and submitted sites to DHS. It was determined that this site was appropriate and L. Spalter asked if CB8 can see these documents. C. Moerdler asked to review documentation on the valuation information provided by AACPI to DHS. M. Okebiyi doesn't have a problem providing the documents if possible. C. Moerdler asked if CB8 would have it within a week and M. Okebiyi said yes. L. Spalter asked the process behind selecting Court Square Realty. There is no relationship between AACPI and Court Square Realty. Court Square Realty is a developer and there was a synergy between the two organizations so they were chosen. Douglas Apple, of AACPI provided additional information on this process. L. Spalter mentioned that there are five businesses at this location currently. L. Spalter has done research on current AACPI sites and does not believe they have enough experience with this proposed transitional model with 130 single men. B. Bender further inquired about similar models to this proposed shelter.

Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz provided concerns about this proposed shelter, specifically the failed model. There has been a lack of transparency from DHS with providing information to elected officials, The Community Board & community.

David Gellman offered concerns regarding the proximity to Van Cortlandt Park and the length of the contract. Douglas Apple stated that there will be restrictions and requirements for AACPI that would prevent them from flipping the building after the contract term.

Local community members raised questions and concerns about this proposed homeless shelter. Concerns about the proximity to local area hospitals and transportation were discussed.

Smyra Brandon, of Senate Majority Andrea Stewart Cousins Office, stated that their office is receiving many calls and concerns since the shelter borders Yonkers. The Senator requests additional information on the proposal.

C. Tepelus shares the concern o receiving information not far enough in advance. Does this proposal fill a need of shelter in CB8? How many people in CB8 require housing? Over the thirty-four year contract, how many residents will be served by this proposed shelter. A discussion of Turning the Tide took place.

#### SCA School Proposal at Visitation Site ( John Collins Place)

Nicole Holloway, Community Relations Manager of The Bronx SCA Office and Zeeshawn Ott ( External Affairs), Gayle Mandaro (Real Estate Division) and Valerie Rojas (DOE District Planning) presented on a new school proposal. N. Holloway stated that the SCA follows the following process to aquire a new school site. First, SCA presents to the Community Education Council and Community Board before presenting to the City Council. The process included an environmental review and discussion with DOT, FDNY, etc. This presentation has not yet been made to the Education, Libraries & Cultural Affairs Committee.

Elements of the proposed school will be determined further on in the process. School District 10 has a need of 2,925 seats making it the highest need in The Bronx. 2060 of needed seats are located in the subdistrict that includes the neighborhoods of Kingsbridge, Bedford Park & Norwood. This school would create 696 seats, including District 75 seats. The site is owned by a private developer. There will be a residential development at this site as well. SCA is not aware of details on this. The SCA has entered the 45 day comment period which ends in early January.

C. Moerdler raised concerns of school busing, parking and traffic in the area. He requested a diagram or summary showing the farthest distance in the sub district to the school and the bus route. District lines for an elementary school are fairly close to the school. This presentation shows the process, but the environmental review and site planning will be in the future. R. Ginty raised land use concerns related to a mixed use development at this site. SCA will be coordinating with the private developer but does not have information on development at this time.

S. Alexander is concerned about the communte for some students. C. Gannon will coordinate with S. Alexander and SCA about an upcoming Education, Libraries & Culturals Affairs Committee meeting presentation.

## Caro Building (135 W 225th Street) - LPC Application

Residents of 135 W 225th Street presented their Landmarks Preservation Committee Application and requested a letter of support from Community Board 8. The Caro Building is a unique Art Deco apartment building in Marble Hill, New York. Completed in 1937 by Benjamin Caro, father of biographer, Robert Caro, the family owned and maintained it until sold to an LLC in July, 2021. The building was designed by noted architect Horace Ginsbern (AKA Ginsberg), whose work on the Grand Concourse and throughout the Bronx. C. Moerdler offered advice for residents and formed a working group of Bob Bender, Rosemary Ginty and David Gellman. The working group will get in touch with the committee and report at next month's building.

The Caro Building Committee requests that Community Board 8 do not contact the landlord. The committee withdrew their request for a letter of support because they believe making this public would put the approval at risk.

The Stagg group requested a change in Saturday work hours at 6375 Broadway, but were unable to attend. This item will be tabled.

A discussion of the November minutes took place. P. Ellis voted to approve the resolution, but was listed as abstained. A unanimous vote was taken to approve the November Committee Minutes as amended.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 pm.

Minutes submitted by C. Gannon, District Manager