

Bronx Community Board 8
Land Use Committee Meeting

March 23rd 2023

Minutes

A link to a recording of the meeting is available here: https://youtu.be/zJ3ORs1_vYk

Committee Members (8): Charles Moerdler, Marty Wolpoff, Dan Padernacht, Bob Bender, David Gellman, Rosemary Ginty, Julie Reyes, Sylvia Alexander

Absent members (2): Nick Fazio, Lee Chong

Guests: Council Member Dinowitz, Assembly Member Dinowitz, Ophelia Phipps (DOB), Craig Hughes (DOB) Camila Thomas (DCP), Nadine Lubka, Giovanni Puello, Teresa Rodriguez, Paimaan Lodhi (Tishman Speyer), Michael Babik (Tishman Speyer), Jeffrey Otto, Randi Martos (AM Dinowitz' Office), Jesse Lerer (AM Dinowitz' Office), Brian Hunt (Steamfitters Local 638), Teri Colon, Paula Luria Caplan, News12 The Bronx, Christina M. Carlson, Dario Quinsac (NYS Senator Jackson's Office), Jim and Melanie Wacker, Joana Ahmadi, Jose Lesato, Rafael Familio, Susan Bower, Helene Cazato

The meeting was called to order by C. Moerdler at 7:01pm

306 West 232nd Street, Bronx – Construction Complaints:

C. Moerdler provided an update regarding violations issued at 306 West 232nd Street. A DOB representative acknowledged the inspection, confirmed it's being audited by the agency's Construction Safety team.

3745 Riverdale Avenue - Stagg Development:

M. Wolpoff informed the committee of a meeting that took place the prior month with Stagg Group, the developer of a construction project at 3745 Riverdale Avenue, Bronx. M. Wolpoff provided a construction update and mentioned that there had been break ins at the construction site during which equipment was stolen. M. Wolpoff also provided details on the driveway which will be located on Riverdale Avenue, noted that the development is not yet ready to begin lottery, and shared his screen to provide rendering of completed building.

BxCB8 Affordable Housing Report

C. Moerdler noted that the committee will discuss an Affordable Housing Report at the upcoming Land Use Committee meeting April 3rd.

5445 Palisade Avenue - SNAD Complaint

C. Moerdler provided an introduction and history of the Special Natural Area District (SNAD) and how it relates to the new Homeowner Relief Program which is maintained by the Department of Buildings. C. Moerdler discussed a new SNAD complaint at 5445 Palisade Avenue, which may qualify for the Homeowner Relief Program. A DCP representative confirmed they haven't received any inquiry from a

separate SNAD Complaint at 5501 Palisade Avenue. C. Moerdler brought forth the issue of whether or not there's a right on behalf of DOB to substitute a warning notice for a violation with regards to SNAD enforcement. The DOB representative said that she'll take this back to borough commissioner and provided a description of the intent of the Homeowner Relief Program. C. Moerdler noted that the board has passed a resolution to retain pro-bono counsel and confirmed that the counsel may act in court and address this lack of enforcement. C. Moerdler noted that AM Dinowitz has expressed interested in creating SNAD violation a misdemeanor.

160 Van Cortlandt Park South – Visitation Site

C. Moerdler noted that B. Bender will take the chair's role during the discussion of the Visitation Site at 160 Van Cortlandt Park South.

B. Bender introduced P. Lodhi, Senior Director, who represented Tishman Speyer along with M. Babik who leads the design and construction team for this site.

A copy of the presentation is available on BxCB8's website, linked here:

https://cbbrooklyn.cityofnewyork.us/cb8/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2023/03/160-Van-Cortlandt-Park-South-Deck_CB-Mtg-3_2023.pdf

Assembly Member Dinowitz shared remarks about Visitation Site and how his goal has been to get a school at this site. Commented that building 370 units of housing is not in the best interest of the community. Noted that the development should have more 2- and 3-bedroom units. AM Dinowitz asked Tishman Speyer (developer of 160 Van Cortlandt Park South development site) to reconsider the balance of unit sizes.

P. Lodhi noted that the presentation is preliminary and does not represent the final project. Also noted that Tishman Speyer doesn't speak for the NYC School Construction Authority, which is building a school on an adjacent property. Noted that the proposed development is 100% Affordable with approx. 340 units of affordable housing, 70 parking spaces, 170 bike parking spaces, indoor recreation space and an outdoor rooftop space. Noted that the developer is permitted to build 422 units and not required to build any parking. Noted that the site has a 64% lot coverage ratio, and that there is a pedestrian entrance at NE corner of the lot and a vehicular entrance on west 239th street. Noted that there was one curb cut.

P. Lodhi noted sustainability features: HPD enterprise green community project, rooftop solar panels, compliance with new DEP uniformed stormwater regulations, permeable pavement, increase in street trees, green rooftop terrace of approx. 8400 sq ft.

P. Lodhi provided a breakdown of the development's unit sizes: 25% studios, 45% 1-bedroom units, 20% 2-bedroom units, 10% 3-bedroom units. Provided a breakdown of the units' affordability: 60% of units will be designated for families is between 40-80% of the Average Median Income (AMI), 40% of units to 80-110% AMI. Noted that 50% of the units will be designated for families living in CB8 (neighborhood preference). Provided 2022 list of AMIs.

M. Babik noted that abatement and demolition will finish end of July. Noted that construction will begin 2024 and not finish until mid-2026, and that Tishman Speyer plans to come to back to BxCB8 to discuss more.

P. Lodhi provided project email and phone number 160VCPS@tishmanspeyer.com, 212-715-0124.

B. Bender noted that this is as-of-right project.

P. Lodhi confirmed that their plans match existing HPD programs with regards to 2- and 3- bedroom apartments.

Several attendees expressed support for the development noting: need for affordable housing, construction job opportunities, proximity to park, future school, transit and future Putnam Greenway.

Most attendees expressed concern over various aspects including: disproportion of 2- and 3- bedroom apartments; vehicular congestion on surrounding streets; school overcrowding; size of the development as out-of-scale with the neighborhood; design of development; flooding; pedestrian safety, effect of scale of project on tenants; size of units; zoning; status of neighborhood preference being litigated; asbestos abatement; size of nearby playground; current vehicular parking on local sidewalks.

Attendees asked representatives for Tishman Speyer several questions regarding: effect of development on property values; status of easement with adjacent school property; effect of pending neighborhood preference litigation on development; coordination with neighborhood environmental groups on planting preferences; role of developer after construction is completed; HPD termsheet applicability; designation and location of required open space; garbage pickup location; price of off-street parking.

Representatives for Tishman Speyer provided the following details about the development: 2500 sq. ft. will be dedicated for use by the school; developer is following current guidelines about neighborhood preference; developer does not have renderings of interior parking space at the moment; development complies with zoning standards; the development's standard room sizes are larger than required; Tishman Speyer will manage the building; anticipates union labor to staff building personnel positions; building will have a doorman; HPD has not yet opined on this project; the developer will be connecting with neighboring properties during construction; the parking garage is on surface level, partially located beneath the development and is permeable; developer will connect with HDC near end of 2023; existence of additional exits/egress to the building; developer met with BxCB8 regarding traffic issues; 90% of asbestos abatement is complete and that the process involved a negatively pressurized environment with licensed individuals and a 3rd party air quality examiner.

Council Member E. Dinowitz stated that the community needs more 2- or 3- bedroom units, that the developer must maximize number of units.

Minutes and Adjournment

C. Moerdler stated that the minutes from the February committee meeting will be voted on at the April 2023 meeting.

C. Moerdler made a motion to adjourn. C. Tepelus seconded that motion. The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:22pm.

Prepared by Luke Szabados, BxCB8 Community Coordinator

Reviewed by Charles Moerdler, Land Use Committee Chair