

Bronx Community Board 8
Land Use Committee Meeting Minutes

February 5, 2024

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mvx-yO90s30&t=4170s>

Location – Board Office: 5676 Riverdale Ave., Suite 100, Bronx, NY 10471

Hybrid Meeting

Chair C. Moerdler called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Attendance, Land Use Committee:

Present (8) – Charles Moerdler, Martin Wolpoff, Bob Bender, Carol Blake, Lee Chong, David Gellman, Daniel Rowen, Laura Spalter

Absent (4) – Sylvia Alexander, Nick Fazio, Omar Murray, Jessica Sosa

Community Board Members:

Julie Reyes (CB8 Chair), Kelli Buford, Mary Ellen Gibbs, Debra Travis

Staff:

Farrah Kule Rubin (District Manager), Ardhmir “Ardy” Malziu (Community Coordinator)

Guests:

Jesse Lerer (NYS Assemblyman Dinowitz’s Office), Camila Thomas (Department of City Planning), Ted Weinstein (Department of Housing Preservation and Development), Effie Ardizzone (Department of Environmental Protection), Stefano Morisi (Architect, 4401 Manhattan College Parkway), Endi Ulaj & Denis Gjini (Innovative Development & Construction), Stuart Harris (President, Van Cortlandt Jewish Center), Jack Kleinfeld (Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Van Cortlandt Jewish Center), Stu Loeser (Stu Loeser & Co.) Dr. Abba Leffler, Gary Axelbank

VOTE to APPROVE January 4, 2024, Minutes – APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

APPROVED (8) – C. Moerdler, M. Wolpoff, B. Bender, C. Blake, L. Chong, D. Gellman, D. Rowen, L. Spalter

ABSTAINED (0)

OPPOSED (0)

LPC Application:

4401 Manhattan College Pkwy, Bronx, NY 10471 Terrace & Pool Residential Construction - Legalization of LPC Violations – Stefano Morisi, architect, presented on behalf of the owner of 4401 Manhattan College Pkwy, Bronx, NY 10471.

- Series of LPC violations (sent three (3) months ago) that need to be resolved.
 - Violations: front gate was replaced, iron work on terraces, windows, gutters, balconies, and awnings.
- Also applying to build a new pool and terrace at the back of the house.
- No trees will be removed or compromised.

Land Use Committee requests that Mr. Morisi:

- Reach out to the Fieldston Property Owners Association (FPOA), at the request of the Community Board, and transmit/share the LPC Application with the FPOA and obtain their views, if any, concerning the entire application.
- Reach out to the neighbors within 200 feet of the property and give them a copy of the LPC Application so they are aware and have an opportunity to provide their comments.
- Find out from the property owner of 4401 Manhattan College Parkway, Bronx, NY 10471 regarding when the changes were made to the property.

Mr. Morisi must certify with the Community Board, in writing, that he has been in touch with the FPOA and neighbors (within 200 feet of the property) and asked for their opinions to be submitted to the Community Board before the next Land Use Committee Meeting in March 2024.

Discussion of Developments at 69 & 71 Stevenson Place, 3862, 3870, 3874 & 3880 Sedgwick Avenue in Van Cortlandt Village

Chair C. Moerdler proposed and then withdrew a resolution concerning the developments at 69 & 71 Stevenson Place, 3862, 3870, 3874 & 3880 Sedgwick Avenue in Van Cortlandt Village.

- Endi Ulaj presented on behalf of Innovative Development & Construction, property owner of 3862, 3870 & 3874 Sedgwick Avenue, Bronx, NY 10463.
- Stuart Harris & Jack Kleinfeld presented on behalf of the Van Cortlandt Jewish Center (VCJC) located at 3880 Sedgwick Avenue, Bronx, NY 10463.

Land Use Committee, Innovative Development & Construction, Van Cortlandt Jewish Center, and community residents discussed the planned developments of the properties located at 69 & 71 Stevenson Place, 3862, 3870, 3874 & 3880 Sedgwick Avenue in Van Cortlandt Village.

- Endi Ulaj stated that Innovative Development & Construction is:
 - Looking to construct multifamily units (multiple buildings/rentals) per the zoning code in the area.
 - No public financing or financing from the NYC Housing Development Corporation (HDC), at the moment.
 - No plans to seek NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) permits in the next 30 days.
- Chair C. Moerdler suggested that Innovative Development & Construction let the Committee know if they would be interested to set up a monthly meeting with an ad-hoc group of the Board, as done in the past with the Stagg Group construction project at 3745 Riverdale Avenue.
- Jack Kleinfeld, Chairman of the Board of Trustees at VCJC stated:
 - There are buildings in the local area already, including a 14-story building and two buildings across the street from VCJC.
 - Innovative Development & Construction has done work on Mosholu Parkway, not too far from Van Cortlandt Village.
 - VCJC is looking to sell the building but do not want to close the synagogue and would like to remain in the community/building.
- Community comments/concerns:
 - Community preservation is at stake.
 - Someone from the outside is coming into the neighborhood making decisions on what the neighborhood will look like.

- Encourage a community dialogue/plan.
- Concern with single-family homes being destroyed.
- Neighborhood preservation is important.
- The community has not been engaged in discussions regarding the developments.
- Neighborhood needs community services, schools, daycares, healthcare, etc., especially when building new housing.
- Need to have green space within urban space.
- Preserve the VCJC building space and add businesses/social facilities in VCJC instead of selling it.
- Continue community dialogue to find the right plan.
- VCJC has a moral responsibility to work with the community on the development.
- Chair C. Moerdler suggested that Innovative Development & Construction provide facilities that will aid the community. The Board will assist Innovative Development & Construction to move forward in an orderly fashion if they provide community facilities.
- B. Bender stated that the entire site is zoned R6A. This zoning allows for multifamily buildings, as of right.
- Question brought up regarding Innovative Development & Construction's experience working on bedrock and greenspace, as well as how many projects completed in the past.
- Innovative Development & Construction stated they should have no issues regarding the bedrock/greenspace and have completed twenty-five (25) projects in total, including with a company that they ran in the past.
- Chair C. Moerdler stated that the goal is to try to get everyone together to see if the Committee can be helpful to all sides to get a solution. It is in the public/community interest.

Report by Subcommittee working with Stagg Group on Construction at 3745 Riverdale Avenue

- M. Wolpoff cannot predict when the building can be finished.
- Meeting is coming up with Stagg. Hope is that they are close to being finished. Stalled by two things:
 - Con Edison – elevator motorization now in process.
 - Window delivery delay.
- Stagg found a sculptor for art in front of the building.
- Upcoming discussions will be on the rental process.

New Business

Anticipate to receive and address the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity in March/April.

Hebrew Home Public Access Sub-Committee created with Land Use Committee Members B. Bender, L. Spalter and M. Wolpoff who will work with representatives from River Spring/Hebrew Home to start discussions for a public access for the Henry Hudson River Greenway.

Adopted the resolution as follows in the January 4, 2024, Land Use Committee meeting:

RE: Gaming Facility Text Amendment - The City is proposing a citywide zoning text amendment to allow gaming facilities as a permitted use in certain commercial districts (Section 32-10) and manufacturing districts (Section 42-10) in the Zoning Resolution. This modification would allow a gaming facility licensed by the State and developed through a new State defined siting process to be developed without regard to any potential conflict with the Zoning Resolution

WHEREAS, the Department of City Planning has requested comment respecting a proposal to bypass full Community Board 8 action respecting gambling Casino location; and

WHEREAS, no representative of any Casino interest, the City of New York or other entity has offered any explanation or sound reason why such action is merited,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Land Use Committee of Community Board 8 rejects the proposal and declines to accede to the request, instead reaffirming its rights of prior review.

VOTE to DISSAPROVE the Amendment - APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

APPROVED (11) – C. Moerdler, S. Alexander, B. Bender, C. Blake, L. Chong, N. Fazio, D. Rowen, J. Sosa, L. Spalter, O. Murray, M. Wolpoff

ABSTAINED (0) OPPOSED (0)

L. Spalter stated that the DCP Hearing for Green Fast Track for Housing rule change is coming up for a public hearing this week. It would exempt some projects in both low and higher density zones from environmental review.

A MOTION was made by C. Moerdler and seconded by L. Chong to ADJOURN - APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

APPROVED (8) – C. Moerdler, M. Wolpoff, B. Bender, C. Blake, L. Chong, D. Gellman, D. Rowen, L. Spalter

ABSTAINED (0) OPPOSED (0)

Meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Submitted by Ardy Malziu, Community Coordinator, Bronx CB8 and Reviewed by Farrah Kule Rubin, District Manager, Bronx CB8