

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

**MINUTES OF THE LAND USE COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON MARCH 3, 2014 AT RIVERALE YM-YWHA,
5625 ARLINGTON AVENUE**

PRESENT CB8:

C. G. Moerdler- Committee Chair, S. Alexander, B. Bender, A. P. Creaney, L. Daub, M. Donato, R. Fanuzzi, A Fella, P. Friedman, M. Goodman, M. Heller, M. Khury, D. Kornbluh, D. Lennon, A. Moore, P. Mullen, D. Padernacht, L. Parker, R. Press, J. Rather, G. Santiago, G. Singleton, L. Spalter, M. Wolpoff, H. Young, M. Zegarra-Soja

N. Stent – CB8 District Manager

GUESTS/COMMUNITY RESIDENTS:

J. Firestone, T. Pantazi, A. Pantazi, J. Fletcher, J. Moerdler – Mintz Levin, D. Brenner, M. McLaughlin, D. Greenblatt – rep. Congressman E. Engel, R. Nissim, N. Gans, L. Paull – Ethical Culture, K. Green, N. Reid, N. Della Rocca, J. O’Callaghan, J. Grossman – CPR, R. Bretan – CPR, H. Been – CPR, S. Byrns & J. Hall – BKSK, E. Spindler, J. Linetran, C. Coppola, J. Sullivan, O. Koppell, T. Courtede, M. Gothelf, R. Bowers, J. Demko – rep. Assemblyman J. Dinowitz, M. Kelly, S. Ramos-Alamo, M. Rajamini – Riverdale Press, A. Noonan, M. Kaplowitz, A. Leborwitz, T. Kristi, P. Beitchman, G. Fox, K. Rose – MMC, L. Richmond – MMC, J. Horstman – DCP, C. Caile, A. Monaki, A. Andler – rep. Councilman A. Cohen, G. O. Koppell, D. Widge, K. Knowlitz, L. Bade, J. Weil, S. Oppenheimer, E. Dunnion, S. Ryan

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 PM by Chairman Charles Moerdler.

Item # 1 – City Planning Commission application No. N 140229 ZAX expansion of a single family home, and an above ground spa/hot tub located at 5625 Independence Avenue Block 5947, Lot 70, within the Special Nature Area District of CB 8.

The applicant was present and said the homeowners in the area (The Hillside Group) gave him a letter in favor of the application after having more shrubbery added to prevent any run off. The Land Use Committee passed the following resolution in favor of the applicant subject to the board receiving a copy of the letter from the neighbors:

RESOLVED, that the Land Use Committee approves, pending receipt of letter from applicant of agreement to conditions set forth by the Land Use Committee, the Department of City Planning Application No. N 140229 ZAX, for grant of authorizations involving modifications of topographic features on Tier I sites and authorization of a development, enlargement, or site alteration on a Tier II site or portion of a zoning lot having a steep slope buffer to allow the expansion of the single-family home and an above ground spa/hot tub with a wood deck on property located at 5625 Independence Avenue, Block 5947, Lot 70, within the Special Natural Area District (NA-2);

Vote: 19 in favor, 0 opposed, and 1 abstention

In Favor –

S. Alexander, B. Bender, A. P. Creaney, M. Donato, A. Fella, P. Friedman, M. Goodman, M. Heller, M. Khury, D. Kornbluh, C. G. Moerdler, D. Padernacht, R. Press, J. Rather, G. Santiago, L. Spalter, M. Wolpoff, H. Young, M. Zegarra-Soja

Abstention –

R. Fanuzzi

Item # 2 – City Planning Commission application No. N 140260 modification on a Tier 1 site, expansion or alteration of a Tier 2 site with a steep slope or steep slope buffer to allow a swimming pool and terrace to be built at 3020 Palisade Avenue Block 5945, lot 255 within the special Nature area of CB 8.

The applicant was asked if the neighbors within 200 feet were notified since there was no one present to comment either way. Questions included – where will the pool be placed, the definition of a steep slope, and the buffer zone. The applicant said that there will be nothing built on the steep slope or buffer, and that only one tree will be removed and then said that it would be replaced. The proposed Hudson Greenway project to the property was brought up, and as to why no neighbors were at the meeting, it was said that the applicant's wife went to all the neighbors to inform them of this meeting. The vote was in favor with the tree replacement subject to no objections from any neighbors. The following resolution was presented:

RESOLVED, that the Land Use Committee approves, pending receipt of letter from applicant of agreement to conditions set forth by the Land Use Committee, the Department of City Planning Application No. N 140260 ZAX, for the grant of authorizations involving modifications of topographic features on Tier I sites, and authorization of development, enlargement, or site alteration on a Tier II site or portion of a zoning lot having a steep slope or steep slope buffer to allow the construction of a swimming pool and terrace on property located at 3020 Palisade Avenue Block 5945, Lot 255, within the Special Natural Area District (NA-2);

Vote: 25 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention for cause

In Favor –

S. Alexander, B. Bender, A. P. Creaney, L. Daub, M. Donato, R. Fanuzzi, A. Fella, M. Goodman, M. Heller, M. Khury, D. Kornbluh, D. Lennon, C. G. Moerdler, A. Moore, P. Mullen, D. Padernacht, L. Parker, R. Press, J. Rather, G. Santiago, G. Singleton, L. Spalter, M. Wolpoff, H. Young, M. Zegarra-Soja

Abstention for Cause –

P. Friedman

Item # 3 – Review and status update of the proposed 11 story medical facility at 3471 & 3735 Riverdale Avenue and 3644 Oxford Avenue.

The chair turned this part of the meeting over to the vice-chair Mr. Martin Wolpoff due to representation of the developer by a blood relative. Ms. Lynn Richmond Chief of Staff represented Montefiore Hospital, and Mr. Jeffrey Moerdler represented Simone Developers. Vice-chair Wolpoff stated that there is general displeasure by the community and distrust of Montefiore Hospital and Simone Developers.

Ms. Richmond read from a prepared statement saying that the hospital is aware of the community distrust, and has spoken to the local elected officials. She said that residents of CB 8 made 75,000 visits to one of the six the Montefiore sites in CB 8 and the Bronx. Montefiore wants to consolidate the six CB 8 sites into one full service site to be more efficient, and has asked Simone Developers to redesign the current plans for this site.

Mr. J. Moerdler, representing Simone Developers, who is building the medical center, said that he was not at the meeting with the elected officials when they said the project was withdrawn, but that the plans were put on hold and not withdrawn. He added that no new plans have been submitted, and that Simone is in dialogue with Montefiore to address the community concerns. He said that he hopes to come back in a few weeks with more answers other than there will be off site parking for employees.

Vice-chair Wolpoff then asked for the data that Montefiore speaks of for the community needs. There was also a question of Montefiore being wedded to this one location as opposed to other sites such as one on Broadway in Kingsbridge. Ms. Richmond responded that the hospital is looking at other sites such as the one mentioned, but this site on Riverdale/Oxford Avenues was best suited for Montefiore.

Four local residents on a speakers list then spoke as to why they opposed the proposed site. One asked for the need for such a medical center at the proposed site. The second spoke of all the snow that fell by February 15th, and held up a photo of the condition of Oxford Avenue after the snow falls. The third said that two days after he moved in next to the site the demolition work began, and a fourth also opposed the project.

Vice-chair Wolpoff asked the elected officials to speak next. While the state legislatures were still in Albany, Councilman Andrew Cohen said that it appears that Montefiore and Simone are working together to address the community issues. He added that it was nice to see that Montefiore and Simone in attendance tonight.

Ms. Richmond responded that their data shows Riverdale is an undeserved area in certain areas, and in time for an appointment. She added Montefiore has asked that the project be held off to listen to community concerns. Mr. J. Moerdler explained that may be why the Department of Buildings may have rejected the original plans.

The floor was then open to board members for questions. M. Khury asked about a comment from a neighbor to the site about the rocks under their house and vibrations during the construction phase - to which there was no answer. L. Spalter asked about the status of the demolition, and was told it was on hold. Mr. Moerdler said when told that the Oxford Avenue house was fully demolished that he was unaware of that. D. Padernacht asked if the board will see the amended plans before being presented to the DOB, and the answer was YES. D. Kornbluh asked who is responsible if this project fails Montefiore or Simone which was not answered. R. Press asked where the 6 current Montefiore sites are and what services would be added that are not currently available in CB 8. The six sites are in Riverdale and Kingsbridge, and as to other services, mammography and other doctors was the answer. To a question of the Broadway site that was mentioned before it was said that the site is not suitable, and that Montefiore is moving forward with Simone on the Riverdale site. Montefiore has asked Simone to adjust the plans and look still at other sites even though they are committed to the Riverdale site. B. Fanuzzi asked if the funding for the Riverdale site is contingent on area service of under-served Monies. The reply was no, it does not meet any Government requirements. Montefiore is leasing the site, and it is being built by Simone Developers. Also, Montefiore is not classifying the site as an under-served site for federal funding. B. Fanuzzi added that there would only be compromises to the Riverdale site. A. Fella asked where is West Med? The answer by Ms. Richmond was that West Med runs a top notch operation, that is why they have been chosen to manage the building operations, and that West Med was at the first meeting. B. Bender said that he is discouraged by what has been said. Montefiore is looking at other sites, but going forward with the Riverdale site. R. Press said that he was informed that Simone is looking to lower the

height of the proposed project, and is looking at having a Riverdale Avenue entrance/exit to the parking area. Mr. J. Moerdler agreed to what board member Press had said.

The floor was then opened to other members of the audience who did not sign-up to speak. Former Councilman Oliver Koppell asked if Montefiore was willing to consider any other site, and would they consider one if he gave it to them. The answer was that right now Montefiore is working with Simone on the Riverdale site. Koppell said that he is a patient of the Montefiore site on Johnson Avenue, and that if the service he needs is not available there all he has to do is go to another Montefiore site elsewhere. Other members from the audience also expressed their displeasure of the site. Ms. Richmond finished by saying that some sort of an administrative certificate would be needed in response to one of the audience members questions.

Mr. Wolpoff thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 9:10 PM.

Minutes submitted by:

R. Press
Land Use Secretary