



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10

215 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor—New York, NY 10027

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**CICELY HARRIS**  
Chairperson

**SHATIC MITCHELL**  
District Manager

July 15<sup>th</sup> 2019

Honorable Marisa Lago, Chair  
Department of City Planning NYC  
160 Broadway, 31<sup>st</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10271

**Re: La Hermosa Church**  
**1-5 West 110<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**6 West 111<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Block 1594, Lot 41**  
**New York, NY 10026**

Dear Commissioner Lago,

This letter confirms the decision made at the General Board meeting held on June 5<sup>th</sup> 2019 declining to support the ULURP Application (C 190434 ZMM) for the development of La Hermosa Church site located at the above referenced address.

**The vote was 2 (Yes) 28 (No) 1 (Abstention).**

Prior to the decision, the CB10 Land Use committee met with the Church and their advisors on the following days:

April 10<sup>th</sup> Afternoon meeting with Land Use Committee Members  
April 18<sup>th</sup> Land Use Committee Meeting  
May 16<sup>th</sup> Land Use Committee Meeting /Vote

During each meeting we were able to learn more about the project and ask substantive questions.

We offered feedback to the church in anticipation of the community concerns.

Overall, we were concerned we did not have sufficient information to make an informed decision to approve the project.

Prior to certification, leaders of the Land Use committee met with Councilman Bill Perkin's office to discuss the matter. A letter from the Councilman's office to Department of City Planning was written asking to hold off on the ULURP certification until there was better understanding of the project and/or a developer was identified. That request was denied. La Hermosa Church received ULURP certification May 6<sup>th</sup> 2019 and the review process was underway.

Subsequently, at the Land Use meeting held on May 16<sup>th</sup> 2019, La Hermosa Church leadership, legal representative and architect made a presentation outlining their project and their approval needs. An overall history of the church, its reputation for community involvement along with plans to establish an endowment using the proceeds from the land sale and fund arts programs was presented.

**The vote taken at the Land Use committee was 7 (Yes) 1 (No) 0 (Abstention).**

The above vote was conditional upon the following terms:

- The project is designed based upon the MIH standards as required by Community Board 10 for the district
- The project remain on-site
- Once the developer is on-board, he/she would be required to come back to the Land Use committee to share the development plans.

### Comments

In the letter addressed to your attention from the Councilman's office, it was stated that *Affordability is a top concern in this neighborhood and we must do all we can to ensure new development will not accelerate neighborhood change*. Specifically, the letter cited two items for further clarification that were still unclear at the time of the General Board meeting held in June:

- Process for (and identification of ) a designated developer
- Further exploration of affordability and a unit composition that meets the needs of CB 10

Your response to the Councilman's request for more time and further evaluation was that the redevelopment of La Hermosa Christian Church site is a private application submitted by the church.

However, among other requests, La Hermosa Church is seeking a change in zoning from a R8 to a C1-9. To achieve the project's desired scale, the church (and any development partner) is subject to Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) as required by City Council legislation and the Community Board 10 MIH resolution (see attached). ***According to the ruling of MIH public input and accountability is required.***

Hence the overwhelming response from the CB 10 should not come as a surprise. Members did not feel comfortable authorizing such as project as evidenced by the voting outcome. To coin one board members sentiments, "Voting for this project is akin to *writing a blank check*; there are still too many unknowns".

Without a developer in place to authorize the project costs and /or profitability, compliance to MIH mandates at both the city and community level, the building of an on-site mixed use facility at this site is both ambiguous and ambitious. While we commend the church for shepherding the process as a means of maintaining control, we find it difficult to think that a savvy developer will agree to the financial terms and covenants of the church with no modification. The Community Board at-large has a history with developers coming before the community board and later changing plans at the expense of community needs. They do not want to be duped yet again with such a significant game changing project.

Lastly, the La Hermosa Church presentation was placed on a meeting agenda with many agenda items. An extensive discussion affording further clarification of the project, project costs, income targets and who the project was intended to serve was not explored in great detail. For example, other community concerns related to environmental impact was also not addressed including how increased density of both pedestrian and vehicular traffic this project will bring to the area and particularly the 110<sup>th</sup> Street train stop at Lenox Avenue. Some community board members still have issues with the overall scale of the project. We do understand and acknowledge that the church has numerous followers and supporters for this effort.

We in theory support the project and applaud La Hermosa Church for their vision in undertaking this significant and well deserved enhancement for the most southeastern end of our district. However, we are ultimately more uncomfortable with making a decision, one that is synonymous with a "blank check" without clear outcomes.

Thank you in advance for your consideration to these matters.

Sincerely,



Stanley N Gleaton  
Chair Land Use Committee  
Manhattan Community Board 10



Lisa Downing  
Vice- Chair Land Use Committee  
Manhattan Community Board 10



Cicely Harris  
Chairwoman  
Manhattan Community Board 10

CC Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman  
Hon. Brian Benjamin, New York State Senator  
Hon. Inez E. Dickens, Assembly District 70  
Hon. Al Taylor, Assembly District 71  
Hon. Bill de Blasio, New York City Mayor  
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