



Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

530 West 166th St. 6th Floor, New York, NY 10032
Phone: (212) 568-8500, Fax: (212) 740-8197

Eleazar Bueno, Chairperson
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

January 29, 2021

Hon. Sarah Carroll, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
David N. Dinkins Municipal Building
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

Re: Resolution requesting the NYC Dept. of City Planning Rezone Areas of Washington-Heights West of Broadway Currently Mapped with R8 Zoning

Dear Chair Carroll:

At the General Meeting on Tuesday, January 25, 2022, Community Board 12, Manhattan, passed the following resolution with a vote of 40 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention, and 0, not voting requests that the NYC Department of City Planning expeditiously undertake the actions necessary to rezone the area in Washington Heights west of Broadway from West 155th Street to West 177th Street.

Whereas: In 2008, Community Board 12-Manhattan ("CB12-M") in partnership with the City College Architecture Center, now the J. Max Bond Center for Urban Futures, completed a District-wide Neighborhood Planning and Land Use Study (the "Planning Study") that encompassed, among other endeavors, the exploration of matters related to affordable housing, neighborhood preservation, contextual zoning, and historic preservation, in 2009 and 2010, CB12-M undertook further studies of soft sites (the "Soft Site Analysis") and C8 zoning districts with the assistance of Planning Fellows provided through the office of then Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer.

Whereas: C8 Zoning districts were generally intended for industrial and commercial level auto-related uses and did not allow for any residential building. Given the demand in Washington Heights and Inwood for exceptionally affordable housing, the prohibition against residential development is inconsistent with planning goals and objectives. In June 2010, CB12M passed a resolution requesting the Department of City Planning ("DCP") to rezone the C8 in Washington Heights and Inwood to permit residential development consistent in height and density with the existing buildings near each C8 district and also to permit ground-floor retail and second-floor commercial office uses where, in consultation with CB12-M and community stakeholders, it is deemed appropriate and beneficial to meet community needs. To date, DCP has not acted on this request; and

Whereas: The Soft Site Analysis of 2009/2010 focused on sites where a specific development was not currently proposed or being planned, but where under existing zoning, there are sites with "as-of-right" unused development rights, i.e., air rights, that may be reasonably expected to result in future development projects. CB12M's intent in undertaking this analysis was not to prevent development but rather to understand where it is likely to occur and establish a framework to ensure that any new product is appropriate in scale and density; and

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Whereas: The Planning Study and Soft Site Analysis revealed that although a majority of Washington Heights and Inwood is zoned R7-2, the area west of Broadway from West 155th Street to West 177th Street is zoned R8. R7-2 is medium density zoning that allows for a density or floor area ratio ("FAR") of 3.44 times the size of the zoning lot. R8 is higher density zoning that provides for FAR of 6.02 times the zoning lot. The Soft Site Analysis also revealed that the area south of New York-Presbyterian Hospital includes sites that are built to only 50% to 75% of the density permitted as-of-right under R8 zoning; and

Whereas: The zoning regulations that govern land use in Washington Heights and Inwood are mainly unchanged since the City's current zoning resolution was established in 1961, the 1961 zoning resolution does not impose height limits. Quality Housing Zoning was established in 1987 in response to height factor zoning to encourage shorter buildings to result in a better fit with neighboring buildings. With the establishment of Quality Housing regulations and contextual zoning districts, the amount of area in the City mapped R7-2 and R8 has been reduced. The urban fabric of Washington Heights and Inwood predominately pre-dates the 1961 zoning. New construction built under height factor zoning can result in structures that disrupt the existing urban fabric and are out of context, particularly for projects constructed on soft sites; and

Whereas: Examples of out-of-context development projects proposed in the past two years on soft sites in the area mapped R8 south of New York-Presbyterian Hospital include a 13-story building on the site of 857 Riverside Drive, a circa 1851 single-family home related to the abolitionist movement and the continuing fight for racial justice, and a 17-story building on the site a twelve 19th century rowhouses on West 158th Street immediately adjacent to the Audubon Park Historic District that were excluded from the historic district despite multiple requests submitted to the Landmarks Preservation Commission for their inclusion. New buildings at the heights proposed would not be permitted under contextual zoning regulations requested by CB12-M in 2012; and

Whereas: In 2012, CB12M passed a resolution requesting DCP to develop and implement a contextual zoning plan, and in 2016 passed a resolution reaffirming the 2012 request. To date, DCP has not acted on this request; and

Whereas: In September 2021, DCP launched an initiative to request public comment on principles of "good urban design" to achieve a more inclusive approach to urban design that would help to create a more welcoming and equitable public environment, and it acknowledges that good urban design starts with understanding the needs and concerns of community residents; and

Whereas: CB12-M has a documented commitment to advancing principles of good urban design and ensuring that new development is thoughtfully balanced and respects neighborhood scale and character as well as existing and potential future historic preservation initiatives. It would be beneficial to Washington Heights and Inwood to have its land-use regulations updated to provide for a regulatory framework that will encourage future development to be consistent with the district's existing urban fabric, and that will enhance the neighborhood and will also respect and maintain existing scenic vistas, now, therefore, be it;

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Resolved: Community Board 12-Manhattan requests that the NYC Department of City Planning expeditiously undertake the actions necessary to rezone the area in Washington Heights west of Broadway from West 155th Street to West 177th Street that is mapped with R8 zoning instituting zoning regulations that would require any new development to be contextual and consistent with neighborhood character and be it further.

Resolved: Community Board-12-Manhattan also requests that the NYC Department of City Planning acknowledge its work to advocate for sound urban design principles and finally advance the contextual zoning plan requested in 2012 to rezone C8 districts to allow for development benefits the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eleazar Bueno', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Eleazar Bueno
Chairperson

cc:

Hon. Eric Adams, Mayor

Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President

Hon. Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate

Hon. Brad Lander, Comptroller

Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman

Hon. Cordell Cleare, State Senator

Hon. Robert Jackson, State Senator

Hon. Alfred Taylor, Assembly Member

Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Council Member

Hon. Shaun Abreu, Council Member



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Hon. Sarah Carroll, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
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New York, NY 10007

Re: Resolution supporting the Installation of Heritage Marker Signage in the Jumel Terrace Historic District.

Dear Chair Carroll:

At the General Meeting on Tuesday, January 25, 2022, Community Board 12, Manhattan, passed the following resolution with a vote of 41 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention, and 0, not voting, enthusiastically reaffirms its support for the Harlem Heritage Marker project and supporting the installation of the Heritage Markers proposed for the Jumel Terrace Historic District near 12 Jumel Terrace 437 West 162nd Street.

Whereas: In February 2021, Community Board 12-Manhattan ("CB12-M") unanimously passed a resolution in support of the Harlem Heritage Marker project (the "Project"), which involves the installation of 25 commemorative markers (the "Street Signs") at various locations in Manhattan Community Districts 9, 10 and 12 to capture the extraordinary social, political, and cultural history persons and places in these neighborhoods associated with of the Harlem Renaissance, the Project is an initiative of While We Are Still Here, a 501 (c) (3) organization that includes long-term residents of 409 and 555 Edgecombe Avenue, buildings that are central to the Harlem Renaissance. Two Street Signs will be located within the Jumel Terrace Historic District. Review and approval of the Landmarks Preservation Commission ("LPC") is required for these two signs: and

Whereas: The William C. Pomeroy Foundation (the "Foundation") provided a grant to support the Project. The street signs will conform to design standards required by the Foundation for historical markers. The characters will be made of half-inch thick cast aluminum and will be 36 inches in width and 24 inches in height. They will be double-sized and include identical text on each side to describe commemorated individuals. While We Are Still Here's logo will be placed at the top of the sign. The signs will be mounted on steel posts that are seven feet in height; and

Whereas: The Street Signs proposed for the Jumel Terrace Historic District will be installed at sidewalk locations near 12 Jumel Terrace and 437 West 162nd Street. The 12 Jumel Terrace sign commemorates Lawrence Neal, an African American scholar, poet, critic, lecturer, and playwright who significantly influenced the 60's black arts movement. The 437 West 162nd Street sign commemorates J. Rosamond Johnson, an African-American singer, and composer. He wrote the music for "Lift Every Voice and Sing," later known as the Negro National Anthem. He was the younger brother of writer and civil rights activist James Weldon Johnson; the first African American to serve as Secretary of the NAACP; and

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Whereas: CB12M advocates for diversity and inclusion in the designation of historic buildings, structures, and districts and ensures that the history, culture, contributions, and legacy of people and communities of color are recognized, acknowledged, and preserved. We applaud the efforts of While We Are Still Here in formulating and advancing the Project and encourage the City of New York to follow its lead and develop and implement initiatives that will similarly raise the visibility of the social, political, and cultural history and contributions of the City's diverse communities; and

Whereas: The Street Signs will not have adverse visual impacts on the streetscape of Jumel Terrace Historic District but rather will enrich the streetscape and serve to inform the public of the significance and contributions of individuals who once resided in the Jumel Terrace Historic District; now,

Therefore, Be It Resolved: Community Board 12-Manhattan enthusiastically reaffirms its support for the Harlem Heritage Marker project and supports the installation of the Heritage Markers proposed for the Jumel Terrace Historic District near 12 Jumel Terrace 437 West 162nd Street.

Sincerely,



Eleazar Bueno
Chairperson

cc:

Hon. Eric Adams, Mayor

Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President

Hon. Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate

Hon. Brad Lander, Comptroller

Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman

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