



## Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

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

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Richard R. Lewis, Chairperson  
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

May 23, 2019

Hon. Corey Johnson  
Speaker of the NYC Council  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: AFFIRMING SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF THE PARK TERRACE WEST – WEST 217<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Dear Speaker Johnson:

At the General Meeting on Tuesday, April 23, 2019, with a vote of 32 in favor, 2 opposed, 1 abstention, Community Board 12 Manhattan, passed a resolution supporting the proposed Rule Change subject to the clarification and modification to satisfactorily address the questions raised herein; and approving the provisional resolution passed in the April 3, 2019 Land Use Committee Meeting reiterating its support for the proposed designation of the Park Terrace West - West 217<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District, and urging the City Council to affirm the designation, and urging LPC to advance further designations of historic districts and individual buildings in Washington Heights and Inwood; and approving the provisional resolution passed in the April 3, 2019 Land Use Committee Meeting.

Whereas: In November 2018 Community Board 12-Manhattan ("CB12M") passed a resolution supporting the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission's ("LPC") proposal to designate the Park Terrace West-West 217<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District (the "Proposed Historic District") located in Inwood; and

Whereas: On April 3, 2019 the New York City Council's Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses Subcommittee and the full Land Use Committee voted to affirm designation of the Proposed Historic District, and on April 9, 2019 the full City Council is scheduled to vote on the designation; and

Whereas: Washington Heights and Inwood is linked to the earliest period in our national history. Its urbanization represents an important era in the development of the island of Manhattan and the growth of New York City. The place of Washington Heights and Inwood in the history of this city and nation deserves more attention, respect and acknowledgement; and

Whereas: CB12M in collaboration with City College undertook a district-wide land use planning study (the "Study") for Washington Heights and Inwood that included a chapter on buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest that merited further study and evaluation for historic designation. A copy of the Study's Executive Summary was provided to LPC in 2007. Since 2009 CB12M has passed 11 resolutions that evidence its support for historic preservation; now, therefore, be it

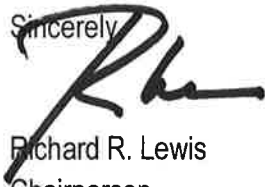
Hon. Hon. Corey Johnson

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**Resolved:** Community Board 12-Manhattan reiterates its support for the proposed designation of the Park Terrace West - West 217<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District, urges the City Council to affirm the designation, and urges LPC to advance further designations of historic districts and individual buildings in Washington Heights and Inwood.

Sincerely  


Richard R. Lewis  
Chairperson

cc: Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor  
Hon. Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate  
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Comptroller  
Hon. Brian Benjamin, State Senator  
Hon. Robert Jackson, State Senator

Hon. Al Taylor, Assembly Member  
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Assembly Member  
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member  
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member



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May 23, 2019

Hon. Margery Perlmutter  
Chair  
New York City Board of Standards and Appeals  
250 Broadway, 29th Floor  
New York, New York 10007

### **Re: SUPPORTING THE PROPOSED BOARD OF STANDARDS AND APPEALS RULE CHANGE**

Dear Chair Perlmutter:

At the General Meeting on Tuesday, April 23, 2019, with a vote of 35 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstention, Community Board 12 Manhattan, passed a resolution supporting the proposed Rule Change subject to the clarification and modification to satisfactorily address the questions raised herein; and approving the provisional resolution passed in the April 3, 2019 Land Use Committee Meeting.

Whereas: The Board of Standards and Appeals ("BSA") is proposing a rule change (the "Rule Change") to promote, as stated in the materials issued by BSA in March 2019, transparency by codifying existing, longstanding policies set in place by BSA, and setting forth procedures to ensure adherence to such policies. The deadline for the submission of public comments on the Rule Change is Thursday, April 11, 2019; and

Whereas: Since 1916 BSA has worked to administer zoning, building, and housing regulations to protect the City's interest in safeguarding the general welfare while balancing private property interests. Under the New York City Charter, BSA is an independent agency that consists of five commissioners (the "Commissioners"). In recent public hearings it has come to BSA's attention that many stakeholders are not aware of how the Commissioners review applications, what evidence they consider, and what specific policies BSA has had in place for years to promote transparency, integrity, and the independence of the Board's review process. The Rule Change aims to codify BSA's long-standing policies and practices and establish procedures to ensure adherence with these policies, and

Whereas: The Rule Change would amend the sections New York City Charter to state BSA's commitment to ensuring its independence, which is crucial to the fair exercise of its authority and discretion regarding zoning and land use in New York City. The Rule Change would also introduce a new code of conduct section that states the Commissioners will:

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1. Observe exemplary standards of conduct and act in a manner that promotes public confidence
2. Not initiate, permit, or consider communications concerning a pending application that are made outside of a public hearing or review session or otherwise included in the record without the authorization of the general counsel
3. Not accept any award, plaque, gift, benefit, or thing of value that would result in or create the appearance of giving preferential treatment to any person or entity, losing or affecting their independence or impartiality, or accepting or having accepted such item in exchange for being considered when rendering a decision; and

Whereas: The Rule Change was reviewed at the April 3, 2019 meeting of Community Board 12-Manhattan's Land Use committee ("Land Use" or the "Committee"). In general, the Committee was favorably disposed to the Rule Change but, in the course of discussion, identified questions or aspects of the Rule Change that required clarification including the following.

1. Does the Rule Change govern the Commissioner's communication concerning a proposed or potential application before it is formally submitted?
2. Does BSA have a formal definition for what is considered testimony or communications that appear or is otherwise included in the application record? If so what is that definition?
3. How does BSA maintain independence from the Mayor's office?
4. Does the Rule Change pertain to BSA's Executive Director and staff? If not, are there similar rules, policies and procedures that do govern their communications?
5. Why does the Rule Change restrict only the Commissioners from accepting awards, gifts, and other things of value but not members of their immediate family? Extending this restriction to members of the Commissioners immediate family would be in line with conflict-of-interest rules that govern City employees and would guard against the potential for circumventing the prohibition of Commissioners accepting gifts and other things of value; and

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Whereas: After further discussion, the Committee agreed that the Rule Change, properly clarified and amended, would be beneficial to promoting greater public understanding of BSA's policies and procedures regarding the review of applications. Now, therefore be it

Resolved: Community Board 12-Manhattan supports the proposed Rule Change subject to its clarification and modification to satisfactorily address the questions raised herein.

Sincerely,



Richard R. Lewis  
Chairperson

cc: Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor  
Hon. Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate  
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Comptroller  
Hon. Brian Benjamin, State Senator  
Hon. Robert Jackson, State Senator  
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