

## LAND USE COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES

April 1, 2015

### Committee Members Present

Wayne Benjamin, Chair  
Anita Barberis, Asst. Chair  
Isaiah Bing  
Osi Kaminer  
Arlene Schulman

### Committee Members Absent

Steve Simon

### Board Members Present

Richard Lewis

### Public Member

Vivian Ducat

### Public Member Absent

Staff: Debra Blow

Guests: Rita Gorman, Monzer Khafagy – HAP, Lucian Reynolds – MBPO, Mary Anderson

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:10pm. Land Use Committee (“Land Use” or the “Committee”) Chair Wayne Benjamin began the meeting by welcoming committee members and guests. He provided an update on the follow-up presentation that Dan Cohen of the Housing Partnership was scheduled to make to the Committee noting that the Department of City Planning (“DCP”) has advised that it is taking the lead on a new Broadway Rezoning Study, from West 155<sup>th</sup> Street to Dyckman Avenue, and has requested that the Housing Partnership discontinue any further work on its rezoning proposal.
2. Lucian Reynolds, Urban Planner from the Office of the Manhattan Borough President lead a presentation and discussion on land use regulations and the uniform land use review process (“ULURP”). Mr. Reynolds stated that he is the Borough President’s planning liaison for CB12-M, is a former member of Manhattan Community Board 11 and its Land Use Committee, is a resident of East Harlem and a former resident of Washington Heights, and that attended Hunter College’s Planning School. Mr. Reynolds provided an overview of the Land Use 101 PowerPoint presentation previously reviewed by the Committee with particular emphasis on ULURP and other discretionary actions such as Board of Standards and Appeals (“BSA”) special permits and zoning variances, zoning text amendments, and applications that require review by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Lucian stated that rezoning / ULURP applications are subject to environmental review, i.e.: an environmental impact statement (“EIS”), in which potential environmental impacts must be disclosed and mitigation measures recommended, but implementing the mitigation measures is not a requirement of the EIS; in the course of review and consideration of the EIS, City Council members and/or other elected officials can advocate for implementation if mitigation measures. He further stated that in the context of reviewing an EIS or applications for discretionary reviews such ULURP or BSA, it is important to understand what is being studied, what actions are being requested and what approvals are required, in addition to understanding the language of the planning or review process and asking the right questions to specifically address the discretionary actions under consideration.
3. Monzer Khafagy, Project Manager with HAP Investments presented HAP’s proposal for the modular construction of a residential building to be located at 655-667 West 187<sup>th</sup> Street. Chair Benjamin stated that HPA contacted CB12M and asked to meet with its Land Use and Housing and Human Services committees, and that, since construction of the project will involve temporary street closures HAP was advised that it should also meet with the Traffic and Transportation (“T&T”) committee. Mr. Khafagy stated that this is his first project as a project manager with HAP; he formerly worked in the oil and gas industry where modular construction is used extensively and that he is excited to bring the use of modular construction to residential buildings. The project is an eight-story building that includes 47 one-, two- and three-bedroom market-rate rental units and 14 parking spaces. Mr. Khafagy stated that HAP is using the same manufacturer, located in Pennsylvania, which produced the modular units for The Stack, a modularly-constructed residential building located in Inwood. He further stated that modular construction does not result in significant cost savings. The benefits include greater quality control (everything is built in a controlled, enclosed environment) and a shorter, more efficient construction process (different phases of work can be performed at the same time as opposed to in series, for example while the foundation is being excavated the modules are being made). The modules are shipped with all interior construction, finishes and branch plumbing and utility lines in place; plumbing and utility risers and mains are

built and connected on-site. He further stated that short-comings of modular construction include the need to stick to a fixed module and that ceiling heights can become a bit compromised in order to fit the modules within the building height permitted by zoning. He also stated that the City's proposal under the Rezoning for Affordable Housing to allow greater flexibility in building heights would be beneficial to project that are built with modular construction.

The modules are 13 feet wide and 60 feet long. They can only be shipped after midnight and will be transported by way of the George Washington Bridge. During the construction process HAP has requested that the street be closed to vehicular traffic to facilitate process of staging and erecting the modules; this will be discussed further with T&T. It is anticipated that installation of the modules will be complete within six weeks and the project's total construction duration will be 13 months.

4. Chair Benjamin stated that he will ask District Manager Ebenezer Smith to follow up with DCP on the status of the ULURP application of the day care center at West 159<sup>th</sup> Street and Edgecombe Avenue, noting that there are only two more LU meetings before CB12M recesses for the summer.
5. After further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Wayne Benjamin