



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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Burt Lazarin
Chair

Jesse Bodine
District Manager

December 13, 2018

Corey Johnson
New York City Council Speaker
City Hall Office
New York, NY 10007

Re: Intro 1058

Dear Speaker Johnson:

On November 14, 2018, the Hell's Kitchen/Clinton Land Use Committee of Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) heard a presentation of Intro 1058, which has been introduced by Council Member Espinal and Brooklyn Borough President Adams. The bill calls for the Department of City Planning (DCP) in cooperation with relevant agencies and stakeholders to prepare a comprehensive urban agriculture plan by July of 2019. The intent of Intro 1058 is to study this issue through a "Land Use lens."

At its regular Board meeting on December 5, 2018, Manhattan Community Board voted to recommend approval by a vote of 32 for, 0 opposed, 2 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible, of the concept of Intro 1058 and to encourage further study of the issue.

According to an Urban Design Lab report, published in 2011, there are over 900 farms and gardens in New York City as a whole. In addition, the report claims, over 5,000 acres of unused land could be repurposed to provide solutions to some of the concerns around food security and health. Due to a lack of resources, support, coordination, funding and appropriate policies, food production from these sources are not maximized to their full potential.

Intro 1058 asks DCP and the relevant agencies to do the following:

- develop a list of current urban agricultural spaces and available land;
- prioritize the use of urban agriculture;
- change land policy;
- evaluate current codes to ensure integration of urban agriculture;

- increase access to healthy foods in low income communities;
- integrate urban agriculture into city plans;
- educate youth on food systems;
- create new jobs; and,
- form an office of urban agriculture.

The Clinton Community Garden on West 48th Street and the “urban farm” on the roof of the Metro Baptist Church on West 40th Street are tremendous assets for Manhattan District 4. A study on how to expand food-related use and potential of the City’s — and our district’s — green spaces is a worthy one. It merits further investigation. The study should also take into consideration the fact that some plants take on heavy metals and should be periodically tested to assure they are safe for consumption.

Sincerely,



Burt Lazarin
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Jean-Daniel Noland
Chair
Clinton/Hell’s Kitchen Land Use Committee