



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

July 11, 2007 /Calendar No. 6

C 070300 PCX

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services and the Fire Department, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, for the site selection and acquisition of property (Block 2905, lot 38) and the site selection of property (Block 2905, lot 30) located at 1637-1655 Washington Avenue, for use as a rescue facility and parking lot, Community District 3, Borough of the Bronx.

This application (C 070300 PCX) was filed on January 18, 2007 by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services and the Fire Department (FDNY), for site selection of property (Block 2905, lot 30), and for site selection and acquisition of property (Block 2905, lot 38) located at 1637-1655 Washington Avenue, for use as a rescue facility and parking lot.

BACKGROUND

The Fire Department (FDNY) and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) are requesting site selection approval of a city-owned property (Block 2905, Lot 30) to facilitate the construction of a new facility for Rescue 3 on the northern part of Lot 30, and site selection and acquisition approval of an adjacent privately-owned lot (Block 2905, Lot 38) for accessory parking.

The New York City Fire Department is proposing to construct a new facility for Rescue 3 on the city owned lot (Block 2905, Lot 30), which is currently the site of an EMS facility and an accessory parking lot, and to acquire an adjacent privately-owned vacant parcel (Block 2905, Lot 38) for accessory parking, in the Bathgate area of Bronx Community District 3. Rescue 3 is one of the Fire Department's five elite operations units, and it serves the entire Borough of the Bronx. In

addition to fire-fighting, Rescue 3 fire fighters are trained and equipped to respond to numerous types of emergencies requiring the use of an assortment of specialized tools and equipments. The existing building, which currently houses Rescue 3, is located at 453 East 176th Street and does not meet the programmatic and unique storage requirements of the company.

The Fire Department will construct a new facility for Rescue 3 on the city owned lot (Block 2905, Lot 30), and as a part of the proposal, FDNY will provide accessory parking for employees of Rescue 3 and the existing EMS Station, and spare ambulances by acquiring an adjacent privately-owned vacant parcel (Block 2905, Lot 38). The project site is located between East 172nd and East 173rd Streets, approximately two blocks east from Claremont Park and about four blocks west of Crotona Park, in an M1-4 zoning district. Most of the area within a quarter mile radius of the site is zoned M1-4 and M1-1. Other zoning districts within a quarter mile radius of the site include R6 to the east, R8 to the west and R7-1 to the south, southwest and northwest, with mainly C2-4 overlay on Webster Avenue and C1-4 on Claremont Parkway.

The block 2905 on which the project site is to be located, is occupied primarily by one- or two-story automotive-related and industrial uses on the west side, two 1-story residential apartment buildings on the north side, and three vacant tax lots on the south side of the project site. The project site is comprised of two rectangular-shaped, mid-block parcels (Block 2905, Lot 30 and Lot 38), which front on Washington Avenue.

Block 2905, Lot 30 of the project site is a city-owned property under the ownership of FDNY. The site was the subject of an earlier ULURP application (C 000150 PSX) for site selection to facilitate

the construction of a one-story ambulance (EMS) station and an automotive preventive maintenance service facility. The one story EMS Station 18 on the southern portion of the Lot 30 serves the Bathgate, Tremont, East Tremont and Mount Hope communities of the Bronx, and occupies approximately 6,000 square feet of the Tax Lot 30. The automotive preventive maintenance service facility was not built on the northern portion of Lot 30 due to the budgetary constraints. Lot 30 currently accommodates accessory parking with a capacity of 28 spaces, which is utilized by employees and spare ambulances of the EMS Station 18.

Block 2905, Lot 38 of the project site, which FDNY is seeking to acquire, is privately-owned property located directly south of Lot 30 of the project site. Lot 38 is a rectangular-shaped parcel, with approximately 10,513 square feet of lot area. It is currently unimproved and enclosed by a chain-link fence, and it is used for vehicle storage.

On Block 2905, Lot 30, the Fire Department will construct a new three-story facility for Rescue 3, which will occupy approximately 25,000 square feet of total floor area. It will have a large vehicular bay for its apparatus and vehicular access from Washington Avenue. The first floor will be 18 feet high to accommodate the apparatus while the second and third floors will each have 10 feet high ceilings. The number of employees assigned to Rescue 3 will remain unchanged with the construction of new facility. There will be five fire-fighters and one officer per tour, shift changes will occur at 9AM and 6PM. With the construction of the new facility on Lot 30, 14 out of 28 accessory parking spaces will be lost. In order to compensate for the loss of these parking spaces and to accommodate additional parking spaces generated by the new facility for Rescue 3, FDNY will acquire an adjacent privately-owned parcel (Block 2905, Lot 38) directly south of the existing

EMS facility. Lot 38 will occupy an accessory parking lot with a capacity for approximately 27 spaces including two spaces for disabled parking. The parking for the members of both Rescue 3 and EMS Station 18 will be relocated to this replacement parking lot. Additionally, FDNY will use the lot for storage of various emergency equipments and parking spare apparatus/ambulances.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 070300 PCX) was reviewed pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and the SEQRA regulations set forth in Volume 6 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations, Section 617.00 et seq., and the New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Rules of Procedure of 1991 and Executive Order No. 91 of 1977. The designated CEQR number is 07FDO001X. The lead agency is the Fire Department.

After a study of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action, a negative declaration was issued on January 10, 2007.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C 070300 PCX) was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on February 26, 2007, and was duly referred to Community Board 3 and the Borough President of the Bronx in accordance with the Title 62 of the Rules of the City of New York, Section 2-02 (b).

Community Board Public Hearing

Community Board 3 held a public hearing on this application (C 070300 PCX) on April 10, 2007 and on that date, by a vote of 23 to 0 with 0 abstentions, adopted a resolution recommending approval of this application.

Borough President Recommendation

The Borough President of the Bronx held a public hearing on this application (C 070300 PCX) on April 27, 2007, and issued a recommendation approving this application on May 21, 2007 with the following conditions:

“that the new construction funded with public money must be environmentally sustainable, in conformance with the intent of Local Law 86. I recognize that Local Law 86 exempts firehouses from its requirements to achieve a Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED) rating; nevertheless I call on the FDNY to implement the law’s provisions for reducing energy consumption to the extent feasible, including:

- Energy efficient lighting
- HVAC systems that minimize energy consumption
- Plumbing equipment designed to reduce water usage

In addition, street trees should be planted along Washington Avenue and integrated into interior design of the proposed parking lot, serving as a buffer between the lot and adjacent buildings.”

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On May 23, 2007 (Calendar No 1), the City Planning Commission scheduled June 6, 2007, for a public hearing on this application (C 070300 PCX). The hearing was duly held on June 6, 2007 (Calendar No. 15). There was one speaker from the Fire Department, who spoke in favor of the application. There were no other speakers, and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The Commission believes that the application for site selection and acquisition to facilitate the construction of a new three-story approximately 25,000 square-foot Rescue 3 facility and for accessory parking, on property located at 1637-1655 Washington Avenue (Block 2905, part of Lot 30, and Lot 38), Borough of the Bronx, Community District 3, is appropriate. The Commission also acknowledges that the need for this facility was included in the Citywide Statement of Needs

for FY 2006-2007. The proposed project is consistent with the proposed location and siting criteria identified in the Statement of Needs.

The proposed site selection and acquisition will permit the construction of a necessary, modern Rescue 3 facility serving the entire Borough of the Bronx. The current quarters of Rescue 3 located at 453 East 176th Street is too small and does not meet the special programmatic and storage requirements for the FDNY's Rescue companies. The Fire Department's plan to construct a new facility for Rescue 3 at 1637-1655 Washington Avenue, approximately four blocks away from existing quarters, will create a modern facility that will allow Rescue 3 to effectively and efficiently perform its duties. The project area is currently zoned M1-4 which allows a fire station to be constructed as-of-right.

The proposed Rescue 3 site is readily available and can accommodate the unique programmatic and storage requirements of Rescue 3. The site is adequate in terms of its size, configuration, availability of primary roadway access, and compatibility with neighboring land uses. The affected portion of the parcel is a 62 feet by 140 feet, rectangular-shaped property with approximately 62 feet of frontage on Washington Avenue. The site is located in close proximity to the Cross Bronx Expressway and Claremont Parkway. All the streets in the vicinity are predominantly manufacturing corridors, which provide easy access to the rest of the neighborhood of the Bronx.

The Fire Department will build an accessory parking lot on an adjacent privately-owned parcel (Lot 38), with a capacity of 27 spaces, in order to compensate for the loss of 14 parking spaces and to accommodate additional parking spaces generated by the new Rescue 3 facility. The accessory

parking lot will be used by the members of both Rescue 3 and existing EMS Station 18, for storage of various emergency equipments and spare apparatus, which will avoid on-street parking.

The Commission encourages FDNY to follow the Borough President's recommendations about environmentally sustainable design in conformance with the intent of Local Law 86, and parking. Furthermore, the Commission notes that the parking area of the proposed site must comply with the Department of City Planning's proposed Zoning Text, 'Design Regulations for Commercial and Community Facility Parking Lots', which was referred to Community Boards and Borough Presidents on June 18, 2007.

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the City Planning Commission finds that the action described herein will have no significant impact on the environment; and be it further

RESOLVED, by the City Planning Commission, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, that based on the environmental determination and consideration described in this report, the application (C 070300 PCX) submitted by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services and the Fire Department, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, for the site selection and acquisition of property (Block 2905, lot 38) and the site selection of property (Block 2905, lot 30) located at 1637-1655 Washington Avenue, for use as a rescue facility and parking lot, Community District 3, Borough of the Bronx, is approved.

The above resolution, duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on July 11, 2007 (Calendar No. 6), is filed with the Office of the Speaker, City Council, and the Borough President of Bronx in accordance with the requirements of Section 197-d of the New York City Charter.

AMANDA M. BURDEN, AICP, Chair

KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, Esq., Vice Chairman

**ANGELA M. BATTAGLIA, IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E., ANGELA M. CAVALUZZI, R.A.,
ALFRED C. CERULLO, III, BETTY Y. CHEN, RICHARD EADDY, LISA A. GOMEZ,
NATHAN LEVENTHAL, JOHN MEROLO, KAREN A. PHILLIPS, DOLLY WILLIAMS,**
Commissioners