



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

March 18, 2009/ Calendar No. 15

C 080107 PSR

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Police Department and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the site selection of property located at 970 Richmond Avenue (Block 1704, Lot 1) for use as a police precinct station house, Community District 1, Borough of Staten Island.

The application (C 080107 PSR) was filed on October 4, 2007 by the Police Department (NYPD) and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) for site selection of property located at 970 Richmond Avenue (Block 1704, Lot 1), Borough of Staten Island, Community District 1, for use as a police precinct station house for the new 121st precinct.

RELATED ACTION

In addition to the site selection which is the subject of this report, implementation of the proposed development also requires action by the City Planning Commission on the following application which is being considered concurrently with this application:

C 080106 ZSR Special permit pursuant to Section 74-67 of the Zoning Resolution to locate a police station in a residential district and to allow use of community facility bulk regulations.

BACKGROUND

The project site (Block 1704, Lot 1) is surrounded by Sanders Street, Wilcox Street, Richmond Avenue and the Hillside and Baron De Hirsch Cemeteries in Staten Island Community District 1. This site is located in an R3-2 district. The site is city-owned, approximately 130,366 square feet and is currently undeveloped. Most of the irregularly shaped property is predominantly flat; at the Richmond Avenue frontage there is a 10 foot rise over a distance of 150 feet. This site had been used by the Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) for asphalt millings and vehicle storage.

In the R3-2 zoning district the Hillside Cemetery and Baron De Hirsch Cemetery are adjacent to the southerly boundaries of the project site. To the west and north of the site across Sanders and Wilcox streets there are one and two-family residences and low-rise apartment buildings. The Graniteville School, PS 22, is located at Sanders Street and Monsey Place which is one block north of the site. North of the project site along the west side of Richmond Avenue there are commercial uses within the C1-2 and C1-1 commercial zoning districts. Across Richmond Avenue to the east there is a large shopping center within a large C2-2 zoning district. North of that there are additional commercial uses within a C2-1 zoning district.

Project Description

Staten Island currently has three police precincts with boundaries that are coterminous with the three community districts. Population growth and increased demands for law enforcement services in northwestern Staten Island have lead to a proposed new 121st police precinct to be created from the western portions of the current 120th and 122nd precincts. The new 121st precinct would be generally bounded: on the east by Jewett Avenue in Community District 1 and Manor Road, Brielle and Rockland avenues and Forest Hill and Richmond Hill roads in Community District 2; on the south by Arthur Kill Road, Richmond Avenue, Richmond Creek, Fresh Kills and Little Fresh Kill in Community District 2; on the west by the Arthur Kill at the westerly boundaries for Community Districts 1 and 2 and on the north by the Kill Van Kull at the northerly boundary for Community District 1.

As certified, the facility included a two-story, 48,800 square foot precinct station house with a total of 108 parking spaces and vehicular access on Richmond Avenue and Sanders Street. The proposed building is set back 32 feet from the northerly property line to provide an internal driveway with parallel parking and a landscaped buffer between the street and the building.

This proposed facility is designed to provide adequately sized and modern administrative spaces, locker rooms, lavatories, dormitories, shower facilities, equipment storage areas, interrogation

rooms, muster and detention areas. The facility is expected to accommodate approximately 421 new NYPD employees. The development includes landscaping around the periphery of the site and in the 29,000 square foot parking lot. Proposed trees include 23 trees in the parking lot area, 37 perimeter trees and 18 street trees. The development complies with commercial parking lot regulations of the Zoning Resolution, including provision of bioswales, even though these regulations do not apply to this site. Iron picket fencing 6 feet in height would be provided between the sidewalk and the internal landscape buffer area along the site periphery on Sanders and Wilcox streets. Wirewall fencing 6 feet in height would be located along the southerly property lines adjacent to the cemetery uses.

The 108 at-grade parking spaces are distributed in four locations: a 77 space parking lot of approximately 29,000 square feet in the southwesterly portion of the site; 4 internal spaces accessed through this parking lot; 22 parallel parking spaces along the northerly Wilcox Street frontage and 5 publicly accessible visitor parking spaces at the main building entrance on Richmond Avenue.

REQUESTED ACTIONS

Public Facility Site Selection (C 080107 PSR)

The Police Department (NYPD) and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) are seeking site selection of property located at 970 Richmond Avenue (Block 1704, Lot 1) to locate the new 121st precinct station house.

Special Permit (C 080106 ZSR)

Police stations are not permitted as-of-right in R3-2 residential districts. The applicants request a special permit pursuant to Section 74-67 to allow the new police station to be located in an R3-2 residential district and to allow the applicable community facility bulk regulations to apply to the proposed building.

The proposed building has an aggregate width of street wall along Wilcox Street of approximately 580.5 feet. Section 23-463 has a maximum aggregate width of street wall of 125 feet in an R3-2 district. There is no maximum aggregate for community facilities. In addition the proposed building

does not provide the required rear yard pursuant to Section 23-47. The one-story portion of the proposed building encroaches into the required 30 foot rear yards. Community facility regulations allow such encroachment up to a height of 23 feet.

In addition, the proposed building does not comply with community facility regulations governing rear yard requirements, height and setback regulations governing sky exposure planes and inner court regulations. In addition, the building does not comply with regulations governing restrictions on use of required open space for parking and location of parking spaces in Lower Density Growth Management Areas. In this instance, the City is exercising its option not to be subject to its zoning requirements when performing a governmental function.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 080107 PSR), in conjunction with the application for the related action (C 080106 ZSR), 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 City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Rules of Procedure of 1991 and Executive Order No. 91 of 1977. The designated CEQR number is 07NYP002R. The lead agency is the Police Department.

After a study of the potential environmental impact of the proposed action, an amended Negative Declaration was issued on October 20, 2008.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C 080107 PSR), along with the application for the related action (C 080106 ZSR), was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on November 17, 2008, and was duly

referred to Community Board 1 and the Borough President, in accordance with Title 62 of the Rules of the City of New York, Section 2-02(b).

Community Board Public Hearing

Community Board 1 held a public hearing on this application (C 080107 PSR) on January 5, 2009, in conjunction with the public hearing on the application for the related action (C 080106 ZSR), and on January 13, 2009, by a vote of 28 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstaining, adopted a resolution recommending approval of these applications "...with the request that the architects increase the public parking spaces by any means possible".

Borough President Recommendation

This application (C 080107 PSR), along with the related application (C 080106 ZSR), was considered by the Borough President of Staten Island, who issued recommendations to approve the applications on January 21, 2009.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On February 4, 2009 (Calendar No. 8), the City Planning Commission scheduled February 18, 2009, for a public hearing on this application (C 080107 PSR). The hearing was duly held on February 18, 2009 (Calendar No. 34), in conjunction with the hearing for the related action (C 080106 ZSR). There were two speakers in favor and none in opposition.

A representative of the Police Department appeared in favor of the application. He described the proposal and stated it will address the increased need for police services in northwestern Staten Island. He stated that in response to the request from Community Board 1 for increased public parking for visitors to the 121st precinct station house, the applicant will increase, from five to seven,

visitor parking spaces in the circle at the Richmond Avenue entrance to the new station house and will make the parking spaces on the north drive of the proposed facility available when there are precinct community council meetings or other events which could bring large numbers of visitors to the station house. In addition, he stated that NYPD would work with Department of Transportation (DOT) to provide on-street designated visitor parking spaces in front of the facility along Richmond Avenue. The project architect also appeared in favor.

There were no other speakers, and the hearing was closed.

Waterfront Revitalization Program Consistency Review

This application was reviewed by the Department of City Planning for consistency with the policies of the New York City Waterfront Revitalization Program (WRP), as amended, approved by the New York City Council on October 13, 1999 and by the New York State Department of State on May 28, 2002, pursuant to the New York State Waterfront Revitalization and Coastal Resources Act of 1981 (New York State Executive Law, Section 910 et seq.). The designated WRP number is 08-106.

This action was determined to be consistent with the policies of the New York City Waterfront Revitalization Program.

CONSIDERATION

The City Planning Commission believes that the application (C 080107 PSR) of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) for the site-selection of city-owned property located at 970 Richmond Avenue (Block 1704, Lot 1), in the Borough of Staten Island, Community District 1, is appropriate.

The Commission notes the proposed site was not included in the Citywide Statement of Needs, however, a letter dated June 7, 2007 pursuant to Section 204g of the New York City Charter was sent to the Borough President of Staten Island.

The Commission notes that the new 121st precinct is being created as a response to population growth and increased demand for law enforcement services in northwestern Staten Island. This new precinct would be created from the western portions of the existing 120th and 122nd precincts.

The Commission notes that the project site for the new facility is located within the service area for the new 121th Precinct, which is the northwestern portion of Staten Island north and south of the Staten Island Expressway.

The Commission believes the proposed site is centrally located within the new 121st Precinct and ideally located for direct access to major roads, such as Richmond and Forest avenues, for expedient access to community needs and calls for service in the new precinct.

The Commission notes that the proposed site is city-owned and that prior DOT storage operations at this site have been relocated.

The Commission notes that the site is in an R3-2 zoning district which does not permit the use as-of-right, and therefore, the applicants are seeking a special permit pursuant to Section 74-67 of the New York City Zoning Resolution, (C 080106 ZSR), to allow the construction of a police station in a residence district and to allow the applicable district bulk regulations for community facility buildings.

In response to concerns about having adequate parking for visitors to the facility, the Commission notes that, in a letter, dated March 6, 2009, the NYPD indicates that

the Department is acutely aware of the need for visitor parking at the new 121 Precinct.

When presented with preliminary plan for the 121 precinct the Police Commissioner gave specific direction that visitor parking was a priority and was to be provided. The consultant did provide 5 spaces in front of the facility along the circular drive entrance and after our meeting with Staten Island Community Board # 1 the consultant and NYPD determined that two additional spaces could be provided at this location. In addition, the Department will work with Staten Island Department of Transportation to provide designated on street parking along Richmond Avenue in front of the precinct for visitors once the facility is nearing completion. Also, when it is anticipated that large numbers of people will be visiting the facility for community meetings the Command Officer of the precinct will allow visitor parking in the 22 overflow employee parking spots along the driveway on the north side of the building running parallel with Wilcox Street. The main parking area on the south side and the overflow area are restricted access and will be controlled by a Security Road Barriers. On occasions when community meetings occurs a Police Officer can be stationed at the Security Barrier to control access to the overflow area so visitors can park in these spots.

In addition to the site selection application, the project requires a special permit (C 080106 ZSR) to allow the police station to be located in a residential zoning district and use of community facility bulk regulations.

The Commission notes that the NYPD searched for suitable alternative sites. It was determined that there were serious difficulties in locating the police station in a district where it would be both permitted as-of-right and capable of servicing the assigned area. The only sites where the police station could have been built as-of-right were privately owned commercial sites. The Commission also notes that the proposed site is centrally located within the boundaries of the new precinct.

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 that the City Planning Commission, in its capacity as the City Coastal Commission, has reviewed the waterfront aspects of this application and finds that the proposed action is consistent with WRP policies; and be it further

RESOLVED, by the City Planning Commission, pursuant to Sections 197-c and 200 of the New York City Charter, that based on the environmental determination, and the consideration and findings described in this report, the application (C 080107 PSR) submitted by the Police Department and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services for site selection of property located at 970 Richmond Avenue (Block 1704, Lot 1) Borough of Staten Island, for use as a police precinct station house, is approved.

The above resolution (C 080107 PSR), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on March 18, 2009 (Calendar No.15), is filed with the Office of the Speaker, City Council, and the Borough President in accordance with the requirements of Section 197-d of the New York City Charter.

AMANDA M. BURDEN, FAICP Chair

KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, Esq. Vice Chairman

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