



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

September 22, 2021/Calendar No. 28

C 210459 ZSQ

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by WF Industrial IV LLC pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for the grant of a special permit pursuant to Section 62-837 of the Zoning Resolution to modify the height and setback, maximum width of walls facing shoreline and the ground floor streetscape requirements of Section 62-341 (Development on Land and Platforms) in connection with the construction of an approximately 495,000 square-foot motion picture studio, on property located at 1 Steinway Place a.k.a. 36-01 19th Avenue (Block 814, Lots 1 and 10), in an M3-1 District, Borough of Queens, Community District 1, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-627.

This application for a special permit pursuant to Zoning Resolution (ZR) Section 62-837(a) was filed by WF Industrial IV LLC on May 21, 2021. The requested special permit, in conjunction with the related applications described below would facilitate the construction of a seven-story, 495,000-square-foot media production facility and 34,800 square feet of publicly accessible open area on Block 814, Lots 1 and 10, in Astoria, Queens, Community District 1.

RELATED ACTIONS

In addition to the special permit (C 210459 ZSQ) that is the subject of this report, the proposed project also requires action by the City Planning Commission (CPC) on the following applications, which are being considered concurrently with this application:

N 210457 ZAQ Zoning authorization pursuant to ZR 62-822(a) for modification of waterfront public access area (WPAA) and supplemental public access area (SPAA) requirements

N 210458 ZAQ Zoning authorization pursuant to ZR 62-822(b) for modification of WPAA and SPAA design requirements

BACKGROUND

The applicant requests a special permit and zoning authorizations to facilitate the construction of a seven-story, 495,000-square-foot media production facility and 34,800 square feet of publicly accessible open area in Astoria, Queens, Community District 1. The project area and

development site are coterminous and consist of one zoning lot comprised of two tax lots (Block 814, Lots 1 and 10). Lot 10 is owned by the applicant and Lot 1 is not owned by the applicant and is not expected to induce development as a result of the proposed actions. The development site is bounded by Luyster Creek, also known as Steinway Creek, to the west, Bowery Bay to the north and east, and Steinway Place and 19th Avenue to the south. The zoning lot was historically home to the Steinway Piano factory, which continues to operate on Lot 1.

The development site has a lot area of 491,612-square feet. The applicant-owned Lot 10 consists of 228,693 square feet of unimproved land with 435 feet of frontage on 19th Avenue and 475 feet of frontage on Luyster Creek. Foundation work, to be used either for the proposed project or for an as-of-right last-mile distribution facility with the same footprint, has begun on Lot 10. The non-applicant-owned Lot 1 consists of 262,919 square and is improved with buildings ranging from one-to-five stories occupied by the Steinway Piano factory. Lot 1 has approximately 350 feet of frontage on 19th Avenue and 590 feet of frontage on Steinway Place. There are no plans for additional development on the Steinway Lot and the existing conditions on the Steinway Lot are proposed to remain.

The development site's shoreline features a steep slope that has been hardened with boulders, concrete and asphalt. The development site is within the one percent annual chance flood plain (Flood Zone AE) and must comply with flood-resistant construction standards of the NYC Building Code. The portion of the development site below 10 feet above sea level is within the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) tidal wetland jurisdiction, within which impervious coverage cannot exceed 20 percent for new developments. In addition, pursuant to DEC's regulations, no structures can be constructed within 30 feet of the development site's existing shoreline, unless such structures are water dependent, such as an overlook or boat launch.

The development site is also within LaGuardia Airport's Airport Circling District, which restricts the height of buildings on the development site to 170-feet tall, pursuant to Article VI, Chapter 1 of the ZR.

The development site is in northern Astoria, within the Steinway Industrial Business Zone (IBZ), in Community District 1, Queens. The surrounding area includes a mix of light and heavy industrial uses, commercial uses, and open space. The area to the north and west of the site is characterized by low-scale heavy industrial uses, such as the Astoria Energy powerplant, and the NYC Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Bowery Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant line the waterfront. Prevailing built form east of the project area includes one-to-two story, high lot coverage light industrial uses. Retail uses are concentrated on 37th Street, one block south of the development site, and include a one-story shopping plaza on the west side of the street and a local brewery on the east side. Residential areas south of 20th Avenue, about one-quarter mile south of the development site, are generally improved with two-to-four story multi-family buildings.

The surrounding area is predominantly mapped with light and heavy manufacturing districts to the north, east, and west and low density contextual residential districts to the south. The project area is within an M3-1 zone bounded by Luyster Creek to the west, Bowery Bay to the north and east, and Steinway Place and 19th Avenue to the south. M3-1 zoning districts allow for up to 2.0 FAR of commercial or manufacturing floor area, including limited retail uses, office uses, and a broad range of industrial uses. Buildings in M3-1 zoning districts can have a maximum front wall height of 60 feet or four stories, whichever is less, before setting back and continuing to rise pursuant to a sky exposure plane. Parking in M3-1 zoning districts varies by use. Waterfront blocks and zoning lots within the M3-1 zoning district are subject to Zoning Resolution Article VI, Chapter 2 (Special Regulations Applying in the Waterfront Area). The areas south and east of the development site are located within an M1-1 district that extends east to encompass LaGuardia Airport. The areas south of 20th Avenue are zoned with low density R4 and R5 contextual districts. There are also no nearby public facilities or institutional uses.

The development site is approximately 0.2 miles to the southwest of the one-acre Woodtree Playground and basketball courts fronting on 20th Avenue between 37th and 38th streets. There are also approximately eight acres of privately-owned baseball/softball and soccer fields fronting on 20th Avenue one block south of the development site.

The development site is served by the Q101 and Q100 buses. The Q101 has stops south of the development site on 20th Avenue and Steinway Street and provides service to East Midtown in Manhattan. The Q100 bus stops southwest of the development site at 20th Avenue/31st Street and runs between Queens Plaza and Rikers Island. The development site is located approximately one mile from the nearest subway station, the Ditmars Station, with service on the N and W lines.

In December 2020, the City Council approved a combination acquisition and site selection for the NYC Department of Sanitation (DSNY) to facilitate the development of a new sanitation garage and salt shed across Luyster Creek from the development site with an entrance that would be located at the terminus of 19th Avenue, adjacent to the development site (C 200238 PCQ). During public review, Community Board 1 requested that DSNY build a public waterfront access area or walkway on the portion of Luyster Creek they would control. DSNY agreed to reserve the property for open space, although there is currently no funding allocated for design and construction of the open space.

An area one block south of the development site was rezoned pursuant to the 238-block 2010 Astoria Rezoning (C 100199 ZMQ). The Astoria Rezoning was a contextual rezoning that aimed to ensure development more closely reflects the established built context and direct opportunities for moderate residential and commercial growth to wide streets and along transit corridors. Under the Astoria Rezoning, non-contextual residential districts were rezoned to lower and mid-density contextual districts and R4, R4-1, R5, and R5B districts were established just south of the development site.

The applicant proposes to develop a new seven-story media production facility that would contain 495,000 square feet of floor area and include 11 sound stages and accessory production facilities, as well as 34,800-square feet of publicly accessible open area. With the existing Steinway facility, the FAR of the development site would be 1.82, which complies with the 2.0 maximum permitted FAR. The building is proposed to rise to 135 feet, but would be permitted to rise to 150 feet to accommodate mechanicals. This would accommodate a vertical studio village consisting of two levels of 60-foot-tall sound stages and a seven-story building core housing freight elevators, offices, production and storage facilities, and communal areas. The

proposed building would rise to the full building height of 135 feet, without setback, on its 19th Avenue and Luyster Creek frontages, with a 422.8-foot long streetwall along the Luyster Creek frontage and a 123.88-foot long streetwall along the 19th Avenue frontage.

The studio village would require ample space for parking, loading, and circulation to accommodate props, scenery, and equipment. The ground floor would contain 26 off-street loading berths and 310 accessory parking spaces as well as the production studio's lobby and reception areas. The proposed development would have two vehicular access points on 19th Avenue – a main, 60-foot-wide curb cut providing ingress and egress, located approximately 480 feet west of Steinway Place, and a second, 30-foot-wide curb cut providing ingress and egress, located approximately 360 feet west of Steinway Place. An elevated driveway with a ramp from the new building's 30-foot-wide curb cut on 19th Avenue to the first level of sound stages would allow for parking and circulation of vehicles within the first story of the proposed development. Each sound stage would have a designated loading area and designated freight elevators providing direct access to that stage.

The development's main lobby would be located at the terminus of 19th Avenue, adjacent to the entrance to the waterfront public space, and a secondary lobby would be located farther east on 19th Avenue, between the development's two curb cuts. To provide access to the development from public transit, a shuttle bus would run every 20 minutes during weekday morning, midday, and evening peak periods and at additional times determined by demand, to and from the Ditmars Boulevard N/W subway station with drop-off at the development's main entrance. This drop-off would also be used for taxi and ride-share services.

Due to the development site's location within Flood Zone AE, raising the sound stages above the accessory ground floor parking and loading areas would allow them to be elevated above the design flood elevation of 14 feet. The majority of the development's ground floor would be wet flood-proofed, apart from the two lobby areas, which would be dry flood-proofed. Another sustainable design feature would include a 150,000-square-foot solar array located on the roof to provide a renewable energy source.

The development would contain 34,800 square feet of publicly accessible open area, equivalent to approximately 15 percent of the construction site's lot area and seven percent of the development site's lot area. The public access areas would include a 30,600-square foot-WPAA along Luyster Creek and a 4,200-square-foot public access area (PAA) fronting on 19th Avenue being provided as a condition for site plan approval. The WPAA and PAA would be open to the public year-round from 6 a.m. to 1 a.m. every day of the week.

The WPAA would have a depth of approximately 50 to 70 feet from the shoreline and would provide a variety of public amenities, including an ADA-accessible public walkway, a mixture of moveable and fixed seating, and overlooks that provide views of the East River. The WPAA's landscape would include bioswales for stormwater capture on the development site. Several plants within the WPAA would provide phytoremediation, capturing and cleaning storm water before it passes to the City's sewer system or Luyster Creek and would also purify the air. Educational signage would also be located adjacent to the WPAA's pedestrian circulation paths, providing information on featured plants and native wildlife. Safety measures would include overnight lighting along the walking path and 24-hour security personnel. The WPAA would be required to be built according to the design regulations of the CPC Chair's Waterfront Certification.

Approximately 26,320 square feet of the WPAA falls within DEC's tidal wetlands jurisdiction and, pursuant to ZR Section 62-531(b)(1), the design of this area would be controlled by plans approved by DEC, accommodating the agency's requirement that impervious coverage not exceed 20 percent. Over the protected habitat, pathways would be elevated and constructed with permeable metal grating, allowing rain and sunlight to pass through.

The 19th Avenue PAA would consist of a paved pathway, landscaping, and seating areas that would contain seating, tables, and planted areas, including five trees and bioswale areas.

To facilitate the proposed development, the applicant requests a special permit and two zoning authorizations. The applicant is also seeking a Chair certification pursuant to ZR 62-811 for waterfront public access and visual corridors.

Special Permit (C 210459 ZSQ)

The applicant seeks a special permit pursuant to ZR Section 62-837(a) to modify bulk regulations on waterfront blocks. The applicant proposes waivers of base height and setback, building height, maximum length of walls facing the shoreline, and ground-floor streetscape requirements applicable to M3-1 districts on waterfront blocks. Given the undulating character of the natural shoreline along Luyster Creek and an irregular distance to the shoreline, the applicant proposes to waive the 30-foot minimum setback requirement from the shore public walkway, required pursuant to ZR Section 62-341(a)(2), to allow for a regularly shaped building form. To facilitate a loft-like building envelope that better matches the built context of the surrounding industrial area and effectively houses the vertical configuration of sound stages, the applicant proposes to waive the 60-foot maximum base height requirement and 110-foot maximum height requirements, required pursuant to ZR Section 62-341(c)(1) and 62-341(c)(2), respectively, which would allow the building to rise without setbacks to a maximum height of 150 feet. To allow a floorplate that can accommodate the minimum dimensions for sound stages (120 feet by 150 feet), the applicant proposes to waive the 100-foot maximum wall length facing the shoreline, pursuant to ZR Section 62-341(c)(5), to facilitate proposed lengths of 423.3 feet and 126.83 feet facing the Luyster Creek shoreline. Lastly, to enable the sound stages to be raised above the design flood elevation and allow for the ample parking and loading necessary for a studio village, the applicant proposes to waive the requirement that 50 percent of a building's ground floor street frontage and/or WPAA frontage contain floor area pursuant to ZR Section 62-341(c)(6) and permit the ground-floor to be made up predominantly of non-floor area floor space comprised of approximately 157,000 square feet of wet flood-proofed parking and loading areas.

Zoning Authorization (N 210457 ZAQ)

The applicant seeks a zoning authorization pursuant to ZR Section 62-822(a) to modify WPAA requirements. ZR Section 62-57(a) requires that where the aggregate area of a required shore public walkway in an M3-1 zoning district is less than 15 percent of the waterfront zoning lot's total area, an SPAA must be provided to make up the difference. Because the existing historic Steinway Piano facility occupies the upland portion of the development site, the proposed development must be closer to the shoreline. Therefore, the as-of-right waterfront access requirements would occupy approximately 32 percent of the floorplate of the proposed

development, leaving only approximately 155,000 square feet of buildable lot area and impairing the desired configuration based on the minimum dimensions for sound stages. Given these site constraints, the applicant proposes to waive the requirement that the WPAA provide open space equivalent to 15 percent of the waterfront zoning lot's area. The project's WPAA, including its PAA, would make up seven percent of the development site's lot area and 15 percent of the construction site's lot area and would include a 30,600-square foot WPAA and 4,200 square-foot PAA along 19th Avenue.

ZR Section 62-57(a)(2) requires that the average width of a SPAA be 25 feet. The applicant therefore also proposes to modify ZR Section 62-57(a) to reduce the required average width of a SPAA from 25 feet to 22 feet to provide sufficient upland area for the new development.

Zoning Authorization (N 210458 ZAQ)

The applicant seeks a zoning authorization pursuant to ZR Section 62-822(b) to modify design requirements within the WPAA per ZR Section 62-60. The requested authorization would allow the applicant to adhere to the provisions of the DEC tidal wetlands jurisdiction, intended to restore ecological habitats, natural shorelines, and native plantings, while still providing appropriate access for the public to enjoy the Luyster Creek shoreline. To permit a permeable elevated walkway that accommodates DEC tidal wetlands requirements, the applicant proposes to modify the slope, height, and paving material requirements of ZR Sections 62-61(d)(1)(i), 62-62(d)(2), and 62-656(a)(1), respectively. To enable plantings that facilitate wetland habitat restoration, the applicant proposes to waive the lawn requirement of ZR Section 62-62(c)(1)(i). To allow additional seating, ensure pedestrians stay on the designated path, and further accommodate the wetlands requirements, the applicant proposes modifications to ZR Sections 62-62(c)(2)(ii), 62-651(d), and 62-652(d), respectively.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 210459 ZSQ), in conjunction with the related applications for zoning authorizations (N 210457 ZAQ, N 210458 ZAQ), 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 lead is the City Planning Commission. The designated CEQR number is 210DCP196Q.

After a study of the potential environmental impact of the proposed actions, a Negative Declaration was issued on June 7, 2021. The Negative Declaration included an (E) designation (E-627) to avoid the potential for significant adverse impacts related to hazardous materials, air quality, and noise. The requirements of the (E) designation are described in the Environmental Assessment Statement and Negative Declaration.

WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

This application (C 210459 ZSQ) was reviewed by DCP 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 30, 2013 and by the New York State Department of State on February 3, 2016, 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 19-243.

This action was determined to be consistent with the policies of the WRP.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C 210459 ZSQ) was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on July 12, 2021 and duly referred to Queens Community Board 1 and the Queens Borough President in accordance with Title 62 of the Rules of the City of New York, Section 2-02(b), along with the related applications for zoning authorizations (N 210457 ZAQ, N 210458 ZAQ), which were referred in accordance with the procedures for non-ULURP matters.

Community Board Public Hearing

On June 15, 2021, Queens Community Board 1 held a public hearing on this application (C 210459 ZSQ) and, on that date, by a vote of 35 in favor, one opposed and one not voting for cause, adopted a resolution recommending approval of the application.

Borough President Recommendation

The Queens Borough President held a public hearing on this application (C 210459 ZSQ) and the related actions for zoning authorizations (N 210457 ZAQ, N 210458 ZAQ) on July 1, 2021, and on July 29, 2021 issued a recommendation to approve the application with the following conditions:

- “1. There should be a minimum goal of 30% for local hiring and use of MWBE businesses in the construction and development of this project. There should also be quarterly reporting on the numbers of people hired and if the 30% hiring goals has been reached. The applicant has stated that they will seek union labor and have already begun to work towards these goals and should continue to follow through with the agreements as they make further progress;
2. Motion picture and television production together with all the ancillary support services are robust industries that are an important growing segment of the Queens and NYC economy. Wildflower Studios should offer internship opportunities for local public school and college students to assure that Queens and NYC residents study and are prepared with the skills and knowledge required to have careers in all aspects of motion picture and television production.”

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On August 18 (Calendar No. 23), the City Planning Commission scheduled September 1, 2021 for a public hearing on this application (C 210459 ZSQ). The hearing was duly held on September 1, 2021 (Calendar No. 52). Four speakers testified in favor of the application and none in opposition.

Four members of the project team spoke in favor of the application. They summarized the proposed project, describing the architecture, design, open space, and programming. The applicant discussed the economic development benefits of the development, including the creation of more than 1,000 permanent jobs and 600 construction jobs as well as the anticipated ripple effect of increased revenue for local restaurants, businesses and the hospitality sector. The project architect described how the proposed building would be permitted to rise to a height of up to 150 feet with no setbacks to accommodate two levels of sound stages built to industry

standards of 150 feet by 120 feet with a height of 60 feet. The architect also described the proposed building's façade, which would have glazing at select areas along 19th Avenue and Luyster Creek to activate the streetscape, and would be clad with precast concrete panels to modulate the facade and support acoustics critical to sound stages. The landscape architect provided an overview of the WPAA and PAA designs and discussed the ecological features of the areas as well as the planned safety measures, including the overnight lighting along the walking path and 24-hour security personnel.

The applicant's representative discussed the applicant team's outreach activities and stated the applicant's intent to commit legal and design resources to assist Community Board 1 with advocating for reconstruction of the 19th Avenue street end for improved public access and increased pedestrian safety with the necessary public agencies, including the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT), DEC, and DSNY. The applicant representative also described the applicant's workforce development strategy.

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

CONSIDERATION

The Commission believes that this application for a special permit (C 210459 ZSQ), in conjunction with the related applications for zoning authorizations (N 210457 ZAQ, N 210458 ZAQ), is appropriate.

Together, the requested actions will facilitate the development of a new seven-story media production facility that would contain 495,000 square feet of floor area and include 11 sound stages and accessory production facilities. In addition, 34,800-square feet of publicly accessible open area, 310 accessory parking spaces, and 26 accessory loading berths will be provided. The development site, located along Luyster Creek within the Steinway IBZ, is an opportune location for increased commercial development and open space. The Commission is pleased that the proposed actions will facilitate development on an underutilized site and support the creation of more than 1,000 new jobs near public transit and a growing residential population within an existing economic center. The Commission is also pleased that employment growth anticipated

by the proposed development will increase the amount of activity in the surrounding area, providing revenue for local restaurants, businesses, and the hospitality sector.

The Commission notes that the film and media industries are critical growing sectors within the Queens and New York City economies and have a long-established history in Western Queens, with Kaufman Astoria Studios and Silvercup Studios located south of the project area in southern Astoria and Long Island City, respectively. The film industry belongs to a broader arts and entertainment ecosystem in Western Queens that includes visual and performing arts and the film and media sectors and extends from Long Island City up through Astoria. The Commission is pleased that the actions will facilitate the first vertical studio village in Queens which will promote the expansion of the borough's film and media sectors and create opportunities for synergy with the sizeable arts community in Western Queens.

Zoning Special Permit (C 210459 ZSQ)

The Commission believes that the special permit pursuant to ZR 62-837(a) for modification to the underlying bulk regulations is appropriate. The constraints of the irregular natural shoreline and underlying M3-1 bulk regulations discourage development consistent with commercial and industrial land use trends in the surrounding area. The proposed building form, which would not be permitted by the underlying zoning, will consist of a loft-like building envelope that will reflect and reinforce the industrial character in the surrounding Steinway IBZ. The building, permitted to rise to a height of up to 150 feet without setbacks, allows for large floorplates and two levels of sound stages that meet the minimum dimensions of 120 feet by 150 feet with a height of 60 feet. The sound stages will be elevated above ground floor accessory parking and loading areas to facilitate flood resistant construction in accordance with Appendix G of the Building Code. The Commission notes that the special permit waivers will permit modifications to height and setback, maximum walls facing the shoreline, and ground floor streetscape requirements to facilitate this improved, more resilient, building form consistent with the surrounding area that accommodates the space needs of a vertical studio village.

Zoning Authorization (N 210457 ZAQ)

The Commission believes that the authorization pursuant to ZR Section 62-822(a) to modify WPAA requirements is appropriate. The Commission notes that, with the existing historic Steinway Piano facility in the upland portion of the zoning lot, the underlying regulations requiring a WPAA equivalent to 15 percent of the zoning lot's area would hinder the desired configuration of sound stages by occupying a significant amount of the developable site area. The authorization will allow the applicants to construct a WPAA and PAA that is equivalent to seven percent of the development site's lot area and 15 percent of the applicant-owned portion of the zoning lot and would include a 30,600-square foot WPAA and 4,200 square foot PAA along 19th Avenue. The Commission notes that while the amount of required open space is being reduced, the WPAA covers the full 475-foot shoreline of the development site, meets the minimum dimensions and requirements for WPAA's, and is located on a historically large zoning lot where manufacturing jobs are being preserved and created. The Commission is pleased that the proposed actions will facilitate a significant new open space resource in an area underserved by open space and provide improvements to the public realm on 19th Avenue.

The Commission is also pleased that the proposed WPAA will provide the first open space resource on Luyster Creek and is designed to allow for future waterfront linkages to the waterfront treatment plant to the north and the planned WPAA across the creek at the DSNY salt shed. The Commission believes that the proposed development's WPAA sets the precedent for a broader framework of open space facilitation along Luyster Creek that will benefit the residents and workers in the surrounding area.

Zoning Authorization (N 210458 ZAQ)

The Commission believes that the authorization to modify design requirements within the WPAA per ZR Section 62-60 is appropriate. The Commission notes the unique site conditions and DEC tidal wetlands jurisdiction, both of which necessitate design modifications. The authorization will allow the applicant to meet DEC tidal wetlands requirements intended to restore ecological habitats, natural shorelines, and native plantings, while still providing appropriate access for the public to enjoy the Luyster Creek shoreline. The Commission is pleased that the proposed authorization will facilitate an improved design with features, such as a permeable elevated walkway, that support habitat restoration and stormwater collection.

The Commission notes the Borough President's condition that the applicant should set a minimum goal of 30 percent for local hiring and use of MWBE businesses in the construction and development. While it is beyond the scope of this application, the Commission is pleased that in a letter to the Borough President dated August 17, 2021, the applicant stated its commitment to procuring MWBE businesses and working with a local workforce development non-profit to develop a construction workforce program targeted to local NYCHA residents. The Commission also notes the applicant's commitment to sponsoring job placement and tuition for 20 electrical and plumbing certification students at a local community college annually.

The Commission notes the Borough President's condition that the applicant offers internship opportunities for local public school and college students to support the development of skills in the film and television production sectors. While it is beyond the scope of this application, the Commission is pleased that in the same letter to the Borough President, the applicant committed to arranging guest speakers and internship programs for students, including the creation of a new production assistant training program targeted to a diverse workforce.

The Commission is also pleased that the applicant has committed legal and design resources to assist Community Board 1 with advocating for the reconstruction of the 19th Avenue street end for improved public access and increased pedestrian safety. The Commission notes the ongoing advocacy of the local community to advance reconstruction of the 19th Avenue street end and views its reconstruction as a critical missing link in the future waterfront open space framework for Luyster Creek. The Commission encourages the applicant to provide ongoing support to the necessary public agencies, including DEP, DOT, DEC, and DSNY, to facilitate this impactful public realm improvement.

FINDINGS

The Commission hereby finds, pursuant to Section 62-837(a) of the ZR, that the bulk modifications on waterfront blocks will not adversely affect access to light and air on surrounding waterfront public access areas, streets and properties; and:

- (1) will result in a better site plan and a better relationship between the zoning lot and the adjacent streets, surrounding neighborhood, adjacent open areas and shoreline than would be possible through strict adherence to the regulations; or
- (2) are necessary to protect unique natural features such as rock outcroppings, significant grade changes or wetlands, or to accommodate existing buildings or other structures.

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that having considered the Environmental Assessment Statement, for which a Negative Declaration was issued on June 7, 2021 with respect to this application (CEQR No. 21DCP196Q), 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 consideration described in this report, the application submitted by WF Industrial IV LLC for the grant of a special permit pursuant to Section 62-837(a) of the ZR to modify the height and setback, maximum width of walls facing shoreline and the ground floor streetscape requirements of Section 62-341 (Development on Land and Platforms), in connection with the construction of an approximately 495,000 square-foot motion picture studio, on property located at 1 Steinway Place a.k.a. 36-01 19th Avenue (Block 814, Lots 1 and 10), in an M3-1 District, Borough of Queens, Community District 1, is approved, subject to the conditions set forth in CEQR Declaration E-627 and the following additional terms and conditions:

1. The property that is the subject of this application (C 210459 ZSQ) shall be developed substantially in accordance with the specifications and zoning computations indicated on the following approved plans prepared by Bjarke Ingels Group, filed with this application and incorporated in this resolution:

<u>Drawing No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Last Date Revised</u>
U-002	Zoning Analysis	May 14, 2021
U-003	Zoning Lot Plan	May 14, 2021
U-011	Bulk Waiver Plans	May 14, 2021
U-012	Bulk Waiver Plans	June 4, 2021
U-013	Bulk Waiver Elevations & Sections	May 14, 2021
U-014	Bulk Waiver Elevations & Sections	May 14, 2021

2. Such development shall conform to all applicable provisions of the Zoning Resolution, except for the modifications specifically granted in this resolution and shown on the plans listed above which have been filed with this application. All zoning computations are subject to verification and approval by the New York City Department of Buildings.
3. Such development shall conform to all applicable laws and regulations relating to their construction, operation, and maintenance.
4. All leases, subleases, or other agreements for use or occupancy of space at the subject property shall give actual notice of this special permit to the lessee, sub-lessee, or occupant.
5. No development pursuant to this resolution shall be permitted until the Restrictive Declaration dated September 20th, 2021 and executed by Adam Gordon, as a condition of the Special Permit, as well as related authorizations and Certification, is recorded and filed in the Office of the Register of the City of New York, County of New York. Such restrictive declaration shall be deemed incorporated herein.
6. Upon the failure of any party having any right, title or interest in the property that is the subject of this application, or the failure of any heir, successor, assign, or legal

representative of such party, to observe any of the covenants, restrictions, agreements, terms or conditions of this resolution whose provisions shall constitute conditions of the special permit hereby granted, the City Planning Commission may, without the consent of any party, revoke any portion of or all of said special permit. Such power of revocation shall be in addition to and not limited to any other powers of the City Planning Commission, or of any other agency or government, or any private person or entity. Any such failure as stated above, or any alteration in the development that is the subject of this application that departs from any of the conditions listed above, is grounds for the City Planning Commission or the City Council, as applicable, to disapprove any application for modification, cancellation, or amendment of the special permit hereby granted.

7. Neither the City of New York nor its employees or agents shall have any liability for money damages by reason of the city's or such employee's or agent's failure to act in accordance with the provisions of this special permit.

The above resolution (C 210459 ZSQ), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on September 22, 2021 (Calendar No. 28), 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.

KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, Esq., *Vice Chairman*
DAVID BURNEY, ALLEN P. CAPPELLI ESQ., ALFRED C. CERULLO III, JOSEPH I. DOUEK, RICHARD EADDY, HOPE KNIGHT, ANNA HAYES LEVIN, ORLANDO MARIN, LARISA ORTIZ, RAJ RAMPERSHAD, *Commissioners*



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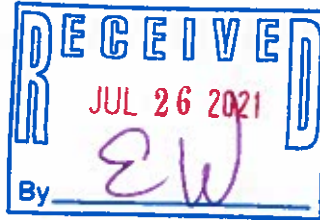
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July 19, 2021

Honorable Marisa Lago
Chair
NYC City Planning Commission
120 Broadway, 31st Floor
New York, New York 10271



RE: Wildflower Studios 35-15 19th Avenue
C210459 ZSQ Special Permit bulk modification on Waterfront Blocks N210457 ZAQ and N210458 ZAQ Authorizations modification of requirements for Waterfront Public Access Area.
N210460 ZCQ CPC Chairperson Certification compliance of site plan with zoning regulations as modified.

Dear Chair Lago,

On June 15, 2021 Community Board 1 Queens (CB1Q) voted 35 in favor, 1 opposed, 0 abstentions and 1 present but not voting for cause on a motion to recommend approval of the four referenced actions that would facilitate the construction of a new media production facility and a Waterfront Public Access Area (WPAA) in the Steinway neighborhood of Queens Community District 1.

The Applicant, WF Industrial IV LLC, filed the following applications on May 21, 2021; They were certified and referred out for comment on June 7th:

- o A CPC Special Permit (C 210459 ZSQ) to modify sections of the Zoning Resolution for lot coverage, base height and setback, maximum building height, maximum length of the building wall adjacent to a shoreline, distances between buildings and modification of ground floor streetscape requirements;
- o Authorizations (N210457 ZAQ and N210458 ZAQ) to modify the size, configuration and design of the WPAA and
- o A Chairperson's Certification (N210460 ZRY) that the site plan complies zoning regulations as modified.

Project Description

The proposed Wildflower Studios will occupy a waterfront zoning lot located within the Steinway Industrial Business Zone (IBZ) immediately adjacent to Luyster (Steinway) Creek. The lot is bounded on the north by Bowery Bay, Steinway Place (38th Street) to the east and 19th Avenue to the south and the creek to the west. The proposed project site and the Steinway Piano factory both occupy the same zoning lot that totals 491,612 SF and is zoned M3-1. The proposed studio use is classified as UG 10 motion picture, radio or television production studios.

If the applications are approved, the proposed 495,000 SF building would be 7 high stories (135 feet) and contain 11 sound stages. Uses accessory to the studios will occupy a central core of the building. Accessory parking (320 spaces) and loading areas (26 berths) would be enclosed on the ground level of the building with two vehicular and two pedestrian entrances to the building from 19th Avenue.

A 34,800 SF landscaped Waterfront Public Access Area (WPAA) will be constructed along Luyster Creek and along 19th Avenue. The open space would be accessible to the public, landscaped and contain seating areas. The WPAA will contain bioswales, coastal vegetation and multiple levels of plantings that will create a landscape for shore birds, safe nesting areas and pollinator-friendly plantings. Although there will be no physical access to the Creek due to SDEC tidal wetlands restrictions, wood-decking overlooks will be permitted for visual access to the water with signage placed at the shoreline providing information about plantings and wildlife. The proposed development expects to generate 1,100 jobs. Building foundation is expected to be completed September, 2021 with occupancy in 2023.

Committee Review

The applicant met with the Land Use Committee February 3rd, March 3rd, and June 2, 2021. The initial meeting focused on creating a joint effort to clean up Luyster Creek with the goal of increasing access to the water in this part of the District; coordinating with DSNY to extend the Luyster Creek WPAA to the Sanitation Garage site across the creek; designing an approach to the WPAA on 19th Avenue that draws people toward the water and connects with the nearby Little League sports fields on 19th Avenue at 37th Street;

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providing more educational and recreational programming along the waterfront and connecting with area technical schools and local artists; how Studio traffic will impact the Little League sports fields; increasing the size of the WPAA beyond the 40 ft. minimum; hours of access to open space and possible bulkhead treatments that would enhance remediation of the creek.

The Wildflower team responded to the Committee's issues in a letter dated February 16, 2021 and returned on March 3rd to give an update on their meetings with DSNY, DOT and DEP. They provided DSNY with plans for the WPAA, but DSNY claimed budget constraints prohibited a shoreline walkway into their project design. The team also described in more detail the sustainability measures for the building and justified the requested waivers as they related to the studio's program and building design. Suggestions were made to again work with DOT and the 19th Avenue owners to enhance the street-end treatment around the creek (remove concrete barrier) and join efforts with the community in the near future to get city support for extending the WPAA.

On June 2, 2021 the Committee was updated and passed a motion to recommend approval with no conditions 8 in favor, 1 opposed and 0 abstentions. The Committee also requested the Applicant's help in coordinating efforts with DEP, DOT, SDEC and DSNY to extend the WPAA around Luyster Creek and initiate cleanup of the waterway.

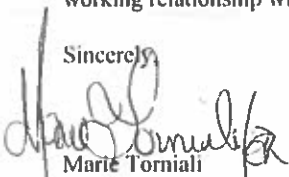
Expecting the applications to be certified and referred out for comment on June 7, 2021, the Applicant updated the Committee on June 2nd. On that date the Committee passed a motion with no conditions to recommend approval to the Board. Due to a technical issue, however, the applications were recertified on July 12, 2021 before the Board's June 15th public hearing. The delay did not alter the applications that were reviewed or advertised for public hearing by the Community Board.

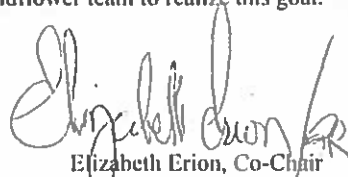
Community Board Public Hearing

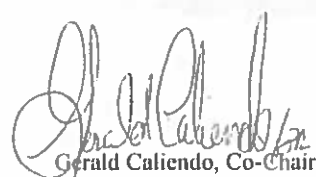
On June 15, 2021, the Wildflower Studio project team presented their proposal at the CB1Q public hearing. Board Members had received a written Land Use Committee report and after the presentation, one member made a statement in support of the project noting of the jobs generated, the off-street loading and that the applications for the waivers requested were reasonable. Four other Board Members asked questions about hiring local residents, wage scales and union coverage for jobs, security around the waterfront area, results of soil sample tests and mitigation measures and suggestions for shoreline treatments that would aid in clean up. There were no speakers from the general public and the hearing was closed.

The almost unanimous vote to approve the Wildflower Studios project was followed with a request to the Applicant to help coordinate community efforts with City agencies to devise a plan for extending the WPAA around Luyster Creek and initiating cleanup of the waterway. Creating new waterfront access points along the district's shoreline has long been a priority for the Board and local organizations. We believe the timing of the studio project with the design of the new QW1 Sanitation Garage across the Creek, present a unique opportunity for joint efforts that will ultimately benefit the community, the environment, Wildflower Studios and surrounding IBZ businesses. The Board and its committees look forward to establishing a long-lasting working relationship with the Wildflower team to realize this goal.

Sincerely,


Marie Tornali
Chairperson


Elizabeth Erion, Co-Chair
Land Use and Zoning Committee


Gerald Caliendo, Co-Chair
Land Use and Zoning Committee

cc: Honorable Donovan Richards, Queens Borough President
Honorable Michael Gianaris
Honorable Jessica Ramos
Honorable Zohran Mamdani
Honorable Catherine Nolan
Honorable Brian Barnwell
Honorable Jimmy Van Bramer
Mr. Frank B. Perez, New York City Council, District 22
Mr. Irving Poy, Director, Land Use, BPQ
Ms. Alexis Wheeler, Director, Queens Office DCP
Ms. Sarit Platkin, DCP
Ms. Maricela Cano, QBP, Director of Community Boards
Mr. Joseph Nocerino, QBP, Office Representative
Mr. Rafael DeNiro, WF Industrial IV LLC
Mr. Alan Horton, WF Industrial IV LLC
Mr. Daniel Sundlin, Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG) Architecture
Mr. Britt Zuckerman, Dirtworks Landscape Architecture
Ms. Rachel Scall, GreenbergTraurig
Mr. Nick Hockens, GreenbergTraurig

Queens Borough President Recommendation

APPLICATION: ULURP #210459 ZSQ

COMMUNITY BOARD: Q01

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by WF Industrial IV LLC pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for the grant of a special permit pursuant to Section 62-837 of the Zoning Resolution to modify the height and setback, maximum width of walls facing shoreline and the ground floor streetscape requirements of Section 62-341 (Development on Land and Platforms), in connection with the construction of an approximately 495,000 square-foot motion picture studio, on property located at 1 Steinway Place a.k.a. 36-01 19th Avenue (Block 814, Lots 1 and 10) in an M3-1 District, Borough of Queens, Community District 1.

Plans for this proposal are on file with the City Planning Commission and may be seen at 120 Broadway, 31st Floor, New York, NY, 10271. (Related ULURP # 210457 ZAQ, 210458 ZAQ, 210460 ZCQ, 210461 LDQ);

PUBLIC HEARING

A hybrid Public Hearing was held by the Borough President at 120-55 Queens Boulevard and via Zoom webinar livestreamed on www.queensbp.org on Thursday, July 1, 2021 at 9:30 A.M. pursuant to Section 82(5) of the New York City Charter and was duly advertised in the manner specified in Section 197-c (i) of the New York City Charter. The applicant made a presentation. There were no other speakers. The hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

Subsequent to a review of the application and consideration of testimony received at the public hearing, the following issues and impacts have been identified:

- This application is for a special permit which proposes a bulk modification to change minimum setback and maximum base height requirements (Zoning Resolution Sections 62-341(a)(2) and 62-341(c)(1)) to allow a 135 foot building to rise without setbacks as well as modification of required maximum length of walls facing the shoreline in ZR Section 62-341(c)(5) to allow walls to exceed 100 feet by 320 feet on one side of the building and by 25 feet on the adjacent wall. The proposed actions would facilitate development of a 495,000 SF media production studio at 35-15 19th Avenue, containing 11 sound stages and accessory facilities, with publicly accessible areas along 19th Avenue and Luyster Creek;
- ULURP #N210457 ZAQ concurrently filed with this application seeks a modification to change the required shore public walkway area in an M3-1 District from 15% of the site floor area to 7% and a modification to change the average width of supplemental publicly-accessible area (PAA) from 25 feet to 22 feet;
- ULURP #N210458 ZAQ concurrently filed with this application seeks a modification of design requirements within the Waterfront PAA and supplemental PAA to facilitate restoration of habitat, natural shoreline, and native plantings while still providing sufficient public access;
- ULURP #N210460 ZCQ seeks certification to confirm the site plan for the proposed project complies with ZR 62-50 and 62-60 as modified even with no visual corridors on site;
- ULURP #N210461 LDQ for a legal document from Steinway, Inc. (adjacent property owner) acknowledging the Wildflower Studio applications and stating ownership of 42,244 SF (Block 814, p/o Lot 1) that is included in the proposed project area;
- The proposed development is a 7-story, 495,000 SF media production studio with 11 sound stages vertically stacked two levels above one story of accessory off-street parking and loading space. Due to industry standards, each sound stage will each be roughly 18,000 SF. The building's core would house all accessory uses and approximately 33 freight elevators that directly connect each sound stage to loading berths. The ground floor would contain two lobbies, reception areas, and parking and loading spaces. Most of the ground floor would be wet flood-proofed except for the lobbies which would be dry flood-proofed. In total, there will be 310 parking spaces and 26 loading berths. Additionally, there would be two vehicular access points, both allowing ingress and egress to the site, on 19th Avenue: a 60 foot wide curb cut located 480 feet west of Steinway Place and a 30 foot wide curb cut located 360 feet west of Steinway Place. A shuttle bus traveling to and from the Ditmars Boulevard Station to the proposed building's main entrance would run every 20 minutes during morning and evening rush hours plus additional times determined by demand. The application received an E-designation (E-627) for air quality and therefore will undergo remediation before any construction begins;
- There would be two publicly accessible areas (PAA) with a total area of 34,800 SF. An approximately 16 foot setback from the 19th Avenue sidewalk would contain a 4,200 SF Sidewalk PAA with paved pathway, 1,910 SF of plantings, and a seating area. The 30,600 SF Waterfront PAA is an approximately 40 foot wide walkway between the Luyster Creek waterfront and proposed building and includes 19,415 SF of planted area, an overlook of the creek, seating, bioswales, and educational signage;
- The project site is located within an existing M3-1 District and is bounded by Luyster Creek to the west, Bowery Bay to the north and east, and Berrian Boulevard and 19th Avenue to the south. It is comprised of

QUEENS BOROUGH PRESIDENT RECOMMENDATION

ULURP #210459 ZSQ

Page two

two tax lots (Block 814 Lot 1 and 10) in a single zoning lot with a total area of 491,612 SF. The applicant owns Lot 10 which has an area of 228,693 SF and is currently unimproved. Lot 10 has ~435 feet of frontage along 19th Avenue and 475 feet of frontage along Luyster Creek. Lot 1 is instead owned by Steinway Inc. and has an area of 262,919 SF. It is improved with one to five-story buildings, including Steinway Piano Factory. There is 350 feet of frontage along 19th Avenue and 590 feet along Steinway Place. The applicant intends to acquire 42,244 SF of floor area from Steinway Inc. to use for the project. Steinway Inc. submitted a letter to Community Board 1 (CB 1) stating that Wildflower does not have the right to utilize that floor area unless Steinway Inc. agrees to its purchase and the closing of such acquisition has occurred. The existing site is situated both within the Steinway Industrial Business Zone (IBZ) and the 1% annual chance flood plain;

- The surrounding area within a 400 foot radius consists of a mix of industrial and manufacturing buildings ranging one to two stories. The area one block south of the development site, comprised of 238 blocks, underwent a rezoning in 2010. Nearby facilities include the Astoria Energy Power Plant north of the site, DEP Bowers Bay Wastewater Plant to the northeast, and approximately 8 acres of private soccer and baseball fields to the south. The site is situated close to the Q101 and Q100 bus stops and a mile from the N and W lines at Ditmars Station;
- Community Board 1's (CB 1) Land Use Committee (LUC) approved the application by a vote of eight (8) in favor, one (1) against, and none (0) abstaining on June 2, 2021. At their monthly meeting held on June 15, 2021, CB 1 approved the application with thirty-five (35) in favor, one (1) opposed, and one (1) abstaining. CB 1 stated they would like to work with the developers to coordinate waterfront cleanup and beautification of the 19th Avenue sidewalk;
- In December 2020, the City Council approved a DSNY proposal to construct a new garage and salt shed across from the project site on the opposite side of Luyster Creek. CB 1 had requested that DSNY create publicly accessible area along the waterfront. Waterfront access is scarce in Community District 1 and therefore they would like to see both Wildflowers Studio and DSNY work together to create one connected waterfront pathway;
- At the Borough President's Land Use Public Hearing, the Borough President brought up questions regarding waterfront access, jobs, and community outreach. The Wildflowers Studio team stated they had previously met with DSNY. Although funding for DSNY's portion of the waterfront had been uncertain at their last meeting, Wildflowers remains ready and willing to work with DSNY, other city agencies, and CB 1 to join their waterfront areas. The Borough President stated that he would follow up with the agencies about getting funding in place for the waterfront access;
- The applicant team also estimated the creation of 600 construction jobs, and between 1000 to 1200 predominantly union employees per day once the building was fully operational. Regarding outreach to local community-based organizations, the applicant has already reached out to tenant groups in nearby NYCHA housing, Girls and Boys Club, Urban Upbound, as well as LaGuardia Community College and Frank Sinatra High School for the Arts to discuss potential internship opportunities. The Borough President invited Wildflowers to use events such as the Borough President's Office Virtual Queens Jobs Recruitment Fair to spread word of employment opportunities. The Borough President also recommended connecting with local restaurants and other nearby small business. Wildflowers Studio acknowledged and embraces their proximity to diverse food and amenities in Astoria and would strongly encourage employees to eat locally. They have already contacted United Community Civic Association to introduce them to local business owners;
- Council Member Constantinides submitted a letter to the Chair of Community Board 1 expressing his support for the project;

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the above consideration, I hereby recommend approval of this application with the following conditions:

- There should be a minimum goal of 30% for local hiring and use of MWBE businesses in the construction and development of this project. There should also be quarterly reporting on the numbers of people hired and if the 30% is reached. The applicant has stated they will seek union labor and have already begun to work towards these goals and should continue to follow through with the agreements as they make further progress;
- Motion picture and television production together with all the ancillary support services are robust industries that are an important growing segment of the Queens and NYC economy. Wildflower Studios should offer internship opportunities for local public school and college students to assure that Queens and NYC residents study and are prepared with the skills and knowledge required to have careers in all aspects of motion picture and television production.



PRESIDENT, BOROUGH OF QUEENS

July 29, 2021

DATE

WF Industrial IV LLC
c/o Wildflower Ltd LLC
80 8th Avenue, Ste. 1602
New York, New York 10011

August 17, 2021

VIA EMAIL

Honorable Donovan Richards
Queens Borough President
Queens Borough Hall
120-55 Queens Boulevard
Kew Gardens, New York 11424

Re: Wildflower Studios Special Permit, Authorizations and Certification (ULURP Nos. C210459ZSQ, N210457ZQA, N210458ZQA and N210460ZCQ)

Dear Borough President Richards:

We are the applicant with respect to the above-referenced actions seeking a special permit for bulk relief and waterfront authorizations and a certification related to waterfront public open space, required for construction of Wildflower Studios, a proposed 11-sound-stage, 495,000 sf film and television production studio to be located at 35-15 19th Avenue (Block 814, Lot 10) in Astoria. These applications were the subject of your public hearing on July 1, 2021, and we are receipt of your July 29, 2021 recommendation in favor of the applications. This letter responds to the two conditions upon which you based your favorable recommendation:

- *There should be a minimum goal of 30% for local hiring and use of MWBE businesses in the construction and development of this project. There should also be quarterly reporting on the numbers of people hired and if the 30% is reached. The applicant has stated they will seek union labor and have already begun to work towards these goals and should continue to follow through with the agreements as they make further progress.*

We are committed to the minimum goal of 30 percent local hiring and use of MWBE businesses in the construction of Wildflower Studios. Wildflower Studios will benefit from an ICAP property tax abatement. To be eligible for these benefits, we are required to comply with Local Law 67, which, among other things, requires that we reach out to and solicit a minimum three bids from MWBEs for all major construction contracts and subcontracts. Thus far we have awarded our site security contract to an MBE, and we are continuing to solicit bids from MWBEs, as well as local firms, as we prepare to move forward with construction of the Studio. We will provide your office with copies of our ICAP reporting documentation as we move forward with construction and work towards the goal of 30 percent local hiring and use of MWBE businesses.

To ensure local hiring, we are working with Urban Upbound to develop a workforce development program that will help local residents, with a focus on local NYCHA residents, obtain training to assist with job placement on our project and future local construction projects. We have also reached out to the Astoria Houses Tenant Association about their job fairs and recruiting opportunities, and anticipate further outreach to local NYCHA tenant associations through our work with Urban Upbound. We will also be sponsoring placement and tuition for local residents, with an emphasis on residents of NYCHA's western Queens campuses, in electrical and plumbing certificate programs at LaGuardia Community College.

We anticipate that the majority of the more than 1,000 permanent jobs at the Studio will be union jobs. This includes the building's 150 to 200 service workers, and we now have an agreement in place with 32BJ.

- *Motion picture and television production together with the ancillary support services are robust industries that are an important growing segment of the Queens and NYC economy. Wildflower Studios should offer internship opportunities for local public school and college students to assure that Queens and NYC residents study and are prepared with the skills and knowledge required to have careers in all aspects of motion picture and television production.*

We met with faculty of Frank Sinatra School of the Arts High School and with faculty from LaGuardia Community College's film and television program and adult continuing education to discuss how best we can provide meaningful opportunities to their students. As detailed in the enclosed letters, we are committed to working with Frank Sinatra's faculty to coordinate guest speakers and support internship programs and to work with LaGuardia's faculty to support the creation of a new production assistant training program targeting a diverse workforce.

Sincerely,

WF INDUSTRIAL IV LLC



By: Raphael De Niro

Cc: Chair Marisa Lago, City Planning Commission
Sarit Platkin, Department of City Planning
Alexis Wheeler, Department of City Planning
Nick Hockens, Greenberg Traurig, LLP
Rachel Scall, Greenberg Traurig, LLP

WF Industrial IV LLC
c/o Wildflower Ltd LLC
80 8th Avenue, Ste. 1602
New York, New York 10011

August 4, 2021

VIA EMAIL

Gideon Frankel, Principal
Frank Sinatra School of the Arts High School
35-12 35th Avenue
Queens, New York 11106

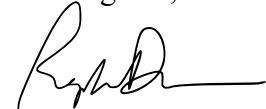
Re: Wildflower Studios

Dear Gideon,

It was a pleasure meeting with you and your colleagues last month and touring Frank Sinatra School of the Arts' impressive facility. Based on our discussions, we believe there are a number of ways in which Wildflower Studios can serve as a resource for Frank Sinatra students. In particular, we are excited to work with you and your colleagues to develop an on-going program of presentations and workshops at the School. We understand the importance, to your students and the School's mission, of helping students see a place for themselves in the arts and entertainment industries by hearing from experienced technical and backstage crew members and female and BIPOC industry leaders. We are also intrigued by your partnership with Local 52 to provide a real means of internship placement for your students and would like to support those continued efforts.

I look forward to returning to the School in the fall when classes are in session, and to helping celebrate the School's 20th anniversary.

Best regards,



Raphael De Niro

Cc: Queens Borough President Donovan Richards
Chair Marisa Lago, City Planning Commission
Nick Hockens, Greenberg Traurig, LLP

WF Industrial IV LLC
c/o Wildflower Ltd LLC
80 8th Avenue, Ste. 1602
New York, New York 10011

August 17, 2021

VIA EMAIL

LaGuardia Community College
3110 Thomson Ave.
Long Island City, NY 11101
Attn: Sunil Gupta, Jason Schafer and David Stott

Re: Wildflower Studios

Dear Vice President Gupta and Professors Schafer and Stott,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with our team over the past two months to discuss LaGuardia Community College's Empire State Development grant proposal to create a production assistant training program that will provide full scholarship opportunities to local Queens residents looking to start a career in the media and entertainment industry. We agree that there is a pressing need for production training programs in Queens, where the number of film and television production opportunities continues to grow. This is especially true of training programs that will benefit a diverse workforce that has not always had access to these opportunities. We are excited that Wildflower Studios' 11 proposed sound stages will be opening at the same time your first cohort will be completing their training and hope we can help match students with their first jobs in the industry.

We also understand the importance of having industry professionals visit your campus to speak with students. Our team is happy to meet with your students to discuss what goes into the development of a new television and production studio. Once Wildflower Studios is up and running, we will work with you and users of the Studio to identify professionals from a range of disciplines and specialties who can come speak to LaGuardia's Film and Television Production students.

We look forward to speaking with you in the future and are excited to see the opportunities you will create for your future production assistant students.

Best regards,

WF Industrial IV LLC

By: 
Name: Raphael De Niro

Cc: Claudia Chan, LaGuardia Community College
Queens Borough President Donovan Richards
Chair Marisa Lago, City Planning Commission
Nick Hockens, Greenberg Traurig, LLP
Rachel Scall, Greenberg Traurig, LLP