



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

September 10, 2008 / Calendar No. 10

C 080492 HAK

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD):

- 1) pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal Law of New York State for:
 - a) the designation of property located at St. Mark's Avenue (Block 1452, Lot 65), 1511, 1505, 1503, and 1501 St. Mark's Avenue (Block 1452, Lots 59, and 62-65), Bergen Street (Block 1452, Lot 138), and Saratoga Avenue (Block 1452, Lot 147), as an Urban Development Action Area; and
 - b) an Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; and
- 2) pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the disposition of such property to a developer selected by HPD;

to facilitate development of a residential building, tentatively known as Common Ground Senior Housing, with approximately 71 units, to be developed under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 202 Supportive Housing Program for the Elderly, Community District 16, Borough of Brooklyn.

Approval of three separate matters is required:

1. the designation of property located at St. Mark's Avenue (Block 1452, Lot 65, 1511, 1505, 1503, and 1501 St. Mark's Avenue (Block 1452, Lots 59, and 62-65), Bergen Street (Block 1452, Lot 138), and Saratoga Avenue (Block 1452, Lot 147), as an Urban Development Action Area; and
2. an Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; and
3. the disposition of such property, to a developer selected by HPD.

The application (C 080492 HAK) for an Urban Development Action Area designation and project approval and disposition of city-owned property was submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) on June 12, 2008.

Approval of this application would facilitate the development of approximately 18,100 square-feet of vacant city-owned property for a low income housing development for seniors with 71 rental units.

The Department of Housing Preservation and Development states in its application that:

The project area consists of underutilized vacant land which tends to impair or arrest the sound development of the surrounding community, with or without tangible physical blight. Incentives are needed in order to induce the correction of these substandard, insanitary, and blighting conditions. The project activities would protect and promote health and safety and would promote sound growth and development. The project area is therefore eligible to be an Urban Development Action Area and the proposed project is therefore eligible to be an Urban Development Action Area Project pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal Law.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Housing Preservation and Development is seeking an Urban Development Action Area designation, project approval, and disposition of city-owned land for a site located on St. Mark's Avenue (Block 1452, Lot 65) , 1511, 1505, 1503, and 1501 St. Mark's Avenue (Block 1452, Lots 59, and 62-64), Bergen Street (Block 1452, Lot 138), and Saratoga Avenue (Block 1452, Lot147), in the Brownsville neighborhood of Brooklyn's Community District 16.

The project site consists of seven vacant lots located on St Marks Avenue between Howard and Saratoga avenues. The site is currently zoned R6 with a small portion located in a C2-3 commercial overlay. The project would be developed pursuant to existing zoning and is funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 202 Supportive Housing Program for the Elderly. . The proposed project consists of approximately 18,000 square feet and includes a total floor area of approximately 50,000 square feet. The proposal will facilitate a 7-story U shaped building with approximately 71 units including 55 one bedroom units and 16 studio units.

Forty percent of the apartments will be reserved for homeless seniors including seniors with mental and physical disabilities. All the units will be affordable at or below 60% of Area Median Income (AMI).

The amenities in building will include a landscaped courtyard, a community room and a laundry room in the cellar.

The project site is adjacent to a 7-story apartment building for the elderly to the west and to the east there is a 3-story residential building. The rest of the block is a mixture of three- to four-story residential buildings along Bergen Street and Saratoga Avenue, and both mixed use and commercial buildings along Howard Avenue. The area is serviced by several bus lines within walking distance of the site.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 080492 HAK) 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 08HPD016K. The lead agency is the Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

After a study of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action, a Negative Declaration was issued on May 9, 2008.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C 080492 HAK) was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on June 16, 2008, and was duly referred to Brooklyn Community Board 16 and the Brooklyn 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 16 held a public hearing on this application on July 15, 2008 and on that date, by a vote of 22 to 0 with no abstentions, adopted a resolution recommending approval of the application.

Borough President Recommendation

This application was considered by the Brooklyn Borough President who issued a recommendation approving the application on August 15, 2008.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On August 11, 2008 (Calendar No 2), the City Planning Commission scheduled August 27, 2008 for a public hearing on this application (C 080492 HAK). The hearing was duly held on August 27, 2008 (Calendar No.28). There were three speakers in favor and none in opposition.

The project sponsor described how the proposed project would provide low income housing for seniors, a portion of which would be reserved for homeless seniors. The project architect described how the building design evolved in response to site constraints and elaborated on the amenities provided for the seniors and described measures taken to address light provided to the site. A representative from HPD spoke in support of the proposed project and stated that the resident selection process is subject to HUD requirements.

There were no other speakers on the application and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The Commission believes that the application (C 080492 HAK) for UDAAP designation and project approval and, the disposition of city-owned property is appropriate.

This application would facilitate the development of a site that has been vacant for several years. This proposal will also bring much needed new units of affordable housing to the Brownsville neighborhood by creating 71 dwelling units that will provide rental opportunities to low income seniors, including seniors with mental and physical disabilities.

In response to a concern raised at the Commission's public hearing regarding units set aside for homeless individuals to be reserved for community residents, in a letter dated September 4, 2008 , the Department of Housing Preservation and Development stated "HPD has no requirements relating to the percentage of units reserved for community residents. However, the project sponsor,

Common Ground Community (CGC) intends to target 40% of the project's dwelling units as permanent housing for homeless seniors and will work with the City's Department of Homeless Services (DHS) on the selection of the residents.. To the extent possible, CGC will outreach to local shelters to enhance the possibility of homeless persons living within the community applying to this project.

The transformation of this vacant site to productive use would eliminate its blighting influence on the neighborhood and would enable this city-owned property to be reactivated with uses that serve the needs of Brooklyn's Community District 16 and the City of New York. The Commission therefore finds that the proposed Urban Development Action Area (UDAAP) designation and project approval and related disposition of City-owned property are appropriate.

RESOLUTION

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

WHEREAS, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development has recommended the designation of property located at St. Mark's Avenue (Block 1452, Lot 65), 1511, 1505, 1503, and 1501 St. Mark's Avenue (Block 1452, Lots 59, and 62-65), Bergen Street (Block 1452, Lot 138), and Saratoga Avenue (Block 1452, Lot 147 as an Urban Development Action Area; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development has also recommended the approval of an Urban Development Action Area Project for such property;

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Planning Commission after due consideration of the appropriateness of the actions, certifies its unqualified approval of the following matters pursuant to the Urban Development Action Area Act;

- a. the designation of property located at St. Mark's Avenue (Block 1452, Lot 65), 1511, 1505, 1503, and 1501 St. Mark's Avenue (Block 1452, Lots 59, and 62-65), Bergen Street (Block 1452, Lot 138), and Saratoga Avenue (Block 1452, Lot 147) as an Urban Development Action Area; and
- b. an Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; and

the City Planning Commission recommends that the New York City Council find that:

- a. The present status of the area tends to impair or arrest the sound development of the municipality;
- b. The financial aid in the form of tax incentives if any, to be provided by the municipality pursuant to Section 696 of Article 16 of the General Municipal Law is necessary to enable the project to be undertaken; and
- c. The project is consistent with the policy and purposes stated in Section 691 of Article 16 of the General Municipal Law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the City Planning Commission, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, that based on the environmental determination and the consideration described in this report, the application of the Department of Housing Preservation and Development for the disposition of city-owned property located at St. Mark's Avenue (Block 1452, Lot 65) , 1511, 1505, 1503, and 1501 St. Mark's Avenue (Block 1452, Lots 59, and 62-65), Bergen Street (Block 1452, Lot 138), and Saratoga Avenue (Block 1452, Lot147), Community District 16, Borough of Brooklyn, to a developer selected by HPD, is approved.

The above resolution, (C 080492 HAK) duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on September 10, 2008 (Calendar No. 10) 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
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