



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

August 11, 2004/Calendar No. 27

C 040476 HAM

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 246 West 116th Street (Block 1831, Lot 56), 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 seven-story building tentatively known as Cassiopeia Apartments, with approximately 32 units for low-income persons and one unit for a superintendent, to be developed under the New York State Housing Trust Fund Program, Borough of Manhattan, Community District 10.

Approval of three separate matters is required:

1. The designation of property located at 246 West 116th Street (Block 1831 Lot 56), as an Urban Development Action Area;
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 for the Urban Development Action Area designation and project, and disposition of city-owned property was submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development on May 26, 2004.

Approval of this application would facilitate construction of a seven-story, mixed residential/commercial building containing 32 low-income units. The proposed project is tentatively known as the Cassiopeia Apartments project.

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

The disposition 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 as an Urban Development Action Area Project pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal Law.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Housing Preservation and Development seeks approval of an Urban Development Action Area designation and project, and related disposition of city-owned property to facilitate development of the Cassiopeia Apartments, a proposed 32-unit, low-income rental project to be built developed under the New York State Housing Trust Fund Program.

The project site is located in south Central Harlem, Manhattan Community District 10.

Under the Housing Trust Fund Program, sponsors selected by the New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation (HTF) purchase and rehabilitate vacant city-owned buildings or purchase vacant city-owned land to facilitate construction of new residential buildings. HTF provides construction and permanent financing. Upon completion, the rehabilitated or newly constructed

buildings would provide rental or limited equity cooperative housing for low income and homeless families.

The proposed housing site, 246- 250 West 116th Street, is located on the south side of West 116th Street between Adam Clayton Powell Jr and Frederick Douglass boulevards. The site includes two tax lots (Block 1831, Lots 56 and 57) that total 7,569 square feet. Lot 56 is city-owned and Lot 57 is owned by the developer. However, only city-owned Lot 56 would be subject to the requested UDAAP and related disposition action. The site was recently rezoned from R7-2 (3.44 FAR) to R7A (4.0 FAR), as part of the Frederick Douglass Boulevard Rezoning project (C 030436 ZMM), which was approved by the City Council on November 6, 2003. The proposed project is the first new residential development on the West 116th Street corridor to benefit from the Department's rezoning for the area. It would have 29,969 square feet of floor area and be built at 3.95 FAR.

The project would provide 32 residential units (plus one unit for a superintendent) targeted to low income families. The project would also provide 1,776 square feet of ground floor retail space and 2,896 square feet of landscaped open space to be placed in the rear of the building. Further, new street trees would be planted to improve the surrounding streetscape.

Along West 116th Street, the proposed housing site is adjoined by an occupied five-story mixed residential/commercial building and a two-story commercial building. The block is typified by four and five-story street wall buildings. The surrounding neighborhood is developed with mix a

mix of four, five and six-story residential buildings, community facilities and scattered vacant lots. The project site is served by several local bus routes that run along West 116th Street, and along Adam Clayton Powell Jr and Frederick Douglass boulevards. Subway service is provided at West 116th Street and Frederick Douglass Boulevard by the IND 6th and 8th Avenue lines. Local convenience shopping is primarily available along West 116th Street.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 040476 HAM) 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 for Procedure of 1991 and Executive Order No. 91 of 1977.

The lead agency is the Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

This application was determined to be a Type II action which requires no further environmental review.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C 040476 HAM) was certified as complete on June 7, 2004, and was duly referred to Community Board 10 and the Borough President, in accordance with Article 3 of the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) rules.

Community Board Public Hearing

Community Board 10 held a public hearing on this application on June 17, 2004 and on that date, by a vote of 19 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions adopted a resolution recommending the approval of the application with the following conditions:

- The developer use locally based marketing groups
- The developer conduct marketing seminars within CB 10
- The developer utilize locally based professionals (engineers, landscape architects, construction managers, general contractors, subcontractors, other buildings trade professionals)
- The developer be responsible for sanitation / health concerns of the site (snow/ice removal, weekly lot cleaning, rodent baiting, fence repairing)
- The buildings must be of uniformed signage
- The roof top mechanicals be enclosed within an esthetically pleasing structure
- The commercial spaces be sized and priced to accommodate small local based entrepreneurs
- The gating inside the commercial spaces be “see through”
- The owners have a meaningful collective voice in the commercial tenant selection
- That external, esthetically-pleasing lighting be installed on the perimeter

Borough President Recommendations

This application was considered by the Borough President, who issued a recommendation on July 16, 2004 approving the application with the following condition:

The Borough President urges the developer to remain committed to ensuring that it utilizes locally-based marketing groups and professionals (e.g., general contractors and subcontractors) throughout the development process. The Borough President also urges that minority and women-owned enterprises are given full opportunity to participate throughout the development process, including bidding on contracts.

CITY PLANNING PUBLIC HEARING

On July 14, 2004 (Calendar No. 13), the City Planning Commission scheduled July 28, 2004 for the public hearing on this application (C 040476 HAM). The hearing was duly held on July 28, 2004 (Calendar No. 21). There were two speakers in favor of this application and none in opposition.

Those speaking in favor included the project's developer and architect. Both speakers noted the concerns raised by the Commission, Borough President and Community Board regarding the proposed marketing of the project, the utilization of ground floor retail space and the participation of Harlem residents in the project's development phase. In response, both speakers reiterated their commitment to engage the local labor pool of skill and unskilled workers to advance this project to completion. Project marketing would be handled by the developer; who in turn, would solicit local businesses and entrepreneurs as potential tenants for the ground floor retail space.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The Commission believes that the proposed Urban Development Action Area designation and project (UDAAP), with the related disposition of city-owned property, are appropriate.

The proposed actions would facilitate the development of the Cassiopeia Apartments, a new seven-story, mixed residential/commercial building to be developed under the New York State Housing Trust Fund Program.

The project site is located on the south side of West 116th Street between Adam Clayton Powell, Jr and Frederick Douglass boulevards in Harlem. Located in an R7A/C1-4 zoning district, the site includes two lots (Block 1831, Lots 56 and 57) totaling 7,569 square feet. Block 1831, Lot 57 is owned by the project developer, while Lot 56 is city-owned and subject to the proposed UDAAP and related disposition action.

The proposed development is a seven-story building rising to a height of 65 feet. The project would provide 32 units of low income housing (plus one unit for a superintendent). The project would also provide approximately 1,700 square feet of ground floor retail space and 2,800 square feet of landscaped open space. Additionally, new street trees would be planted to improve the surrounding streetscape.

The Commission notes that the proposed building design and scale complement the existing urban fabric on neighboring blocks. The Commission also notes that the project site is included in the Frederick Douglass Boulevard Rezoning area (C 030436 ZMM), a recently approved, Department-sponsored rezoning initiative. The project site, rezoned from R7-2 (3.44 FAR) to R7A (4.0 FAR) is the first new residential development on the West 116th Street corridor to benefit from the Department's rezoning for the area.

The Commission believes the proposed project would provide new affordable housing for low income families in Harlem. The project complements ongoing public and private redevelopment efforts on neighboring blocks and underscores the city's commitment to redevelop Harlem. The Commission, therefore, believes that the proposed Urban Development Action Area designation and project (UDAAP), and related disposition of city-owned property are appropriate.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development has recommended the designation of 246 West 116th Street (Block 1831, Lot 56) in Community District 10, Borough of Manhattan, 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 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 246 West 116th Street (Block 1831, Lot 56), 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 to be provided by the municipality pursuant to Section 696 of the Urban Development Action Area Act 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 the Urban Development Action Area Act; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the City Planning Commission, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, that based on the environmental determination and 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 246 West 116th Street (Block 1831, Lot 56), Community District 10, Borough of Manhattan, to a developer to be selected by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, is approved (C 040476 HAM).

The above resolution (C 040476 HAM), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on August 11, 2004 (Calendar No. 27) 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, AICP, **Chair**
KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, Esq., **Vice Chairman**
ANGELA M. BATTAGLIA, ANGELA R. CAVALUZZI, R.A.,
RICHARD W. EADDY, JANE D. GOL,
CHRISTOPHER KUI, JOHN MEROLO,
KAREN A. PHILLIPS, DOLLY WILLIAMS, **Commissioners**