



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

July 14, 2004 Calendar No. 29

N 040424 BDQ

IN THE MATTER of an application submitted by the Department of Small Business Services on behalf of the Queens Plaza/Court Square Business Improvement District pursuant to Section 25-405 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, as amended, concerning the formation of the Queens Plaza/Court Square Business Improvement District, Borough of Queens, Community Districts 1 and 2.

On February 3, 2004, the Mayor authorized the preparation of a district plan for the Queens Plaza/Court Square Business Improvement District (BID). On April 26, 2004, on behalf of the Queens Plaza/Court Square District Management Association (DMA), the Department of Small Business Services (DSBS) submitted the district plan located in Community Districts 1 and 2 in the Borough of Queens.

BACKGROUND

The proposed Queens Plaza/Court Square BID is located in Long Island City, in the Borough of Queens. The BID's boundaries extends along Jackson Avenue , from Thompson Avenue to Queens Plaza; and on Queens Plaza, from Northern Boulevard to 21st Street.

There are 85 properties in the BID, that includes commercial and light industrial uses. There are also, eight mixed-use properties with ground floor commercial use and residential units above. The District represents 65 property owners and 218 businesses.

There are two properties owned by not-for-profit organizations, Phoenix House and Centralized Laboratory Services. The Special Long Island City Mixed-Use District is adjacent to the western edge of the proposed BID.

The proposed BID will provide supplemental services that will include, but are not limited to, street maintenance, security and marketing. The sanitation program may include cleaning and sweeping of sidewalks and gutters; graffiti removal; maintenance of street trees and snow removal at bus shelters and crosswalks. The BID anticipates employing five persons, that will provide services five days a week. The program will supplement the existing municipal sanitation program.

The budget for the first year of the BID is projected to be \$300,000. The budget will allocate \$135,000 to sanitation, \$62,000 to security, \$18,000 to marketing/promotions, \$75,000 to administration and \$10,000 towards the contingency plan.

The BID assessment method is based upon assessed valuation and lot size for Class A properties. Class A properties include properties devoted to commercial and industrial uses as well as vacant lots and parking lots. The rate for Class A properties per individual property lot size square foot shall not exceed \$.103 and the rate

per dollar of individual property assessed valuation (AV) shall not exceed \$.0018 for the first year. Class B properties shall be assessed by linear front foot. Class B properties are properties devoted in whole or in part to residential uses. The total of all Class B properties shall not exceed one percent of the total budget for the first year.

Class C properties (not-for-profit owned properties devoted in whole to public or not-for-profit use) and Class D properties (properties owned and devoted to public or not-for-profit use) shall be exempt from the BID assessment. Not-for-profit and government owned properties devoted in part to commercial/for profit uses shall be assessed in the same manner as Class A properties.

The BID's Steering Committee conducted extensive outreach to the property owners, commercial tenants and merchants in the District. Through four informational mailings, two public meetings, three door-to-door distributions, over 200 phone calls and over 40 face-to-face meetings, the Steering Committee described the types of services that will be rendered and the assessment that the property owners and commercial tenants would incur. The outreach for the BID was documented and submitted to the Department of City Planning.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The district plan 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 State Code of Rules and Regulations, Section 617.00 et seq., and the New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Rules of Procedure of 1991 and Executive Order No. 91 of 1977. The designated CEQR number is 04SBS006Q. The lead agency is the Department of Small Business Services.

After a study of the potential environmental impact of the proposed action, a negative declaration was issued on February 3, 2004.

LAND USE REVIEW

On April 26, 2004 the Department of Small Business Services submitted the district plan for the Queens Plaza/Court Square Business Improvement District (BID) to the Department of City Planning. The plan was then transmitted for review to the Office of the Mayor, Office of the Queens Borough President, City Council Speaker, City Council Member of Community District 26 and Queens Community Boards 1 and 2.

Community Board Public Hearing

On June 15, 2004, Community Board 1 adopted a resolution recommending approval of this application (N 040424 BDQ) by a vote of 35 in favor, 0 opposed with 0 abstentions. On June 3, 2004, Community Board 2 adopted a resolution recommending approval of this application (N 040424 BDQ) by a vote of 36 in favor, 0 opposed with 2 abstentions.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On May 26, 2004 (Calendar No. 10) the Commission scheduled June 9, 2004 for a public hearing on the district plan. On June 9, 2004 (Calendar No. 13), the hearing was duly held. There were four speakers in favor of the proposal and none in opposition.

The chairperson of the Long Island City Business Development Corporation spoke about how the boundaries of the BID were proximate to several city initiatives to improve the physical and economic condition of the area. He stated that the District is the gateway to the borough and that having a BID there would help spur businesses to locate in the area which is also a part of the 4th Central Business District. He spoke about the industrial companies concerns of cleanliness and security in the area and as a result of those concerns, the BID's boundaries were drawn to include the

manufacturing companies. He stated that the establishment of a BID for the area would foster reinvestment and redevelopment in the area and that it would also increase the area's viability as a mixed-use district.

A property owner of 700,000 square foot property within the District spoke about witnessing the benefits of a BID in other parts of the City. He cited the concerns of the commercial tenants and property owners that included sanitation, street maintenance and security.

A representative of the Long Island City Business Development Corporation spoke about the outreach conducted throughout the area. He explained how the surveys were sent to the property and business owners to ascertain the issues of the potential participants of the BID. The result of the surveys also aided in the Steering Committee ability to determine what services would be rendered. He also stated that the commercial tenants and property owners were given an estimated assessment through a mailing.

Counsel for MetLife spoke about the companies' recent transfer to Long Island City and their enthusiasm and support for the proposed BID. She spoke about Metlife's investment in the economic development and growth of the area. She emphasized that the BID

would attract new businesses to the area as well as retain the existing businesses.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

Consideration

The Commission believes that the proposal to create the Queens Plaza/Court Square Business Improvement District in Queens is appropriate.

The Commission has carefully reviewed the documents that the proposed BID sponsor submitted regarding notification of constituents about the pending BID. It believes that these outreach efforts for the BID were adequate and satisfactory.

BID's are important to the City because they help retain and attract businesses to the District and promote healthy economic development for the City.

Resolution

The Commission supports the proposed plan and has adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the City Planning Commission certifies its unqualified approval of the proposed district plan for the Queens Plaza/Court Square Business Improvement District.

The above resolution duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on July 14, 2004 (Calendar No. 29) is filed with the City Council and the City Clerk pursuant to Section 25-405 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York.

Amanda M. Burden, AICP, Chair

Kenneth J. Knuckles, Esq., Vice Chairman,

Angela M. Battaglia, Irwin G. Cantor, P.E.,

Angela R. Cavaluzzi, R.A., Richard W. Eaddy, Alexander Garvin,

Jane D. Gol, Christopher Kui, John Merolo, Karen A. Phillips,

Dolly Williams, Commissioners