



## **CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**

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April 9, 2007 / Calendar No. 4

C 070136 PPQ

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**IN THE MATTER OF** an application submitted by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, for the disposition of one (1) city-owned property located at 58-03 Rockaway Beach Blvd. (Block 15926, Lot 44), Borough of Queens, Community District 14, pursuant to zoning.

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The application for the disposition of one city-owned property was filed by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), Division of Real Estate Services (DRES) on October 4, 2006.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), Division of Real Estate Services (DRES) submitted an application for the disposition of one (1) City-owned property, 58-03 Rockaway Beach Blvd. (Block 15926, Lot 44), pursuant to zoning. The subject property is located in the Arverne neighborhood in the Rockaways, in Queens, Community District 14. The property includes a two-story building that was built and used as a firehouse until 2004, and which is currently vacant.

The building was occupied FDNY Engine Company No. 265 and Ladder 121, which in November of 2004 relocated to a new facility at 303 Beach 49<sup>th</sup> Street., approximately 8 blocks to the east, because renovation of the existing building was not feasible.

The subject property is situated in an R6 district with a C2-4 overlay. Ocean Village, a Mitchell-Lama apartment complex, is located to the south of the property. City-owned, vacant lots under the jurisdiction of HPD are located on both sides of the property on Rockaway Beach Boulevard.

The surrounding neighborhood consists mostly of residential uses and vacant land. Some of the buildings on adjacent blocks are of a similar low- to mid-rise scale and include the new Arverne-By-The\_Sea development

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This application (C 070136 PPQ) 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 agency is the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS).

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

### **UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW**

This application (C 070136 PPQ) was certified as complete by the City Planning Commission on November 13, 2006 and was duly referred to Community Board 14 and the Borough President, in accordance with Article 3 of the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) rules.

### **Community Board Public Hearing**

Community Board 14 held a public hearing on this application on January 9, 2007 and on that date, by a vote of 34 to 0 with 0 abstentions, adopted a resolution recommending disapproval of the application. In its recommendation, the board stated that it:

Requests a period of 18 months be allowed for the community and its elected officials to explore community uses such as a vocational center to be funded by city, state, federal or non-for-profit sources.

### **Borough President Recommendation**

This application was considered by the Borough President, who issued a recommendation approving the application on February 8, 2007 with the following condition:

The socioeconomic data for the Rockaway Peninsula show a high rate of unemployment and deficiency of required skills or job education for some sectors of the population. This property should not be placed on the public auction calendar until sufficient time has been allowed to fully explore the feasibility of establishing an employment training center on the property.

### **City Planning Commission Public Hearing**

On February 7, 2007 (Calendar No. 8), the City Planning Commission scheduled February 28, 2007 for a public hearing on this application (C 070136 PPQ). The hearing was duly held on February 28, 2007 (Calendar No. 21). There were three speakers in favor of the application and one speaker in opposition.

The speakers in favor included the Deputy Commissioner of DCAS, a representative of the Deputy Mayor's Office, and the Fire Department's Chief of Operations (FDNY). The Deputy Commission from DCAS noted that a hold had been put on this property at the request of the Department of Housing and Preservation (HPD) which would preclude its being sold while the hold remained in effect. The representative of the Deputy Mayor's Office stated the city would establish a Community Steering Committee to develop plans for the site to ensure that future uses fit the needs of the community in which it is located. The steering committee would include representatives of the Mayor's Office, the local City Council member, city agencies, the

Borough President and the Community Board. The committee would be chaired by the Mayor's Office and Vice Chaired by the local City Council Member and would have a goal of achieving consensus on an adaptive reuse vision and disposition strategy within six months of committee establishment.

The Chief of Operations for FDNY stated that the department chose not to renovate the existing facility for Engine 265 and Ladder 31 and built a new facility to house those companies as well as Battalion 47 and EMS Station 47. The new facility at 303 Beach 49<sup>th</sup> Street opened in October of 2004 and no significant changes in response time resulted.

The speaker in opposition, a city resident expressed opposition to all firehouse dispositions and that firehouses should be used as firehouses.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

## **CONSIDERATION**

The Commission believes that the disposition of one City-owned property located at 58-03 Rockaway Beach Blvd. (Block 15926, Lot 44), is appropriate.

The Commission notes that Engine 265 and Ladder 31 closed the station at 58-03 Rockaway Beach Blvd. and built a new facility at 303 Beach 49<sup>th</sup> Street. The new station opened in October of 2004.. The Commission notes that response times have not changed.

The Commission further notes that HPD has requested a hold on the subject property, and that DCAS has granted the hold. This will preclude the sale of the site while the hold remains in effect.

The Commission is pleased that a steering committee has been established that includes the mayor's office, the local Council Member, the Borough President, the community board and city agencies. The committee's goal is to achieve consensus on an adaptive reuse vision and disposition strategy for the site within six months of its establishment. There have been two meetings of the steering committee and several options for reuse of the site have been suggested including a vocational school geared to the construction or health trades and housing. The Commission believes that it would be inappropriate to place any restrictions on the sale and future use of the property while the committee continues to meet. In concert with the hold on the property placed by DCAS, the Commission is confident that an appropriate future use for the site will be found.

## **RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, by the City Planning Commission, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, that the disposition of one (1) City-owned property located at 58-03 Rockaway Beach Boulevard (Block 15926, Lot 44 in the Borough of Queens, Community District 14, proposed in an application by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, dated October 4, 2006, is approved.

The above resolution (C 070136 PPQ), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission, on April 9,, 2007 (Calendar No. 4), 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, IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E., ANGELA R. CAVALUZZI, R.A.,**

**ALFRED C. CERULLO, III, RICHARD W. EADDY, LISA A. GOMEZ,**

**DOLLY WILLIAMS, Commissioners**

**BETTY Y.CHEN, NATHAN LEVENTHAL, Commissioners, ABSTAINING**