



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

September 19, 2012/Calendar No.3

C 120378 PCQ

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the site selection and acquisition of property located at 36-16 79th Street (Block 1251, p/o Lot 12) for use as a park in Community District 3, Borough of Queens.

This application (C 120378 PCQ) was filed on May 29, 2012 by the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) for site selection and acquisition of a privately-owned property located at 36-16 79th Street (Block 1251, p/o Lot 12), Community District 3, Borough of Queens, for use as a public park.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) are proposing to acquire a 24,600 square-foot property located at located at 36-16 79th Street (Block 1251, p/o Lot 12) for use as a public park.

The property is a 24,600 square-foot through-block site currently owned by the Garden School, a private education facility, and is used for outdoor recreation by the school. The midblock site is located adjacent to the Garden School, and it has frontages on 78th and 79th streets. Thomas J. Travers Park is located across 78th Street from the site, and Public School 145 is located across 79th Street. The southern boundary of the proposed park adjoins the rear-yard of a six-story residential apartment building, which faces 34th Avenue. The site is paved and has painted stripes for a baseball field layout and tennis courts. A chain-linked fence surrounds the property on the south, east and west.

Subsequent to the proposed acquisition, it is expected that the Garden School would retain use of the site during school hours, generally from 8 AM until 4 PM. The park would be managed by DPR and would be open for weekday public use outside school hours until 9 PM daily and all day on weekends and school holidays. The park would also be open to the public during the summer from 8 AM until 9 PM. The ball field will be available for use at these times for

baseball or softball leagues. Currently, the playground has no outdoor lighting.

As part of the proposed acquisition, improvements would be undertaken to make the park secure and available for public access. DPR plans to install a chain link fence with a lockable access gate to separate the proposed property from the Garden School building. Two new lockable access gates will provide public ingress and egress from 78th and 79th streets. The proposed park's location across from Travers Park makes the acquisition of this property practical since it means that DPR can manage and operate both sites as a joint resource.

The site is zoned R7-1 and the area surrounding the site is predominately residential. Further north of the site, along Northern Boulevard, is a R4/C1-2 zone which contains local retail uses in single-story buildings. Lots further west on the boulevard are zoned C8-1. The Jackson Heights Historic District is located south and east of the proposed acquisition site.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 120378 PCQ) 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 12DPR004Q. The lead agency is the Department of Department of Parks and Recreation.

After a study of the potential impacts of the proposed action, a Negative Declaration was issued on May 8, 2012.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C 120378 PCQ) was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on June 4, 2012 and was duly referred to Community Board 3 and the 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 3 held a public hearing on this application on June 21, 2012 and on that date, by a vote of 36 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions, recommended approval of the application.

Borough President Recommendation

This application was considered by the Borough President, who issued a recommendation on July 10, 2012 approving the application.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On August 8, 2012 (Calendar No. 2), the City Planning Commission scheduled August 22, 2012 for a public hearing on this application C 120378 PCQ. The hearing was duly held on August 22, 2012 (Calendar No. 21). There were five speakers in favor and none opposed.

The City Council Member for this district noted that his district was second to last in the City in the amount of open space available to residents and praised the community participation allowing this open space acquisition to become possible. The second speaker, a member of Community Board 3 and a local community organization, spoke of the role that open space played in teaching children to learn how to play and pointed out these spaces often served as the primary vacation areas for some children in Jackson Heights. Also, a representative from the Department of Parks and Recreation spoke about maintenance responsibilities and the proposed hours of park operation.

A spokesperson from a parks advocacy group spoke of the need for this open space acquisition and expressed the concern that in terms of park open space, out of 51 districts Jackson Heights was ranked 49th. The last speaker, a resident of Jackson Heights and member of a community based volunteer organization, praised how the community coalesced behind this proposal, the result of two years of effort, and hoped the Commission would vote in favor of this acquisition.

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

CONSIDERATION

The City Planning Commission believes that the application by the DPR and DCAS for the site selection and acquisition of a 24,600 square-foot, privately-owned property located at 36-16 79th Street (Block 1251, p/o Lot 12), for use as a park, is appropriate.

The Commission recognizes that Community District 3 falls below the City's goal of 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents and is therefore underserved in terms of a public open space. The Commission believes the proposed park would provide a much-needed public active open space opportunity to complement the active and passive resources found in Travers Park located across 78th Street.

The Commission believes that the acquisition of this property will increase and enhance opportunities for open recreational space in Jackson Heights, providing additional open supervised and unsupervised active recreation areas for this community.

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the City Planning Commission finds that the action described herein will have no significant impact on the environment; 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 considerations described in this report, the application submitted by the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services for the site selection and acquisition of property located at 36-16 79th Street (Block 1251, p/o Lot 12), for use as a park, Community District 3, Borough of Queens, is approved.

The above resolution (C 120378 PCQ), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on September 19, 2012 (Calendar No.3), 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
KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, Esq., Vice Chairman,
ANGELA M. BATTAGLIA, RAYANNE BESSER, IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E.,
ALFRED C. CERULLO, III, BETTY Y. CHEN, MICHELLE DE LA UZ,
MARIA M. DEL TORO, RICHARD W. EADDY, ANNA HAYES LEVIN,
ORLANDO MARIN, Commissioners

Application #: **C 120378 PCQ**

Project Name: **Travers Park Addition**

CEQR Number: **I12DPR004Q**

Borough(s): **Queens**

Community District Number(s): **3**

Please use the above application number on all correspondence concerning this application

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

- Complete this form and return to the Department of City Planning by one of the following options:
 - EMAIL (recommended):** Send email to CalendarOffice@planning.nyc.gov and include the following subject line: (CB or BP) Recommendation + (6-digit application number), e.g., "CB Recommendation #C100000ZSQ"
 - MAIL:** Calendar Information Office, City Planning Commission, Room 2E, 22 Reade Street, New York, NY 10007
 - FAX:** (212) 720-3356 and note "Attention of the Calendar Office"
- Send one copy of the completed form with any attachments to the applicant's representative at the address listed below, one copy to the Borough President, and one copy to the Borough Board, when applicable.

Docket Description

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the site selection and acquisition of property located at 36-16 79th Street (Block 1251, p/o lot 12) for use as a park.

Applicant(s): Department of Parks and Recreation 830 Fifth Avenue NY, NY 10065 Department of Citywide Administrative Services 1 Centre Street NY, NY 10007		Applicant's Representative: Joshua Laird 212-360-3402 Randy Fong 212-669-7150
Recommendation submitted by: Queens		
Date of public hearing: June 21, 2012		Location: I. S. 227- 32-02 Junction Boulevard, E.E.
Was a quorum present? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		<i>A public hearing requires a quorum of 20% of the appointed members of the board, but in no event fewer than seven such members.</i>
Date of Vote: June 21, 2012		Location: Same As Above
RECOMMENDATION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve <input type="checkbox"/> Approve With Modifications/Conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Disapprove <input type="checkbox"/> Disapprove With Modifications/Conditions <u>Please attach any further explanation of the recommendation on additional sheets, as necessary.</u>		
Voting # In Favor: 36 # Against: # Abstaining: Total members appointed to the board: 44		
Name of CB/BB officer completing this form Marta E. Lebreton	Title Chairperson	Date 7/13/2012

Queens Borough President Recommendation

APPLICATION: ULURP #120378 PCQ

COMMUNITY BOARD: Q03

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER of an application submitted by Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), pursuant to Sections 197-c of the NYC Charter, for site selection and acquisition of property located at **33-16 79th Street**, Block 1251, part of Lot 12, Zoning Map 9d, Jackson Heights, Borough of Queens.

PUBLIC HEARING

A Public Hearing was held in the Borough President's Conference Room at 120-55 Queens Boulevard on June 28, 2012, at 10:30 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 two (2) speakers in favor of the application. The hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

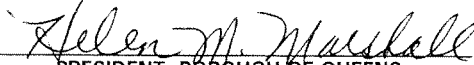
Subsequent to review of the application and consideration of testimony received at the public hearing, the following issues and impacts have been identified:

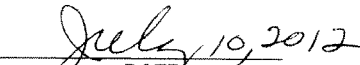
- The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) proposes site selection and acquisition of an existing 24,6000 sf asphalt play yard owned by the Garden School at 33-16 79th Street in Jackson Heights for use as a public park;
- The project site is located mid-block and generally bounded by 34th Avenue, 78th Street and 79th Streets, and Northern Boulevard. The site is surrounded by the Garden School to the north, Joseph Pulitzer School (I.S. 145) to the east (across 79th Street), the existing J. Travers Park to the west (across 78th Street), and adjacent to a six (6) story residential building (78-01 34th Avenue) to the south;
- The property is owned by the Garden School a private not for profit educational facility. The property is improved with an asphalt play area containing a baseball field and striping for tennis used by the school for its recreational activities. DPR would manage the property as a public park during non-school hours including weekends and the summer months. As part of the acquisition agreement, the Garden School would retain rights for use of the site during school hours.;
- Jackson Heights has been identified as one of the areas most underserved by publicly accessible open space. The two nearest publicly accessible open spaces from the proposed acquisition site are respectively 2,000 and 3,000 feet or more than a ten minute walk away. The district profile for Queens Community District 3 lists 1,879.12 acres of parklands and selected publicly accessible open spaces in 27 facilities. Out of total acreage, 98.6% (1,853.84 acres) are located either in Flushing Meadows Corona Park or the green spaces along the Grand Central Parkway.;
- The surrounding areas to the south, east and west of the project site are predominantly developed with medium density apartment buildings. Northern Boulevard is a major east west thoroughfare that is heavily developed with ground floor commercial uses.;
- Community Board 3 approved this application by unanimous vote at a public hearing held on June 21, 2012.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the above consideration, I hereby recommend approval of this application.

The need for additional open space in the Jackson Heights community has long been recognized by the community board and local elected leaders. However, the lack of available undeveloped land suitable for use as recreational open space restricts the ability to provide more facilities. Addition of the proposed open space will provide greatly needed new publicly accessible open space and supplement the active and passive recreational provided in Travers Park for the growing Jackson Heights community. There is widespread support in the community for this project and capital funding has been provided by this office and local elected officials.


PRESIDENT, BOROUGH OF QUEENS


DATE