



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

March 12, 2008/Calendar No. 23

C 080142 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 532, 542, 554-62 Watkins Street, (Block 3617, Lots 25-29-33) and 566, 209-219 Lott Avenue (Block 3617, Lots 36 and 40) 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 13, four-story buildings, tentatively known as Watkins Street Co-Ops with approximately 104 residential units, in the Borough of Brooklyn, Community District 16.

Approval of three separate matters is required:

1. The designation of 532, 542, 554 -62 Watkins Street (Block 3617, Lots 25, 29, and 33) and 566, 209-219 Lott Avenue (Block 3617, Lots 36 and 40), as an Urban Development Action Area;
2. An Urban Development Action Area Project for such property; and
3. The disposition of such properties, to a developer to be selected by HPD.

The application for the 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 October 26, 2007.

Approval of this application would facilitate the development of 104 residential units for low- and moderate-income families in the Borough of Brooklyn, Community District 16.

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.

RELATED ACTIONS

In addition to the Urban Development Action Area and Project designation and disposition of property, which is the subject of this report, implementation of the proposal also requires action by the City Planning Commission on the following application which is being considered concurrently with this application:

C 080141 ZMK Zoning Map Amendment to change an M1-1 district to an R6 district.

BACKGROUND

The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) is seeking an Urban Development Action Area Designation, project approval and disposition of city-owned property, and an amendment to the zoning map to change from an M1-1 district to an R6 district, to facilitate the development of 13, four-story walk up buildings with approximately 104 residential units.

The 25,033 square-foot site is located on Watkins Street and Lott Avenue in the Brownsville section of Community District 16, Brooklyn, and is comprised of five city-owned fenced vacant lots (Block 3617, Lots 25, 29, 33, 36 and 40) in an M1-1 zoning district. The Imperial Paper Box Corporation is adjacent to the project site to its south and is comprised of one, two-story manufacturing building and one four-story vacant loft on Osborn and Newport Streets respectively. A city-owned vacant lot is at the south-east corner of this block is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Parks and Recreation.

The proposed development would consist of 13 four-story buildings with, 104 units of affordable cooperative housing. There would be 33 one-bedroom units, 45 two-bedroom units including a superintendent's apartment, 11 two-bedroom duplex units, and 15 three-bedroom duplex units.

Approximately 4,236 square feet of outdoor recreation space would be provided for the residents, in addition to on-site parking for 22 cars for the residents. This development would be built pursuant to Quality Housing regulations.

HPD in addition to the Urban Development Action Area designation and project approval and disposition of property requests an amendment to the zoning map from M1-1 to R6 to facilitate the proposed project. The existing M1-1 zoning district permits manufacturing and limited commercial uses at a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.0. Residential use is not permitted. The proposed R6 permits residential uses to an FAR of 2.43 and community facility uses to an FAR of 4.80. The optional Quality Housing program permits 2.2 FAR on narrow streets and a maximum building height of 55 feet.

The surrounding area is zoned R6 and is predominantly residential and developed with a mix of two- to three-story residential and multi-family buildings. Newport Gardens, a three-story multi-family affordable housing complex, is located on Osborne Street across from the site. Two-story, publicly-subsidized Nehemiah Homes are located across from the project site on Watkins Street. Small pockets of light manufacturing uses are located on nearby blocks. The project area is accessible by public transportation with the B8, B15, B35, and B60 bus line and the #3 IRT line located within a short walking distance.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 080142 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 Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Rules for Procedure of 1991 and Executive Order No. 91 of 1977. The designated CEQR number is 07HPD004K. 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 March 5, 2007.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C 080142 HAK) was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on October 26, 2007, and was duly referred to Community Board 16 and the Borough President, in accordance with Article 3 of the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) rules.

Community Board Public Hearing

Community Board 16 held a public hearing on this application (C 080142 HAK) on December 18, 2007, and on that date, by a vote of 16 to 0 with 8 abstentions, adopted a resolution recommending approval of the application with the following condition:

Community Board #16 recommends approval of the Watkins Street Co-op on condition that there be at least 50 parking spaces, given the number of units, and that the units have central air condition and heat.

Borough President Recommendation

This application was considered by the Borough President, who issued a recommendation approving the application on January 29, 2008.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On February 13, 2008 (Calendar No. 5), the City Planning Commission scheduled February 27, 2008, for a public hearing on this application (C 080142 HAK). The hearing was duly held on February 27, 2008 (Calendar No. 25), in conjunction with the public hearing on the application for the related action (C 080141 ZMK). There were four speakers in favor of the application and none opposed. The architect for the proposed project described the proposed units and site plan. A representative of the Community Preservation Corporation, the intended sponsor stated that this project would provide opportunities for home-ownership for area residents. A neighborhood minister and representative from HPD also appeared in favor.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The Commission believes that this application for the proposed Urban Development Action Area designation and project, disposition of city-owned property, in conjunction with the amendment to the zoning map, is appropriate.

The applications would facilitate the development of a 13 four-story residential buildings with 104 residential units. Approval of these applications would provide much-needed affordable housing opportunities for low- to moderate-income households in the community.

Disposition would allow for the return of this property to a productive use and eliminate its blighting influence on the neighborhood. It would enable these city-owned properties to be developed with a use that would serve the needs of Community District 16 and the City of New York. The project complements ongoing public and private redevelopment efforts on nearby blocks.

The amendment of the zoning map from an M1-1 district to an R6 district would extend existing R6 district designation on blocks to the north and south of this long-vacant, city-owned site and would allow residential development at a potential FAR of 2.2, which is currently not permitted. The site is on a block which is currently zoned M1-1 for light manufacturing and is completely surrounded by residential uses. The proposed R6 district would facilitate a Quality Housing development which would complement neighborhood residential uses.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development has recommended the designation of property located at 532, 542, 554-62 Watkins Street, (Block 3617, Lots 25-29-33) and 566, 209-219 Lott Avenue (Block 3617, Lots 36 and 40) 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 532, 542, 554 -62 Watkins Street (Block 3617, Lots 25, 29, and 33) and 566, 209-219 Lott Avenue (Block 3617, Lots 36 and 40), as an Urban Development Action Area; and
- b) An Urban Development Action Area Project for such property;

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 policy is consistent with the policy and purposes stated in Section 691 of the Urban Development Action Area Act.

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 532, 542, 554 -62 Watkins Street (Block 3617, Lots 25, 29, and 33) and 566, 209-219 Lott Avenue (Block 3617, Lots 36 and 40), Borough of Brooklyn, Community District 16, to a developer to be selected by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, is approved (C 080142 HAK).

The above resolution (C 080142 HAK), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on March 12, 2008 (Calendar No. 23), 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.,

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Commissioners