



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

November 16, 2005/Calendar No. 15

C 050245 MMQ

IN THE MATTER OF an application, submitted by the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Transportation, pursuant to Sections 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter, for an amendment to the City Map involving:

- the establishment of Remsen Cemetery Park between Trotting Course Lane and Alderton Street; and
- any acquisition or disposition of real property related thereto,

Community District 6, Borough of Queens, in accordance with Map No. 4981 dated July 25, 2005 and signed by the Borough President.

The application (C 050245 MMQ) for an amendment to the City Map was filed by the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Transportation, pursuant to Sections 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter on December 30, 2004. It involves: the establishment of Remsen Cemetery Park between Trotting Course Lane and Alderton Street; and any acquisition or disposition of real property related thereto.

BACKGROUND

The application filed by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the Department of Transportation (DOT) proposes the establishment of Remsen Cemetery Park at Remsen Square between Trotting Course Lane and Alderton Street. In 2003, Remsen Cemetery (Lot 44, Block 3178) was assigned to the Department of Parks and Recreation by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services for historic preservation purposes. In this application DPR proposes to map the cemetery and a portion of Lot 75 on Block 3178, which is adjacent to the existing cemetery as Remsen Cemetery Park. The portion of Lot 75 to be included in the proposed park will be acquired by DPR. Currently, the landscaped portion of Lot 75 which is proposed to be acquired by DPR serves as a veterans memorial park and is maintained by the owner. The remaining portion of Lot 75 and the entire Lot 76 will be donated to the City for street purposes by the owner, the American Legion.

Remsen Cemetery (Lot 44, Block 3178) which dates back to the 1790's is a historic site and a New York City landmark. The cemetery was used by the Remsen family, several of whose members played important roles in the American Revolution. Jeromus Remsen, who established

the cemetery, led a regiment at the Battle of Long Island. Jeromus Remsen's grave and that of his wife are within the site.

The project site is in an R4 zoning district in the Rego Park/ Forrest Hills section of the Borough of Queens. Adjacent zoning districts include R3-2 to the west, R4B to the east and M1-1 to the south. The immediate area is developed with one and two family residential buildings.

Agencies were polled on January 12, 2005. No city agency had any objections to the proposal.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 050245 MMQ) 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 No. is 05DPR005Q. The lead is the Department of Parks and Recreation.

After a study of the potential environmental impact of the proposed action, a negative declaration was issued on June 17, 2005.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C 050245 MMQ) was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on August 22, 2005, and was duly referred to Community Board 6 and the Borough President, in accordance with Article 3 of the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) rules.

Community Board Public Hearing

Community Board 6 did not hold a public hearing on this application (C 050245 MMQ) but on September 14, 2005, by a vote of 31 to 0 with 0 abstentions, adopted a recommendation approving the application.

Borough President Recommendation

This application (C 050245 MMQ) was considered by the Borough President of Queens, who issued a recommendation approving the application on October 28, 2005.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On September 28, 2005 (Calendar No. 3), the City Planning Commission scheduled October 19, 2005 for a public hearing on this application (C 050245 MMQ). The hearing was duly held on October 19, 2005 (Calendar No. 40) and continued to November 2, 2005 (Calendar No. 16).

There were four speakers in favor and none in opposition to this application. Two speakers, representatives of the Department of Parks and Recreation, described the proposal and spoke in favor of the application.

The president of the Remsen Park Coalition, Inc., stated that the neighborhood organization was formed to rescue this historic cemetery from its neglected condition. She further stated that the organization has been collaborating with DPR for landscaping and maintenance of this site and it would continue to do so.

A representative of the American Legion, the owner of the property being mapped as a portion of the parkland (Lot 75), expressed no objection to this proposal and stated that this cemetery must be mapped as parkland to preserve it for future generations.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The City Planning Commission believes that this amendment to the City Map is appropriate.

Remsen Cemetery (Lot 44, Block 3178) which dates back to the 1790's is a historic site and a New York City landmark and was assigned to the Department of Parks and Recreation by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services for historic preservation purposes in 2003. Several neighborhood organizations including the Remsen Park Coalition and the American Legion Post 1424 were responsible for rescuing this cemetery from its neglected state, creating an attractive memorial open space. A portion of Lot 75 on Block 3178 functions as a veteran's memorial park and is maintained by the American Legion, the owner. This portion is also proposed to be mapped as a park.

Mapping Remsen Cemetery Park would protect this historic landmark for future generations and provide a passive open space to the community.

RESOLUTION

Therefore, the City Planning Commission, deeming the proposed amendment to the City map and any related acquisition or disposition to be appropriate, adopts the following 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 Sections 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter, that based on the environmental determination and the consideration described in this report, the application (C 050245 MMQ) for the amendment to the City Map involving: the establishment of Remsen Cemetery Park between Trotting Course Lane and Alderton Street; and any acquisition or disposition of real property related thereto in Community District 6, Borough of Queens, in accordance with Map No. 4981 dated July 25, 2005 and signed by the Borough President, is approved.

All such approvals being subject to the following conditions:

- a. The subject amendment to the City Map shall take effect on the day following the day on which certified counterparts of Map No. 4981 are filed with the appropriate agencies in accordance with Section 198 subsection c of the New York City Charter.

The above resolution, duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on November 16, 2005 (Calendar No. 15), 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 Chair

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