



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

September 8, 2004/Calendar No.39

C 040310 PPQ

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Small Business Services, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, for the disposition of one (1) city-owned property located adjacent to John F. Kennedy International Airport (Block 14260 part of Lot 1), bounded by Rockaway Boulevard, Eastern Road and North Boundary Road, pursuant to zoning, Community District 13, Borough of Queens.

The application for disposition of city-owned property was filed by the Department of Small Business Services (DSBS) on February 25, 2004, to dispose of one (1) city-owned property located adjacent to John F. Kennedy (JFK) International Airport (Block 14260, part of lot 1), Borough of Queens, pursuant to zoning.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Small Business Services (DSBS) intends to dispose of the subject property to the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) which, in turn, intends to enter into a direct sale of the property to Vista Realty Partners, LLC. Vista intends to develop the site with a combined warehouse and office building to be occupied by Quick International Courier, an air courier firm.

The subject city-owned property is bounded by Rockaway Boulevard, North Boundary Road and Eastern Road. John F. Kennedy International Airport borders the site to the south, east and west. The five-acre property, which is vacant and zoned M1-1, was originally part of the airport. It was, however, surrendered by the Port Authority to the City of New York under the Sixth Supplemental Agreement of the Airport Lease. Idlewild Park and the Springfield Gardens industrial area are located to the north across Rockaway Boulevard. The airport, the industrial area and the 25-acre International Airport Center site that fronts on Rockaway Boulevard to the northeast of the site are also zoned M1-1. These areas north of the site are

developed with airport-related offices and warehouses. There is a United States Postal Service mail processing center, Port Authority Police satellite office, U. S. Customs Office and other airport operations south of Eastern Road, airport runways to the east of the site and vehicular roadways to the west. The section of Idlewild Park across Rockaway Boulevard near the subject site is primarily landfill. Wetlands within Idlewild Park are almost one mile from the site. Residential development is located beyond Idlewild Park north of 147th Avenue. The undeveloped right-of-way for the proposed Nassau Expressway borders the site on the northwest and a fourteen-acre, vacant city-owned parcel abuts the subject property to the north and east. This parcel is proposed for disposition under a separate application (C040309 PPQ).

The disposition will facilitate the as-of-right construction of a two-story office and warehouse building with approximately 98,400 square feet of floor area and 191 accessory parking spaces. Quick International Courier, which currently has operations in Springfield Gardens, Queens, and other parts of the United States, intends to consolidate its facilities and establish its headquarters adjacent to Kennedy Airport. The disposition will be pursuant to zoning.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 040310 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 set forth in Executive Order No. 91 of 1977. The lead agency is the New York City Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding. The designated CEQR number is 02DME012Q.

After a study of the potential environmental impact of the proposed action, a negative declaration was issued on February 26, 2004.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C 040310 PPQ) was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on April 26, 2004, and was duly referred to Queens Community Board 13, in accordance with Article 3 of the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) rules.

Community Board Public Hearing

Community Board 13 held a public hearing on this application on June 24, 2004, and on June 28, 2004, by a vote of 26 to 3 with 1 abstention, adopted a resolution to disapprove the application with the following comments:

The community contends that this project would add to traffic conditions at Farmers Boulevard, Rockaway Boulevard and Guy Brewer Boulevard....The community was particularly concerned about the cumulative air quality problems resulting from all of the projects begun or proposed for the area.

Borough President Recommendation

The Queens Borough President considered the application on July 15, 2004 and issued a recommendation approving the application on August 10, 2004 with the following conditions:

There have been longstanding concerns about the concentration of air cargo warehouses and businesses in this general area. There are residences in the vicinity which may be exposed to higher than usual amounts of air pollution due to the high volumes of vehicular traffic and proximity to the airport. Air monitors should be installed in this area to measure the amounts of particulate matter or other pollutants that this community is being exposed to on a regular basis;

Quick International Courier should build a sound wall (similar to the one built around the Marine Air Terminal at LaGuardia Airport) and provide additional landscaping around the new facility to visually screen the facility from the adjoining neighborhood and to increase absorption of unhealthy emissions.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On July 28, 2004 (Calendar No. 14), the City Planning Commission scheduled August 11, 2004 for a public hearing on this application (C 040310 PPQ). The hearing was duly held on August 11, 2004 (Calendar No. 19). There were two speakers in favor and none in opposition to the application. The chief financial officer of Quick International Courier described the operations of his company and future expansion plans. A representative from the Economic Development Corporation presented an overview of the proposed development and clarified issues relating to traffic patterns and site drainage.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

Waterfront Revitalization Program Consistency Review

This application was reviewed by the Department of City Planning for consistency with the policies of the New York City Waterfront Revitalization Program (WRP), as amended, approved by the New York City Council on October 13, 1999 and by the New York State Department of State on May 28, 2002, pursuant to the New York State Waterfront Revitalization and Coastal Resources Act of 1981 (New York State Executive Law, Section 910 et seq.). The designated WRP number is WRP #04-017.

This action was determined to be consistent with the policies of the New York City Waterfront Revitalization Program.

CONSIDERATION

The Commission believes that the application submitted by the Department of Small Business Services for the disposition of one (1) city-owned property located adjacent to John F. Kennedy International Airport (Block 14260, part of lot 1), pursuant to zoning, is appropriate.

The subject property, approximately five acres bounded by Rockaway Boulevard, Eastern Road and North Boundary Road, is intended to be disposed to the New York City Economic Development Corporation which intends to sell the property to the Vista Realty Partners. Vista intends to construct a two-story, 98,400 square foot office and warehouse building with 191 accessory parking spaces for Quick International Courier. The Commission is aware that Quick International Courier, an air courier business, currently occupies a warehouse facility north of the airport in Springfield Gardens, Queens, as well as offices throughout the country. The proposed facility will allow Quick to establish a corporate headquarters facility at John F. Kennedy International Airport and lease a portion of the new warehouse space to other firms that perform similar cargo consolidation operations now located at other JFK and off-airport locations. The Commission also notes that the new facility will enable Quick to proceed with its own consolidation and expansion plans.

The Commission notes that in response to concerns raised by the community board and the Borough President a traffic impact analysis was performed as part of the project's environmental assessment that indicates because Quick International Courier is already located in the area, the proposed warehouse and office facility would have little or no noticeable impact on existing traffic volumes or traffic delays on Rockaway Boulevard and at nearby intersections. The analysis indicates that primary access to the proposed site would be from roads that are on airport property and that no access or egress would be directly from or onto Rockaway Boulevard. As a result of relocating the firm from Springfield Gardens to the subject site, vehicular trips in the surrounding community are expected to be reduced by half since most of the trips will be directly between the new facility and the

airlines at the airport.

With regard to air quality impacts, the Commission notes that the Environmental Assessment Statement indicates no significant air impacts are anticipated based on projected traffic volumes and parking from the proposed project. The Commission acknowledges the Queens Borough President concerns about air quality monitoring in the area, but notes that such a requirement is beyond the scope of this application.

The Commission also notes that the Environmental Assessment Statement indicates no wetlands will be affected by the proposed development, that all storm water runoff will be managed on-site and although the subject site is located near an aircraft flight path and less than three-quarters of a mile from airport Runway 22R, the proposed facility will not generate noise levels in excess of existing conditions. The Commission also notes that the Environmental Assessment Statement indicates noise attenuation measures and materials will be incorporated into the construction materials for the facility.

With regard to the Queens Borough President's condition regarding construction of a sound wall, the Commission considers such construction to be part of an overall airport development plan and, therefore, not within the scope of this application. While the Borough President recommends landscaping to screen the proposed facility from the adjacent community, the Commission notes that the facility is located more than one-half mile from the residential community and that any landscaping must strictly adhere to Port Authority and FAA requirements for flight safety.

The Commission believes that this application would facilitate the relocation and expansion of an important airport-related business.

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, that the City Planning Commission, in its capacity as the City Coastal Commission, has reviewed the waterfront aspects of this application and finds that the proposed action is consistent with WRP policies; 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 consideration described in this report, the disposition of one (1) city-owned property located adjacent to John F. Kennedy International Airport (Block 14260 part of Lot 1), bounded by Rockaway Boulevard, Eastern Road and North Boundary Road, pursuant to zoning, in the Borough of Queens, Community District 13, proposed in an application by the Department of Small Business Services, dated February 25, 2004, is approved.

The above resolution (C 040310 PPQ), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on September 8, 2004 (Calendar No. 39), is filed with the Office of the Speaker, City Council, and the Queens Borough President in accordance with the requirements of Section 197-d of the New York City Charter.

AMANDA M. BURDEN, AICP, Chair

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