



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

October 7, 2008/Calendar No. 5

C 080478 PCX

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Board of Elections and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for site selection and acquisition of property located at 385 Gerard Avenue (Block 2349, Lot 90), for use as a warehouse and offices, Borough of The Bronx, Community District 1.

The application was filed by the Board of Elections (BOE) and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) on May 30, 2008 for the acquisition of property located at 385 Gerard Avenue (Block 2349, Lot 90), for use as a warehouse and offices, Community District 1, Borough of The Bronx.

BACKGROUND

BOE and DCAS propose the site selection and acquisition of privately-owned property located at 385 Gerard Avenue (Block 2349, Lot 90), for use as a warehouse and offices. The subject property is a 12 story commercial building that occupies most of a triangular block bounded by E. 144th Street, Gerard Avenue and the Major Deegan Expressway.

The BOE would occupy four currently vacant floors within the building and use the space to store and maintain approximately 1,500 new voting machines used in the Bronx, Primary, General, and Special Elections, as well as to store miscellaneous voting materials and voting records along with long term archives and supplies. The new voting machines have been purchased to comply with the Help America Vote Act. In addition to voting machine storage, one floor will be used as BOE's Bronx Borough Office which approximately 65 people work during each business day, from 9am to 5pm except on election days which increase from 8am to 9pm.

The proposed Board of Elections space would be most active during the three to four days before and after an election day. During these periods, the voting machines would be moved from the 385 Gerard Avenue location to various polling locations within The Bronx. In addition, the current Board of Elections voting machine facility, located at 1780 Grand Concourse, will still be operational with the current machines being stored there for one to two years until they are no longer needed.

The site is located within an M1-2 zoning district. A light manufacturing district, which allows a maximum FAR of 2.0. The zoning permits the proposed use. There are a mix of land uses in the surrounding area. To the immediate west of the project site is the Major Deegan Expressway. Beyond that and to the south is a mix of open storage, parking, and warehouse uses. To the east and north are a number of single and multi-story buildings with light manufacturing and warehouse uses. Additionally, Hostos Community College has offices and classrooms in a number of buildings in this area. Public transportation to the site includes access to the 2, 4, and 5 subway lines at the 149th Street and Grand Concourse intersection; the Bx 19 bus on E. 149th Street and the Bx 1 bus on Grand Concourse.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The application (C 080478 PCX) was reviewed pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Act (SEQRA regulations set forth in Volume 6 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations, Section 617.00 *et seq.* and the New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Rules and Procedures of 1991 and Executive Order No. 91 of 1977. The lead agency is the Board of Elections. The designated CEQR number is 08BOE001X.

After a study of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action, a Negative Declaration was issued on April 17, 2008.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C 080478 PCX) was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on June 16, 2008, and was duly referred to Community Board 1 and the Bronx 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 1 held a public hearing on this application (C 080478 PCX) on July 31, 2008 and on that date, by a vote of 20 to 0 with no abstentions, adopted a resolution recommending approval of this application.

Borough President Recommendations

This application (C 080478 PCX) was considered by the Bronx Borough President, who issued a recommendation approving the application on August 21, 2008.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On August 27, 2008 (Calendar No. 1), the City Planning Commission scheduled September 10, 2008 for a public hearing on this application (C 080478 PCX). The hearing was duly held on September 10, 2008 (Calendar No. 19). A representative of the Board of Elections appeared in favor. There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The City Planning Commission believes that this application by the Board of Elections and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services for the site selection and acquisition of property located at 385 Gerard Avenue (Block 2349, Lot 90) is appropriate. The Board of Elections will be receiving approximately 1,500 new voting machines, mandated by the Help America Vote Act, and requires a location that is adequate to accommodate the expanded needs of the Board of Elections.

The proposed site at 385 Gerard Avenue is in close proximity to major modes of public transportation as well as major Bronx thoroughfares such as the Major Deegan Expressway. This accessibility is important as the Board of Elections borough office is relocating to 385 Gerard Avenue and will serve approximately 65 daily employees as well as perform day-to-day functions with the general public. The proposed site has adequate loading facilities including large freight elevators, open floor spaces, and high ceilings. Additionally, the building is secure and is fully air-conditioned with proper electrical capacity, which is necessary to meet the technology requirements of the new machines.

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, pursuant to Sections 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 Board of Elections and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services for site selection and acquisition of property located at 385 Gerard Avenue (Block 2349, Lot 90), Community District 1, Borough of The Bronx, for use as a warehouse and offices, is approved.

The above resolution (C 080478 PCX), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on October 7, 2008 (Calendar No. 5), 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
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