



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MANHATTAN BOROUGH BOARD

April 20, 2017

In Attendance:

Presiding: Jessica Mates, Chief of Staff; Aldrin Bonilla, Deputy Borough President; Lucille Songhai, Director of Community Affairs; Andrew Lombardi, Community Liaison; Andrew Chang, Community Liaison

Council Members: None present

Community Boards: Diana Switaj (CB 1); Terri Cude (CB 2); Jamie Rogers (CB 3); Vikki Barbero (CB 5); Rick Eggers (CB 6); Roberta Semer (CB 7); Jim Clynes (CB 8); Brian Benjamin (CB 10); Diane Collier (CB 11); Shahabuddeen Ally (CB 12)

Members of the Public: Nilus Klingel, Dept of City Planning; Mary Kimball, Dept of City Planning; Joel Kolkman, Dept of City Planning; Manuela Powidayko, Dept of City Planning; Charlie Anderson, Assemblywoman Deborah Glick's office; John Blasco, Councilwoman Rosie Mendez's office; Rob Walker, Community Board 4; Vincent Fang, Councilwoman Margaret Chin's office

Minutes: Andrew Lombardi, Community Liaison, Manhattan Borough President's Office

Agenda for April 20, 2017 Borough Board – Adopted

Minutes for March 16, 2017 Borough Board –added CB 5 additional comments re: East Midtown

Presentation: Text Amendment to Flood Resistance Zoning, Dept of City Planning

Manhattan's flood plain and population are both projected to see huge increases by 2050. The 2013 flood text was a temporary regulation to facilitate recovery from Hurricane Sandy. However, the Department of City Planning (DCP) is interested in "Flood Text II", which would make the most effective aspects of that initial flood text permanent.

Buildings located in the flood plain are regulated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and enforced at the local level by DCP and the Department of Buildings (DOB).

Enforced by DOB, flood resistant construction requires certain buildings to elevate their lowest floors and mechanical equipment above the design flood elevation. These standards allow buildings with commercial uses to dry flood proof the lowest floor and the mechanical equipment below the design flood elevation.



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The 2013 Citywide Flood Text amended zoning in six key areas, in order to catalyze recovery from Sandy:

- Height: measured from flood elevation level
- Access: flexibility for stairs, ramps, and lifts
- Parking: flexibility to relocate parking
- Systems: flexibility to relocate or elevate mechanical equipment
- Ground floors: account for costs of new flood risk [don't understand- ask Basha]
- Streetscape: Require features to mitigate blank wall [also don't understand]

"Flood Text II" aims to fix and improve those provisions based on lessons learned:

Height:

- homeowners may face the loss of subgrade spaces when retrofitting, but will be permitted to increase height
- property owners may want to preempt future risk from rising flood plains by over-elevating
- Ground floors: current incentives to keep ground floors active may not be sufficient
- Homes in manufacturing districts may not be able to rebuild if damaged

DCP is planning a robust public engagement process, beginning with community outreach in spring 2017 and starting the scoping/ULURP process in spring 2018. As part of this outreach process, DCP plans to do the following:

- Partner with stakeholders to educate and promote awareness of flood risk and resiliency issues
- Explain how zoning tools relate to resiliency
- Explore unique neighborhood issues through in-depth public presentations and workshops
- Develop a proposal through an iterative process that is shaped by feedback

Questions:

Clynes (CB 8): Please come to our June waterfront committee

DCP: We sent letters to CBs offering to present. We will be presenting to civic groups too.

Eggers (CB6): Are you coordinating with the East Side Coastal Resiliency efforts?

DCP: Yes, but this proposal is specific to buildings.

Cude (CB2): Is this related to Enterprise Commercial Partners for resiliency?

DCP: No, that is a different project addressing flood resiliency auditing and retro-fitting.

Cude: Both should come to the CB.



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Rogers (CB3): Are you working with FEMA NYCHA?

CB: Yes.

Collier (CB11): Are you also thinking about open space along the waterfront? Our open space along the water front in East Harlem took a beating.

DCP: This is more about building zoning but we are coordinating on open space with other agencies.

Switaj (CB1): How much of an impact is there from these text amendments on height and additional FAR?

DCP: The goal is that there is no net increase. There may be an average addition of 3-4 feet since they're being lifted above the flood plane.

Bonilla (BP office): The 2050 flood area on Sherman Creek is being looked at for re-zoning. Any concerns about overlap?

DCP: New construction is a good thing for long-term. New buildings will be built at the same density and height, but above the flood plane. Currently, there is an insurance deduction for going 3 feet above the flood plane.

Bonilla: Is it possible to access the dry floodproof areas? How will it affect insurance?

DCP: Yes. Commercial spaces have the option to dry floodproof, but they must be above the design flood elevation.

Ally (CB12): You showed a 140% increase in population and flood maps. Is this generally for Manhattan, or specific to boards? And why is it happening?

DCP: Sea level increase will cause the flood levels to rise. It won't flood equally everywhere – the orange areas show how far into the island it will go. We want to ensure in Sherman Creek for example that new buildings are built prepared for the future flooding coming.

Songhai (BP): What has your rollout been like to CBs? What is your plan for outreach?

DCP: We're here today to start this conversation with community boards who want presentations early on.

Benjamin (CB10): We have ULURPs on development now—so it'd be helpful if we could have this conversation now preliminarily. And the problem we have is so many projects are as-of-right who we don't get to comment on.



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Bonilla: But there will be ability to comment on this since it's a text amendment.

Collier (CB11): Please come to our re-zoning task force meetings for our area so this info is kept in mind by everyone.

Bonilla: This adds another layer of nuance, on top of the affordable housing conversation.

Eggers (CB6): How does this affect city-owned property?

DCP: We are talking about changing the zoning to create more resilient construction. This would apply to public and private buildings.

Clynes (CB8): What about in-progress uncompleted buildings?

DCP: This only affects new construction, doesn't retroactively apply to building already built or in progress. The FEMA regulations are mandatory, and the flood insurance program is enforced through lenders and banks. Building code is enforced by DOB. Zoning regulations are optional in this case – a set of reliefs to make it easier to comply in order to make buildings more resilient.

Office of Borough President Report

Delivered by Lucille Songhai, Director of Community Affairs:

Our big focus is on the Garment Center. We have met with everyone – designers, retailers, workers, theater district representatives – and we are convinced there are ways to keep a great deal of manufacturing in Manhattan. Next week we'll be hosting a symposium, which we hope will serve as a vehicle to start a discussion with the Economic Development Corporation and City Hall to discuss innovative solutions. We hope everyone will join us on April 24th. We also want to give special thanks to CBs 4 and 5, and Councilmember Corey Johnson for their work on this issue.

On April 25th, we will be hosting a really interesting bike forum to discuss the future of biking in the city. We will be looking at the latest in new technology and bike safety, from helmets to lights.

Good news on a project we've been working on with Councilmember Mendez on CHARAS: after deliberation, Corp Counsel decided the current proposed lease for the building does not meet standards for 'community use'. We're glad we won't be seeing luxury dorms in this building anytime soon.



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Other news: we have submitted on East Midtown re-zoning ULURP; we held an immigrant storytelling event last night; we have re-usable shopping bags for Earth Day—let us know if you'd like some.

We will have a veteran affairs person coming twice a week to our downtown office and storefront office to work with people on veteran issues.

We are working with Washington Heights merchants and CB12 on an upcoming forum about resolving nuisance summonses.

We will also be hosting info sessions with the Regional Economic Development Counsel to make sure small businesses and non-profits are applying for available money.

In terms of Community Board appointments, we are still deliberating. Please be patient with us!

CB Questions and comments:

Ally: Could we get a list of all the other options for applicants to get engaged, in the event they aren't appointed?

Semer (CB 7): Per Lucille's advice, we are planning an event in June for people who are not appointed to meet with board members and larger agencies with volunteer opportunities. We're happy to open it up to others as well.

Songhai: We'll also be doing our non-profit mixer for those not appointed. We'll also be having our mixer for those appointed.

Benjamin: We'll have to figure out ways to get public members involved – wonder if we have to change by-laws.

Bonilla: We hired a consultant to help us look at by-laws across community boards and standardize the best practices. By June we should have a product for the CBs to kick around and look at over the summer. By-laws should be a living, breathing document that makes things easier, not harder.

We also held by-law trainings that drew about 80 people each. The goal is for the consultant to get us 85% the way to by-laws, with the boards making specific rules for itself through the other 15%.

Eggers (CB6): Is there a timeline for the by-laws?

Bonilla: We want to get a draft to you by June.



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Eggers: We're receiving a lot of interest in public membership.

Bonilla: The charter gives guidance around that with percentages, and our office can give further guidance on it.

Songhai: The amount of people applying is why the non-profit networking is so important to us. Some people may not be a great fit for the CB but for other ways to get involved. Still, people should go to board meetings, stay involved with their boards. Boards do public members differently based on need, availability, etc.

Semer: We stopped having public meetings a few years ago under BP Stringer when we were told public members were part of quorum, then didn't show up. But what we have done is include people who want to be involved on task forces, and make them 'friends of the committee who are experts in the area but can't commit to being a full member.

Cude (CB2): I was also surprised to learn that public members aren't subject to the COIB as board members are. Some committees may be problematic since they may have conflicts of interest but it can't be enforced.

Bonilla: All of these issues came up in our workshops - not all committees are a good idea for public members. As you can see, there's tons of differences of opinion on this one issue, which we hope you can address in the by-laws while also using the best practices we've identified.

Barbero (cb5): Is that part of the charter, that they're not part of COIB? I require all members disclose.

Bonilla: I am not sure, but we will check.

Chair reports:

CB12: We are working on affordable housing, including Inwood re-zoning. We are also dealing with affordable housing with the Inwood Public Library project. These two projects will be ongoing. Tonight, we'll be discussing bike lanes on Dyckman with the BP's office. The George Washington Bridge terminal project is delayed again, it was supposed to be open by now.

CB11: We've had three public hearings recently. We voted yes to approve a project on the African burial ground, but we outlined all the conditions that should be considered for points of agreement - 100% affordability, local hiring, protection of the burial ground, and that CB11 remains at the table throughout the entire process. We also voted on the ECF education construction fund, the 96th Street project. A 68 story building coming to East



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Harlem. What they fail to mention is the state of the art facilities that will be built for high school students. About 30 students showed up from the high school that night [at the hearing], testifying on why they needed the new facility. There was opposition but as the chairwoman, it's very important for us to give our youth an opportunity and show them you can have the same as other communities. Yes, there's the issue of the 68 story building, but as we put in our conditions, we'll see if there's other ways we can bring it down. Last but not least, the third public hearing was on moving the sanitation facility from 99th Street to Potamkin. We voted no. They came to us in 2013, and then 2016. We said no. It's a parking lot - it's going to be across the street from a cancer center, from a school, from open space. And it's not on par with what's being offered downtown, like in [CB] 6, or in Boards 1, 2, and 5. Finally, we had a private showing for young children and with the Young Men's Initiative of *Hidden Figures*. With all the free popcorn and soda you can eat and drink. We received great feedback, and to hear from the young people. It was sponsored by CB11 small business members who pulled the money together.

CB10: We are having a non-profit resource fair, timed around when we get our new members. We want to give those who aren't placed on the Board a chance to meet non-profits in the district and connect with them. We are having a clean and healthy Harlem forum. Sanitation has been a huge issue, including on 125th Street. Sanitation has not kept up with development, so we're having this forum and will have sanitation reps there to discuss - we may not be 42nd Street but we're moving closer to it. Sanitation is tied to health. Real estate brokers want to re-name south of 125th Street SoHa [for 'South Harlem']. We are actively against this and passed a resolution against it. Some businesses already have this in their windows, and we're trying to work with them to resist this. It's going to get messy. But we are actively on top of this. 1 person voted against the resolution. Last, we have one more issue of community garden vs. affordable housing development. We have the Mandela community garden that hasn't been that active, and is owned by HPD. HPD has awarded the site to a MWBE to build affordable housing. We are trying to have a joint meeting to have a conversation and have it vetted out - you hate to have to choose between a community garden and affordable housing.

CB8: Rat Academy is coming in May - we've had many complaints. Second, I have to take back my offer to give up the MTS. We're now looking at, because of high costs, people have come to us to look at it for a different site. Currently, service is supposed to terminate at 91st Street. However, once you get off that ferry, you have to walk all the way back down around Gracie Mansion to get to transport. Or you have to walk all the way up to 90-something. So someone wants to convert the MTS to - you've got the transport, the SBS bus, so make that the transport hub rather than the ferry service down the road. Something else going on now - the SBS on 79th Street. What they've done on the east side is we used to have 3 lanes of traffic each direction - park, and 2 drive. Now it's 1 park[ing], 1 transport. If you have someone double park, I don't know where the bus is going to go. He'll have to illegally cross the double line. Can we have someone look at that or what the DOT is doing? We got



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no notification. Also, the waterfront committee and the MTS - that is going to be the one doing it.

CB7: We are meeting to talk about NYCHA cuts. Second, thanks to Aldrin, we've been going personally to every committee to discuss our district needs statement.

CB6: I found the district needs document to be helpful. We are trying to go through it and use it as a reference to see if we're actually addressing the issues we prioritized. Last month we had another ULURP on the 34th Street heliport. Ours is limited to commercial uses, weekdays, no tourists. We thought it'd be an easy approval but it got heated during full board. It came down to alternative uses for the heliport when it's not being used. We have very little open space, it's the perfect place for outdoor activities. We ran into a problem last summer though when we found out there'd be a *rap* concert on the pier, and the numbers expected were thousands of people. Nobody knew it was coming and we weren't prepared - so it got moved. So alternative uses were a hot issue. We ultimately approved it but put a lot of conditions in. We have another ULURP coming - actually a text amendment. In the Sutton Place area, they're trying to do a resident-initiated text amendment to contain heights in the area. They've proposed a 90 story building where the tallest buildings now are 30 stories. We'll be meeting this summer. Sanitation garage also proposed to be near a hospital in our district, which is a concern. On Saturday, CB6 will be cleaning up Stuy Cove park as part of Earth Day. Board members should have board email addresses for sake of FOILs. Business info should not be in people's signatures. One last thing - two last things. I'd like to spend more time in Borough Board exchanging ideas with other board chairs. And the last thing - office space. We have had a very hard time with office space, and need help getting more permanent affordable qualified office space.

CB5: We have a lot of landmarks, maybe the most. We constantly deal with owners giving us the runaround and have a negative view on owning landmarked buildings. So I want to say the new owners of the Waldorf Astoria came to us this month and gave two presentations and impressed the board to an incredible degree. They have taken elaborate plans to go the extra mile [for us]. Shared streets: we have a crazy one coming up. [Where Broadway reaches Madison Square Park], everyone jaywalks. So they're changing the traffic pattern and creating a shared street on Broadway from 24th to 25th Streets. DOT studied for 18 months, we had workshops, did outreach. It will help with ped safety, circulation, etc. while providing car and delivery use at the nearby residential building. But if you're driving down Broadway, you'll no longer be able to continue through without turning. We are concerned there are going to be more and more shared streets coming up, with lots of chairs and things with over-programming. We passed a resolution stating that over-programming defeats the purpose of ped plazas, causing different forms of congestion. On Garment Center: for me, our District Manager, and other members of the Board, we have been looking at the administration's proposal. We have a lot of concerns and are right on board with Gale about what this will do to the [ecosystem] of the industry. We had a hearing on March 22nd to collect info. We had 35 people from the industry come to speak - only 1



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person spoke in favor, the rest are crazed, so upset. We haven't taken a position yet, but we've asked to back up. This is what happened with East Midtown. We've been asked to take a position by April 3rd without being consulted. They've been working on this for 3 years and didn't say a word. It's outrageous. We're not responding, we're asking people to back up. We wrote a letter to EDC and then Gale got all the local electeds to sign on to a letter to the same effect. We are recommending another steering committee like we did with East Midtown.

CB3: Economic Development Committee: we are kicking around idea of special district in East Village to protect small businesses. We are looking at CB7 and their work on special districts. Near our district was a meeting on the Mount Sinai Beth Israel transition. We pushed hard for them to have more public engagement, and we'll be meeting later today. We hired a consultant to help us with our comments on the environmental impact statement scoping on the Two Bridges proposed towers on the waterfront. We are also moving forward slowly on a Chinatown area re-zoning plan. We'll be convening a subcommittee of stakeholders on this.

CB2: Good news. Thanks to Gale and others, we had a groundbreaking for the Spring Street park. This is great because we have very limited open space in our district. I'm looking forward to our new members and then the realignment of the committees. The 3 L's: landmarks, land use, liquor licenses. We're trying to be proactive with our advocacy for parks. Affordable housing, environmental issues. We're working with CB1 as well about possible changes to the Holland Tunnel and tolls on the Verrazano Bridge as ways to alleviate traffic congestion. I'll see you back here for the Mount Sinai meeting, because we currently have no hospitals in our district.

CB1: We just had our first meetings with new committee structures. We used to do it by geography, but we dissolved them and now have it by subject. We have a meeting regarding coastal resiliency, and are trying to secure more funding. Also working on Peck Slip Park, trying to get Parks to listen to us about its future. We have LMDC money for it, it was planned 10 years ago. But now since the neighborhood has changed, some want to do something different with the space. We're asking Parks to remove certain elements, so we'd have more open flexible space. This request was made in 2014. Continued construction coordination issues, new super tall buildings coming in. Question about the Regional Economic Development Council meetings. Who's invited to that?

Jessica Mates: Anyone.

Councilmember's Reports

John Blasco, from Hon. Rosie Mendez's office: We've had staff transitions - I every CB has a new rep. Please keep an eye out to meet them soon if you have not already. Washington Irving Campus building is undergoing a huge construction project with the SCA. We have



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received tons of complaints from residents nearby in CB6. The CM is hosting a community forum on 4/24, and the SCA will be there to discuss some modifications they're making to address concerns. Last, CMs Mendez and Johnson are hosting a forum to raise awareness on issues around non-gender conforming and transgender community members. Hosted at the Gay Men's Health Crisis.

Hon. Speaker Mark-Viverito's office: no report.

Borough Board adjourned.