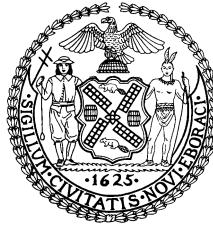


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**The City of New York**  
**Community Board 8 Manhattan**  
**Parks & Waterfront Committee Meeting**  
**Thursday, November 12 2020 - 6:30PM**  
*This meeting was conducted remotely via Zoom*

**Community Board Members (Present):** Elizabeth Ashby, Lowell Barton, Michelle Birnbaum, Alida Camp, Felice Farber, Craig Lader, Rita Popper, Barbara Rudder, Tricia Shimamura, Barry Schneider, Russell Squire, Marco Tamayo; Elaine Walsh; Shari Weiner

**Community Board Members Excused:** Pope-Marshall

**Community Board Public Members (Present):** Judy Schneider, Irma Torres

- 1. Parks & Waterfront Meeting, Joint with Housing and Zoning and Development**  
**PUBLIC HEARING:** N 210095 ZRY - Zoning for Coastal Flood Resiliency (ZCFR) presented by Scott Williamson-East Side Team Leader and Azka Mohyuddin-City Planner, both of the Department of City Planning (DCP), they are liaisons with the community boards and are not resiliency planners/experts. They will get back to us with any specific questions not answered at the meeting.

The following is based on Mr. Williamson's comments and the material submitted and posted on the Community Board 8 website Parks Committee before the meeting:

- The proposed zoning text amendment would make permanent and improve upon the Special Regulations Applying in Flood Hazard Areas (**Article VI, Chapter 4**) of the **New York City Zoning Resolution** to remove zoning barriers that hinder the reconstruction and retrofitting of buildings to resiliency standards and to help ensure that new construction will be more resilient. In addition, ZCFR would include citywide provisions to help sites provide back-up energy, and rules that help the City recover from future disasters, including provisions intended to help address the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated economic effects. This has been driven since "Superstorm Sandy" and is one part of the "One NYC Plan". The change is being made by a Citywide text amendment. CB8 and Roosevelt Island are part of this plan.
- Two text amendments were adopted in 2013 and 2015 on a temporary emergency basis and are set to expire in the next few years.
- On a citywide level, the City's land use strategy has aimed to maintain prevailing land uses and the planned density across neighborhoods in the floodplain while encouraging buildings and neighborhoods of all types to become resilient in the long-term.

- The Governor declared a State disaster emergency for the entire state to address the threat the virus posed to the health and welfare of New York residents and visitors. With cases quickly increasing over the next few weeks, the Governor announced a full stay-at-home order for all non-essential workers on March 20 and halted all non-essential construction on March 27. The City’s Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) was suspended from March 16 through September 14. However, these allowances cannot be extended beyond the time frame of the Emergency Order without a zoning text amendment.
- ZCFR would be applicable to all lots located wholly or partially within both the current 1% and 0.2% annual chance floodplains (the latter serving as a proxy for the projected 2050 1% annual chance floodplain). This contrasts with the 2013 Flood Text and 2015 Recovery Text, which have a more limited geography as they only apply to buildings located wholly or partly within the 1% annual chance floodplain. However, to help the city prepare for or respond to other disasters, select provisions in ZCFR would be applicable throughout the city.
- ZCFR would make permanent the temporary zoning rules of these previous actions, but also improve upon them based on lessons learned since their original implementation through DCP’s analysis of resilient construction in the floodplain, coordination with partner City agencies, and community feedback received during public engagement since Superstorm Sandy.
- In addition to increasing the potential height of storm surges, sea level rise will also cause the floodplain to expand over time.
- Based on data provided by the NPCC, the 1% annual chance floodplain is projected to cover one-quarter of the city’s total landmass by the 2050s.
- The city’s experience recovering from Superstorm Sandy and the current COVID-19 pandemic makes clear that zoning should include rules that can help facilitate long-term disaster recovery. While the storm pointed out the need for provisions that make it easier to reconstruct damaged buildings after a disaster like a hurricane, there is also a need for zoning regulations to address the associated effects from disasters like the pandemic, even if they do not cause physical damage. All rules should be able to be made applicable quickly after a disaster strikes the city, as with the COVID-19 pandemic, but should last no longer than necessary to facilitate the recovery. Beyond this, the city can be made less susceptible to future disasters by undertaking zoning changes that keep vulnerable populations in nursing homes out of harm’s way and by allowing for a more resilient energy grid.
- **Goals of ZCFR**  
Given the issues currently facing New York City’s coastal neighborhoods under the existing zoning framework and the possibility for future disasters beyond the floodplain, DCP has developed the following core goals to assist the city and its residents to be resilient over the long-term.
  - **Goal 1.** Encourage resiliency throughout the current and future floodplains. All building owners in areas subject to flood risk should have the option to proactively incorporate resiliency standards into their buildings, even when these standards are not required by FEMA and Appendix G of the New York City Building Code.
  - **Goal 2.** Support long-term resilient design of all building types. Zoning rules in the floodplain should facilitate protection from coastal flooding for all buildings, independent of their age, typology, or specific location.

- **Goal 3.** Allow for adaptation over time through incremental retrofits. Building owners should be able to incrementally incorporate resiliency improvements into all buildings and waterfront sites, including existing structures that are not able to fully meet Appendix G.
- **Goal 4.** Facilitate future recovery by reducing regulatory obstacles. Zoning rules should assist vulnerable populations and the recovery process after a future storm or other type of disaster, including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- Questions and Comments followed:
  - **Mr. Williamson was invited back to the December 9<sup>th</sup> Land Use Committee meeting, which is a meeting of all the board members to do a short presentation and talk about some of the following comments and issues that affect Community Board 8 including Roosevelt Island. At that time the Board may take a position on the proposed Zoning Text Amendment.**
  - Specific items that the proposal did not seem to address according to some members were: flooding at the 96<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> Street areas, where many of the hospital and institutions are located, the Esplanade, The FDR, Sewers etc. The plan is citywide and is not targeted to Community District 8 Manhattan.
  - Mr. Williamson said this particular part of the text is not supposed to specifically address some of the above items, such as: infrastructure, hospital, FDR. He also spoke about protecting lower placed building equipment and building special platforms to raise mechanicals. The committee notes this has been done at Stanley Isaacs.
  - Mr. Williamson also made the point that this was a citywide plan for the entire city and not all of it applied to our community. Also, any changes to the level of the flood plain would have to start with FEMA.
  - People were concerned that getting habitable space and mechanicals out of the flood plain would allow builders to add extra height to the overall height of the buildings. Mr. Williamson said that building above a height limit would be possible for buildings in the flood plain, but would be limited to that additional height needed to compensate for the loss of this space at ground floor level, where the building is most susceptible to flooding.
  - A question was raised if there are any financial aids/resources so that a building may come into compliance. Mr. Williamson said he would have to get back to us on that.

## **2. Temporary Public Art Installation on Park Avenue Mall by the Asia Society:**

presented by Elizabeth Marsella-Senior Coordinator for Public Art, NYC DP&R and in coordination with Michelle Yun-Director of the Asia Society.

- The temporary art installation by the Asian Artist Xu Zhen, will be located at East 70<sup>th</sup> Street across from the Asia Society.
- It will be up from March 16<sup>th</sup> to June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
- The sculpture, “Eternity—Male Figure, Statue of Venus Genetrix”, is just over 12 feet tall on a concrete base of approximately 3 ½ feet. It is cast bronze on an internal steel armature.
- The sculpture's upper figure is an inverted replica of an 11th-century Cambodian figure that is part of the museum's esteemed Rockefeller Collection, while the bottom figure is a

replica of a second-century Romanesque figure of a female form that belongs to the Getty collection.

- This sculpture is part of the Asia Society's Triennial, a major exhibition showcasing the works of Asian Art. There will be other work of art by Xu Zhen on view at the museum.
- To book your timed tickets, please visit Asia Society website: <https://asiasociety.org/triennial/visit>
- Questions and Comments followed:
  - The point was made that it has been very challenging time for public art.
  - Question raised about children climbing on statue. There will be a guard across the street in front of the museum and there are security cameras.
  - The sturdiness of the base and sculpture was brought up. The MTA Engineers have thoroughly reviewed the project as they would not want it to pierce their tunnel below the sculpture. It was said these engineers are even tougher than some City Agencies.
- No Resolution was made, as this was for information only.

### **3. Update by Wes Hamilton, District Manager-NYC Parks Department**

- Carl Schurz playground is completed and open to the public.
- Esplanade pathway from 76<sup>th</sup> to 78<sup>th</sup> Streets is restored.
- 24 Sycamores Park is under construction.
- St Catherine's Park is in the design phase
- The John Jay spray showers have been repaired and there should be no more flooding. Three truckloads of sand were removed from the drains.
- It's My Park Day was successful in many parks.
- Small events of under 50 people, such as birthday parties, are being permitted in parks.
- Xmas tree lighting in certain places.
- There is now a form to rename parts of parks or in honor of someone. Wes will get the form to the Board office for submitting a suggestion to the Parks Department.
- Questions and Comments followed:
  - Complaint about motorcycle going north on the Esplanade. Wes said that is an NYPD and Parks Enforcement Patrol issue and is a challenge.
  - Someone graffitied the inside of the glass at 81<sup>st</sup> Street on John Finlay Walk. Wes said, "Will do" in response to investigating to see if a repair could be made.
  - Sand box at John Jay needs cleaning due to all the leaves. That is a problem this time of year in many parks.

### **4. Old Business**

- Tricia thanked the Muslim Volunteers for all their work at Ruppert Park.
- Then Mubeen Siddiqui, of the Muslim Volunteers of New York, thanked all the neighbors for helping with this last clean up. She also requested help from Wes with the irrigation. Could they please get a hose to address this problem?
- Stacy Pappas, the new executive director of Friend of the East River Esplanade, was introduced and said a few words. She said she would present in the future.
- Subject came up about having a meeting for various park groups.

There being no other Old or New business, the meeting was adjourned.

Tricia Shimamura and Barry Schneider  
Co-Chairs, Parks and Waterfront Committee  
Barry Schneider, Chair 197-a Committee

Judith Schneider, Scribe