

**Alida Camp**  
Chair

**Will Brightbill**  
District Manager



505 Park Avenue, Suite 620  
New York, N.Y. 10022-1106  
(212) 758-4340  
(212) 758-4616 (Fax)  
[www.cb8m.com](http://www.cb8m.com) – Website  
[info@cb8m.com](mailto:info@cb8m.com) - E-Mail

**The City of New York**  
**Community Board 8 Manhattan**  
**Zoning and Development Committee**  
**Tuesday, December 8, 2020 - 6:30 PM**  
*This meeting was conducted remotely via Zoom*

*Please note: The resolutions contained in the committee minutes are recommendations submitted by the committee chair to the Community Board. At the monthly full board meeting, the resolutions are discussed and voted upon by all members of Community Board 8 Manhattan.*

**Resolution for Approval: Item 1**

**MINUTES:**

**Present:** Elaine Walsh, Elizabeth Ashby, Alida Camp, Adam Wald, Anthony Cohn, Barbara Chocky, Craig Lader, Ed Hartzog, Elizabeth Rose, Felice Farber, Gayle Baron, Marco Tamayo, Michele Birnbaum, Peter Patch, Rita Popper, Shari Weiner, Valerie Mason, May Malik, Jane Parshall, Russell Squire, Barry Schneider, Barbara Rudder

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Zoning & Development Committee Co-Chair Elaine Walsh who announced that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the New York Blood Center proposal to rezone the site to allow the construction of a 16-story 334-foot-tall building mid-block which is currently zoned R8B residential use where the height limit is 75 feet. She indicated that the Blood Center declined the invitation to attend stating it had to get ready for the scooping meeting.

Elizabeth Ashby, Committee Co-Chair, announced there will be several presentations:

1. Marty Bell – Blood Center doesn't need tower, the as of right building would provide more space than needed. Blood Center is asking for 450% more than site zoned. Height comparison only shows building on the avenues, proposed building totally out of proportion. The proposed building will cause loss of sunlight on St. Catherine's Park.
2. Howard Schecter, Esq., represents 333 E. 66<sup>th</sup> St. Structure not in keeping with neighborhood buildings would have a negative effect; Blood Center requested special permits to mitigate set-backs, concerned about increased traffic on East 66<sup>th</sup> Street.
3. Paul Graziano, Planner – Need of Blood Center can be met by as of right building proposed project is not based on need. In 1984 Blood Center filed to build 30 story building. Proposed building doesn't fit mid-block it is a mid-town office building. St. Catherine's Park heavily impacted.
4. Anthony Cohn, Architect-CB8 Board Member shared his screen to show several slides of 3D pictures of site, proposed building and as of right building. He pointed out the zoning address is use and bulk of building.

5. Rachel Levy from Friends of the Upper East Side Historical District and George James, Planner, R8B Zoning District designed to preserve residential use that minimize impact on five-story walkup tenements that dominate mid-block. Blood Center would occupy only 35% of building, the remainder would be leased to Longfellow for commercial uses. R8B zoning not impediment to other medical buildings. Proposed building will have substantial negative impact by throwing shadow on St. Catherine's Park and streets. There are three City owned properties where Blood Center could be located, East Harlem, Kips Bay and Long Island City.

6. Erica Doyle representing Julia Richmond Educational Campus. The school is opposed to proposed project. Concerned about 4-year construction project. There are student ages 3 months to 21 years in school. Concerned about construction equipment will endanger students by blocking street so can't access school. Concerned how it will affect neighborhood.

Elaine Walsh invited the public to speak. As these comments just restated points made earlier only names are provided in these minutes:

Paul Caine, Betty Cooper Wallerstein, Adam Gromback, Lidia Canizares, Ruth Brodsky, Lynn Alessi, Julie Menin, Jeffrey Moss, Jackie Ottman, Bernadette Adam Kane, Marie Andriana, Kathy, Anthony Baret, Peter Rogel, Lo Van de Vaik, Cary Walker, Craig DiBone, Susan.

Elaine took an informal straw poll of those participating in Zoom meeting.

There were 133 participants who indicated they were in opposition to Blood Center project; with 2 participants who indicated they were in favor.

**Members of CB8 speaking:**

Michele Birnbaum – we now have clear picture of the proposed project, encouraged people to support existing zoning, wants resolution in opposition.

Elizabeth Rose – asked for resolution to be passed in opposition to Blood Center project.

Ed Hartzog – talked about 1984 application; wants CB to be more than advisory.

Valerie Mason – if change in mid-block zone can occur on E. 67<sup>th</sup> Street would be precedent for rezoning on your street.

Elaine Walsh called for a vote on a resolution opposing the New York Blood Center project.

**WHEREAS**, the New York Blood Center has partnered with Longfellow Real Estate Partners and is proposing to construct a 334'-tall building on the site of the existing NYBC (Block 1441, Lot 40) which will provide, above the 5<sup>th</sup> floor, space for commercial tenants to use as research labs and medical offices, and

**WHEREAS**, the Blood Center is requesting 5 zoning changes:

1. Rezone site from R8B district to a C2-7 district which allows a commercial laboratory use (USE GROUP 9) and to develop the site to 10 FAR (453,000 zoning square feet) with no height limit.

2. Rezone Second Avenue block frontages between 66-67 St. to a depth of 100' from C1-9 to a C2-8 to "legalize" an existing movie theater and to allow several other large-scale functions under USE GROUP 9 (Catering Hall, Wedding chapel, TV Studio, Gymnasium);
3. Zoning text amendment to Section 74-48 to allow, by special permit, an increase in commercial FAR in C2-7 districts for medical laboratories and associated offices, and modifications to the applicable supplementary use, bulk, and signage regulations.
4. Special permit pursuant to Section 74-48, as amended, to permit:
  - a. commercial laboratory and associated office space to be included in the project at more than the 2 FAR permitted in C2-7 districts pursuant to Section 33-122;
  - b. the commercial space to be located above the second floor of the building, which is not permitted by Zoning Resolution Section 32-421;
  - c. the commercial space to be located above the lesser of 30 feet or two stories, which is not permitted by Zoning Resolution Section 33-432;
5. Special permit pursuant to Section 74-48, as amended, to permit:
  - a. modifications of the height and setback regulations of Section 33-432, which will allow the building to encroach on the initial setback distance and the sky exposure plane, which is necessary to accommodate the large floor plates required for modern, efficient laboratory uses;
  - b. modifications of the rear yard equivalent regulations of Section 33-383, which will allow the Proposed Development to occupy the same footprint as the existing building on its lower floors, and will allow the upper portion of the building to be shifted away from the park and away from the neighboring building; and
  - c. a sign to be located at the top of the building's base, in excess of the surface area permitted for illuminated signs pursuant to Section 32-642, the total surface area permitted for all signs pursuant to Section 32-641 and 32-643, and the maximum height of signs allowed by Section 32-655, and

**WHEREAS** the mid-blocks in Community District 8 are predominately and appropriately zoned R8B, and

**WHEREAS** R8B zoning protects the scale and character of the mid-blocks, and

**WHEREAS** R8B zoning permits residential and community facility uses only with height limit of 75', and

**WHEREAS** the livability of the community and the quality of life of the residents depend upon the R8B height and use regulations, and

**WHEREAS**, the Blood Center has acknowledged that it can satisfy its mission and space needs within the R8B zoning (five floors and 75' high), and

**WHEREAS** the proposal may result in significant adverse impacts related to: land use , zoning, socioeconomic conditions: open space, transportation, shadows, hazardous materials, water and sewer infrastructure, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, noise, public health, neighborhood character:

1. The proposal amounts to “spot zoning.”
2. The commercial laboratory component is inappropriate for the residential area.
3. The proposed building would have a negative impact on the students attending JREC,
4. The proposed building would create overwhelming demands upon local services
5. Traffic in the area is already seriously congested and will likely be exacerbated
6. The 334-foot commercial tower would generate a large amount of pedestrian traffic in the already overcrowded local sidewalks.
7. The proposed building would cast extensive shadows over Saint Catherine’s Park and neighboring buildings.
8. The commercial entity and the research labs and associated office space will have significant adverse effect on the environmental air quality.

**WHEREAS** the proposed zoning changes, if approved, would set a dangerous precedent, putting all the Upper East Side mid-blocks at risk, and

**WHEREAS** Community Board 8 has approved and is working with DCP towards limiting building height on avenues east of Lexington to 210', and this proposal significantly exceeds that on a mid-block lot, and

**WHEREAS** the representative of the Julia Richman Education Complex shared the institution’s alarm and opposition to the proposal, and

**WHEREAS** and the shadows on the complex would put the building in darkness and have a negative impact on student learning, and

**WHEREAS** there is widespread fear and opposition in the community, as evidenced by the hundreds of residents attending the committee meetings to voice their concerns, and

**WHEREAS**, Community Board 8 has disapproved similar zoning change requests from Northwell/Lenox Hill Hospital,

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the committee opposes the request for all of the zoning changes as outlined in our resolution and as set forth by the New York Blood Center

*Yes (15):* Elaine Walsh, Elizabeth Ashby, Alida Camp, Adam Wald, Anthony Cohn, Barbara Chocky, Ed Hartzog, Elizabeth Rose, Gayle Baron, Marco Tamayo, Michele Birnbaum, Peter Patch, Rita Popper, Shari Weiner, Valerie Mason

*Abstain (1):* Craig Lader

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

**Elaine Walsh & Elizabeth Ashby, Co-Chairs**