

Russell Squire
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 – Website
info@cb8m.com – E-Mail

**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Zoning and Development Committee
Tuesday September 28, 2021 - 6:30 PM
This meeting was conducted 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.

Minutes

PRESENT: Elizabeth Ashby, Gayle Baron, Michele Birnbaum, Alida Camp, Anthony Cohn, Gregory Morris, Sharon Pope-Marshall, Rita Popper, Elizabeth Rose, Barbara Rudder, Russell Squire, Marco Tamayo, Adam Wald, Sharon Weiner, Leo Yu (Public Member)

Resolution for Approval:

Item 4: CB8 Being Informed of Applications for After-Hours Work Permits (Unanimous)

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 by Elizabeth Ashby.

Agenda

Item 1: Update on Community Board 8's Application for Yorkville and Lenox Hill Special Zoning Districts, covering First, Second, and Third Avenues

Anthony Cohn reported that work on the Application has recommenced. The planner will combine the two Special Districts into one. Members were reminded that there are three components of the Special Districts - a height limit of 210 feet, preservation of the low buildings and tenements, and protection of the local retail and service stores.

A member of the public spoke in favor the 210-foot height limit. He said that the taller buildings cause great environmental damage because their excessive energy consumption leads to enormous carbon emissions.

Marco Tamayo has been helping the planer with affordable housing aspects of the proposal. Members of the Board advocated more affordable housing, that new construction be within a year of demolition, and that buildings be preserved not demolished to protect the environment.

A one-page summary of the proposal was requested.

Item 2: Goddard-Riverside Safe Haven's claim to be as-of-right

Several months ago, the Department of Buildings was asked questions regarding its position on Goddard-Riverside Safe Haven's claim. Its letter in response arrived 13 minutes before the meeting. It said they stood by their position that it was as-of-right. A quote from case they used as precedent was attached and references to the Zoning Resolution and Board of Standards and Appeals decisions were included. Because of late arrival of letter, the Committee decided to study the DOB position after meeting and act at a later meeting.

Item 3: Informing Community Boards of proposals for Zoning lot changes

Several months ago, a bill was proposed to require that Community Boards be informed of Applications for zoning lot mergers. The Community Board supported this proposal and requested that it include all zoning lot changes. No action has taken place on the proposal.

The consensus of the Committee was to write a letter to Department of Finance, asking that Community Boards be informed of Applications for zoning lot mergers and changes when they are filed. Committee felt that the more information that we had, and the earlier we received it, was a good idea.

Item 4: CB8 is not being Informed of Applications for After-Hours Work Permits, as promised.

The Community Board has had numerous complaints about this. The Committee felt that these permits are granted too liberally and often without justification. The following resolution was passed unanimously:

WHEREAS after-hours permits cause great disturbances to nearby residents, and

WHEREAS the Community Board has had numerous complaints about this, and

WHEREAS these permits are not supposed to be automatically granted, and

WHEREAS the Community Board wishes to monitor this situation and assist the public in addressing the problem,

BE IT THEREFOR RESOLVED that Community Board 8M request the Department of Buildings to require that all Applicants for after-hours work permits file copies of their applications with the affected Community Boards when they file them with the Department of Buildings.

Yes (14): Elizabeth Ashby, Gayle Baron, Michele Birnbaum, Anthony Cohn, Sharon Pope-Marshall, Gregory Morris, Rita Popper, Elizabeth Rose, Barbara Rudder, Russell Squire, Marco Tamayo, Adam Wald, Sharon Weiner, Leo Yu (Public Member).

Old Business - Updates on Projects

New York Blood Center/Longfellow Tower

It was reported that the proposal was working its way through ULURP. The Community Board voted against it unanimously and the Borough President rejected it as well. The City Planning Commission voted for it by a vote of 8 to 2. It now goes to the City Council; its Land Use Committee will hold a Hearing on Wednesday, October 20.

Northwell/Lenox Hill expansion – Lexington

The hospital’s position still remains that they will soon file for ULURP.

Northwell/Lenox Hill expansion – Third Avenue

There has been no change here either.

Spence School application for revision to BSA variance (discussed at Full Board Meeting on Wednesday 22 September).

Several years ago, the Board of Standards and Appeals granted the Spence School a change-of-use Variance to allow a Community Facility (the school). The owners of the neighboring property now wish to construct a “luxury storage facility” on their site. They purchased unused development rights (air rights) from Spence for this purpose.

Currently, the school’s air rights would be for Community Facility use.

A local resident testified that the block is already over-burdened with traffic.

Specific issues in Spence Application

The Board felt that it did not have enough information regarding these issues. Members also questioned how Community Facility air rights could be put to commercial use.

General discussion of Zoning Issues pertinent to CB8 (ULURP vs. BSA, for example)

It was explained the ULURP stands for Uniform Land Use Review Procedure and applies to Applications for zoning changes, which are decided by the City Planning Commission. The Board of Standards and Appeals hears Applications to waive provisions of the Zoning Resolution; such waivers are called Variances.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Elizabeth Ashby and Anthony Cohn, Co-Chairs