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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Zoning and Development Committee
Tuesday, January 24, 2023 - 6:30 PM
Conducted remotely on Zoom

Please note: The resolutions contained in the committee minutes are recommendations submitted by the committee co-chairs 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.

Resolutions for Approval:

Item 1: 150 East 91st Street – Redeemer Presbyterian Church

Minutes

Board Members Present: Elizabeth Ashby, Michele Birnbaum, Lori Ann Bores, Lorraine Brown, Anthony Cohn, Saundra I. Coleman, Lindsey Cormack, Edward Hartzog, Valerie Mason, John McClement, Sharon Pope-Marshall, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Elizabeth Rose, Judy Schneider, Anju Suresh, Marco Tamayo, Adam Wald, and Leo Yu (Public Member).

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

Item 1: A discussion of 150 East 91st Street – Redeemer Presbyterian Church’s proposed building and its effect on neighboring buildings.

The committee first discussed Redeemer Presbyterian Church’s proposed building at 150 East 91st Street and its effect on neighboring buildings. The building will be as-of right and shares a century-old air shaft with its neighbor at 160 East 91st. The proposed building will not replace its portion of the airshaft, leaving 160 without legally complying windows on its western side.

Olivier DuPont, Diane Forgione, and Meena Rao, members of the 160 East 91st Street co-operative board of directors, spoke of the quality-of-life damage that would be caused to the affected apartment owners, of the loss of habitability that would be caused to their apartments, and expressed concerns related to safety and fire escape egress in the case of fire. The following Resolution was passed by a vote of:

Yes (17): Elizabeth Ashby, Michele Birnbaum, Lori Ann Bores, Lorraine Brown, Anthony Cohn, Edward Hartzog, Valerie Mason, John McClement, Sharon Pope-Marshall, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Elizabeth Rose, Judy Schneider, Anju Suresh, Marco Tamayo, Adam Wald, and Leo Yu (Public Member).

Abstain (2): Lindsey Cormack, Saundra I. Coleman.

WHEREAS; 160 East 91st Street is a Co-op originally built in about 1906; and

WHEREAS; 160 East 91st Street has shared a lightwell with 150 East 91st Street since their original construction; and

WHEREAS; the lightwell provided light and air to twenty-four apartments, and the only light and air to eight of those apartments, all Studios; and

WHEREAS; the fire escape for those 24 apartments sits on the 160 East 91st Street side of the property line occupying the entire width of the lightwell from the building line to the property line; and

WHEREAS; the plans Redeemer Presbyterian Church (150 East 91st Street) filed with the Department of Buildings for a new building do not include a lightwell; and

WHEREAS; this construction will severely damage the habitability and safety of the apartments with west-facing windows in 160 East 91st Street; and

WHEREAS; Community Board 8 supports the efforts of residents of 160 East 91st Street to have sufficient light and air to ensure the habitability of their apartments, and

WHEREAS; Community Board 8 supports the efforts of residents of 160 East 91st Street to maintain the health and safety of their residents,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that Community Board 8 supports and urges ongoing negotiations between Redeemer Presbyterian Church and the stakeholders of the contiguous building to prevent the damage to the light, air, and habitability of the apartments at 160 East 91st Street that would be caused by the absence of a lightwell.

Item 2: A discussion of 419 East 91st Street – the proposed Safe Haven’s zoning Objections

The committee then discussed the legal status of 419 East 91st Street - formerly proposed to be utilized as a Safe Haven. The Department of Buildings has revoked its permit and issued a letter of Objections. The Committee reiterated CB8's commitment to reducing lack of housing within the district but remains concerned that the proposed project does not conform to current zoning.

Roxanne Elings, the attorney representing a community coalition, presented the neighbors’ concerns. Darryl Vernon, the attorney representing the owner of the adjacent building, presented his concerns about damage to his building. Devon Fredericks, a concerned neighbor of the building, informed the committee of the inability to get information on the project. Several members of the public voiced opposition to the zoning details of the proposed building.

Item 3: An Update on Lenox Hill and Yorkville Special Zoning Districts

The topic of the Community Board’s proposal for the Yorkville and the Lenox Hill Special Districts was introduced. The committee was informed that representatives of the Department of City Planning requested a meeting with the Board Chair and the Zoning and Development Committee Co-chairs. At that meeting, the Board Chair and the Zoning and Development Committee Co-chairs were informed that the Department of City Planning would not advance the proposal for the two special zoning districts.

Item 4: An introduction to the City Planning online site for Zoning and Land Use (ZOLA)

This item was laid over for discussion at a future meeting.

Item 5: Old Business

No items of Old Business were discussed.

Item 6: New Business

No items of New Business were discussed.

The meeting was then adjourned at 10:15 PM.

Elizabeth Ashby, Anthony Cohn and Sharon Pope-Marshall, Co-Chairs