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**The City of New York**  
**Community Board 8 Manhattan**  
**Zoning and Development Committee**  
*Tuesday, January 30, 2024 - 6:30 PM*  
*Conducted remotely on Zoom*

**Minutes**

**Board Members Present:** Elizabeth Ashby (Co-chair), Gayle Baron, Michele Birnbaum, Alida Camp, Anthony Cohn (Co-chair), Sahar Husain, Craig Lader, John McClement, Sharon Pope-Marshall (Co-chair), Rita Popper, Margaret Price, Marco Tamayo, Adam Wald, and Sharon Weiner.

**Approximate Number of Public Attendees:** 25

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM.

**1. Introduction to City of Yes Housing Opportunity**

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 P.M. by Co-chair Sharon Pope-Marshall, who introduced Co-chair Anthony Cohn and the first agenda item, the City of Yes for Housing Proposal.

Mr. Cohn made a relatively brief presentation, demonstrating the steps required to locate information on zoning initiatives on the Department of City Planning website.

He went on to introduce the basic elements of the proposal, using the Scope of Work Document from the DCP website as the basis. A link to the PDF of the presentation is available [here](#).

One member of the public spoke:

1. Elaine Walsh spoke in opposition to the proposal. She made the following observations:
  - a. She noted that there was no real data to support the assertions made in the proposal.
  - b. No thought was given to its unintended consequences.
  - c. She suggested that the proposal offers no real assurances that Affordable Housing, its ostensible goal, will be built under this program.
  - d. The plan to create new Single Room Occupancy residences could recreate the SRO disaster of the 1970's.
  - e. The elimination of the parking regulations would lead to more pressure on the existing parking facilities.
  - f. The proposal does not adequately define campus as it pertains to housing (as opposed to educational facilities).
  - g. There has been little or no public input.
  - h. These proposals could redefine the nature of the community without any real material benefit.

Several Members of the Committee spoke:

2. Marco Tamayo also spoke in opposition:
  - a. The district is too dense, the highest population density in the United States.
  - b. The transit infrastructure is barely adequate at the current population density, even with the Q line.

- c. The zoning in CD8, with R10 on the avenues, for the most part, is considerably higher than in the corresponding Community District to the North (CD11, whose portion of the same avenues are zoned R7-2).
- d. Corresponding wide streets in Queens and Brooklyn have consistently lower density (most of Queens Boulevard, which is 200 feet wide - wider than Park Avenue – is zoned as R7). Ocean Parkway, 210 feet wide, has no portions with a higher density than R7.
- e. Marco also expressed concern that the new rules for additional floor area and height in R8B districts would destroy their character.

3. Alida Camp raised four points:

- a. How do all of the proposals in the City of Yes interlock? Will the increased flexibility for commercial activity in existing and new residential buildings decrease housing stock? How do the COY proposals work with other initiatives like Congestion Pricing, new garbage regulations, and the continued existence of roadway dining?
- b. Why is there no provision for permanent affordable housing?
- c. Will there be an Environmental Impact Statement for this proposal?
- d. Are there provisions to modify the Air Rights Transfer regulations, and how will existing transfers be handled with increased FAR?

4. Michele Birnbaum made a number of points, some in support of previous comments:

- a. While not all of the proposals directly bear on CD8M, we should look closely at the entire package and judge its merits for the city as a whole.
- b. A possible solution to the height problem on the eastern avenues of CD8 might be a change in zoning so that the underlying district were an R10A zone.

5. Rita Popper noted by way of preface that we don't build Affordable Housing in CD8 because we don't want to:

- a. Many affordable units are being built in other boroughs
- b. Developers of residential projects in CD8 only want to build luxury apartments.

6. Shari Weiner made it clear that from her experience in Livingston, NJ, affluent communities can create mandatory affordable housing, but does not see the compulsion to do so in this proposal.

7. Gayle Baron expressed the wish that the Committee would take a deeper dive into the particulars of the proposal, and Co-chair Cohn replied that the Committee will take up a portion of the proposal at the next meeting.

8. Alida Camp and Peggy Price both further echoed comments from other Board Members.

## 2. **Lenox Hill and Yorkville Special Districts – Update**

At the conclusion of the discussion, Co-chair Pope Marshall introduced the second topic, which was the background and progress of the Proposed Lenox Hill and Yorkville Special Districts. Several Committee members, Co-chair Ashby, Michele Birnbaum, and Alida Camp described the genesis and long history of the proposal. Former Committee Co-chair Elaine Walsh also contributed to the discussion. The following points were emphasized:

- 1. The origin of the proposal dated back to before 2017.
- 2. A major concern was, and is, that Affordable Housing required for new projects was moved to sites outside of CD8M, providing no benefit for the district.
- 3. Developers should be obliged to relocate tenants pushed out by new construction and that relocation should occur within the district.
- 4. At present, there is a difference of opinion as to the efficacy of the current system of towers built using the air-rights transfer mechanism, rather than limiting categorically the size of buildings along the avenues.

## 3. **Old Business**

No items of Old Business were discussed.

#### **4. New Business**

No items of New Business were discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

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