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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Zoning and Development Committee
Tuesday, June 25, 2024 - 6:30 PM
Conducted remotely on Zoom

Minutes

Board Members Present: Elizabeth Ashby (Co-chair), Juno Chowla-Song, Anthony Cohn (Co-chair), Craig Lader, Valerie Mason, John McClement, Jane Parshall, Sharon Pope-Marshall, Rita Popper, Barbara Rudder, Judith Schneider, Marco Tamayo, Adam Wald, and Sharon Weiner.

Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 15

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 PM.

1. Council Member Keith Powers will provide updates on the final version of City of Yes for Economic Opportunity, which was modified by the City Council and approved on June 6, 2024, and share preliminary thoughts on COYHO

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. by Co-Chair Anthony Cohn, who introduced Council Member Keith Powers and the agenda item, The City of Yes for Economic Opportunity.

Council Member Powers spoke to the changes the City Council made to the proposal prior to its approval. He highlighted the purpose of the proposal and its roots in encouraging economic development through modifications to the 1961 Zoning Resolution. The City Council modified several of the proposals:

- the home office provisions,
- corner store restoration – illegal cannabis being the main target,
- curtailing “last mile” business proposals,
- those surrounding “urban farming.”

He then moved to a brief discussion of the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity. He emphasized the city-wide nature of the proposals and the potential within them for easing the development pressure on Manhattan as a whole and CD8M in particular.

Questions from the Committee members followed. While many questioners/commenters applauded the goals and city-wide scope of COYHO, the particulars were questioned, especially as regards the higher density in already high-density districts. Some called for a reversal of the long-standing parking ban in new construction, as well as its expansion to the balance of the city. Several questioned the efficacy of a plan that would not satisfy existing housing needs, let alone the likely increased shortfall in the future.

2. Review of “City of Yes for Housing Opportunity”

Co-chair Elizabeth Ashby introduced John Mangin and Azka Mohyuddin from the Department of City Planning, who explained further some of the more confusing proposals within COYHO. They then answered questions about specific aspects of the proposal:

- The absence of an affordable housing requirement for office conversions,
- Vacant apartments,
- The difference between “affordable” and affordable as a planning term of art – the latter is keyed to the HUD definitions of a percentage of AMI,
- The possibility that the COYHO proposals will not generally lower housing costs due to “trickle-down” effects,

- The need for “missing-middle” housing and its connection to the lower-density proposals,
- Transfer of Landmark Development Rights expansion,
- Displacement of tenants due to redevelopment,
- Modification to rear yard requirements,
- Introduction of new, higher density, residential zones.

The lengthy Q&A concluded with a clarification from John Mangin of several possible misconceptions arising from the COYHO:

- The expansion of “contextual zoning,” or Quality Housing, to the entire city, which will eliminate height factor zoning and yield more neighborhood-sympathetic development,
- The effect of the change in rear yard requirements will allow buildings with a more irregular shape and more courts and corners.

3. **FAR cap and other issues arising from New York State Budget.**

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

4. **Old Business**

No items of Old Business were discussed.

5. **New Business**

No items of New Business were discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 PM.

Elizabeth Ashby and Anthony Cohn, Co-Chairs