

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS

AND DISPOSITIONS 1

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC
SITINGS AND DISPOSITIONS

----- X

March 28, 2024
Start: 11:45 a.m.
Recess: 12:37 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - COMMITTEE ROOM, 14TH
FLOOR

B E F O R E: Kamillah Hanks, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Justin L. Brannan
Amanda Farías
Oswald Feliz
Sandy Nurse
Yusef Salaam

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS 2

A P P E A R A N C E S

Carl Hedman, Director with the Leverage
Preservation Programs at New York City Department
of Housing Preservation and Development

Nicole Lockett, Genesis Companies

Soweto Edwards, Genesis Companies

Adam Beckerman, Senior Planner at the Department
of Housing Preservation and Development

Jack Heaney, Managing Principal at Fulcrum
Properties

Arvind Sindhvani, Director of Land Use, Planning
and Development at New York City Department of
Housing Preservation and Development

Jocelyn Torio, Senior Project Manager at
Settlement Housing Fund

Michael Gaboury, Settlement Housing Fund

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS AND
DISPOSITIONS

3

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning. This is a
3 microphone check for the Subcommittee on Landmarks,
4 Public Sitings and Dispositions. Today's date is
5 March 28, 2024, located on the 14th Floor Committee
6 Room, recording done by Pedro Lugo.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning and
8 welcome to the New York City Council Hearing on
9 Landmarks, Public Sitings and Dispositions.

10 At this time, can everybody please
11 silence your cell phones?

12 If you wish to testify, please go up to
13 the Sergeant-at-Arms desk to fill out a witness slip.

14 At this time and going forward, no one is
15 to approach the dais. I repeat, no one is to approach
16 the dais.

17 Thank you for your cooperation.

18 Chair, we are ready to begin.

19 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much, and
20 thank everyone for their patience for these technical
21 difficulties. [GAVEL] Good morning. We still in
22 morning? Yes.

23 Welcome to a meeting of the Subcommittee
24 on Landmarks, Public Sitings and Dispositions. I am
25 Council Member Kamillah Hanks, and I'm the Chair of

1
2 the Subcommittee. Today, I'm joined by my Colleagues,
3 Council Members Brannan, Feliz, Nurse, and Salaam.

4 Before we begin with today's agenda, I
5 will remind everyone that this meeting is being held
6 in a hybrid format. For members of the public who
7 wish to testify remotely, we ask that you first
8 register online and that you may do so by visiting
9 www.council.nyc.gov/landuse to sign up and then sign
10 on to the Zoom and remain signed in until you have
11 testified.

12 For anyone here today in person that
13 wishes to testify, if you have not done so already,
14 please see one of our Sergeants to fill out a
15 speaker's card, and we will call your name at the
16 appropriate time.

17 For anyone wishing to submit written
18 testimony on the items being heard today, we ask that
19 you please send it via email to
20 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov, and please indicate
21 the Land Use number and/or project name in the
22 subject line of your email.

23 On today's agenda, we have a hearing on
24 East Tremont Cluster NCP in Council Member Feliz's
25 District, LU numbers 35 and 36, a Preconsidered

1
2 hearing on Melrose Concourse NCP in Council Member
3 Stevens' District in the Bronx, and a Preconsidered
4 hearing on Genesis MPLP in Council Member Salaam's
5 District in Harlem.

6 Now, I will open a public hearing for the
7 two Preconsidered applications bought by HPD for the
8 designation of an urban development action area,
9 approval of an urban development action project,
10 disposition of City-owned land to a developer
11 selected by HPD under application G 240049 NUM as
12 well as real estate property tax exemption pursuant
13 to Article XI of the Private Housing Finance Law
14 under application G 240050 XAM. Together, these
15 actions will facilitate preservation of an affordable
16 housing project known as Genesis MPLP for eight
17 buildings in Harlem in Council Member Salaam's
18 District.

19 Appearing today on this panel is Carl
20 Hedman from HPD, Nicole Lockett from Genesis, and
21 Soweto Edwards from Genesis.

22 Those wishing to testify remotely, again,
23 please, you must register online by visiting the
24 Council's website at council.nyc/landuse.

2 Counsel, would you please administer the
3 affirmation.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, would you
5 please raise your right hand and state your name for
6 the record?

7 CARL HEDMAN: Carl Hedman, HPD.

8 NICOLE LOCKETT: Nicole Lockett, Genesis
9 Companies.

10 SOWETO EDWARDS: Soweto Edwards, Genesis
11 Companies.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell
13 the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth
14 in your testimony before the Subcommittee and in
15 answer to all Council Member questions?

16 CARL HEDMAN: Yes.

17 NICOLE LOCKETT: I do.

18 SOWETO EDWARDS: Yes.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. Please let us
20 know when you're ready to share your presentation and
21 let's put it on the screen.

22 CARL HEDMAN: Great. We're ready. Perfect.
23 Hi, everyone. My name is Carl Hedman. I'm a Director
24 with the Leverage Preservation Programs at HPD. I'm
25 here to start the presentation on Genesis MMN1901,

1
2 which is a part of the Multifamily Preservation Loan
3 Program at HPD. You can advance to the next slide,
4 please.

5 The proposed actions today, I'll provide
6 a quick summary. The applicant is the New York City
7 Department of Housing Preservation and Development.
8 The program is the Multifamily Preservation Loan
9 Program, which designates qualified sponsors to
10 purchase and rehabilitate City-owned and vacant lots
11 that are multifamily and mixed-use buildings in order
12 to create low- and moderate-income rental housing. As
13 part of the proposed designation, the properties
14 would be sold to the sponsor for a nominal 1-dollar
15 purchase price for each site. The sponsor is Genesis
16 Companies, LLC. The proposed property manager is Ezra
17 Management. The summary of the Land Use applications
18 today is an urban development action area designation
19 along with an urban development action area project
20 approval, the disposition of eight sites in
21 Manhattan, blocks 1823, 1831, 1720, 1720, 1937, 1736,
22 1849, and 1914, and lots 36, 25, 35, 36, 27, 25, 42,
23 and 60 respectively, along with the action request
24 today is an Article XI exemption for the full cluster
25 and, as part of the action, HPD will propose to issue

1
2 a 40-year regulatory agreement to preserve the
3 affordability. You can advance to the next slide,
4 please.

5 As a quick overview of the properties,
6 this cluster is comprised of eight buildings with 78
7 rental units currently located in central Harlem. 220
8 Lennox Avenue and 222 Lennox Avenue are vacated
9 eight-unit buildings that are both landmarked
10 exterior, 170 West 130th Street is an occupied four-
11 unit building that is landmarked exterior and
12 interior, 77 Lenox Avenue, aka 100 West 114th Street,
13 is an occupied nine-unit building, 203 West 131st
14 Street is occupied nine units, 205 West 115th is
15 occupied 11 units, 33 West 116th is occupied nine
16 units, 138 Street is occupied 24 units, and 358 West
17 116th is occupied five units. In addition, there is
18 one vacant commercial space located at 77 Lenox. The
19 cluster consists of 46 occupied units and 39 vacant
20 units. All buildings are City-owned. There is no
21 existing regulatory agreement as it is a City-owned
22 property, and all properties are in need of
23 significant renovation work. We can advance to the
24 next slide, please.

1
2 Just a quick overview, this is a map
3 showing that the properties are located in Central
4 Harlem between West 114th Street and West 138th
5 Street.

6 NICOLE LOCKETT: You can advance to the
7 next slide, please.

8 Just a quick overview of Genesis
9 Companies. Our organization is a Harlem-based 100
10 percent African-American-owned and controlled
11 development organization based in Harlem. We work
12 primarily in Harlem. Often, we partner with community
13 groups with faith-based organizations and the like.
14 Our founding tenant is on green and energy efficient
15 buildings to preserve and advance the health and
16 safety of our residents, and we have done a number of
17 similar development projects. We have or have in
18 development 160-plus buildings, most of those in
19 Harlem, and about 1.45 billion all told in total
20 development costs. Advance to the next slide, please.

21 We are also very focused on M/WBE
22 partnerships and particularly development partners,
23 advancing the ecosystem of M/WBE developers in our
24 community. As part of this program, we will be
25 entering into an agreement to participate in the

M/WBE Build Up Program and the Hire NYC program to make sure that local residents have opportunities for work as part of this development.

SOWETO EDWARDS: Next slide.

Here we have three images of existing buildings in the cluster. To the left, we have 33 West 138th Street, which is the largest building and most northern in the cluster, the center image is of 220 and 222 Lenox Avenue, which are both landmarked and located in the Mount Morris Park Historic District, and to the right we have 170 West 130th Street, which is also deemed historic. Next slide.

The eight sites that make up TPT Lenox Avenue Cluster will undergo either substantial or gut rehabilitations to address the extensive physical needs. Post rehab, the existing 78 units will be converted into 85 units of affordable housing, but the existing tenancy will be offered preferential rents to preserve affordability. In addition, 15 percent of the units will be reserved for homeless households. There is one existing commercial space located at 77 Lenox Avenue that will be marketed for rent as a vanilla box. A total of over 70,000 gross

1
2 square feet will be rehabbed as a part of this
3 effort. Next slide.

4 We anticipate it will take 30 months to
5 complete the scope of work for this project, which
6 will include, but is not limited to, the replacement
7 of existing roofs with new green roofs, new kitchen
8 and bathrooms with upgrades to appliances and
9 countertops, new energy efficient light fixtures in
10 both the units and common areas, façade repairs to
11 fix defects and make buildings water sound and energy
12 efficient through the repointing of bricks, repair
13 and restoration of existing cornices, and the
14 installation of new energy efficient windows. In
15 accordance with the City's initiative to reduce the
16 dependency on fossil fuels, we will introduce
17 electric kitchens at five of the buildings. All
18 buildings post construction will achieve Enterprise
19 Green Community's certifications. In addition, to
20 comply with section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation
21 Act, five units throughout the cluster will be
22 retrofitted for the mobility impaired and an
23 additional five units will be retrofitted for hearing
24 and vision impaired. Next slide.

1
2 The current plans call for a change in
3 unit mix to correct the inefficiencies of the
4 existing layouts and to comply with DOB codes. This
5 proposed unit mix will create upward of an additional
6 seven units of affordable housing. As it stands, the
7 approved plans will increase the number of studios,
8 one-bedroom and three-bedroom units with a reduction
9 to the existing four- and five-bedroom units.

10 NICOLE LOCKETT: Next slide, please.
11 You'll see here a mix of the affordable units of the
12 property. 57 percent of the units are low-income or
13 very-low-income. These are also subject of an
14 existing low-income housing tax credit application.
15 The other units in the property are also income
16 restricted between 80 to 110 percent of area median
17 income so all of the units are income restricted, and
18 I think that is the end.

19 Thank you so much for your time and
20 attention.

21 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you, applicant
22 panelists.

23 We have some questions. Council Member
24 Salaam, do you have any questions?

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: I do. I'm looking
3 at the breakdown of some of the existing units and
4 the proposed units and, just so that I understand,
5 the reduction would be from both five bedrooms and
6 four bedrooms to allow for the expansion of the three
7 bedrooms and possibly one bedroom and more studio,
8 okay.

9 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. Before I
10 continue with my questions, I would like to recognize
11 Majority Leader Amanda Fariás has joined us.

12 Question one. Your presentation stated
13 that the cluster consists of 46 occupied units and 39
14 vacant units. What is the average income for the
15 existing tenants?

16 NICOLE LOCKETT: We're actually in the
17 process now of income verifying those existing
18 tenants. The existing tenants' rents, however, are
19 not planned to increase. We have applied for eight
20 project-based vouchers for those existing tenants who
21 may want to take advantage of those project-based
22 vouchers, particularly if they are income burdened or
23 if they're rent burdened, and we've applied for
24 eight, and we have been awarded eight already in two
25 buildings in the cluster, and so those project-based

1
2 vouchers will first be offered to the existing
3 tenants, but tenants will not see an increase to
4 their rent under the plan that HPD has set forth.

5 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you for that. So
6 just to confirm, they'll get their first rights of
7 refusal? Okay, and we definitely look forward to
8 having that information submitted to the Committee.

9 So you also explained the substantial
10 renovations needed. What is the plan for housing the
11 existing tenants during these renovations?

12 SOWETO EDWARDS: Out of the cluster there
13 are five buildings, or six rather, that are going to
14 go under what we call a gut rehabilitation. For those
15 buildings, we're going to fully relocate those
16 tenants to outside units and, while they're
17 relocated, and it's only temporary, we will do the
18 extensive work in those units. Two buildings, we have
19 earmarked for what we call in-place renovations so we
20 are able to work around them during normal business
21 hours.

22 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Speaking from
23 experience, it is a little daunting when we try to
24 relocate families. What kind of outreach is being
25 done, lead time so they can prepare themselves?

1
2 SOWETO EDWARDS: No, so we are constantly
3 communicating with tenants and giving them what the
4 general outline, the plan is for relocation, making
5 them know that this is not a displacement program,
6 that they're going to come back to their units.

7 Genesis, as a firm, we have substantial history in
8 relocation. We've completed one ANCP project through
9 HPD, and we're in construction of another one now.

10 Both projects were all gut rehabs. We had to relocate
11 the tenants and have successfully moved them back in
12 the first instance, and we'll do so in the second.

13 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Is there a line or
14 contact information if tenants have issues with the
15 relocation process? Is there some type of process in
16 which they can file or send grievances if some ever
17 exist?

18 SOWETO EDWARDS: Yeah, so we work with
19 relocation consultants foremost, and also the tenants
20 have our direct contacts as project managers. There
21 is a form, I can't recall what the name is, but not
22 only can they fill out the form to cite any
23 grievances or any issues, they can always call either
24 us if they feel comfortable. If they don't, they can
25 go straight to the third-party relocation consultant.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. One last
3 question. Is the existing commercial space of 77
4 Lenox Avenue currently occupied? And if so, what are
5 the plans for that space moving forward?

6 SOWETO EDWARDS: It is currently vacant.
7 It was previously a liquor store. We don't have
8 anyone earmarked to take over so we will be rehabbing
9 the space and turning it over as a vanilla box.

10 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much.

11 Now, I'd like to recognize any of my
12 Colleagues if anyone has any questions.

13 Seeing none. Thank you. This applicant
14 panel is now excused.

15 Counsel, are there any members of the
16 public who wish to testify on this item?

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Hanks, we don't
18 have any members of the public witnesses who have
19 signed up to speak.

20 If anybody is in the room that would like
21 to speak, please fill out a card or indicate if you
22 filled out a card to speak on this item.

23 If there are any remote public
24 participants who wish to testify, please press the
25 raise hand button.

1
2 As a reminder, if anybody would like to
3 submit written testimony, you can do so at
4 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

5 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: There being no other
6 members of the public who wish to testify regarding
7 the Preconsidered LU for the Genesis MPLP proposal,
8 this hearing is now closed.

9 Now we'll open the hearing for LU numbers
10 35 and 36, applications brought by HPD for the
11 designation of an urban development action area,
12 approval for an urban development action project
13 disposition of City-owned land to a developer
14 selected by HPD as well as the real estate property
15 tax exemption pursuant to Article XI of the private
16 housing finance law to facilitate development of an
17 affordable housing project known as East Tremont
18 Cluster NCP for three clustered vacant sites in the
19 Bronx in Council Member Feliz's District.

20 Appearing today on this proposal is Jack
21 Heaney from Fulcrum Properties and Adam Beckerman
22 from HPD.

23 Those wishing to testify must register
24 online at the Council's website at
25 council.nyc.gov/landuse.

1
2 Counsel, would you please administer the
3 affirmation?

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, would you
5 please raise your right hand and state your name for
6 the record?

7 ADAM BECKERMAN: Adam Beckerman.

8 JACK HEANEY: Jack Heaney.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And do you affirm to
10 tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
11 truth in your testimony before this Subcommittee and
12 in answer to all Council Member questions?

13 ADAM BECKERMAN: Yes.

14 JACK HEANEY: I do.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Please let
16 us know when you're ready for us to pull up the
17 presentation.

18 ADAM BECKERMAN: We are ready. Could you
19 go to the next slide, please?

20 Good morning and thank you, Council
21 Members, for the opportunity to present to you today
22 on the East Tremont Cluster NCP Project. I'm Adam
23 Beckerman, a Senior Planner at the Department of
24 Housing Preservation and Development. I'm joined
25 today by my HPD colleagues and the development team

1
2 who will introduce themselves later in the
3 presentation. We are seeking Land Use actions today
4 to facilitate the construction of approximately 63
5 affordable rental units and one super's unit to be
6 built over three vacant City-owned infill sites
7 located in the East Tremont neighborhood of the
8 Bronx. These three sites were originally part of
9 HPD's NIHOP's NCP request for qualifications, which
10 identified hard to develop City-owned infill sites
11 and matched them with qualified development teams.
12 Development team today is Briarwood Organization and
13 Fulcrum Properties, who all have extensive experience
14 building affordable housing in the Bronx. To
15 facilitate the project, HPD is requesting the
16 following Land Use actions. Designation of an urban
17 development action area, approval of the urban
18 development action area project, approval of the
19 disposition of City-owned property, and Article XI
20 approval. The project was originally certified on
21 November 27th and has since received approval with
22 conditions from Bronx Community Board 6 on January
23 10th, approval conditions from the Bronx Borough
24 President on February 12th, and approval from the
25 City Planning Commission on March 6th. I will now

1
2 hand it over to Jack Heaney from Fulcrum Properties
3 to speak more about the project.

4 JACK HEANEY: Thank you, Adam, and good
5 afternoon to the Chair and the Committee Members.
6 Thank you for your time. My name is Jack Heaney. I'm
7 the Managing Principal of Falkland Properties. I'm
8 the co-developer for this project along with the
9 Briarwood Organization. Unfortunately, my partner,
10 Ira, sends his regards. He was not able to attend
11 today due to a family matter so I'll be speaking on
12 behalf of the project. As Adam indicated, these sites
13 are small, difficult infill sites in the East Tremont
14 section of the Bronx.

15 ADAM BECKERMAN: Could we go to the next
16 slide actually?

17 JACK HEANEY: Oh, I'm sorry. Next slide,
18 please.

19 Our team's solution to this problem was
20 to propose a project that takes advantage of senior
21 zoning regulations, or AIRS, in order to increase or
22 maximize the number of affordable housing units on
23 these sites and, at the time of the RFP, this was
24 actually a new addition to the New York City Zoning
25 Code. The project entails three buildings clustered

1
2 around the Cross Bronx Expressway. Each building
3 varies from six to nine stories in height. As Adam
4 mentioned, the total number of units is 63 affordable
5 with one super's unit, and about 25 percent of these
6 units will be reserved for low-income and formerly
7 homeless seniors. Next slide, please.

8 The unit mix in AMI breakdown is
9 approximately 25 percent AIRS or senior units. Of
10 that, seven units will be reserved for formerly
11 homeless seniors, and the balance of the units will
12 be reserved for singles and families at 60 to 70
13 percent of AMI. Next slide, please.

14 The largest of the three sites is 907
15 East 175th Street. This is 33 units of which nine
16 will be reserved for low-income housing seniors. It
17 is a nine-story building, and the amenities include a
18 large recreation meeting room, a large landscaper
19 yard, on-site laundry, and a rooftop terrace. Next
20 slide, please.

21 This site is trapezoidal. It's an infill
22 site that faces Highland Park, which is an extension
23 of Crotona Park. In the floor plans, we actually
24 designed the building to take advantage of its wedge
25 shape so that the majority of the units will have

1
2 views of Crotona Park. The site is bound by a Social
3 Security Administration building to the east and two-
4 family homes to the west. Because it is an infill
5 lot, this does have a large rear yard, which will be
6 landscaped and available for recreation use to all
7 the residents. Next slide, please.

8 This site is the smallest of the three
9 and admittedly the most difficult to build on so we
10 took a different approach here in terms of the
11 program. This building is 10 units, two of which will
12 be reserved for low-income housing seniors but, since
13 it's such a small footprint and we have limited
14 cellar space, all of the recreation area, including
15 the laundry, will actually be on the rooftop of this
16 building, which includes connections to landscape
17 outdoor terrace, and we're also utilizing solar
18 panels as trellises to provide shade during the day.
19 Next slide, please.

20 As you can see, this is a tight corner
21 lot, bound on both sides by existing residential
22 buildings and it faces the intersection of Fairmount
23 and Marion Avenue, which are both narrow streets.
24 Next slide, please.

1
2 The third site is also a corner site, a
3 bit larger than 1900. This is 706 Fairmont Place, and
4 this will be 21 units, of which 5 will be reserved
5 for low-income seniors. Again, we took a similar
6 strategy to 1900, where we placed all of the
7 recreation spaces on the roof of the building, which
8 include an outdoor terrace that will be shaded with a
9 trellis, which will also incorporate solar panels.
10 Next slide, please.

11 Again, this is a corner site bound at one
12 end by an adult daycare and the other by an existing
13 house of worship at the intersection of Fairmount and
14 Cortona Avenue. Other common elements between all
15 three sites are that we will be pursuing enterprise
16 green communities with NYSERDA. These will be 100
17 percent electric buildings, and our contractor will
18 be certifying with the M/WBE Build Up Program and
19 HireNYC during construction.

20 At this time, we would welcome any
21 questions from the Committee.

22 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you very much. I
23 have a few questions. In her recommendation, Borough
24 President Gibson encouraged HPD to look at the
25 altering way in which it measures its impact by

1
2 changing the focus from the total unit count to total
3 bedrooms provided. Does your team have any thoughts
4 about this type of metric taking on more importance
5 going forward?

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sorry, could you state
7 your name for the record, please?

8 ARVIND SINDHWANI: Arvind Sindhwani, HPD.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And do you affirm to
10 tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
11 truth in your testimony before the Subcommittee and
12 in answer to all Council Member questions?

13 ARVIND SINDHWANI: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you.

15 ADAM BECKERMAN: HPD definitely takes the
16 Borough President's recommendations into
17 consideration. I think we also value having two-
18 bedroom family-sized units in our project. I think in
19 this project we see almost 44 percent of the units
20 being at least two bedrooms, which is a good
21 percentage of the project and also a good percentage
22 also with one bedrooms as well.

23 ARVIND SINDHWANI: And I'll just add to
24 that response and say we do see demand on Housing
25

1
2 Connect for studios and one bedrooms throughout the
3 city so we do need to meet that demand as well.

4 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. There is
5 like a tight rope that you have to as we think
6 naturally that we need more bedrooms and the same
7 thing happens in many of our Districts so I
8 appreciate that answer.

9 The last question. Can you please speak a
10 little bit about the additional services AIRS
11 residents will receive? Furthermore, are all the
12 residents in these buildings able to utilize the
13 community rooms when the spaces are not needed for
14 AIRS programming?

15 JACK HEANEY: To answer the first
16 question, we will be providing bedroom services, what
17 we call wraparound services for the senior
18 residences. This is independent living, so it's not
19 assisted living. We will be utilizing wraparound
20 services at a minimum to provide social worker and
21 other assistance as needed, and the tenants for all
22 three properties would have access to all of the
23 shared recreation spaces, particularly the large
24 interior recreation room at 705 because that's the
25 largest of the three properties.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much. Now
3 I'm going to hand it over to Council Member Feliz for
4 his statements.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Thank you so much.
6 Thank you, Chair, for this hearing and also thank all
7 of you for all the information. A few questions about
8 this project. Can you talk to us about what exactly
9 you're seeking? You're not seeking a rezoning? You're
10 seeking a disposition. Can you talk to us about when
11 that process was started and give us a little bit
12 more information about that? Who owns the land?

13 ADAM BECKERMAN: These are all City-owned
14 sites. The RFQ I believe was released in 2014, and
15 two of the sites were designated in 2018 and one of
16 them in 2019.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay, and this
18 Community Board project after project has asked for
19 homeownership in this part of the Bronx. That
20 Community Board, Community Board 6, has some of the
21 lowest homeownership rates in the entire city so is
22 this something that was considered as part of the
23 project? If yes, why was that not made an option or
24 possible?

2 ARVIND SINDHWANI: Appreciate the
3 question, Council Member. To speak to that
4 homeownership, when we look at our vacant lots and
5 redevelopment programs, we do consider all different
6 types of housing types. Given the complexities with
7 these lots that the team mentioned earlier on in the
8 presentation, rental made the most sense and they
9 were designated for rental construction in 2018 and
10 2019, but the Community Board's demands, definitely
11 heard loud and clear. HPD takes their feedback and
12 their recommendations into serious consideration, and
13 we'll be bringing homeownership projects to that
14 Board later on this year.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay. Can you talk
16 to us about the layout of the apartments, the
17 studios, one bedroom, two bedrooms?

18 JACK HEANEY: Sure. I can speak to that.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Yeah, any floor
20 plans for them? I don't see them on the presentation.

21 JACK HEANEY: We do. Would they be
22 included in the presentation?

23 ADAM BECKERMAN: They're in the appendix
24 of the presentation if they want to be brought up.
25 Keep going.

1
2 JACK HEANEY: Next slide, please. This
3 would be the typical floor for the largest of the
4 three sites. One bedroom would average about 550
5 square feet. A studio would, this is net square
6 footage, so interior to interior, a studio would be a
7 bit under 400 net square feet, and a two bedroom
8 would be about 730 square feet.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay, and based on
10 the income of the surrounding neighborhood, what are
11 we expecting the average rent to be for these
12 different apartments?

13 JACK HEANEY: Again, about 25 percent will
14 be reserved for low-income seniors and formerly
15 homeless seniors so seven of the units will be
16 reserved for formerly homeless seniors, but we will
17 be seeking eight project-based vouchers to assist
18 with supporting that population. The other non-
19 project-based-vouchers senior residents will be
20 paying between 485 and 697 dollars per month for a
21 studio apartment and 616 and 881 dollars for a one
22 bedroom. The remainder of the units, which would be
23 reserved for singles and families, would be between
24 60 and 70 percent of AMI so their studio would be
25 1,100, a one bedroom would be 1,400, a two bedroom

1
2 would be 1,681. These are all for 60 percent AMI. At
3 70 percent AMI, it's a little bit higher, so a studio
4 would be 1,300, a one bedroom is 1,600, and a two
5 bedroom is just under 2,000 per month.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: All right, thank
7 you for that information. Also, one conversation that
8 all of us have been having for a long time is the
9 fact that all New Yorkers deserve spaces where they
10 can live in with dignity. That includes actual
11 apartment. For example, so basically, not studios
12 where our seniors would have to be sharing their
13 bedrooms with their visitors so is there any way that
14 we could potentially look into turning the studios
15 into a one-bedroom apartments? Is that something that
16 we've looked into? And if yes, why was that not made
17 part of the plan?

18 ARVIND SINDHWANI: So given the layout and
19 the complexities of the lots, rearranging the unit
20 mix is difficult. The Neighborhood Construction
21 Program is designed to build on lots with really
22 restrained layouts, and we can definitely take a look
23 to see what's possible. I won't say no right now and
24 we can get back to you as a followup to see what's
25 possible.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay, and one final
3 question with the Chair's permission.

4 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Go ahead.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Currently, HPD has
6 one homeownership term sheet, the Open Door Term
7 Sheet. Is HPD considering adding new programs that
8 would provide more flexibility and make it easier to
9 build homeownership?

10 ARVIND SINDHWANI: At this time, we're
11 only considering the Open Door Term Sheet as the main
12 driver for building homeownership from our agency,
13 but we are looking into different agency programs
14 such as the Homeowner Help Desks including HomeFix
15 and down payment assistance to meet the needs of
16 homeowners where there might not be a market for
17 homeownership or just meeting the needs of everyday
18 homeowners in New York in a different way other than
19 just building so we are bringing resources to
20 homeowners citywide as well in addition to new
21 construction through Open Door.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Thank you. Thank
23 you so much for the information and, yeah, so if we
24 can work on the studios that'll be great. Our seniors
25 deserve their own private bedrooms so that when they

2 receive visitors, they won't have to bring people
3 into the space where their bedroom and etc. so
4 that'll be helpful. I know that's something that the
5 community has asked for. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much,
7 Council Member.

8 Now, I'd like to recognize any of my
9 other Colleagues for any questions or remarks.

10 Hearing none. Thank you. This applicant
11 panel is now excused.

12 Counsel, are there any members of the
13 public who wish to testify on this item?

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Hanks, there are
15 no public witnesses who have signed up to speak.

16 If anybody is in person and would like to
17 speak, please fill out a card or indicate if you
18 filled out a card for this item.

19 There's no one online registered to speak
20 either.

21 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much,
22 Counsel. I will now call Council Member Feliz to be
23 my acting Chair in my absence. Thank you all, and I
24 apologize.

1
2 There being no other members of the
3 public who wish to testify regarding LU 35 and 36 for
4 the East Tremont Cluster NCP proposal, this public
5 hearing is now closed.

6 I will pass the Chairmanship over to
7 Council Member Feliz as acting Chair.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Thank you so much,
9 Chair Banks.

10 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Hanks.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Oh, Hanks. Sorry.
12 Thank you, Chair Hanks. Coffee hasn't kicked in yet.

13 I am Council Member Oswald Feliz, and
14 I'll be serving as the acting Chair for the remainder
15 of this hearing.

16 Now the hearing on Melrose Concourse. I
17 now open a public hearing for Melrose Concourse, a
18 package of related Preconsidered LU applications
19 brought by HPD for the designation of an urban
20 development action area, approval of an urban
21 development action project, acquisition of property
22 by the City, disposition of City-owned land to
23 developers selected by HPD as well as real property
24 tax exemption pursuant to Article XI of the Private
25 Housing Finance Law under application number

1
2 G240047XAX. Together, these actions would facilitate
3 the development of an affordable housing project
4 known as Melrose Concourse NCP for three clustered
5 vacant sites in the Bronx in Council Member Althea
6 Stevens' District. We do want to note that the
7 project includes a proposed acquisition of property
8 which is a related action and subject to you ULURP
9 for which pursuant to the Charter provisions for
10 Council Call-up will be introduced at the next
11 council stated meeting. Today's public hearing is
12 meant to take testimony on the entire project that is
13 subject to all three related actions, but we will
14 have a future public hearing specifically on the
15 acquisition action consistent with the ULURP
16 requirements under this Charter.

17 Appearing today on this proposal is
18 Jocelyn Torio from the Settlement Housing Fund.
19 Michael Gaboury from the Settlement Housing Fund,
20 Adam Beckerman from HPD.

21 Those wishing to testify remotely must
22 register online by visiting the Council's website at
23 council.nyc.gov/landuse.

24 Counsel, would you please administer the
25 affirmation?

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, would you
3 please raise your right hand and state your name for
4 the record?

5 ADAM BECKERMAN: Adam Beckerman.

6 JOCELYN TORIO: Jocelyn Torio, Settlement
7 Housing Fund.

8 MICHAEL GABOURY: Michael Gaboury,
9 Settlement Housing Fund.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And do you affirm to
11 tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
12 truth in your testimony before this Subcommittee and
13 in answer to all Council Member questions?

14 ADAM BECKERMAN: I do.

15 JOCELYN TORIO: I do.

16 MICHAEL GABOURY: I do.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Please let us know
18 when you're ready for us to share your presentation.

19 ADAM BECKERMAN: Please bring up the
20 presentation. Next slide, please.

21 Good morning and thank you, Council
22 Members, for the opportunity to present to you today
23 on the Melrose Concourse NCP project. I'm Adam
24 Beckerman, a Senior Planner at the Department of
25 Housing Preservation and Development. I'm joined

1 today by my HPD colleagues and the development team.
2 We are seeking Land Use actions today to facilitate
3 the construction of approximately 71 affordable
4 rental units and one super's unit to be built over
5 three vacant infill sites located in the Morrisania
6 and Claremont neighborhood of the Bronx. The cluster
7 went through HPD's NIHOP's NCP request for
8 qualifications, which identified hard to develop
9 City-owned infill sites and matched them with
10 qualified development teams. The current team was
11 designated in 2018. Development team today is
12 Settlement Housing Fund and Beechwood Organization,
13 who both have extensive experience building
14 affordable housing in the Bronx. To facilitate the
15 project, HPD is requesting the following land use
16 actions. Designation of urban development action
17 area, approval of the urban development action area
18 project, approval of the reacquisition of Block 2389,
19 Lot 47, approval of the disposition of City-owned
20 property, and Article XI approval. The project was
21 originally certified on November 27th and has since
22 received approval from Bronx Community Board 3 on
23 January 23rd, approval with modifications from the
24 Bronx Borough President on February 23rd, and CPC
25

1 approval on March 20th. I'll now hand it over to
2 Jocelyn Torio from Settlement Housing Fund to speak
3 more about the project.
4

5 JOCELYN TORIO: Next slide, please. Good
6 afternoon, Council Members. My name is Jocelyn Torio,
7 and I am a Senior Project Manager at Settlement
8 Housing Fund. Settlement Housing Fund is the lead
9 developer for this project. We are a non-profit
10 affordable housing developer and have been doing this
11 work since 1969. We currently own and operate
12 approximately 40 buildings with about 2,000 units of
13 affordable housing in New York City with
14 concentrations of housing and programs in Mount Eden
15 section of the Bronx and throughout the rest of the
16 city. Our co-developer and general contractor of this
17 project is the Beachwood Organization with over 35
18 years of experience in the New York metropolitan
19 area. They have developed over 8,000 homes in New
20 York City, Long Island, Saratoga County, and North
21 Carolina. They have a record of building high quality
22 housing on time and on budget. For this project, we
23 have worked closely with our architect,
24 ESKW/Architects, to maximize the number of units on
25 the sites and to create a diverse mix of unit sizes,

1 including studios, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom
2 units. The project will have 71 units of affordable
3 housing and a super's unit. Next slide please.
4

5 The Melrose Concourse project will be
6 affordable to households and individuals at a range
7 of income levels between 30 percent and 80 percent
8 AMI. Approximately 85 percent of all units will be
9 affordable to households earning up to 60 percent
10 AMI. There will be 23 units for low-income seniors.
11 Eight units will be set aside for formerly homeless
12 seniors, and we will be applying for project-based
13 Section 8 vouchers for these units. Now I'll discuss
14 the context and design for each site. Next slide,
15 please.

16 The first site I'll discuss is 404
17 Claremont Parkway. Next slide, please.

18 This site is the smallest of our sites at
19 approximately 2,800 square feet. It is a trapezoidal
20 shaped site that tapers toward the back. It fronts on
21 Claremont Parkway with Webster Avenue to the west and
22 Brooke Avenue to the east. West of the site is a
23 four-story building with ground floor commercial use
24 and residential above. There is a single-story Icon
25 Charter School to the east of the site. There's a

1
2 prominent view of Claremont Park at the end of the
3 street. Next slide, please.

4 The site will be developed with a four-
5 story building comprising eight units, including six
6 two-bedroom units and two one-bedroom units. Building
7 amenities will include a laundry room, recreational
8 roof terrace, and a landscaped rear yard for all
9 tenants to use. The building massing is divided into
10 three parts with the daylit central stair in the and
11 apartments on either side. Natural materials are
12 featured such as brick and natural wood accents.
13 There are generous planters at grade that provide a
14 buffer between the street and the building and also
15 relate back to the nearby park at the end of the
16 street. Next slide, please.

17 The next site I'll discuss is 1169
18 Washington Avenue. Next slide.

19 This site is a long and narrow site that
20 is approximately 5,800 square feet. This site is on
21 Washington Avenue, which is a busy and more densely
22 developed street. It is between East 167th and East
23 168th Street in the Morrisania neighborhood.
24 Surrounding us here are multifamily residential
25

1 buildings with small shops at the ground floor. Next
2 slide, please.

3
4 The site will be developed with a nine-
5 story elevator building with 34 units, comprising 12
6 studios, including 6 studios for seniors, 14 one-
7 bedroom units including 6 for seniors, and 8 two-
8 bedroom units. Some of the building amenities include
9 a landscaped rear yard, a community room, and an
10 office for tenant services. The building massing here
11 comprises two parts. Within these skinnier volumes,
12 there are textured brick piers to accentuate the
13 verticality. The brick detailing continues down to
14 grade for residents and passersby to experience.
15 There is landscaping between the building and the
16 street line that provides a buffer. Next slide,
17 please.

18 The last site of this cluster is Site 3,
19 12 Gouverneur Place. Next slide, please.

20 12 Gouverneur Place is a mid-block lot
21 that is roughly 4,900 square feet. It is located
22 south of the last site we were just discussing. This
23 block contains a mix of uses, including residential,
24 commercial, industrial manufacturing, and parking
25 lots. Next slide, please.

1
2 This site will be developed with a nine-
3 story building with 30 units. It will comprise of
4 seven studios, of which three will be for seniors, 16
5 one-bedroom units of which will be for seniors and
6 six two-bedroom units and an on-site super's unit.
7 Building amenities include a landscaped rear yard, a
8 community room, a gym, and an eighth-floor
9 recreational terrace for common use. The design here
10 again features the brick and the wood panels
11 recalling the elements from the other two buildings.
12 Next slide, please.

13 In summary, we're proud to be a non-
14 profit led team, and we're excited to be developing
15 these vacant and underutilized lots with the
16 Beachwood Organization. We are thrilled to be
17 building on our existing presence in the Bronx where
18 we have a concentration of affordable housing and
19 programs. Though these lots are small, we work to
20 introduce a project that maximizes the number of
21 affordable units and also provides a mix of unit
22 sizes. Finally, the project responds to the needs of
23 the neighborhood in New York City and will provide
24 homes for low-income households and families and low-
25 income and formerly homeless seniors.

1
2 Thank you and we welcome your questions
3 and comments.

4 ACTING CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you so
5 much for your testimony.

6 I have a few questions. The Community
7 Board, Bronx Borough President, and Council Member
8 Stephens have all expressed concern about unit sizes
9 at each of these sites. Can you detail how the team
10 landed at the current unit mix and the unit size?

11 ADAM BECKERMAN: Before I hand it back
12 over to the development team, on these infill sites
13 oftentimes we're working with very small sites so
14 there's a lot of constraints. I think in this project
15 we tried to maximize a mix of units. I do want to
16 highlight that, and the development team can speak to
17 this more, that we utilized in the studio spaces,
18 alcoves so there is a bit of separation. Even though
19 it's a studio, there's a separation to put the bed,
20 and we've incorporated that in about half the units
21 so thinking about some of those feedbacks. Would you
22 like to add anything?

23 JOCELYN TORIO: I'll just mention that, as
24 Adam was discussing the alcove studios, those are
25

1
2 about 400 square feet on average so that's a generous
3 size studio.

4 ACTING CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay. Can you
5 speak about some of the improvements that you were
6 able to make after having conversations with the
7 local Council Member Althea Stephens, and also
8 throughout the ULURP process, so the project from
9 beginning to where we are now?

10 JOCELYN TORIO: With the Community Board,
11 security was a concern that was brought up. We made
12 sure to have conversations with a security consultant
13 and to have security cameras in front of the building
14 and throughout the building. Lighting was also a
15 concern brought up by the Community Board as well as
16 the Council Member, and so we have plans for exterior
17 lighting and as well as lighting at the ground floor
18 of the building.

19 ACTING CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: All right.
20 Thank you. I'd like to recognize any of my
21 Colleagues. Anyone in the Zoom?

22 All right. No more questions. Thank you
23 so much. The applicant panel is now excused.

24 Counsel, are there any members of the
25 public who wish to testify on this item?

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes. We have two members of the public, Chad Sandler and Fialka Semenuik.

CHAD SANDLER: We're from the development team, here to answer any questions but no comments from us.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. There is nobody signed up online. If there's anybody else in person who would like to sign up?

ACTING CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you. There being no other members of the public who wish to testify regarding the Preconsidered LU actions for the Melrose Concourse NCP proposal, the public hearing is now closed.

All right, and that concludes today's business. I would like to thank the members of the public, my Colleagues in the Council, Subcommittee Counsel, Land Use Staff, and the Sergeants-at-Arms for your participation today. This meeting is hereby adjourned. Thank you. [GAVEL]

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date May 2, 2024