

Pacific Park

BROOKLYN

Quality of Life Meeting Tuesday, May 7, 2019

NOTES

1. Greenland Forest City Partners (GLFCP)

The median restoration work is finished and all Maintenance and Protection of Traffic (MPT) barriers have been removed along Atlantic and Vanderbilt Avenues. All train tracks in the storage yard are operational. The demolition of the “Bump Buildings” along Atlantic Avenue is complete. The site is at grade and the work is finished.

The railyard is at substantial completion, but there is still ongoing punch-list work to ensure that everything is operational.

Foundation and excavation work continues at the B4 and B15 sites. Saturday construction activity can be expected at the B15 site to help move the work along. The foundation work is expected to be completed by Q4 2019.

The MPT barriers along Atlantic Ave and Sixth Avenue will remain in place until construction at B4 is complete. Residents asked about the early morning pile driving at B15. There was a suggestion for a 16 ft. construction fence similar to what was previously erected along Dean Street. Due to site constraints and demands by the Fire Department, it would not be safe or practicable to construct a 16 ft. high fence at the B15 site.

Residents asked about the status of the design of the middle school expected at B15. There were concerns about the traffic impacts the middle school will have on the community. There was a request to have a representative of the School Construction Authority at a Quality of Life meeting, so residents can present their concerns and provide suggestions on how to proactively address any potential issues.

There was a discussion about the 78th Precinct’s cars parked along Pacific Street. Residents asked that the police officers move their vehicles to minimize the impact on the flow of

traffic. Staff will follow-up with the precinct and urge the use of the 24 parking spaces provided for the precinct in the 535 Carlton Avenue garage.

2. Empire State Development (ESD) & Atlantic Yards Community Development Corporation (AYCDC)

There was a presentation of proposed amendments to the Atlantic Yards Modified General Project Plan. Staff provided an overview of the history of the Atlantic Yards General Project Plan and the approval process for the proposed modifications. The amendments will be presented to the Directors of the AYCDC on July 22 and then presented to the ESD Board of Directors in August.

Residents expressed their concerns with the process, including changes to the Project's commitments, since it was first introduced, and a lack of public engagement. Residents were concerned about the determination that the proposed modifications did not require a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and asked that such determination be reconsidered. Additionally, residents disagreed with staff that these modifications were minor, non-material changes to the General Project Plan. There was a request for the definition of what constituted a material change to the General Project Plan, and the threshold for determining when a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement is required. Residents also believed that the proposed process only allowed AYCDC Directors to rubberstamp the modifications before they are presented to the ESD Directors.

There was a discussion about the Project's affordable housing obligations. Specifically, the obligations that new developers have to deliver affordable units at their sites. Residents stressed that the new Developers could delay the delivery of the affordable housing units, by accepting the transferred development rights, and ignoring the affordable housing deadline. It was explained that the requirement to building 2,250 units of affordable housing by 2025 is applicable to all Developers. The lease for each parcel binds the Developer to the delivery of the committed affordable housing units, by the 2025 deadline. Liquidated damages are applicable to the new developers for their parcels. The Developer is also required to maintain a 35% affordability threshold during construction. This further ensures that delivery of the affordable housing units is not delayed.

B5 Design Guidelines Drawings Modification - The proposed modification would shift the envelope for B5 towards Atlantic Avenue and extend the envelope slightly in the east-west direction. It was explained that these modifications would not change the lot coverage and bulk of the building. These changes are necessary due to the significant Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) infrastructure under B5 - the Sixth Avenue access ramp, the West Portal, electrical substation, and drill. Residents asked if B5 could be constructed without these proposed modifications and questioned the impact of the proposed shift.

Arena Block Bicycle Parking Reduction – The Project currently requires 400 valet indoor bicycle parking spaces for arena event attendees. The modification would reduce the number of spaces to 100 and remove the valet indoor requirement. The location of the proposed racks was discussed in addition to the site constraints at the B3 facility originally contemplated for indoor bicycle parking use. Residents were concerned that this modification would take away an amenity not previously provided, and also includes 44 existing bicycle racks in the total 100 number count. The justification for the reduction was discussed. Residents noted that it was possible that low bicycle ridership to the arena was due to the lack of an indoor valet bicycle parking option. Residents also inquired about the future use of the storage space that was contemplated at B3. The space will only be made accessible to the building’s maintenance staff. It was explained that before B3 was constructed the site was used to provide hundreds of bicycle racks; the racks were never fully occupied. Additionally, it was noted that though the modification reduces the required number of spaces, the arena operator is committed to monitoring utilization and demand for the bicycle spaces. Once construction at B4 is complete, additional locations on the arena block can be considered for the installation of bike racks.

Distinctive Architectural Design Element Requirement for B9, B12, & B13 – The Project’s Design Guidelines currently require that B9, B12 and B13 have architectural design elements that tie the buildings together. It was explained that the design intent was to allow for the buildings to relate to one another when viewed from the Open Space. Currently the design element is required on three façades of each building, this modification reduces that requirement to two façades allowing for a visual break in the buildings. Residents wondered if it was necessary to modify the approved design plan. They emphasized that the Design Guidelines should not be changed only to accommodate the Developer’s interest.

Clarification on Commercial Use on Residential Blocks: This modification would allow for 100,000 square feet of below grade use for the development of a field house and fitness center at B12 and B13. Both the field house and fitness center would be open to the public and are not limited to only Project residents. There was detailed discussion about the justification for the modification, staff’s review of the request, and the environmental impact to the community. It was explained that an analysis was conducted, and the proposed modification does not present impacts not previously studied in the Project’s environmental review. Residents expressed serious concern with the addition of 100,000 square feet to the Project without public review. They noted that the modification was equivalent to an approximate 40% increase of the permitted commercial square footage at the Project. Traffic impacts, the amount of construction required for the below grade use, and quality of life concerns were all discussed in detail. Residents suggested that the field house and fitness center be developed in the already approved above grade space.

Project Parking Requirement Reduction (Block 1129): The Project's parking requirement would be reduced from 1,200 to 1,000 spaces. In considering the reduction, there was an analysis of parking demand during various arena events and a review of resident monthly utilization of parking garages. Residents worried about the deviation from the 3,600+ parking spaces promised when the Project was first introduced and the subsequent reductions since then. There was a discussion about why the analysis only took into consideration Atlantic Yards residents, without including the demand from surrounding neighborhoods. There were also questions about the parking demand from commuters who might use the available parking spaces as a "park & ride" option. It was noted that the reduction in parking could lead to an increase in illegal parking and traffic congestion in the community.

Change to Square Footage at Parcels B12 and B15: The modification would allow for the transfer of 10,000 square feet from B15 to B12. The change would not impact B15, where construction has commenced. The transfer would allow for more common space, and residential units at B12. Of the units built, at least 25% will be affordable. Residents inquired whether the transfer would increase the number of units at B12, and how that increase would count against the Project's current requirements. It was explained that the Developer can only build up to a maximum of 800 units combined at B12 and B13. This transfer does not change the overall residential square footage for the Project.

Reduction of the Open Space North-South Walkway Width: The Project's Open Space Design Guidelines currently require 16ft wide North-South Walkways. The proposed modification reduces the requirement to a width of 12 feet. The reduced walkway width would conform with State and City requirements for park trails and pedestrian walkways. This reduction allows for more planted areas and recreational open space. Residents raised concerns with the need to change the already approved design plan. They noted that the reduced walkway would only allow four pedestrians to walk along the path at the same time. There was also concern about pedestrians walking on the planted areas and lawns.

Ventilation Structures in Open Space: This modification allows for two ventilation structures in the Open Space at B12 and B13. The structures would have interactive features and would not take away from the total Open Space acreage required at the site. The ventilation structures would exhaust air from the below grade use (parking and recreational establishment). Residents raised concerns with the possible adverse impacts of the exhaust in the Open Space. There were questions about the level of analysis conducted for the modification and residents inquired about why such a change did not require additional environmental review. Residents suggested finding alternate options instead of venting into the Open Space.