

Zoning for Flood Resilience Workshop

Howard Beach @ St. Helen Catholic Academy

Location: St. Helen Catholic Academy – 8309 157th Ave

Date: Tuesday October 17th from 7:30 – 9:30 pm

List of DCP Staff // Zoning: Manuela Powidayko/Jean You, Waterfront and Open Space: Melissa Herlitz/Dana Bennewitz, Queens Office: Brendan Pillar/Kathi Ko/Nick Guertin/Alexis Wheeler, Housing Economic and Infrastructure Planning: Dylan Sandler

List of Attendees // William Schact, Thomas Shih, Betty Braton, Joe Hartigan, John Rainone, Joseph Annicaro, Rose Defino, Mike Bel, Jean E. Ferrar-Rodriguez, Barbara Granickas, Chris Wierzbicki, Frank Coullusco, Vincent Sarrafo, Victor Aquece, John Calcagnile, John Fazio, Nina Veres, John McShane, Tim Roland, Mr. & Mrs. William Fogarty, Domenica Marcello, Sal Pace, Jose Quivano, Holly Gendron, Roger Gendron, John Fazio, Joann Ariola, Josh Hyman, Senator Joseph P. Addabbo

List of Other Agency Staff // Legal Services NYC: Margaret Becker, FloodHelpNY: Ezra Brown, NHS Queens: Joel Santos

Co-Sponsors // NY State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., NY State Assemblywoman Stacey Pheffer Amato, NYC Council Member Eric A. Ulrich, Queens Community Board 10, Howard Beach Lindenwood Civic

Workshop Description

Summary

The Department of City Planning hosted an informational meeting and workshop about floodplain design and development. Following a short presentation on zoning rules that were adopted after Hurricane Sandy to facilitate resilient buildings, participants had the opportunity to share their ideas on how to shape a future update to these rules to advance resiliency in Howard Beach and across the city.

Goals

1. Educate the public about zoning for flood resilience;
2. Learn about resilience strategies in Howard Beach buildings;
3. Establish urban design priorities for Howard Beach and other coastal neighborhoods;
4. Collect feedback on how zoning can help achieve building-scale resiliency.



Summary of Main Takeaways

Urban design priorities for Howard Beach and other coastal neighborhoods –

- Urban design mitigations should be aesthetically pleasing but also serve a purpose such as plantings that absorb rainfall.
- Stair turns and front porch covers are a popular streetscape mitigation for elevated first floor access.

Feedback on how zoning can help achieve building-scale resiliency –

- Relocating mechanical systems to back and side yards is an attractive solution, since new mechanical systems are generally smaller and more efficient than current mechanical systems in homes.
- Over-elevating the first residential floor and using the space below for parking and storage is a popular choice for homes in the exercise.
- Interest in allowing commercial buildings the option of having retail frontage be elevated rather than dry-flood proofed, with several feet for tables or open space that is also raised above the DFE in front of the business. The business would recoup the lost square footage with additional height to max out FAR.

Feedback on non-zoning resiliency issues -

- Flooding is already a common occurrence, not just from hurricanes, but from high tides in Hamilton Beach (specific concerns related to inability to access parts of the neighborhood during high tides) and from rain events throughout Howard Beach.
- Concerns about how retrofitting could raise property taxes if resilient construction triggered a new home value assessment, which is challenging as flood insurance premiums are rising.
- Concerns over funding for retrofitting, how can homeowners be expected to pay for insurance and retrofit their homes?
- Concerns about FEMA, NFIP, and how will new maps and the phasing out of subsidized rates effect insurance premiums.
- Strong desire from the community for other infrastructure investments, including better sewer systems and Army Corps. Of Engineers coastal protection study for Jamaica Bay.

