



The City of New York

# **Manhattan Community Board 1**

Catherine McVay Hughes CHAIRPERSON | Noah Pfefferblit DISTRICT MANAGER

**New York City Council**

**South Street Seaport – Pier 17**

**Testimony by Michael Levine, Director of Land Use and Planning  
Manhattan Community Board 1**

**Thursday, March 14, 2013**

**250 Broadway, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor Committee Room New York, NY**

**9:30 AM**

Good morning. I am Michael Levine, Director of Land Use and Planning at Manhattan Community Board One (CB1).

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Pier 17 ULURP application.

Community Board One engaged in a lengthy and comprehensive public review process since the South Street Seaport Limited Partnership, an affiliate of Howard Hughes Corporation and the New York City Department of Small Business Services applied for approval of several actions to facilitate the reconstruction of the existing three-story Pier 17 retail structure at the South Street Seaport area of Community Board One in Lower Manhattan.

In order to facilitate the proposed project, the applicants are proposing the nine actions:

- 1) A special permit pursuant to Section 62-834 of the Zoning Resolution to permit a modification of the use and bulk regulations applicable to the pier portion of the zoning lot
- 2) A special permit pursuant to Section 74-743(a)(2) of the Zoning Resolution, applicable to general large-scale developments, for modifications to the waterfront yard regulations applicable to the zoning lot
- 3) A special permit pursuant to Section 74-744(c) of the Zoning Resolution, applicable to general large-scale developments, for modifications in the surface area and height of signage and roof signage on the Pier 17 Building
- 4) An authorization pursuant to Section 62-822(a) of the Zoning Resolution to allow a modification of the waterfront public access requirements
- 5) An authorization pursuant to Section 62-822(b) of the Zoning Resolution to allow a modification of the visual corridor permitted obstructions requirements and a modification of the design requirements for waterfront public access areas

6) A zoning text amendment to allow the waterfront public access area on Pier 17 to remain open for 24 hours, as is the current practice, and for the signage to reflect these extended hours because under the current Waterfront Zoning Regulations, waterfront public access areas must be open to the public during designated hours – not more or less – and the required waterfront signage must reflect those hours;

7) A certification pursuant to Section 62-811 of the Zoning Resolution regarding compliance with the waterfront public access and visual corridor requirements, as modified

8) A rezoning of the project area from C2-8 to C4-6

9) A property disposition approval to allow a modification of the use restrictions of the existing lease for the applicable portion of Pier 17

The proposed redevelopment would replace the existing Pier 17 building with a proposed new building that would provide new retail space on the pier as well as improve waterfront public access, public amenities, and add a flexible event space on the roof. Community Board One generally supports adoption by the City Council of the proposed zoning actions, but we have concerns that we would like to address to you.

Community Board One is pleased that the City Planning Commission has denied the proposed rooftop signage and addressed some of the issues with waterfront view corridors which we presented in our testimony before that body. However, we are disturbed by the proposal to rezone the area from C2-8 to C4-6 without a master plan relating to properties adjacent the Pier 17 project.

The other potential redevelopment sites within the proposed rezoning area are the occupied by the historic Tin Building and New Market building which are owned by the City of New York. We understand that development could proceed on these sites only with a further land use review action initiated by the City. We further understand that Howard Hughes Corporation has an option to propose a Mixed Use Project on this site, which it has not yet exercised.

Community Board One is disturbed by HHC's insistence that it has no master plan for the Seaport area, combined with its refusal to discuss, even in a conceptual sense, its thinking regarding the two historic buildings adjacent to the pier. We are therefore left to evaluate HHC's Pier 17 plans without benefit of their thinking regarding the context in which the Pier 17 area would be redeveloped.

Finally, although it is not part of this ULURP application, we ask the City Council to urge the Landmarks Preservation Commission to expand the South Street Seaport Historic District to be consistent with the New York State historic designation to include the northern area of Pier 17, all of the whole Tin Building and the New Market Building. In this manner, future development of these sites adjacent to Pier 17 can be done in a master plan framework.

Catherine McVay Hughes, Chairperson of CB1, will address further concerns.