



The City of New York

Manhattan Community Board 1

Julie Menin CHAIRPERSON | **Noah Pfefferblit** DISTRICT MANAGER

**The City Planning Commission
Public Hearing on the North Tribeca Rezoning
*Nos. 17, 18 & 19***

**Testimony by Michael Levine
Manhattan Community Board #1**

**Wednesday, August 11, 2010 at 10:00 a.m.
Spector Hall, 22 Reade Street, New York, NY**

Thank you, Madam Chair, and members of the City Planning Commission, for convening this public meeting and giving us the opportunity to review the North Tribeca Rezoning. I am Michael Levine, Director of Land Use and Planning for Manhattan Community Board #1.

In 1995, the City Planning Commission rezoned South Tribeca, with the aim of preserving neighborhood character and encouraging elements that would make it a successful and vital community. As you know, northern Tribeca has greatly changed over the past ten years. The residential population has increased tremendously, and what was once a center for manufacturing has become a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood. We believe that North Tribeca now merits the same protection and consideration to preserve its character and encourage qualities that will make it a successful mixed-use residential community.

With this in mind, we began a study of the area several years, with the aim of reviewing the zoning in North Tribeca and making recommendations to the Department of City Planning (DCP) about important elements to include in their comprehensive plan for the area. We are grateful for the productive discussions we have had with DCP on North Tribeca Rezoning, and for their incorporation of many of our recommendations.

In examining how rezoning could evolve with the neighborhood, we identified a number of key qualities we wanted to ensure would be preserved:

- (1) Mitigating the potential negative impacts to quality of life that liquor-selling establishments can have;
- (2) Limiting so-called big box chain stores and bolstering small businesses, including those which survived and continued to serve the community after 9/11;
- (3) Preventing the proliferation of high-density development throughout the neighborhood;
- (4) Enabling numerous illegal dwellings, especially lofts, to seek legal statuses;
- (5) Allowing zoning to conform with the more mixed-use residential neighborhood it has become and limiting the manufacturing uses currently allowed but inappropriate and inconsistent with the character of the neighborhood; and

(6) Encouraging the development of affordable housing in new residential buildings.

To this end, Community Board #1 has passed a number of resolutions in the past several years in support of specific rezoning FAR, height limits, and setbacks (March 21, 2006 and October 16, 2007) and requesting that certain uses be limited to encourage particular types of retail and light manufacturing uses (February 26, 2008).

We were very pleased to see most of these recommendations incorporated in City Planning's proposal for rezoning the M1-5A area to C6-2A within Special Tribeca Mixed Use District. In resolutions adopted on July 28, 2009 and June 22, 2010, we expressed our support for the proposed rezoning, which would (1) limit the size of ground floor retail establishments and hotels; (2) restrict the consolidation of ground floor spaces in separate buildings for certain use groups and along certain street frontages; (3) require that a City Planning Commission special permit be obtained to create a hotel with more than 100 rooms or to have a retail establishment larger than 5,000 square feet on narrow streets and 10,000 square feet on wide streets; (4) replace existing loft dwelling requirements and eliminating restrictions on dwelling use in enlargements; and (5) eliminate any special permit, authorization, or minor modification that involves the ability to convert from manufacturing use to loft dwelling use, as residences would be allowed as-of-right under the proposed zoning.

Once again, we sincerely appreciate the cooperation of DCP and its willingness to converse with the community on these many issues over the years. We support City Planning's proposal for North Tribeca. Thank you for the opportunity to comment today.