

**Riverside South Task Force Minutes
Special Community Meeting
Helen Rosenthal and Ethel Sheffer, Co-Chairpersons
October 30, 2008
St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital**

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 pm by co-chairs Helen Rosenthal and Ethel Sheffer, who welcomed those present and laid out the agenda. The following topics were discussed at the meeting.

1. Introduction and Background/History of Riverside South project, including summary of major Restrictive Declaration and Public Approval provisions and parameters.

- The co-chairs presented a brief summary of the background and history of this project, including an overview of the MCB7's perspective and the issues within its purview.
- RSS sites L, M and N under discussion; will undergo a full ULURP process and review.
- ULURP review required because original Restrictive Declaration called for a television studio complex, and only a modicum of residential use. Documents at that time required a full public review of the TV studio site.
- Materials regarding the project's background available www.nyc.gov/mcb7 ; hard copy available at the meeting of the map of the RSS parcels showing completed and pending sites, and a comparison of the approved and requested uses of the site.
- Phased completion laid out in the Restrictive Declaration, including a 21.5 acre park.
- Spring 2008 – MCB7 sent a letter to Mr. Barnett of Extell (available in hard copy at the meeting and on CB7's website), expressing concerns, including greater height, FAR and density than original parameters in the Restrictive Declaration; non-viability of the television studio plan; big-box store such as Costco [Extell has now relinquished that use]; sustainability, open space design and accessibility to the waterfront park, amount of parking, and other matters.
- Extell responded expressing its willingness to discuss most of these concerns, but did not intend to reduce FAR, density, heights while continuing to request greater FAR and parking.
- Public ULURP process to begin shortly with scoping for the Environmental Impact Statement and certification for ULURP thereafter CB7 wanted a public presentation to the community even before ULURP – hence this meeting
- Tentatively, scoping for the EIS slated to begin December 11, 2008.

2. Informational presentation by the Extell Development Company on the development proposal for southernmost sites, L, M and N.

Presentation by Gary Barnett, president of Extell Development Company.

- Summary of existing RSS project and Extell's progress toward completion of the Avery and Rushmore buildings, and two other buildings above LMN, which are as-of-right.
- LMN is the remaining 8.2 acres from 59th – 61st between WEA and the Hudson.
- Opportunity to do something special, dynamic – vision for “Riverside Center.”
- Market rate and affordable residential units, amenities (movie theater, etc.)
- Big box store taken out of the mix, and reduced parking by 500 spaces (goal not to incite controversy)
- 8.52 FAR – below that requested by other projects.
- Benefits of great open space, possibility of public school and other amenities.

Presentation by architects:

- Southern gateway to RSS, Riverside Park, etc.
- Park at heart of development.
- Southernmost parcel – “transitional” between midtown and RSS and UWS – unique.
- 5 buildings in plan – summary of buildings, including heights.
- Extension of 60th Street to the river.
- Summary of streets and open spaces in plan.

Presentation by landscape architect:

- Goals for open spaces – civic plaza at heart of project with agreement to the grid from the N, E and S
- 3.2 acres of open space exclusive of streets and sidewalks – comparable to Battery Park City
- Efforts to make the project sustainable by using native species for planting; non-heat absorbing paving, “biodiversity” etc.
- Reflecting pool to visually continue 60th Street.

3. Questions and comments from the audience.

Co-Chairs recognized Adam Wolff and Adam Meagher, Department of City Planning, and John Herrold, Administrator of Riverside Park, and representatives from the offices of the Manhattan Borough President, Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal, and State Senator Tom Duane.

Paul Elston, chair of RSS Planning Corp: Support CB request to CPC to require Extell adhere to Restrictive Declaration; brought suit to require Extell to comply with the sustainable development requirements in the Restrictive Declaration – Extell now agrees to do so.-- Miller Highway – should be relocated, and the Park made whole – request Extell to complete the tunnel shell (est. \$150-250MM) -- est. of 2.2B profit from project.

Jennifer Freeman, CEC3 and its space committee: School in the project – parents counting on new school being included -- concerned with the DoE’s financial resources and ability to build the school -- concerned about timing -- urged Extell to contribute more than just shell, and concerned about timetable re need for school; and completion of school timely is key both to residential.

Batya Lewton, Coalition for a Livable West Side: School concerns – asked for 3 new schools, outdoor play space and football, baseball and basketball; PK-5; 6-8 and HS.

Faith Steinberg: Developers destroying neighborhood and environment – development attracts trucks etc.; hardly any affordable housing. Slowing global warming requires serious action and changes in habits. No variances for garages, rezoning.

Steve Robinson, RSS Planning Corp: Background with the RSSPC and has reviewed plans against Restrictive Declaration –, this project too massive, another great architect but only cosmetic improvements-- Extell’s May 2008 analysis compares only with LMN FEIS, not with overall plan-- Extell adds 31.4% more residential; 26% more parking; cluster of commercial -- Public space inviting only to the residential tenants, not to outside community.

Developer response (Paul Selver, attorney, Kramer Levin) – Process issues: outlined process for requested modification – same process as the original approval. Appropriate to use this process – not

acting unilaterally; approvals should not be frozen and able to adapt to changes over time; process is open and fair.

Evelyn Konrad, Movement for the Livable City: Crushing density; public space would be in shadow all day – concern that scoping session and hearing will take place in room too small.

Ethel Sheffer – will insist that CPC will take place at a place and time that will accommodate large community interest.

DCP Rep – will have a day and a night session for project of this size; will want to use Specter Hall to be consistent

Bob Pirani, Regional Plan Assn: Urged CB7 adhere to Restrictive Declaration for reasons given by Mr. Robinson – concern about precedent when Restrictive Declaration is modified – should guide development going forward-- re plan itself – need for railroad station at 59th and WEA; considered by Metro North (and another at 125th) – Extell should reserve space for the station and shell similar to that for the Miller Highway-- public space – first rate talent to design; location of open space is not optimum, should not be privately maintained, but rather under jurisdiction of Parks — placing open space along 59th to be accessible to rest of city; privately managed spaces often only end up as used by residents.

Developer's response (Donna Gargano, Extell): Two spaces at Freedom Place for light rail.

Pirani: Issue is Metro North, not light rail, and should be done in connection with MTA

Paul Selver: Mapping public open space options, public access easement or actual Parks.

Ken Lowenstein, Co-Land Use Counsel: Asking 700K sq ft increase, not 1M.

Ethel Sheffer: CB7 has corrected website reference to the developer's request

Christine Annechino, PS 199 SLT: desperate need for a school – accepts Ms. Gargano's invitation to work together so a proper school can be built to avoid the problems of overcrowding; also reinforced that children in RSS will use public schools – 100 children at PS 199 (out of 500 or so) currently reside in Trump buildings.

Olive Freud, Coalition for Environmentally Sound Development: Always believed that density was originally too great; should not be enlarged -- no presentation about the Miller Highway; should be addressed not only between West 59th-61st Streets; original idea was to put the entire span on a viaduct; need to address through 68th Street; -- given proximity to waste disposal site and power plant, not attractive; residential development in low lying areas bad idea because of global warming – TV studio was a better idea, or a Tivoli Garden type of use.

Lauren Rosenthal, PTA Pres at PS 9: PS9 overcrowded as well; 97K sq ft – Extell to build outer shell, but DoE to purchase at market rates – impossible for City to fund, and takes DoE 8-9 years to complete – does not meet immediate need for new school-- glass towers devalues whole neighborhood.

Gene Boxer, President of Friends of Riverside Park South and condo owner in RSS: Kept family in NYC; 21.5 acres of Park in RSP South included relocation of highway below ground – highway severely limits the existing park space, and huge slope makes additional area unusable; incorporate park into development by burying highway and allow park to flow directly into development (currently takes him 6 blocks to gain access to park right in front of him); www.riversideparksouthnyc.org.

Madeleine Polayes, Coalition for a Livable West side: Square footage needed for school; running track for kids went by the boards; need for school is real.

Paul Willen, Riverside South Planning Corp.: involved in evolution of RSS throughout – alternative vision for LMN lots – enclosed public space amid tall buildings -- alternative is to reverse the plan and have the public space on the perimeter, and accessible to entire community -- original plan did not fully appreciate the beauty of the existing Con Ed building -- alternative vision map presented – takes full southern block West 59th-60th Streets, WEA to river as a true public park, with no feeling of encroaching on someone else’s backyard; place for all neighborhoods within and outside to meet -- alternative would move tall buildings together into rest of sites for LMN -- total open space 5 acres -- path running through the park designed to cross over the future highway and provide access to the waterfront of the RSS Park, allowing Riverside South Park to be tied to the development.

Micah Lasher, Congressman Jerrold Nadler’s office: Rep Nadler has not taken official position, but has concerns -- density – application is a major movement of goalposts in the middle of the game, and while that occurs, this was vigorously debated at the time; even the change of use without density represents huge concession to developer -- new school is imperative to be included; devil in the details – providing the shell doesn’t solve the problem, just finger-pointing; need real school not bogus offer -- school is symptom of overdevelopment -- housing – 12% of affordable housing is the same percent in original Restrictive Declaration – on this scale, more must be done.

Jim Dowell, Director, Riverside Park Fund: Conservancy for the new constituency as well as original; principle issues to be considered in planning process -- vision – original vision included burying of Miller Highway; Park org supports because highway impacts the Park; action can be taken now to ensure the burying of the highway is facilitated -- parkland – cannot yet determine if open space is adequate; huge difference between public plazas and park land; model of Riverside Park South should be continued (albeit modified) – continuous parkland should be preserved.

Mary Hughes, PS199 parent: Need zoning requirements should include a request for a school. Original Restrictive Dec school piece did not go far enough. School went from 117% capacity to 140% capacity in one year. 128 kids from Trump development. Should development proceed, developer must provide school for the units to be built; keep school needs at the forefront.

Council Member Gale Brewer: Often developers don’t personally show up, so applauds Gary Barnett; application will make a huge difference on community; supports wider community input, and facilities and schedule should accommodate – should push scoping back from December to January.

Paul Elston, redux: Proposal about money -- school is a high priority, but school takes space near ground and permits space above – value of space higher up high -- PLANYC – requires assessment of cogeneration for energy efficiency – development should not go forward without a plan for an “energy district”; co-gen plant adequate for development plus area to replace to Con Ed Stanford White building, which could be adapted for other community uses and be 3x more efficient; -- met with pres of MetroNorth – very interested in a rail station with adequate space on East side of N lot West 59th-61st Streets on East side.

4. Response and closing thoughts from Gary Barnett:

Great ideas presented, co-gen especially -- would love to eliminate highway; but does not want to

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sacrifice present for very distant future; incurring great expense to create tunnel -- prevented from improving Park because of hope that highway will be buried -- existing plan would call for two bulky buildings that block off the waterfront, which would impede access and wall off community -- prepared to negotiate on affordable housing -- believes that project improves community -- tough economic times.

Present: Helen Rosenthal, Ethel Sheffer, Page Cowley, Mark Diller, Phyllis Gunther, Klari Neuwelt, Lenore Norman, Roberta Semer, Elizabeth Starkey, Barbara Van Buren.