



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10
215 West 125th Street, 4th Floor—New York, NY 10027
T: 212-749-3105 F: 212-662-4215

HENRIETTA LYLE
Chairperson

ANDREW LASSALLE
Assistant District Manager

Joint Land Use/Landmarks & Housing Committee

Thursday, April 17, 2014 – 6:30 PM
215 West 125th Street, 3rd Fl. Conference Rm.

Hon. Brian Benjamin, Land Use Chair
Hon. Austin Smith, Land Use Vice-Chair
Hon. Daniel Parcerisas, Landmarks Chair

Hon. Melvin Christian, Housing Chair
Hon. Barbara Nelson, Housing Vice-Chair

Present: Brian Benjamin, Donna Gill, Maria Garcia, Forrest, Daniel Parcerisas

- 1) **Welcome/Introductions**
- 2) **HCDC: Proposal to add commercial overlay zones to sections of St. Nicholas Avenue from 110th to 124th streets**

Thomas Lunke from Harlem Community Development Corporation (HCDC) presents a proposal to overlay a C1-4 commercial zoning district to sections of Saint Nicholas Avenue. This proposal was initially presented to CB10 in 2008. HCDC would like to partner with CB10 to study this proposal further and petition the City Planning Commission to add the commercial zoning overlay.

Currently, sections of Saint Nicholas Avenue between West 113th and West 115th, as well as between West 116th and West 120th, are zoned as residential under the 1961 zoning resolution. The proposal is to extend a C1-4 commercial overlay, which already exists along the rest of Saint Nicholas Avenue between 110th and 125th Streets, to these blocks.

Under the 1961 rezoning, existing commercial spaces in the affected blocks were grandfathered in as non-conforming uses. Upon a 2 year vacancy in these spaces, they can no longer be used for commercial purposes and are left vacant. As non-conforming uses, existing businesses have difficulties receive financing from banks to upgrade and invest in their stores, a problem which also affects new businesses moving into vacant spaces that have been vacant for under 2 years.

The proposal would bring non-conforming businesses into conformity with the zoning, enabling them to receive financing from banks. These are mostly “mom and pop” stores. The

proposal would also allow new businesses to operate out of spaces that are currently vacant. The commercial overlay would not allow for any added development rights.

Some board members state that they like the residential character of the street and that the neighborhood is adequately served by retail on nearby avenues and streets. Mr. Lunke states that lacking subway stations, the commercial overlay is unlikely to attract the larger crowds seen along Frederick Douglass Boulevard, West 116th and Lenox Avenue.

3) **Lenox Terrace-Act: Discussion on Lenox Terrace Rezoning**

Members of the Lenox Terrace Association of Concerned Tenants inform the board of a recent meeting they held with the Olnick Organization, the owner of Lenox Terrace. According to the tenant association, Olnick met with them to ask for their support in rezoning the development from R7-2 to C6-2 in order to build more retail along Lenox Avenue between 132nd and 135th Streets and several new residential towers.

The tenant association opposes this plan out of concern that years of construction would affect the quality of life of the residents, including many seniors, and overwhelm schools and public transportation. They also state that under the current zoning the owners can increase commercial space and add new residential towers as of right. While they do not support any new development, this would be preferable to the big box stores and even higher residential density that would result from the rezoning.

4) **AMI Resolution Update**

This issue is tabled until the next meeting to have greater participation.

5) **Landmarks:**

a. Storefront alterations at 194 Lenox Avenue

The owners of 194 Lenox Avenue, located in the Mount Morris Park Historic District are seeking a letter of support for storefront alterations involving stripping the brick and paint to their original condition and installing operable doors at street level to facilitate access to a community space (which would be wheelchair accessible). The latter item requires a public hearing at the Landmarks Preservation Commission which is scheduled for 4/29.

The owners and architect provide photographs of the current and past condition of the building, renderings of the proposed design and photographs of other buildings in the district with a similar design.

Because there is no quorum, this item will be sent to the executive committee with a recommendation to provide a letter of support for the proposed alterations.

b. Storefront alterations at 249 Lenox Avenue

Applicants did not show up.

c. Alterations of garage rear and roof at 261 West 138th Street

Architects representing the owners of 261 West 138th Street present a proposal to alter the rear of the building, located on Strivers Row (Saint Nicholas Historic District). These alterations would not be visible from 138th Street, but they would be visible from Frederick Douglass Boulevard looking down the private alleyway that exists between West 138th and West 139th Streets. The applicants are seeking a letter of support for the alterations for a hearing at the Landmarks Preservation Commission on 5/20.

The building is currently vacant and is being converted from a rooming house into a one-family house. As part of this conversion, the owners seek to lower the window sill on the rear of the third floor in order to provide access to a terrace on the roof of an extension on the 2nd floor. Pipes along this terrace will be replaced with wrought iron railing and the parapet will be finished with brick.

A new opening would be made on the 2nd floor extension to provide access to the roof of the garage, which would also serve as a terrace. The front of the garage will be replaced with a new brick wall and the entrance to the garage will be arched.

The architects present renderings of the proposed design and photographs of existing conditions and of neighboring buildings. The alterations would keep the character of the alleyway and are in line with existing conditions in neighboring buildings. The brick parapet and garage façade are in keeping with the remaining of the rear façade. No alterations are being proposed to the front of the building.

Because there is no quorum, this item will be sent to the executive committee with a recommendation to provide a letter of support for the proposed alterations, subject to a notice from the owners of neighboring buildings that they are not opposed to the alterations.

6) Adjournment