

Dear Members of the City Council and the Land Use Committee,

Please accept this as my written testimony to be entered into the public record on the hearing of 80 Flatbush and their requested zoning amendments.

Kind regards,

Ben Richardson
Treasurer, Fort Greene Association
Parent, Brooklyn P.S. 38 School Leadership Team
Committee Member, One Hanson Place Neighborhood Committee

Good afternoon. My name is Ben Richardson

Chairman Moya, Council Member Levin, members of the City Council and Land Use Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address the council.

As the Treasurer of the Fort Greene Association and a neighborhood representative of the over 28,000 residents of Fort Greene. I will start by saying that we your constituents implore you to vote "no" without exceptions on the zoning amendments being requested by the proposed 80 Flatbush.

Why do I ask that?

The 80 Flatbush team will have you believe that the schools are a tremendous community benefit. They are correct. Every new luxury tower should be required to include schools to accommodate the new density they add to the city. That is what they are proposing. But let's not think for a minute that when a luxury tower in one of the most desirable neighborhoods in Brooklyn is marketed to the community with schools on the ground floor that those 168 seats won't be filled by the residents of 922 new apartments.

It's more likely that there will be a waiting list of 80 Flatbush residents eager to get into the school of the self-contained community they are proposing to build. Which is great. But it won't do a thing for the unfunded school seat needs of District 15 or 13. On the contrary, the overflow from this well-marketed building will likely spill into its zoned school P.S. 38 and other nearby already over-crowded schools. The ECF selling point that this is a school solution for anything more than 80 Flatbush is patently false to anyone who spends more than 5 minutes looking at this project. The ECF and the entire rationale for this project is a solution in search of a problem. Not a problem in search of a solution.

But what about free? Who doesn't love a free school and free community benefits. As we already established, nothing is free.

To that I say that being granted a credit card with no charge limit does not make this project free. It does makes Alloy and the ECF a reckless teenager with unfettered access to the city's financial and political backing, and it makes the city and our community it's unwitting parents. No, the parents of NYC government and the community in this scenario are not giving Alloy and the ECF a cash allowance, necessarily, but they are giving them \$300 million dollars in free unlimited use of the community's prime land and air rights.

What is Alloy's give back to the community in exchange for this?

Much like a selfish teenager who is never able or expected to pay back their parents until they grow up and become parents of their own children, Alloy will never be able to pay back the community. Once the community is changed and the massive environmental impacts of 80 Flatbush are sustained, they will be

there forever. Alloy may one day grow up to be parents of their own reckless youth, but by then it will be too late.

That is where we look to you the City Council, our elected officials to be the responsible parents in this scenario.

As a 20-year New York resident, I understand progress. I certainly understand height and density, and I can assure you that I can perceive a building well above the first 50 feet. As someone who has recently become a more involved citizen with deep family and community roots in Brooklyn, I am very active in helping to shape the progress and the evolution of the world around me. Through their alleged 100 community “presentations” (not meetings), Alloy and The ECF have unfortunately shown no interest in shaping that future in true partnership with the community. Their goal is to unilaterally impose their vision and sell it in every way possible, primarily through the bully pulpit of the Mayor’s office.

I support public schools. I am a public school parent at P.S. 38. I support affordable housing and enabling people to afford to live in the communities they love.. I support cultural space.

I do not support having a public private partnership develop our public schools in general, and definitely not without any financial transparency. I do not support using positive community benefits as blatant leverage points for wealthy developers to earn free giveaways from the city and the community that far outweigh any benefit they offer.

As CM Levin has said, we need to achieve balance in this transitional zone. The math is simply - the average between 2 and 12 is not 18. No matter how many ways Alloy tries to redraw the map, the fundamentals of basic arithmetic simply are not going to change.

For those reasons and 100 more that I can’t fit into two minutes, I again ask you to vote in the interests of your constituents, follow the lead of the unanimous vote of the Community Board, and vote no to 80 Flatbush.

Thank you

Ben Richardson

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Ben Richardson

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