

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS

AND DISPOSITIONS

1

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC
SITINGS AND DISPOSITIONS

----- X

March 18, 2025
Start: 12:12 p.m.
Recess: 12:36 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY, COMMITTEE ROOM - 16TH
FLOOR

B E F O R E: Kamillah M. Hanks, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Amanda Farías
Christopher Marte
Sandy Nurse
Yusef Salaam

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

2

A P P E A R A N C E S

Amhara Hernandez, Senior Planner at New York City
Housing Preservation and Development

Michelle de la Uz, Executive Director, Fifth
Avenue Committee

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS AND
DISPOSITIONS

3

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Check, check. This is a
microphone check for the Subcommittee on Landmarks,
Public Sitings and Dispositions, located on the 16th
Floor, recorded on March 18, 2025, by Pat Kurzyna.
Check, check.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Welcome to the hybrid
hearing on the Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public
Sitings, and Dispositions.

Please silent all electronic devices at
this time.

Also, please do not approach the dais.

If you have any questions, please raise
your hand, and the Sergeant-at-Arms will kindly
assist you.

Thank you very much for your kind
cooperation.

Chair, we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: [GAVEL] Good
afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the meeting of the
Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and
Dispositions. I am Council Member Kamillah Hanks, and
I am the Chair of this Subcommittee. Today, I am
joined by my Colleagues, Majority Leader Farías,
Marte, Nurse, and Salaam.

1
2 Before we begin with today's agenda, I
3 will remind everyone that this meeting is being held
4 in a hybrid format. For members of the public who
5 wish to testify remotely, that we ask that you
6 register first online, and you may do so now,
7 visiting www.council.nyc.gov/landuse to sign up, and
8 then sign on to the Zoom and remain signed on until
9 you have testified.

10 For anyone with us today in person
11 wishing to testify, and you have not already done so,
12 please see one of our Sergeants to fill out a
13 speaker's card, and we will call your name at the
14 appropriate time.

15 For anyone wishing to submit written
16 testimony on items being heard today, we will ask
17 that you please send it via email to
18 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Include the land
19 use number or project name in the subject line of
20 your email. Video and audio testimony will not be
21 accepted.

22 I remind members of the public that this
23 is a government proceeding, and decorum shall be
24 observed at all times. As such, members of the public
25 shall remain silent until called to testify.

1
2 The witness table is reserved for people
3 who wish to testify. No video recording or
4 photography is allowed from the witness table.
5 Further, members of the public may not present audio
6 or video recordings as testimony, but may submit a
7 transcript of such recordings to the Sergeant for
8 inclusion for the hearing record.

9 I will now open the public hearing for
10 Land Use Items 244 through 246 for Brownsville NCP,
11 an application by New York City Housing Preservation
12 and Development for a Zoning Map Amendment, Zoning
13 Text Amendment, and a designation of an Urban
14 Development Action Area, Urban Development Action
15 Area Project, and disposition of City-owned property
16 to develop three new buildings in Council Member
17 Nurse's and Mealy's District in Brooklyn.

18 Appearing today on this proposal is
19 Amhara Hernandez from HPD, Michelle de la Uz,
20 Executive Director, Fifth Avenue Committee.

21 Again, those wishing to testify remotely
22 must register online by visiting the Council's
23 website at council.nyc.gov/landuse.

24 Panelists, to ensure that your microphone
25 is on, red means go, and your microphone is on.

Counsel, would you please administer the
affirmation?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, would you
please raise your right hand and state your name for
the record?

SENIOR PLANNER HERNANDEZ: Amhara
Hernandez.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DE LA UZ: Michelle de
la Uz.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And do you affirm to
tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
truth in your testimony before this Subcommittee and
in answer to all Council Member questions?

SENIOR PLANNER HERNANDEZ: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DE LA UZ: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you, panelists.
For the viewing public, if you need an accessible
version of this presentation, please send us an email
request to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. The
applicant panel may now begin.

SENIOR PLANNER HERNANDEZ: Okay, great.
So, I'm Amhara Hernandez, Senior Planner at HPD. I'm
here with Michelle de la Uz, Executive Director,
Fifth Avenue Committee, presenting Brownsville NCP.

We are very excited to be here today. Thank you for the opportunity. Next slide, please.

The proposed project, Brownsville NCP, is comprised of three small scattered sites, City-owned lots in Brownsville, currently vacant. The project sponsor is Fifth Avenue Committee. They were designated by HPD in 2017, and we have been working to develop new affordable homes on City-owned land to support goals within Brownsville, including recent projects like Brownsville Art Center and Apartments, Livonia 4, and Glenmore Manor. And this project, Brownsville NCP, is continuing towards these goals to provide much-needed affordable housing on underutilized vacant City-owned land. This project proposal is developed under HPD's Neighborhood Construction Program. It's the construction of three new buildings in Brownsville ranging from 6 to 11 stories with up to 74 affordable rental units and an additional super's unit. The original project at ULURP certification was 60 units and one superintendent unit, and it ranged from four to nine stories. During ULURP, the project was modified after the City of Yes text amendment, where additional residential FER was unlocked, where it allowed up to

1 74 affordable rental units and a superintendent unit
2 across the three buildings. And with this, the
3 requested project approvals through ULURP include the
4 Urban Development Action Area designation and project
5 approval and the approval and disposition of five
6 City-owned lots. And for Site 3 only in City Council
7 District 37, a Zoning Map Amendment to rezone a
8 manufacturing area M1-1 to an R7 area district with a
9 C2-4 zoning overlay with a Zoning Text Amendment to
10 establish an MIH in the rezoning area. Sites 1 and 2
11 and City Council District 41 would be developed as-
12 of-right pursuant to existing zoning. Next slide,
13 please.
14

15 In December 2014, HPD released the NIHOP
16 NCP RFQ in an effort to develop infill small vacant
17 lots throughout different neighborhoods in New York
18 City and also to allow for local non-profit smaller
19 organizations to develop as well. In June 2017, HPD
20 designated Fifth Avenue Committee to develop the
21 Brownsville NCP parcels. And since then, we've been
22 working with Fifth Avenue Committee to go through the
23 pre-ULURP process, schematic design, environmental
24 review, and public outreach, and we're really excited
25 to get to this stage now. We certified for ULURP

1
2 September 9, 2024, so you can see this project has
3 been a long time in the making. So, I'll pass it off
4 to Michelle to talk further about Fifth Avenue
5 Committee.

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DE LA UZ: Thanks for
7 the opportunity. I appreciate everybody's presence
8 here. So, I think many folks are familiar with Fifth
9 Avenue Committee, but if you're not, we're a 47-year-
10 old non-profit comprehensive community development
11 corporation whose mission is to advance economic,
12 social, and racial justice in New York City. One of
13 the ways that we do that is to build and manage
14 affordable housing. We've built over 1,500 units. We
15 can actually go to the next slide. I'm sorry.

16 We've built over 1,500 units. Actually,
17 this needs to be slightly updated. We're very
18 productive in our partnership with HPD in the last
19 four years. And so we've done new construction,
20 ground up, and preservation of affordable housing,
21 and we exclusively focus on affordable housing, and
22 we're excited that we would be able to serve the
23 Brownsville community through this project, through
24 this infill project. We can go on to the next slide.

1
2 Amhara talked a little bit about this
3 already. So, as you can see, the three sites are, you
4 know, not that far apart, but also not that close
5 together in the community of Brownsville, and you see
6 the two that are in Council Member Mealy's District,
7 which would be built as of right on Mother Gaston
8 Boulevard and Thomas Boyland. And then the St. Mark's
9 project in Council Member Nurse's District, which
10 would be a rezoning and allow, you know, moving from
11 manufacturing to residential and help serve the
12 broader community. You can go on to the next slide.

13 SENIOR PLANNER HERNANDEZ: So, the first
14 site, Development Site 1, Mother Gaston, is actually
15 the smallest of the three sites. With the City of Yes
16 updates, it's proposing a six-story elevator building
17 with approximately nine affordable rental units. With
18 the City of Yes updates, it was able to add three
19 units to the project with the additional two stories.
20 The site is currently vacant and City-owned. It's in
21 an R6 district with a commercial overlay and would be
22 built as-of-right with quality housing requirements.
23 It's also proposing a community facility or retail
24 use on the ground floor. There isn't a tenant
25 proposed currently, but we've been asking the

1 community board and local community and Council
2 Members for feedback on that. Next slide, please.

3
4 The second site, Thomas Boyland, is
5 proposing an eight-story elevator building with the
6 City of Yes updates with approximately 27 affordable
7 rental units, 11 of which are family-sized two- or
8 three-bedroom units. It also has an open rear yard of
9 over 800 square feet and a six-floor outdoor terrace
10 available to tenants. With the City of Yes updates,
11 we were able to add six more units to the project
12 compared to the original proposal. This site is also
13 vacant and City-owned and is also in an R6 district
14 with a commercial overlay and would be built as-of-
15 right with quality housing requirements. Next slide,
16 please.

17 St. Mark's Avenue is the largest of the
18 three sites. It is an 11-story elevator building with
19 approximately 38 affordable rental units and one
20 super unit as well. It has an open rear yard of a
21 little over 1,200 square feet, 16 units are family-
22 sized two- and three-bedroom units, and we were able
23 to add five more units to this site with the City of
24 Yes. It's also City-owned and vacant. However, unlike
25 the previous two buildings, we are proposing a

1 rezoning of the site and parts of the surrounding
2 area of the existing manufacturing zoning district to
3 an R7A District with the commercial overlay. Next
4 slide, please.

5
6 So, what you see here is an aerial image
7 to the left with our site highlighted red and then
8 the existing zoning map and the proposed zoning map
9 below. So, you can see the area in light gray is the
10 portion of the East New York Rezoning. This was
11 analyzed by DCP, and it saw that the manufacturing
12 area was more suitable for residential and commercial
13 uses, so what we're trying to do is extend off those
14 goals, extending the same portion that was remapped
15 as the R7A and C2-4 Districts as part of the East New
16 York Neighborhood Plan. Next slide, please.

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DE LA UZ: So, touching
18 on some of the sustainability and design elements for
19 the three buildings, they'll be built to Enterprise
20 Green Communities 2020 standards using Energy Star
21 multifamily new construction standards as well, which
22 together ensure that we're at least surpassing the
23 energy performance compared to code by more than 20
24 percent. These will be all electric buildings for all
25 three of the buildings and, you know, typical for

1
2 green design and green development. We have low VOC,
3 you know, sealants and other adhesives, and we plan
4 to install solar on the roofs of the buildings. And
5 you can see, you know, that we really look to have
6 contextual massing and have façades that were
7 consistent with the surrounding community. And, you
8 know, overall, you know, we plan to manage these
9 properties, and so we think a lot about, you know,
10 what we're using as part of our construction, you
11 know, as we're thinking ahead to how we're going to
12 manage the properties moving forward.

13 Moving on to the next slide, you know, as
14 a non-profit, you know, CDC community outreach and
15 local hiring and M/WBE hiring are things that we very
16 much are part of our values and part of how we think
17 about doing the work. And so, you know, as part of
18 Fifth Avenue Committee, plus we have a non-profit
19 workforce development affiliate, Brooklyn Workforce
20 Innovation, so we really want to leverage the full
21 suite of programs that the organization has. Already,
22 Fifth Avenue Committee and our non-profit affiliates
23 serve thousands of people from Brownsville, despite
24 the fact that we actually don't have a physical
25 presence in Brownsville just because of the programs

1 that we have. So, one of the things that we want to
2 do is recruit for our woodworking training program
3 from the local community, and then we would be
4 building those cabinets and installing them in the
5 housing that we would be building. So, you know,
6 pride in local community and really seeing, you know,
7 that they're part of how the neighborhood is evolving
8 is part of our goal there. We want to offer free OSHA
9 30 training for local residents, and we would be
10 doing targeted outreach. Again, something that we
11 already do, but we would be doing it even in greater
12 partnership with local groups for our GED, adult
13 basic education, ESOL, you know, digital literacy
14 access and benefits access programs. And, you know,
15 one of the things that came up in our conversations
16 with the local community board is really partnering
17 with local organizations on job fairs for local
18 residents and ensuring that once we get to the stage
19 of working with and selecting our general contractor,
20 one of the things that we're going to be looking for
21 is a GC that's willing to exceed local hiring and
22 M/WBE subcontractor requirements. That will be
23 important to us.
24
25

1
2 SENIOR PLANNER HERNANDEZ: Next slide,
3 please. So I described before the project is under
4 the Neighborhood Construction Program, and this chart
5 is illustrating the project total and unit mix for
6 all three buildings. The project was able to add 14
7 units and one super across the three buildings after
8 the City of Yes updates. And in response to the CB16
9 recommendation for deeper affordability, the project
10 prioritized increasing the percentage of units in the
11 40 percent AMI tier. Approximately 70 percent of
12 units in the project are available to households
13 earning up to 60 percent of area median income.
14 Additionally, based on prior CB16 and community
15 feedback, we are also keeping the highest tier at 70
16 percent AMI, since we heard that 80 percent AMI tier
17 is too high as well. The three buildings also provide
18 a mix of studios, one bedrooms and two- and three-
19 bedrooms as well, with 39 being large enough for
20 family-sized households. We also have eight units set
21 aside for formerly homeless households in a variety
22 of unit sizes. You can go on to the next slide.

23 So, this slide just provides a little bit
24 of a project summary. So, after the City of Yes, we
25 were able to add 14 additional units, so the project

1
2 is able to have up to 74 units with an additional
3 super's unit across all three. It is a small
4 scattered site project that is more feasible due to
5 it being together, and Fifth Avenue Committee has
6 been working for many years to get this project on
7 its feet and also get to this milestone today, so
8 we're very excited. The original project that was
9 proposed was 60 units, so having these additional
10 units enabled us to deepen affordability and add more
11 units to the 40 percent AMI tier. We also have over
12 2,000 square feet of community facility or retail
13 space in Development Site 1, Mother Gaston Boulevard,
14 that we have been actively seeking input on for a
15 tenant. And we will pass it back to you for comments
16 and questions. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. I just have
18 a few questions. The entire block surrounding the
19 proposed development is zoned M1-1. The blocks to the
20 east are rezoned in 2026 as part of the East New York
21 Rezoning. Could you talk about why this block was
22 initially left out?

23 SENIOR PLANNER HERNANDEZ: We could look
24 into that, as that rezoning was, I believe, not done
25 by HPD, so we will ask DCP and look into that.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. What kind
3 of retail or community facility do you expect to
4 utilize on the ground floor and cellar space?

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DE LA UZ: We've gotten
6 some thoughts from the local community board. I think
7 there's a lot of desire to have perhaps a youth or
8 nonprofit use at that location. Obviously, once we
9 begin construction, and certainly well before
10 completing construction, we'll have extensive
11 conversations with the local community board and
12 local Council Members and reach out to area
13 businesses so we'll have to see is the honest answer.
14 Part of it is seeing what, in a couple years, where
15 the demand is, but we would love to see a
16 neighborhood use that would fit the local residents.

17 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. Now I'd
18 like to recognize Council Member Nurse with some
19 questions.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Thank you, Chair.
21 Good afternoon. It is afternoon now, yes.

22 So other than the increase in height and
23 density, are there any other changes that are coming
24 to this project because of City of Yes, or is that
25 the main?

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DE LA UZ: Those are
3 the main things. I guess the additional units and the
4 additional height. I mean, as a result of that, I
5 think we were also able to address some of the
6 concerns that you've expressed and the community
7 board expressed about depth of affordability,
8 basically by increasing the total number of units. As
9 we looked at the project feasibility financially, we
10 knew that we could take on some lower AMI units when
11 the overall project grew in size.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: I noticed that
13 there was an increase in three bedrooms. I really
14 appreciate that. I don't consider two-bedroom units
15 family-sized. What's the average square footage of a
16 bedroom in this development? Not a master bedroom.

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DE LA UZ: Amhara has
18 it right here.

19 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: For the three
20 bedrooms, they range from 976 to over 1,000 square
21 feet.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: The bedroom?

23 SENIOR PLANNER HERNANDEZ: Oh, for a
24 bedroom.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: A single bedroom.

1
2 SENIOR PLANNER HERNANDEZ: For a bedroom,
3 I would have to do that, but that's for the overall
4 apartment.

5 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Okay. Maybe you have
6 sent it in the past. I'm sorry I don't have it on me,
7 but if you could provide the floor plan of a two-
8 bedroom and a three-bedroom.

9 SENIOR PLANNER HERNANDEZ: Yeah, there it
10 is. What we have here is a three-bedroom of the 976
11 square feet, and I will say that typically for design
12 guidelines, they need to have certain dimensions that
13 tend to equate to 90 or 110 square feet for a bedroom
14 and larger for a master, as you can kind of see in
15 the three-bedroom typical floor plan here.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Okay. For the
17 record, I know the community board was very vocal
18 about this, but if you could just put on the record
19 why you've opted out of making any of these units for
20 apartment homeownership.

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DE LA UZ: We didn't
22 actually opt out. So, when we first applied more than
23 10 years ago in response to the RFP, it was Fifth
24 Avenue Committee with Habitat for Humanity for New
25 York City and Westchester, and then we were selected

1
2 in 2017, and then basically the two projects were
3 split. So, Habitat moved forward with their
4 homeownership project, and Fifth Avenue Committee is
5 moving forward with the rental project so it's not
6 really an opting. The community is really getting the
7 best of both worlds, both homeownership and
8 affordable rental.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: But they've
10 expressed that they would have preferred some part of
11 this project of the three buildings to have
12 homeownership components. I understand the original
13 RFP, but it's been a long time, and a lot of new
14 monies have come in. So just did you have those
15 conversations, and did you communicate to the board,
16 and what were those reasons just so we can have them
17 here as well?

18 SENIOR PLANNER HERNANDEZ: Absolutely. If
19 you could actually go to the last slide of this deck.
20 The second to the slide first, please. So, when we
21 were in the community board phase of ULURP, we had a
22 variety of conversations with the community board and
23 homeownership was raised, but one of the primary
24 priorities of the community board was deepening
25 affordability, and what we discussed with them is

1
2 that the homeownership target AMIs were of higher
3 tiers of moderate income, and that in order to deepen
4 affordability, it really doesn't match that term
5 sheet. However, if you go to the next slide, we did
6 speak to other homeownership opportunities that are
7 coming to the area soon, that we would be happy to
8 come to them with the project teams at a later time
9 to discuss with them. But ultimately that seemed like
10 a sufficient response when we were speaking with
11 them, and we are always happy to discuss further.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Okay. Those are all
13 my questions. Thank you. Oh, sorry. Tell me about
14 what you mean by local hire. Different people have
15 different ways they think about it. Do you have a
16 geographical boundary?

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DE LA UZ: Usually the
18 community board is a geographical boundary. So, I
19 mean, obviously Brownsville is almost all of
20 Community Board 16. So, yeah, we would focus on
21 Community Board 16.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: And what do you
23 anticipate the long-term jobs, the number of jobs,
24 you know, the long-haul permanent jobs for these
25 developments?

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DE LA UZ: I mean, on
3 the permanent job, on a three-building scattered site
4 project, there's going to be one superintendent as a
5 permanent job, and there will be a porter as well,
6 and then, you know, there will be a back office
7 person as well.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Okay. So one for
9 all three?

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DE LA UZ: Essentially
11 three, probably three permanent jobs in the end.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Thank you. Okay.
13 Thank you so much.

14 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. Now I'd
15 like to recognize any of my Colleagues. Does anybody
16 have questions?

17 Okay. Thank you. This applicant panel is
18 now excused.

19 Counsel, are there any members of the
20 public who wish to testify on this item?

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I don't believe there
22 are any.

23 Are there any remote public participants
24 who wish to testify and have not already done so?
25 Please press the raise hand button now. If you are

2 here with us in person, please see one of the
3 Sergeant-at-Arms to first fill out a speaker card.

4 With there being no other members of the
5 public who wish to testify regarding Land Use items
6 244 through 246 for Brownsville NCP, this public
7 hearing is now closed, and the items are laid over.

8 That concludes today's business, and I
9 would like to thank the members of the public, my
10 Colleagues, Subcommittee Counsel, Land Use Staff, and
11 Sergeant-at-Arms for your participation today. This
12 meeting is hereby adjourned. [GAVEL]

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date April 11, 2025