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THE COUNCIL OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

**BRAD LANDER**

DEPUTY LEADER FOR POLICY  
39<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT, BROOKLYN

CHAIR  
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COMMITTEES  
LAND USE  
STANDARDS AND ETHICS  
STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATION

*Statement in Support of Land Use Actions Proposed for  
163 Columbia Street in Brooklyn – 20165374 HAK*

**New York City Council  
Subcommittee on Planning, Dispositions, and Concessions  
Thursday February 25, 2016**

Chair Dickens, and Council Members Cohen, Mealy, Rodriguez, and Treyger, thank you very much for your time and consideration of the land use action proposed for 163 Columbia Street in Brooklyn.

I am in strong support of the proposal. I am pleased to have worked closely with HPD, the Carroll Gardens Association, Inc. (CGA), and Avery Hall Investments to make this proposal a real win for the Columbia Waterfront neighborhood. Together, we reached an agreement that allows the sale of one underutilized vacant lot, which will be developed as a four-unit, market-rate building, in exchange for permanently preserving 28 units of affordable housing, and two much-loved community gardens, along with additional resources to explore the development and preservation of additional affordable housing in nearby Red Hook.

Back in 1991, the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) conveyed the lot at 163 Columbia Street to South Brooklyn Associates Limited Partnership; a subsidiary of the not-for-profit, community-based Carroll Gardens Association. The property was part of a larger portfolio that contained six abandoned buildings. The buildings were renovated and converted into 28 units of low-income housing through the federal low-income housing tax credit program.

The lot at 163 Columbia was designated for open space. However, due to lack of funds, it was never improved, and has remained a vacant lot. Meanwhile, two much-loved community gardens sprung up nearby, the South Brooklyn Children's Garden at 202-204 Columbia Street, and the Pirates Cove Community Garden at 313 Columbia Street, both on short-term license agreements on HPD property.

So when Avery Hall Investments approached the Carroll Gardens Association and HPD with a proposal to purchase 163 Columbia Street, it presented an opportunity. Working together, we have agreed to allow the sale of this 1,991 square foot vacant lot and its redevelopment as a four-unit, market-rate residential building, pursuant to the existing zoning.

In exchange, we are achieving a great package of goals:

- Permanent affordability of the 28 units of affordable housing for low-income families in six buildings on the same block of Columbia Street – which CGA developed at the same time it acquired the vacant lot at 163 Columbia Street. Without this change, the affordability restrictions on those units would eventually expire, potentially leading to the loss of affordable housing in the Columbia Waterfront community. This is being achieved through amendment of the regulatory agreement.
- Significant improvements to these six buildings, and the deepening of capital reserves to support their permanent use as affordable housing, through use of the proceeds from the sale.
- The remaining proceeds from the sale will be used as seed funding for CGA to explore the preservation and creation of as many as 70 new affordable housing units in nearby Red Hook.
- HPD has also agreed to transfer ownership of the South Brooklyn Children's Garden and Pirates Cove Community Garden to the Parks Department, so these treasured but at-risk community gardens will be permanently preserved. In 2015 the South Brooklyn Children's Garden hosted field trips, served as a community drop-off point for household compost, and donated fresh produce to the Food Bank for New York. I am glad that, when the City earlier this year announced protection of 34 community gardens, both community gardens were included on the list.

By permanently preserving affordable housing for low-income families, and much-loved community gardens, this proposal is a win/win for the Columbia Waterfront.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon.

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Appearance Card

338

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/25/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: VILMA HERAMIA

Address: 565 48th St # 2 Brooklyn NY 11220

I represent: CARROLL GARDENS ASSOCIATION

Address: 201 COLUMBIA ST Brooklyn NY 11311

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 337 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Arttimeche (Artie) Pearson, Director of Land Use

Address: 100 Gold St

I represent: HPD

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 337 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/25/2016

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rita Calvo

Address: 100 Gold Street

I represent: HPD

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 338 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/25/2016

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: Arttimeche (Artia) Pearson, Director of Land Use

Address: 100 Gold Street

I represent: HPD

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 338 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/25/2016

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: Kerry La Botz, Director of LIHTC Preservation

Address: 100 Gold Street Year 15 program

I represent: HPD

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/15/16

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: Jay Morris

Address: Fifth Avenue Committee, 601 Degraw Street

I represent: FAC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms