

Queens Community Board #1
Land Use Committee - Sub Committee
Report of Meeting Dated: May 4th, 2022

Re: Innovation Queens

Meeting Attended by:

Marie Torniali, Board Chairperson
Elizabeth Erion, Land Use Committee Co-Chair
Gerald Caliendo, Land Use Committee Co – Chair
Jeffrey Martin, Land Use Committee Vice – Chair
Florence Koulouris, District Manager

Project Overview:

1. The proposed project is the subject of a zoning change for partial 5 blocks in L.I.C.
2. The proposed action is to rezone areas which are currently zoned M1-1 (1.0 FAR & C4-2A (3.0 F.A.R.)), utilizing “large scale development” text of the Zoning Resolution and creating a new Special District : “MX-24” to create new proposed zoning districts within same consisting of: M1-4/R7-3 (5.0 F.A.R.), M1-4/R7X (5.0 F.A.R.), M1-4/R9 (7.52 F.A.R.), and M1-5/R9-1 (9.0 F.A.R.),
3. Based on the fact that the project is proposed as a “large scale development”, this permits with the approval of the City Planning Commission and the City Council, the ability to transfer available floor area from one area of the project to another and to waive numerous height and setback requirements.

Discussion and Comments:

1. At the outset it was generally agreed that the Committee and CB#1 has historically been pro-development when a project is reasonable, and the community at large would benefit by the development.
2. Relative to this project, it was generally agreed that development in this area of the Community Board would be beneficial to the community given the current uses that exist and the potential that a reasonable development would afford the community.
3. It was agreed that the proposed development in the form that it was presented is grossly inappropriate and would potentially be a detriment to the community for the following reasons:
 - a. The proposed zoning and special district with the large-scale development and height and setback waivers, and building massing as presented are not respecting the character and bulk of the adjoining residential blocks.
 - b. It was consistently agreed that the massing of the development should be designed to be higher on Northern Blvd. and step down to 35th Avenue.
 - c. It was generally agreed that the “open spaces” that are being proposed as a major benefit to the community, and which the developer is basing his rationale for being permitted to build more and higher, when closely reviewed seem to be designed to be commercial corridors as access to the proposed retail stores, as in a shopping mall.

- d. It was generally agreed that the “passive recreation space” which is proposed adjacent to Public Park:35, is again designed as a supplement to the commercial and community facility “rental” spaces and not programmed specifically to the public. With that, it was generally agreed that the developer should provide an “active recreation” space such as a small soccer field, basketball court, etc.
- e. It was generally agreed that since the “school” that the developer originally proposed was not agreed upon by the City, that the developer should substitute other beneficial community oriented uses for this space, such as: a YMCA or Variety Boys & Girls type facility that is sorely needed in this area with the potential for indoor swimming, basketball, gym, youth after school classes, etc. Adult Trade School was also suggested to be incorporated.
- f. It was generally agreed that the proposed waiver to permit a retail space to be in excess of 10,000 sq.ft. was objected to and in lieu of that waiver a provision that any request for a space greater than 10,000 sq. ft. must come back to the Community Board for a separate review and approval.

Conclusion:

- 1. It was generally agreed that the Committed “Disapprove” the application and with that the recommendation for the zoning districts and associated bulk and floor area to be permitted for the proposed development should be as follows:
 - a. **Within 100’ of Northern Blvd.:** **R8X** zoning district (with the associated commercial zoning district) – 7.20 F.A.R. and max height of 17 stories – 175 ft.
 - b. **Mid-block:** **R7D** zoning district (with the associated commercial zoning district) – 5.60 F.A.R. and a max. height of 11 stories – 115 ft.
 - c. **Within 100’ of 35th Avenue** **R6A** zoning district (with the associated commercial zoning district) – 3.60 F.A.R. and max height of 8 stories – 85ft.

If you have any questions or comments, do not hesitate to call me.

Gerald J. Caliando, R.A.