

COMMUNITY BOARD #3
655 Rossville Avenue
Staten Island, N. Y. 10309

LAND USE COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 12, 2014

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Thomas Barlotta, Chairman
Frank Morano, *Chairman of the Board*
Philip Centineo
Frank Contrera
Patrick Donahue
Jeffrey Geary
Helen Napoli
Wayne Rosenfeld
Daniel Venuto

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Charles Cappucci

STAFF:

Charlene Wagner, District Manager

GUESTS:

Patrick Ryan, Director of External Affairs Staten Island, Mayor DeBlasio's Office of Housing Recovery
Frank Rapacciolo, representing Councilman Vincent Ignizio 51st District
Lauren Wang, New York City Housing Preservation and Development
Jessica Wurwarg, New York City Housing Preservation and Development
Thad Pawlowski, Department of City Planning, *New York City "Build It Back" Program*
Neal Deridder, Curtis & Ginsberg Architects, Bluestone Organization

Chairman Thomas Barlotta opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. with The Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC CONTACT SESSION– No Speakers

Thomas Barlotta introduced Patrick Ryan who made a presentation to the Committee of NYC Build It Back Program. NYC Build it Back is funded with approximately \$648 million in Federal disaster recovery funds including an initial \$1.77 billion Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery allocation through the Department of Housing and Urban Development. In order to address the highest need families first, the City will prioritize the limited initial funding based on the level of damage and financial need, using national objectives set by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. A Special Permit process based upon the City Planning Flood Resilience Zoning Text Amendment offers homeowners, whose homes were damaged or destroyed during Hurricane Sandy, options to repair, or elevate and repair, rebuild, receive reimbursements for homeowner completed work or seek acquisition in order to return home.

The necessary Board of Standards Findings for this construction to proceed would be resolved by constructing homes that are flood resilient without disturbing the neighborhood character. Over 5,700 registrants have signed up for the program on Staten Island. Mr. Ryan emphasized that

“substantial damage is the driver in this project”. The award calculation for the Build It Back construction pathway is determined based upon damage sustained. If the value of storm damage is less than 50% pre-storm value of the home the program will help to repair the structure only. If the value of storm damage is greater than 50% pre-storm value of the home the program will elevate and repair. However if the total project cost is greater than 80% of the cost of a new home then the program will rebuild for the registrants.

The Bluestone Organization, an architectural firm in Queens, was chosen by the City of New York as the rebuild developer who has streamlined the process with pre-approved designs, budgets, and contractors, and guarantees performance. Homeowners can also choose to hire their own contractor and then seek reimbursement. However the City must review the owner’s proposed design, budget, architect, and contractor prior to providing funds for construction.

City Planning representative Thad Pawlowski, who has been working with The Housing Recovery Office since Hurricane Sandy, described on behalf of The Department of Housing Preservation and Development the benefits of the Board of Standards and Appeals Special Permit Process for the New York City Build It Back program. The program Modified procedures with BSA to:

- Waive requirement for DOB objection prior to application.
- Shorten individual applications to reduce redundancy in clusters.
- Simplify application procedures.
- Limit waiver to only Build it Back Rebuilds using City Selected Developer.
- Apply for Special Permit §64-92 on behalf of all likely Build it Back Rebuild participants.
- Cluster application filings in geographic batches to group public hearings and ease noticing requirements.

The Build It Back Program plans to rebuild homes once the process is completed in May or June this year that will withstand future storms with the following qualities:

- Flood Resilient Construction
- All homes will be elevated above required Base Flood Elevations.
- Buildings will use mold-resistant materials, such as Hardy-Plank siding.
- Wind Resistant Roof-Strapping features and Storm Shutters.
- Homes must meet Enterprise Green Community Standards or Energy Star for energy efficiency.

Based upon the lot size / width and pre-existing square footage there are 10 prototypes of homes that can be built to match the streetscape and restore the character of the neighborhoods. Without

the Build It Back Program residents would have to choose one of 3 options; Not Rebuild, Pursue a Zoning Text Change (or Rezoning) to allow Rebuilding, or Pursue BSA Special Permit §64-92. The Build It Back Program is a voluntary program that gives an option to those homeowners who choose not to take the Buy Out of their properties from the government.

DISCUSSION: The Committee reviewed plus and minuses of the Build It Back Program compared to other methods of rebuilding aid previously offered to displaced homeowners. The Committee had the following concerns:

- The possibility of mismanagement of funds or corruption by residents which may not be used properly to restore properties leaving damaged homes as eyesores to the community.
- Using contractors who would not be local or held responsible (as was the case with the Rapid Repair Program) and warranties on their work and supplies.
- Concern about self-certification by contractors and the inspection process for electrical, plumbing and construction
- Accessibility of funds should there be cost overruns during construction
- Obtain Department of Environmental Conservation Wetlands Permits in a timely manner
- The decision to replace septic tanks and dry wells rather than properly installing new Sanitary and Storm sewers to correct the previous problems.
- The ability for residents to upgrade from the plans created by the Build It Back Program architects

NEW BUSINESS:

- Thomas Barlotta reported that he, Frank Morano, Charlene Wagner, Robert Englert, the developers and a lobbyist attended a meeting at Borough Hall concerning the property on Richmond Valley Road at Page Avenue. Since the original plans were presented there has been some compromises and a better traffic management plan for this location (soft barriers will be installed on the double yellow line to prevent left-turns into the location). The Committee will be requesting that these barriers be maintained as part of this application which will be coming before the Land Use Committee in the near future.
- Frank Contrera announced that on March 26 from 6-8 p.m. the Department of Design and Construction will hold a residents meeting for Sewer Project SE818 at the Woodrow United Methodist Church located at 1075 Woodrow Road in the church hall. This project will install sanitary and storm sewers in over 650 homes.
- Daniel Venuto discussed the apparent trend in using any extra space in commercial parking lots for additional structures if this is permissible and what the future repercussions could be in the future.

OLD BUSINESS:

Jeffrey Geary asked for an update on the status of the Biddle House at 70 Satterlee Street within Conference House Park. Charlene Wagner was informed that the architect is moving forward on this restoration project.

MOTION to adjourn by Helen Napoli

SECONDED: Frank Morano

Meeting adjourned 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T Barlotta', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Thomas Barlotta
Land Use Chairman