

Community Board 17
Land Use and Rezoning Committee
September 1st, 2022

TS Candi
Gale Bartholomew
Alton Aimable
Ann Hudson
Tamara Thomas
Lilleth Heron Robinson
Asar
Sareve
Ms. Cook
Natslie Ferguson
JL James
Theresa Brreton
Kwame Afreh
Joan Erskine
Rachel Goodfriend
Allyson Martinez
Keith Marcelle
Vanessa Quashie
CK Price
Mary Bell Downes

Dawes
Elizabeth
Adele Bennett
Marguerite Vigliante
Marie Monk
Patricia Gabriel
Rona Taylor
Jermaine McIntosh
J. Mc
Pearlene Fields
Zoe
Natasha Duncan
Kathleen Riley
Marie Monk
George Hutchinson
Jair Froome
Jina
P. Bynoe
Marsha
O. Lewis

The meeting of the Land Use and Rezoning committee was called to order by Mr. Kwame Afreh. Mr. Afreh welcomed everyone back after the recess, and asked those present to introduced themselves.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: There were questions regarding the emailing of the meeting minutes.

Ms. Fraser said due to staff shortage, she had to take time out of her vacation to provide coverage to the meeting, she said the minutes were emailed twice to the members.

There was a request to table the minutes until the next scheduled meeting.

Chairperson's Report

- Mr. Afreh extended his condolences to Ms. Marguerite Vigliante on the passing of her mom while the Board was on recess.

- No communication received regarding landmark approvals.
- Nothing regarding variances for businesses
- The summer was quiet no complaints received
- A retreat was held for the new Executive members and the members of the Board. The goal of the retreat was to understand process, be efficient and respectful of people and their time. Roberts Rules will be reviewed so the committee knows how to conduct a meeting and get the business of the Board done.

Mr. Afreh said he would like the committee to host an event to commemorate all the work they did last year. He said there are many angles and opportunities to use to protect the community and he would like the members to bring their ideas to the floor, to discuss their goals for the new year.

Unfinished Business

A question was asked regarding the project on East 98th Street and Kings Highway, close to Kings Highway. The project takes up the block, it will be commercial /mixed use.

Mr. Afreh said he did reach out to the developer, however, the project manager is not ready to speak to the Board. He also reached out to Councilmember Mealy, who gave him her card and asked that he keep in touch with her office regarding the project.

Ms. James said it could be problematic if they are moving forward with the project and the community is not allowed to express their views.

Mr. CK Price said he did some research on the ownership of the East 98 development, it's the two block between Rutland Road and Kings Highway on E 98th Street under the train track, all of which is zoned for commercial, it is not zoned for residential. The developer do not have all the parcels, the parcels are owned by different LLC's, but they are all brothers. They do not own the C-Town and the parcel across from C-Town. They also own over 120 LLC and manages a number of buildings along Kings Highway.

Mr. Afreh said, he has been reaching out regarding the project, however, they are not ready to present to the Board.

New Business - None Presentation(s);

Brooklyn Level Up - Ms. Allyson Martinez, and Ms. Rachel Goodfriend presented on Community Land Trust (CLT). Ms. Martinez greeted everyone and expressed her thanks to the Board for working with the organization on the Tax Lien sale and for allowing Brooklyn Level Up to present on Community Land Trust at the meeting. She said both her and Ms. Rachel Goodfriend are former Co-chairs of the Land Use committee. Brooklyn Level Up is a 501C-3 community development corporation founded during the pandemic. It was born from their shared experience on the Land Use committee.

Ms. Goodfriend said, Brooklyn Level Up is one of the New York City coalition of organizations working to build community land trust and has been working to ensure NYC does policies to support and get Funding to support New York City Community Land Initiative (NYCCLI)

She explained the presentation is a shortened version of the community land trust training. The longer version allows for break-out sessions.

The Agenda will focus on CLT in general, the history, the purpose, what residents can do in terms of education, advocacy, How CLT's get Land, Case Studies, Governance Basics, next steps and discussion.

Ms. Goodfriend said CLT is a nonprofit organization that collectively owns and stewards land for a community. The question regarding stewarding of the land, CLT is supposed to be responsive to how the community wants to steward the land.

The idea of stewarding land is rooted in very old practices that's seen in communities over the world, first in the indigenous communities, who were the first stewards but they were violently removed. The indigenous community values that they imported and led by, can be used collectively through a community, to honor their past and build into the plans on how to operate in the future

Ms. Martinez said residents can watch the documentary called 'The Arc of Justice' which details the history of that movement. Presently, there are over 200 in the country. In NYC, the first is Cooper Square.

Ms. Rachel Goodfriend said the East Flatbush housing and residential spaces is becoming more exclusive and expensive. In the Community Land trust offer organized communities as alternative a way to take land out of the typical market and insure its used to develop housing or other community facility spaces that are affordable for the long term.

She said part of the work is to educate residents, but there are different ways to secure homes and also secure the wealth and future of the neighborhood for the long term for people who already live in the community. That can be through trust and estates planning, home buyer, home ownership, strategies, financial literacy, tenant and homeownership, advocacy, displacement tools and government program, application assistance. She said there are a number of available programs and however due to bureaucracy, most are not able to apply for the benefits.

CLT is trying to bridge that gap and make sure people are taking advantage of all programs and have the services and programs in the neighborhoods. CLT is also working on getting New York City to have a law that any public land RFP, or being transferred to groups are given to CLT rather than private developers. There are also other legislation in line, that will possibly give renters the opportunity to purchase the buildings they are renting. Brooklyn Level Up has been working to prevent those experiencing difficulties paying their real estate taxes from losing their homes, when the buildings are taken by the city because of back taxes. BLU believe those buildings should go to the community rather than foreclosed or sold at auctions to private developers. The city should be able to take control and transfer to the Community Land Trust

Mr. Afreh thanked Ms. Martinez and Ms. Goodfriend for an informative presentation. He encouraged members to broaden their understanding and knowledge on resources and options available to the community.

Presentation – Alton Aimable – Tropicalfete thanked the Community Board for allowing him to make the presentation to the Board. Mr. Keith Marcelle member of Tropicalfete Board also introduced himself.

Mr. Aimable said Tropicalfete is looking forward to developing a coalition with the Board and use culture to keep the youths in the community engaged and learn skills such as costume making, sewing, etc.

Tropicalfete is currently working in six public schools in Brooklyn and senior centers including the one on Clarendon Road, and participate in programs at St. Augustin.

Tropicalfete is requesting a letter of support from Community Board 17. They are currently seeking to lease the space at 1174 New York Avenue. Tropicalfete Inc. was Established in 1999 as an online publication and cultural resource center and in 2011. Tropicalfete became a charitable not-for-profit corporation. Its mission is to develop the community in the areas of arts and social services with a focus on educating the community on Caribbean culture. They have also established a reading program with Barnes and Noble for Caribbean Heritage Month in June.

Purpose: Tropicalfete published information with a concentration on arts and culture as well as highlighting the importance of the arts on education and its positive impact on the economy. Tropicalfete is committed to the cultivation of emerging artists working in all genres. Among these are: Visual arts, fashion, music, dance, theater, film and new media. Tropicalfete serves as a vehicle to elevate talented persons, while recognizing their contribution to society and the arts. In-addition; Tropicalfete offers opportunities for gifted artists to be mentored through a variety of diverse events. They look at the development of artists from a holistic view; and persons with their social needs. Tropicalfete seeks to utilize the power of the artist and arts, as it strives to bring about social changes to whomever/ wherever it is needed.

After a brief discussion, and a Question and Answer session, Mr. Rodrick Daley, Chairperson of the Board brought to the attention of the members the time 9:15 P.M. and the re-zoning Committee did not have an opportunity to present.

Ms. Julia James told the Chairperson, a number of residents remained in the meeting because they felt it was important for them to be part of the re-zoning meeting.

The Chairperson asked for a motion to extend the meeting past 9:00 P.M.

Ms. Julia James made the motion “ I moved for the meeting to be extended until such time deliberation has ended as recognized by the Chairperson of the Board and Chair of the Land Use Committee” second by (name inaudible)... with one opposing.

Mr. Afreh asked for a motion to recommendation to the full Board for the letter of Support for Tropicalfete.

Mr. O Lewis made a motion “ I O. Lewis, committee member make a motion for a letter of support for Tropicalfete” Ms. Julia James second the motion.

Vote - Quorum was established and 15 members voted in favor of the vote. The motion passes.

Rezoning:

The meeting was passed over to the Chairperson of the Re-zoning Committee, Ms. Julia James, to commence their meeting. .

Ms. James apologized to those residents who stayed late to participate in the re-zoning meeting. She said it shows members commitment to the process and appreciate the fact that so many remained past 9:00 P.M.

Ms. Vigilante asked if the Board could vote to have the meetings separately.

Ms. Julia James asked the members and residents to send an email or in the chat to voice their positions on the scheduling of both the Land Use and the R-zoning on the same night.

With no further questions or issues to discuss, Mr. Afreh asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

A motion was made by Marguerite Vigilante to adjourn the meeting and Joan Erskine second the motion .