

Sep. 13, 2021 - Minutes: CB7 Economic Development/Waterfront Committee

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Sr3tkemhBM>

Presentation by Steiner Studios and the Parks Department

Meeting begins

Danny M - we have a presentation on the MiNY Campus, formerly Bush Terminal; Doug Steiner is talking us about some design applications

Jeremy - there will be a second part of this with the Parks Committee, that will likely happen in October

Doug Steiner begins his presentation

- Community liaison: sunsetparkcommunityinput@steinerstudios.com
- Our project is Steiner Sequel, on the South Campus
- We are working with SBIDC, BWI, MOME for job training and placement; ten week internship program; working with local organizations to meet the needs of the community, we want to train people for this field
- 25% MWBE construction hiring goal; annual funding for MOME; 2,500 square feet of space for non-profits addressing racial equity in Film and TV; programs to address underrepresentation of women in the field
- 2,200 permanent, 1,200 construction jobs
- Unionized workforce, the field pays on average \$90,000 plus benefits; nearly half of the workforce does not have a four-year degree
- In NY, \$3.9 billion in spending; 82,000 jobs, direct and indirect; local 52 is growing; teamsters is going up as well; we are at virtually full employment

Review of the South Campus site

- Everything south of the site is subject to Port Authority approval
- Our plan is to keep the two buildings on the south end, 58 and 57; we will be taking down the red brick building (56) and building two new buildings - a parking structure for about 550 cars, plus the surface lot; two sound stage buildings; the area out front is logistics, 10-20 trucks per production, we have 4-8 productions at a time; all parking is self-contained, not adding to first avenue traffic
- The stage buildings have a mid-rise seven story section, at the north end; four stages in each building
- They will be reddish brick; it should look like it's always been there
- There will be a to-be-determined mural on the side facing the water, done with the PDC and community input
- Iconic gate will be put at first avenue
- Review of the site plan - minimize traffic through the site; there is a loop road for the trucks

- We have a substation that will be built; the substation is larger than originally planned, it's toward the north end of the campus
- Building 57 and 58 are support spaces of a variety of uses - mill shops, wardrobe, etc; back of house stuff as well
- The stages are 16,000 feet each, one story; support space is three stories
- Cross sections of the stages shown
- Substation: 70X100; it will be flood-proof; it will be screened from view; it will be visible from the park side, so it will be screened, wire-mesh screening
- The buildings will have solar roofs except for one area that will be a green rooftop terrace; people can go up there and experience the waterfront; we think we will carry a lot of electric needs with the solar panel rooftop system
- Review of trees on the site near the float bridge parcel; public access area as well on the south side; there is an area where people can relax, both open all the time
- A screen fencing and landscaping around the site; physical safety for the talent, and because of intellectual property; a barrier between the north and the south campus; and on the north end along the park; elevated for flood protection; a rain garden will be included in the design; it gets less high as you go south; the rain garden is 34 feet; about 45-50 feet from the bike path to the buildings
- Review of landscaping elements; different plantings along the common boundary of the park; variety of leaves and blossoms;
- Review of various views of the site from different angles and positions
- Hoping to start construction in the spring
- Questions can be directed to Debbie Feinberg - she is the Community Liaison
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Rendering at 24:58



Danny M - you signed the lease, so we can't deal with them (EDC) anymore, we have to bring our problems to you.

Questions and answers

Katie W - how many trucks do you plan on going to the site daily? (DS: I don't know the count, but it's a small number, night shoots, not a rush-hour-type business, 8 productions with 20 trucks each, they would not be there on the same schedule; box trucks to honey wagons - bathrooms - star campers, tractor trailers, not all out on the same day, once out and once back); are they electric? (DS: not now; we are a hotel - we don't buy the trucks, we don't staff the productions, that is up to the production companies in the major studios, I think they are moving in these ways); Katie - these are diesel trucks (DS: production is 3 months to 9 months; start with no trucks, then it goes up from there - I don't know truck generation off-hand but we can make that available); Katie - the entrance on 51st - is the bike entrance still preserved? (DS - entrance at 50th; relocating the entrance to the park through the float bridge parcel; the entrance is being moved a little bit to the south); Katie - how far are you moving it? (50-100 feet, Ben Terssler says); Katie - we know it's diesel trucks, there is pedestrian access; things I'm hearing and seeing is, diesel trucks, not a commitment in terms of air pollution; so it's more of the same; and also, we have significant number of fatalities, dangers on 1st, 2nd, 3rd, there's nothing that reflects those considerations

Nick A - What is your plan for stormwater management? (DS: we are meeting the newest flood maps; storm proofing 57 and 58, raising the grade of the site, and the parking garage is floodproofed); Nick - storm tanks? (Ben Tressler - overall, we won't be increasing impervious surfaces, we are decreasing that - our stormwater plans have been submitted to DEP; the plan entails a connection to existing CSO - the water will not be flowing into the combined sewers - it is being diverted, no net impact on the system, its the functional equivalent of detaining water); Nick - roof area (Nick - 2MW of electricity, a huge amount, all eight stages, roof of the parking structure, and 57-58; we believe that on many days we will be generating power in excess of our requirements); Nick - local hiring, do you have mandates for local hiring, and how are you reaching out to the community to do that; this is a different neighborhood than other studios, there is a language barrier (DS: We have a lot of spanish-speaking workforce members; our own forces and outside contractors; we can't control admission to the union, just work with them in a training program; I'm not sure requirements for our own workforce, but we try to find local people first) (Deb Feinberg - I have had conversations with local organizations, trying to put together a larger Task Force - to really discuss workforce training problems; I have asked for assistance with language barriers; we are working on that, welcome any input, we have spoken to a number of partners; I welcome a continued conversation on that)

Cindy V - Navy Armed Guard pole, dedicated to service members, can you restore, upgrade, and keep it in its place; is that a possibility? It is in disrepair, but if it is part of your property, can we keep it and take care of it? (DS: The Port Authority controls this piece; we will be fixing the area up; it should be a significant improvement, it will be more visible); Cindy V - you'll talk to the Port Authority? (Ben T - maybe it is Dep. of Sanitation land; we can be in touch and figure

out whose property it's on) (DS - I would be OK to put it along the pedestrian structure and bike path); Cindy V - if we can keep it in its place, that would be great, because it's there for a reason;

David E - 50th is one way up hill; the routing for your truck traffic - how would you be routing? I'm concerned with the park entrance; is there combination signage? Are you working with EDC, DOT, into that new entrance? Who owns safety at the entrance? (DS: our goal is to really make people aware of where people are driving onto the lot, separate and apart from the park entrance; this will clearly note our entrance and 50-100 feet south will be the rail entrance) (Ben T - we are working with DOT, we have committed to doing a signal warrant study; that will look at signalization there and enhanced safety measures; the warrant study is proscriptive; we are engaging in that process; we will update you as to the results of that study) (DS - I think DOT is working on some plan to change the routing of traffic along those avenues to make it safer, I think there is a master plan in the works to make it better): David E - I helped establish the entrance at 51st; it was expensive and hard; when you add PA to the mix, it's more complex; is PA committed, or is that a prospect? (DS: PA is onboard with relocating the entrance, but the details are being worked out) David E - I wish you good luck, but I'm concerned when we have these overlapping jurisdictions, I hope we can be in regular dialogue (Ben T - EDC was very aware of those concerns; once we have constructed and opened this alternative access, can we close down this entrance)

Katie W - only when you have the other south entrance, can you close the existing one? (correct); there needs to be a commitment that we are going to have heavy construction, and the impact of increase of trucks and movement at the same time, that we haven't provided public access; the truck issue - we are a heavily burdened community, we have last mile trucking, cancer, asthma, and I haven't heard anything about having diesel engines in and out of your lot, and you've passed the buck to the studios; why is there not accountability from Steiner studios (DS: we can't dictate to our customers; you haven't asked about automobiles; we plan to have charging stations for at least 200, with the ability to go up - ben - 550 will be electrified; that's 90 percent; dS - it's not for us to tell our customers that they have to use electric trucks; the alternative use for the site is last-mile; that's much more traffic than this; there is no limit to what's going into and out of that site today; given the alternatives, this is a good); Katie W - I'm not going to participate in a straw man, but you are saying there is nothing you can do about trucking; you don't have a sense on numbers but you will get back to us, and you don't have a system to make sure they are not diesel trucks; I would like to hear more; Katie - the red brick building coming down, is it on the national registry? (DS: No); Katie asked questions about the original use, building 56; it could have historic value; the last bit is climate change impacts; it is known that flooding maps continue to be updated; have you done a site-specific vulnerability assessment? (DS: I do not believe we are required to, and we haven't done it) (Ben T - we study the long-term effects of climate change on the site as part of our EIS; we look at long-term sea level rise; we have pretty aggressive mitigation strategies, we are raising the site at least two feet above the required level; two MW of solar PV; we are locating critical infrastructure high, elevation 18, the worst-case scenario under the long-term projections; we have taken climate change into account); Katie - Thanks Ben, I find that responsible

John F - Will we be able to get a copy of the EDC presentation? Could the board get a copy? (DS: We can get you a copy); teh heights, what do teh top out at?(DS, 80 for 57 and 58, 110 for the taller building, parking garage is 55 feet to the deck); John F - we prize views of the water; I see you've aligned the buildings to have that view corridor clear; if at all possible, to keep that view corridor clear; when you're looking down, that view can be expressed all the way from the top of the ridge to the water; that would be a great help if that sight line could be respected (DS: We are not subject to view corridors because of the rail yard, but the buildings are relatively low, and I think we've done what we can do); John F - those alleyways in between, if they could be streescaped so that view could be maintained, that would be a great help; Separation between truck and the train yard? (DS: there's a big change in grade, we are building up, a retaining wall and screen wall, 2-6 feet is the retaining wall, and then the screen is above that); John F - can we improve that wall in some way, so we aren't looking at a 200-foot area - can we improv it, ivy growing, some type of landscaping on top? (DS: It's a landscaped green wall, it's a fake stone wall); John F - anything that could soften the edge so we don't get a plinth, but the upland view is very important, it is a park on the other side; (DS: I think there will be a start and positive contrast between our site and the railyard)

Antoinette M - This board has struggled to obtain reliable upfront data on local job hiring and stats; can Steiner collect this data nad make it publicly available along with information on training programs, so there is a level of transparency and accountability? (DS: I know it's illegal for us to ask people their ethnicity or anything like that, any kind of polling); AM - if we can have information broken down by zip code so we can account for local hiring; (Debbie F - we could collect the data once we've hired folks) (Ben Tressler - No - we have our hire NYC commitments, those apply to all of our major subcontractors, meaning new hires, we will go through EDC/SBS process, working with Workforce1 to vet candidates; I believe that program can help to produce the reports you're looking for); AM - we have struggled to obtain reliable information from those programs, so could Steiner commit to obtaining the information and making it available; we don't have a reliable way of getting that information and tracking it moving forward; being able to have that information yearly;

Danny M - I want to add to your question; so how do you keep track now, something like a zip code is easy enough to keep; do you go over the 1099s, the 1040s, if they are employees? (Ben T - Steiner and its direct CMs don't have huge payrolls, the payrolls are the subcontractors during construction - are you asking about construction? Construction manager - are you asking about construction?) Danny M...

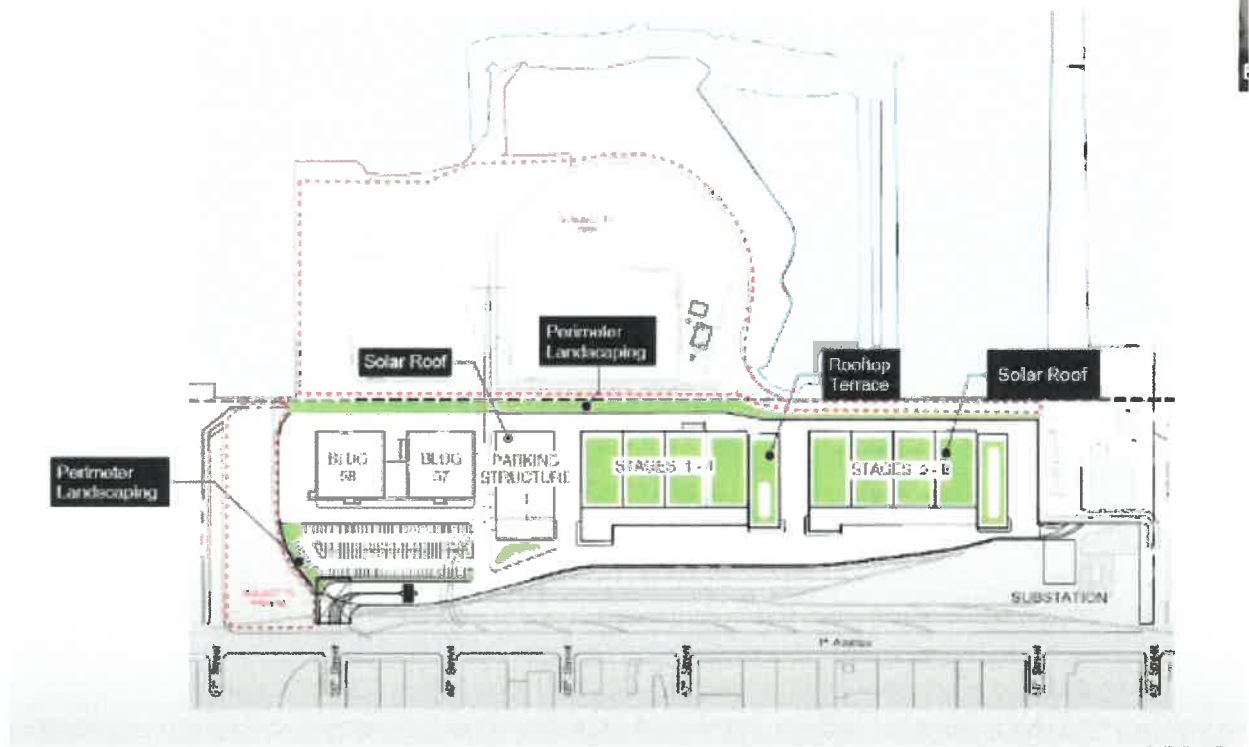
Antoinette M - who is working there, in construction or later on, if and when these studios are developed (DS: We can't get any data from our clients as to their staffing within a production; what we contract with directly is security, housekeeping, landscaping, snow removal, and our own forces, lighting, grip; we don't control the union membership, people showing up to work on the TV series, films); Antoinette - how does Steiner plan to commit to hiring locally? (DS: We can only commit to our own hiring, we can't commit for our clients) (Deborah F - we have the goal and the intention of workforce programs, to create ea pipeline of talent into the studios; we will work with loca lschools, local development corporations like SBIDC and others to foster

interest in working at Steiner and developing the skills to do so, and we are going to be working over the next couple of years to effectuate that); Antoinette - we appreciate the goal but we would also like to see hard numbers (Deborah - based on having to track some zip codes from construction, from a different project, it can be really hard to do; it's hard to make promises, because sometimes it's hard to do; I think the goal is definitely to hire locally and be able to track that as much as we are able) (DS: Check our bonafide, Wegmans hired first and foremost from the surrounding public housing projects and through the Navy Yard workforce center; I believe they hired 250 people from the immediately surrounding area; it was a remarkable job; they're considered one of the great companies in America to work for, and we will do whatever we have committed to do and be as transparent as we can) (Ben T - we are trying to replicate what's done at the Brooklyn Navy Yard) Antoinette M - Did Steiner studios play a role to help companies hire locally at Wegmans? It doesn't sound like you have a way to effectively track that information; it's one thing to say something, it's another to see concretely if it's happening (DS: We did it with Wegmans and their cooperation; the production world is film-by-film, everybody is freelance in that business; what we do here in the Navy Yard is we went through the Brooklyn Navy Yard hiring office; they ran point on that hiring process; they would submit applicants to Wegmans; we don't have that same leeway with this industry as we had with Wegmans) (Ben T - for permanent jobs - this is a specific industry, unionized - we have little reach into the workforce of our clients - as the developers and operators of the facility, we don't have a direct influence over those unionized trades - we have influence over construction hiring; over the past 15 years, we worked with the Navy Yard's hiring center to do aggressive outreach to the local outreach - each job, we run multiple hiring fairs; bring all of our hiring fairs; allow them to meet our pool workforce; we follow up with partners, Workforce1, Navy Yard - we are relying heavily on HireNYC, Workforce1, to be our partners in that; if you're not getting the information you need, we can follow up with them); AM - they wouldn't collect information on freelance (Ben T - construction, that's where we can have more of an impact); AM - for the companies that will occupy space, there is no commitment for a way to collect that data? (DS: no we can't tell Disney to tell us to give us the zip codes of everyone who touches their show; the unions are the ones supplying the workforces); AM - for the Brooklyn Navy Yard, there's no way to know how many folks were employed there locally for any of the studio work? (DS: Correct)

Antoinette M - will there be any redevelopment of redevelopment of Pier 6, and any discussion of leases for the Round House and the Power House?

Danny M - We're going to have to ask EDC those questions. But we can set up a meeting, and we can ask those questions directly in a letter form and then ask for a meeting with EDC.

Rendering at 32:40:



Minutes through 1:18:08 (Note: these minutes are not yet complete - John S)

(BREAK IN THE MINUTES)

[Resolution](#) (2:13:31)

Danny M - We can say that Steiner Studios presented to the CB, we can say there's a lot that we liked, but we have the following concerns. That's all we have to say, and the PDC can take that. Im' asking that when we write this resolution, we write it for the PDC, and not another agency that deals with other aspects. OK? So, is there any discussion on sending a resolution to the NYC Public Design Commission simply to state the facts of tonight's meeting and the concerns expressed? Is everyone good with that? If you're not, just raise your hand and we'll discuss it.

Cindy V - the fact that the red brick buildings coming in, I feel torn about losing the historic buildings, I just want to echo what David had to say, because I think there's a lot of good in this proposal, but I have similar questions.

Danny M - Any resolution won't go out until after the Board meeting, but if you have those concerns please email Jeremy. If anyone doesn't want to write this resolution as stated, write your hand now, other than that, I consider this that we resolve to write PDC of our concerns about the project, and we will also give them what we like about development of the waterfront,

the workforce development, the promise of that, but we have concerns that these things will happen, including the design, everything we could have talked about, such as the view shed, and things like that. OK? (No objections.)

Sanitation and Environment Committee Report, October 14, 2021

The committee met remotely with representatives of the DEP and affected property owners to discuss chronic flooding on 37th Street between 4th and 5th Avenues, 32nd Street between 4th and 5th Avenues, and Kermit Place in Windsor Terrace.

Issues raised: dated and decrepit sewer system insufficient to handle the current climate, much less the future one, perceived evasiveness of the DEP with regards to the issues raised, retrofitting of MTA facilities with the goal of mitigating flooding in surrounding areas, reluctance on the part of the MTA to take responsibility for aggravating chronic flooding on 37th Street (Jackie Gleason Depot on 5th Avenue).

The Committee heard a presentation by 37th Street Block Association President Carrie Moore about the chronic flooding on their block, its history, efforts to get the DEP to adequately repair damaged sewer lines on the block, and efforts to get the MTA to take measures to reduce runoff from their facility, which occupies more than 2 city blocks directly above this block.

The chronic flooding along 37th Street is a longstanding problem going back to at least 2003. The remnants of Tropical Storm IDA saw the worst flooding to date with severe flooding and property damage to basement and sub garden floor levels. Despite various efforts by the DEP to repair the sewer main, including work done in August 2021 to repair the lower portion of the 37th Street main, the problem persists. Recent downpours caused catastrophic flooding at the higher end of the street as well as the lower. The 37th Street Block Association insists the DEP has not done a thorough check of the entire line and that blockages and breaks are present at the higher end of the main. DEP Director of Community Affairs Karen Ellis along with a DEP engineer acknowledge the problem and agreed to do a video inspection of the entire line along 37th Street. Compounding the problem is storm water runoff caused by the Jackie Gleason Depot which is above 37th Street on 5th Avenue. The facility is a massive low rise building with an impermeable asphalt roof, bordered by a wide non-porous concrete sidewalk with few trees. The MTA also owns a parking lot which poorly and perhaps illegally drains onto the sidewalk on the west side of 5th Ave. The most the MTA was willing to offer the Block Association and CB7 in an email response is a walk through with an engineer to identify drains they say they cleared after IDA. The problem with the massive runoff caused by so much impermeable surface on the MTA property remains unaddressed. Even with unclogged drains the 15 inch sewer main there cannot handle the volume from flash floods. Working with the Community Board the 37th Street Block Association along with representatives of the other affected areas from which the committee received reports of chronic flooding is working with various city agencies to get green infrastructure built in these areas. This would include rain gardens, bio-swales, tree plantings, and the replacement of non-porous surfaces with porous ones. The idea is to reduce the volume of water entering the sewer system.

Elizabeth Ianotti representing residents of 32nd Street between 4th and 5th Avenues reported similar circumstances on her block, excess volume combined with inadequate capacity. There was some mention of a plan to replace the sewer main there as evidenced by its inclusion in a DEP capital plan. Residents also complain that shoddy work by a contractor hired by the DOT inadvertently poured concrete over a drain aggravating runoff issues there. A large residential development is being built along 4th Avenue and residents worry that the existing sewer system cannot handle the increase in volume, but the DEP assured residents that developers must include storm water mitigation plans in their applications.

Flooding at Kermit Place dates to at least 1999. Residents there are also dealing with an overwhelmed sewer system, an 8 inch main that cannot accommodate heavy down pours. The City has promised to build green infrastructure in this part of Windsor Terrace which was to be completed this year. No work has started yet. Exasperated residents are still waiting for an explanation as to why the project has been delayed.

Conclusion: more intense and frequent down pours combined with an antiquated and in some places dilapidated sewer system are a growing and urgent and largely unaddressed problem. Few NYC residents will remain unaffected. In our meeting the DEP reminded us that the NYC sewer system was meant to handle the old climate, not much more than an inch of rainfall per hour, Tropical Storm IDA caused over 3 inches to fall in an hour, a record which had only just been set a few weeks before by Henri. The Committee exhorts the City to upgrade the sewer system to enlarge capacity and to aggressively build green infrastructure to reduce volume. We ask that the MTA develop a resiliency plan for their facilities and to act quickly to implement. We demand Congress provide tangible aid to help realize these goals and to act aggressively to mitigate climate change.