

Brooklyn Borough President Recommendation
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
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INSTRUCTIONS

1. Return this completed form with any attachments to the Calendar Information Office, City Planning Commission, Room 2E at the above address.
2. Send one copy with any attachments to the applicant's representatives as indicated on the Notice of Certification.

APPLICATION #: 150326 PSK & 150327 ZSK FDNY Rescue 2

In the matter of applications submitted by the New York City Fire Department and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the site selection and special use permit pursuant to Zoning Resolution section 74-67 to allow a Use Group fire station in a Residence zoning district of property located at Sterling Place between Howard and Saratoga avenues for a 15, 261 sf replacement facility for its Rescue 2 operation within Community District 16.

COMMUNITY DISTRICT NO. 16

BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE
 APPROVE WITH
MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS

DISAPPROVE
 DISAPPROVE WITH
MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS

SEE ATTACHED

BOROUGH PRESIDENT

July 2, 2015

DATE

RECOMMENDATION FOR THE PROPOSED SITE SELECTION AND SPECIAL USE PERMIT – 150326 PSK AND 150327 ZSK

The New York City Fire Department (FDNY), working the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), is seeking the site selection of City-owned property and a special permit pursuant to Section 74-67 of the Zoning Resolution to allow a Use Group 6 fire station for Rescue 2 in an R6 zoning district in Brownsville neighborhood of Community District 16.

These applications would facilitate the construction of a 15,261 sf facility for Rescue 2, one of FDNY's elite rescue operation companies, in a newly constructed firehouse located on Sterling Place, between Howard and Saratoga Avenue on a portion of a lot under the jurisdiction of the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). The remaining portion of lot 22 will remain under HPD's ownership where it is intended to be developed as a community open space in conjunction with NYCHA development fronting Saratoga Avenue.

On June 1st, 2015, the Borough President held a public hearing on the proposed special permit application. There was one speaker, the District Manager of Community Board 16 (CB 16). CB16 approved with conditions that the street trees be planted in consultation with the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) and that the excess air rights be transferred to another city-owned property. CB 16 was seeking the support of the Borough President.

The FDNY representative noted that since the events of 9-11 and Superstorm Sandy, FDNY Rescue companies have expanded responsibilities. As elite firefighters, Rescue 2 Company are deployed for evacuations and rescues. The facilities design is nearly completed and is expected to go out for bid this fall. Construction is anticipated for the Spring of 2016, lasting between 18-24 months.

The representative for the applicant, FDNY, noted that the proposed development requires five street trees to be planting pursuant to zoning, though given the needs of the apparatus doors, four of the street trees cannot be accommodated along this section of Sterling Place. FDNY is committed to coordinating with the Department of Design and Construction (DDC), the Parks Department (DPR), and Community Board 16 to have the trees appropriately located in CD 16.

In response to the Borough President's request for FDNY's sustainability and renewable energy practices with new developments, and practices to retain storm water runoff in the 26th Ward storm drainage area, an area where the city is promoting practices to retain storm runoff, the representative noted that FDNY has thoroughly embraced green technology with this facility. FDNY seeks to contribute to a healthy environment - featuring a green roof, solar hot water and geothermal heating and cooling, LED light fixtures, low-flow plumbing fixtures, energy-absorbing special window glazing, natural daylighting, storm water detention tank to reduce sewer outflows and permeable paving.

In response to the Borough President's policy that FDNY utilize Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) and Locally-Based Enterprises (LBE), the representative disclosed that this is managed by DDC through its public bidding process and DDC had pledged to follow all requirements for MWBE and all others pertaining to job opportunities. The Deputy Borough President requested for FDNY to have DDC confirm that this project would be one of those participating in the Borough President's MWBE fair.

The representative noted that FDNY was in full support of being part of a larger zoning lot with the adjacent Department of Housing Preservation and Development's (HPD) property intended to become a community open space and the PS 178 Annex as a means to facilitate the transferring of excess development rights from the tax lot to house the proposed Rescue 2 fire station.

In regards to traffic safety, FDNY would be working with the Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding the installation of a traffic control signal in front of Rescue 2. As for FDNY protocol in terms of its vehicles heading against traffic, it was noted that FDNY has Fire Emergency Operations procedures which restrict such travel to no more than one block when necessary with a requirement to stop at intersections and proceed when clear. FDNY would consult with the Community Board in this regard.

Consideration

CB 16 approved the applications, with 24 in favor, 0 against and 1 abstaining, with two conditions. It seeks for the Zoning Resolution required street tree plantings where it is not feasible to be planting along the facility, to be placed in Community District 16 in consultation with the DPR and the transferring of the property's unused air rights to the existing city-owned property for future development.

The proposed Rescue 2 facility is part of the Fire Department Special Operations Command. The Fire Department has five such rescue companies, with one located in each borough.

FDNY is attempting to replace its current location facility because it is too small to adequately meet the Fire Department's needs. Current quarters located at 1472 Bergen Street; built in 1893 is a 3,975 sf facility is one of the smallest firehouses in the Department's inventory. Though its apparatus floor was replaced in the early 1990s, it was not designed for the much heavier loads of new equipment. As an undersized facility, it has an inadequate allowance of space for prepackaged disaster kits. A properly sized apparatus floor for Rescue companies would have space to store the Zodiac-type boats for water rescues and searches. In addition, significant portions of its tools and equipment are kept in storage containers in a side yard adjacent to the firehouse. An important piece of equipment for the rescue company, "the collapse rig," must be stored at another firehouse, hindering response and operational readiness. Stocks of material cannot be maintained at either location. As 1472 Bergen Street does not provide for space requirements for conducting training on-site, Randall's Island needs to be used for drills and training for confined space, rope rescues, and other practical drills, effectively taking Rescue 2 out of its service area.

FDNY has determined that a proto-typical firehouse for a rescue company requires approximately 20,000 sf. It seeks to construct a two-story, 15,261 sf building with a footprint large enough to house the apparatuses that Rescue 2 requires and space for other necessary programs and operations such as training, storage, and work areas. The cellar level would be used mainly for equipment storage for the rescue company, for example, hazardous materials (haz mat), SCUBA, etc., and would also include the building's mechanical equipment. The second floor would include an open floor that would store the rescue company apparatuses. A kitchen, conference room and assorted storage areas would also be located on the first floor of the proposed firehouse. The 6,570 sf second floor will have a dormitory and fitness area, lockers and offices for the firehouse personnel.

The Borough President believes that it is appropriate for Brooklyn's FDNY Rescue company to have proper access to its storage and for maintenance of the various tools needed to address critical matters concerning health and safety of both public, and the firefighters themselves. Furthermore, he believes Brooklyn is best served by having suitable space to meet requirements for a training tower designed to replicate confined space, to practice rope rescues, and other practical drills that may be conducted on-site rather than taking a rescue company out of service for such drills and training at the FDNY Training Academy on Randall's Island.

Based on soil samples collected from site borings, it was determined that remediation or other corrective action is not necessary to develop this site.

This use is not permitted as-of-right in a residential zoning district, though fire stations are permitted when findings demonstrate meeting specified conditions. Such fire station will serve the residential area surrounding its proposed location as meeting one of the conditions for being placed in a Residence District. Also, reportedly the siting analysis did not demonstrate a suitable alternative city-owned property in a district wherein Rescue 2 is permitted as of right to construct a larger and more modern Rescue 2 fire station with sufficient space that would accommodate the locational and programmatic needs of being centrally located in the borough with access to major roads.

By moving the facility to the proposed location less than one mile east of Rescue 2's current location on 1472 Bergen Street, FDNY anticipates improved response capabilities due to quicker access to major Brooklyn thoroughfares located near the project sites. Eastern Parkway is two-blocks the south, Atlantic Avenue is seven blocks to the north, Pennsylvania Avenue is to the east and further south are both Linden Boulevard and Kings Highway.

The Borough President is concerned that too many residents of Brooklyn are unemployed or underemployed. It is his policy to promote economic development as a means of creating more employment opportunities as well as promoting Brooklyn-based businesses, including those that qualify as MWBE and LBE. As new construction, this development provides an opportunity for the developer to retain Brooklyn-based contractors and subcontractors, especially those that are designated LBEs, consistent with section 6-108.1 of the City's Administrative Code, and MWBE establishments, as a means to meet or exceed standards per Local Law 1 (not less than 20 percent participation).

Subsequent to the hearing it was confirmed that DDC will have MWBE sub-contracting opportunities as required in design and construction. Studio Gang Architects (SGA), the architectural firm designing the building, is currently utilizing MWBE firms for landscape, lighting and cost estimating. SGA is also WBE but the prime is not counted in the required percentages for design contracts.

With the intended development, the Borough President is satisfied that DDC will meet or exceed these requirements.

The Borough President seeks opportunities to utilize solar panels and/or blue/green/white roofs. In addition to aligning with the Borough President's sustainable energy policy, such modification would reduce the facility's carbon footprint and reduce energy costs annually. In addition, blue/green roofs and various in ground features, such as bio-swales, permeable pavers and detention capacity, would defer stormwater from entering the City's water pollution control plants.

According to the NYC Green Infrastructure 2014 Annual Report, Green Infrastructure plays a role in addressing water quality challenges as well as provides numerous environment, social, and economic co-benefits. DEP is developing its Jamaica Tributary and Bay Long Term Control Plan (LTCP), which Rescue 2's waste- and storm-water affects; therefore, by incorporating green and/or blue roof strategies the presented design for Rescue 2 would be consistent with this LTCP. The sector is supposed to grow by 24 percent by 2022 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the construction of Rescue 2 would provide for more of the job opportunities to be occurring here in Brooklyn.

The Borough President believes that Rescue 2 will be the role model for future City facilities to replicate to advance a sustainable and resilient future.

Though the Borough President is generally supportive of Site Selection and Special Permit to allow a fire station in a Residence District, he has concerns regarding traffic controls; the off-site placement of the Zoning required street tree plantings, traffic controls and street parking, and use of excess development rights.

Zoning Required Street Tree Placement

The Zoning Resolution authorizes DPR to select alternative locations to plant street trees when it is deemed infeasible to plant adjacent to the zoning lot being developed. Such alternative locations may be within CD16 or with one-half mile of the zoning lot, including empty street tree pits or planting strips and may be in an unpaved area owned by the City.

The Borough President believes that the community, coordinated through CB 16, should have adequate say in where these four trees are planted. The adjacent HPD intended open space and vacated tree pits in the nearby community should provide ample opportunity for community consensus. As the need to plant these trees would not likely be the Spring of 2018, he urges community members and members of CB 16

to identify vacated tree pits for possible consideration. In addition, FDNY should gain a commitment from DPR to coordinate with CB 16 for concurrence of where these four trees are to be planted.

Traffic Controls

With the proposed location, Rescue 2's four vehicles, including a rescue, rescue collapse, high-axle and logistic vehicle, are expected to respond to an emergency quickly as possible, using the most expeditious route available. The response routes Rescue 2 emergency vehicles take would depend on several variables such as the location of the call, time of the day, and traffic conditions. Whenever possible, emergency vehicles seek to minimize movement through local streets, as traveling on major thoroughfares which allows for improved response times. According to FDNY Fire Operations, traveling the wrong way on one-way streets is restricted according to Chapter 11 (Fire and Emergency Operations), Section 1 (Preliminary Duties and Response), Paragraph 17 (Officers shall require members driving the apparatus to observe the following), Part "F" (or 11.1.17 (F) of the regulations). When responding to alarms, use of one-way streets against traffic for more than one block should be pursued only when absolutely necessary. When responding on a one-way street against traffic, a full stop shall be made before entering an intersection and apparatus shall proceed only when safe response is assured.

The Borough President is aware that speed is an important factor in providing for successful rescue operations. Because this firehouse is at least two blocks from the nearest major street, Eastern Parkway, they may be times when traveling the opposite direction on Howard Avenue or Sterling Place might be given consideration as opposed to circling local nearby residential streets, including Park Place with its PS 178 Annex. The Borough President believes that FDNY should coordinate with DOT to ensure that a traffic control be placed in front of the fire station. In addition, FDNY should initiate a dialogue with DOT in terms of the appropriate of having DOT installing warning signs of oncoming emergency vehicles along both Howard Avenue at St. John's Place and Sterling Place at Eastern parkway, to determine the appropriateness of such signage.

Street Parking

Street Parking along Sterling Place is accomplished according to parallel parking along both of the street. A section of the curb in front of the proposed Rescue 2 will have curb cuts to accommodate the movement of the four apparatus and staff vehicles. It does not appear to be known whether apparatus movement would require no parking opposite of the fire station. Should there be a need to displace more street parking; the Borough President believes that FDNY should coordinate with DOT to determine whether angled parking would be a feasible means to replicate street parking that might otherwise be lost.

Excess Air Rights

It is one of the Borough President's policies to support effective ways to create more affordable housing. He is committed to seek out all opportunities to facilitate affordable housing. Brooklyn is one of the fastest growing communities in the New York metropolitan area, and the ongoing Brooklyn renaissance has ushered in a series of unforeseen changes even from ten years ago. Unfortunately, Brooklyn's success has led

to displacement of longtime residents, who can no longer afford to live in their own neighborhoods. Residents of Ocean Hill and Brownsville living without rent stabilization protection have not been immune to the rise in real estate prices as more people discover that this community is a great place to live. As a result, many residents are unable to remain in the area where they have lived for many years; they are exhausting their life savings just to keep up with day-to-day living.

The Borough President believes there appears to be an opportunity for the proposed fire station property to contribute to the Mayor's Housing New York Plan as permanent affordable housing in combination with adjacent city-owned properties.

The development of the fire station is proposed for a section of a city-lot under the jurisdiction of HPD. The HPD lot is earmarked for development as a neighborhood open space as part of the Housing Authority's (NYCHA) redevelopment of its former Prospect Plaza development. Adjacent to the HPD and NYCHA properties is the one-story annex to PS 178 abuts the project site to the northeast, with frontage along Park Place.

According to the Enrollment Capacity and Utilization Report based on October 31, 2013 Audited Registers, the PS 178 Annex had an enrollment of 79 students with target capacity of 159 (historical calculation was 151 seats) for use as an early childhood center. Its affiliated main building had 380 students enrolled with target capacity of 723 seats. The Annex was constructed in 1969 with 10,900 sf. Some building systems were upgraded in 1998. According to its Building Conditions Assessment Survey 2013-2015, the building components ranges from fair to good conditions.

The Annex lot is approximately 25,000 sf. The HPD lot has nearly 44,000 sf inclusive of the fire station. It is not known how much, if any, floor area from the remainder of the HPD site might be used in tandem with the adjacent NYCHA intended development. The site's R6 zoning provides for community facility floor area for mixed use buildings according to Zoning Resolution 24-162. Residential floor area could attain the height factor maximum calculation of 2.43 residential floor area ratio minus the 15,621 sf for the fire house. At some future date it might appear to be in the City's interest to consider the PS 178 Annex as a development site for both school and housing purposes. There appears to be ample opportunity to incorporate the Annex at its present or even expanded size should neighborhood growth necessitate additional school seats. There might be an opportunity in the neighborhood of up to 150,000 sf of residential development if no residential zoning rights are to be utilized by the NYCHA site.

The Borough President believes that the City should take steps necessary to develop a mixed use school/affordable housing building. This should be achieved by merging the various city tax lots into a larger zoning lot as a means of maximizing the available unused residential floor area to an appropriate City agency to facilitate such a mixed-use building. FDNY should restrict its jurisdiction to that of a tax lot as part of a larger City zoning lot. Considerations for such development visions, including building bulk, income diversity and the type and number of classrooms that should be accommodated, should be in consultation with Community Board 16, District 23 Community Education Council, District 23

Superintendent, the Principle of PS 178 and its local elected officials.

Recommendation

Be it resolved that the Borough President of Brooklyn, pursuant to section 197-c of the New York City Charter, recommends that the City Planning Commission and City Council approve the land use action requested according to the following conditions:

1. That the Fire Department:
 - a. Achieves a commitment from DPR to coordinate with CB 16 for concurrence of where the four zoning required street trees are to be planted;
 - b. Coordinates with DOT to ensure that a traffic control be placed in front of the fire station;
 - c. Initiates a dialogue with DOT in terms of having DOT installing warning signs of oncoming emergency vehicles along both Howard Avenue at St. John's Place and Sterling Place at Saratoga Avenue, to determine the appropriateness of such signage;
 - d. Coordinates with DOT to determine whether angled parking would be a feasible means to replicate street parking that might otherwise be lost to accommodate the operations of Rescue 2; and,
 - e. Restricts its jurisdiction of its section of lot 22 to that of a tax lot as part of a larger City zoning lot.

2. That the City take steps necessary to develop a mixed use school/affordable housing building, achieved by merging the various city tax lots into a larger zoning lot as a means of maximizing the available unused residential floor area to an appropriate City agency to facilitate such a mixed-use building, in consultation with Community Board 16, District 23 Community Education Council, District 23 Superintendent, the Principle of PS 178 and its local elected officials with considerations for such development vision, including building bulk, income diversity, and the type and number of classrooms that should be accommodated.

and that the City Council has such stipulations incorporated into such agreements prior to granting its approval.