



The Community Association of the East Harlem Triangle

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OPEN STATEMENT

East 125th Street Mixed Use Development EAST HARLEM COMMUNITY TASKFORCE

TOWNHALL MEETING

September 14, 2006

Response from the Community Association of the East Harlem Triangle, Inc. on power points submitted to East Harlem leaders/ elected officials by the East Harlem Community Taskforce.

While Community Board #11 and the current taskforce have made strides in the right direction with this project, our board finds that more must be done to ensure the residents who are underprivileged and underserved are the true benefactors of the former "Uptown NY Project". The following are the remarks from this organization:

1-The RFP should state clearly that the developers are required to include a local developer from East Harlem as part of the development team with rights and privileges equal to all team members with or without the greater financial contribution toward the project cost.

2-The East 125th Street corridor needs its own "Local Development Corporation" to plan, create and oversee a revolving fund to support local businesses in this area and promote business growth on every front for small, medium or big retail box stores and other businesses.

3- Cost per Square foot must be affordable and that the developer will set aside consideration for local businesses interested in relocating to 125th Street.

4- That a labor taskforce be created to ensure construction jobs are readily available to residents, skilled or unskilled laborers or unionized workers and are considered for job placement during the life of the construction phase; receiving a rate of pay equal to unionized workers and other benefits. The taskforce must see to it that a community resident is hired for the position of project manager and paid by the developer. The project manager will oversee the community employment effort and meet with the taskforce monthly. We must require the developer to sign a mutual agreement (MOU) outlining all terms set forth by the community.

5- We are not in agreement with the 20% low income set aside for affordable housing in our community. It is our determination that the greater need for affordable housing lies within low income families who are doubled and tripled up to this day because of the lack of affordable housing units. The number #1 concern in the African American community here in Harlem and nationwide is affordable housing for poor working class or fixed income families. LOW INCOME families are our priority until such time that our city and state government brings forth a solution. Therefore we recommend 50% low income be set aside to relieve our over crowded condition; 25% middle and 25% moderate. OUR NEEDS MUST BE MET FIRST. East Harlem has been a haven for poor immigrants since the early 1900's and we should continue to provide a home for them.

6- Housing must be built with the following considerations; green design should be a requirement in the RFP application. Sound proof frames and windows, air conditioners, heaters and air purifier systems with ozone guards must be installed in each apartment regardless of income status. Roofing should also include greenery. These ideas can help reduce exposure to harmful pollutants from carbon monoxide and other toxins.

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7- We still stand firm on NO UNDER GROUND PARKING for buses. It is our belief the MTA would do well in building new construction over their existing property. We ought to strongly consider ways to reduce the current traffic flow coming from the surrounding bridges, highways and streets. We do agree that attracting commercial tenants with minimal parking is a good idea as recommended by the taskforce.

8- While the taskforce has provided some ideas as to what the business strip may look like, we ask that the taskforce explore further into other options. We have not seen enough ideas to determine the benefits of this development project. This portion of the project goal still needs work and further input, let's not stop here.

In closing, we do not believe given the immense need for low income housing that the potentially new businesses along 125th Street would be affordable or cost efficient to our community. We have land use rights, let's not throw it away and rush into something we may regret in the future. Gentrification is subtle; the smallest change can force you out of your community.

Our previous position of a 25% control of shared profit and revenue over the next 20 years from this project would be the best solution for our community. These monies would guarantee our continuation as residents in this neighborhood. We could afford to stay here and many generations after us would be protected. These monies would afford us services that would meet all our needs.

This may not happen, but we're going to "KEEP OUR EYES ON THE PRIZE!"

Hannah Brockington
President
Board of Directors - CAEHT

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