

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 100083 HAX
BRONX RIVER ART CENTER
March 19, 2010

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD):

- 1) Pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal law of New York State for:
 - a. The designation of property located at 1087 East Tremont Avenue (Block 3141, part of Lot 1), as an Urban Development Action Area; and
 - b. An Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; and

- 2) Pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the disposition of such property to a developer to be selected by HPD;

to facilitate the rehabilitation of an existing four-story community facility building.

BACKGROUND

Approval of this application will facilitate the sale by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) of property at 1087 East Tremont Avenue (Block 3141, part of Lot 1) to The Bronx River Art Center, Incorporated (BRAC). The site consists of 8,581 square feet and includes a four story building used by BRAC, the current tenant of this building since 1976. The site is bounded by East 179th Street on the north, the Bronx River on the east, East Tremont Avenue on the south and Boston Road on the west, in Bronx Community District 6 and zoned R7-1.

Pending improvements to the BRAC building will yield approximately 18,176 square feet of space. This includes a gallery, a conference room, screening room, workshop space, artist studios and administrative offices. An exterior garden consisting of 4,037 square feet will be accessible from the rear of the building. Reconstruction of this building is expected to take two years. The remaining portion of Lot 1 will transferred to the Department of Parks and Recreation and developed as a segment of the Bronx River Greenway project.

Development in the surrounding community includes low-rise residential buildings, Public School 214 and a shopping center complex. Mass transit services including subway via the 2 and 5 trains and bus transportation are available within a two block radius of the BRAC site.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application has been reviewed pursuant to CEQR and SEQRA and received a Type II Declaration, meaning the proposed development will have no impact on the environment. This City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on December 14, 2009.

COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community Board 6 held a public hearing on this application on January 13, 2010. A unanimous vote recommending approval of this application was 25 in favor, zero opposed and zero abstaining.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing was convened by the Bronx Borough President on March 9, 2010. Representatives of the applicant were present and spoke in favor of this application. No other speakers at the hearing offered comment on this application and the hearing was closed.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

In 1976 as many neighborhoods across the Bronx were being set ablaze, the Bronx River Art Center (BRAC) came into being. Its mission was to serve both as a showplace for local artists but also as an essential venue for expressing the passion and vision that comprises life in the Bronx.

Whereas the surrounding communities have been revitalized, to date the building accommodating BRAC has not sustained major improvements. Approving this application will not only facilitate the transfer of this facility directly to BRAC, but will also mark the commencement of a comprehensive reconstruction of the facility itself approximating a seven million dollar investment.

I fully endorse this endeavor and recommend approval of this application.