

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 070550 ZMX
High Hawk Rezoning
July 15, 2010

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by High Hawk, LLC, pursuant to Sections 201 and 197-c of the New York City Charter for an amendment of the Zoning Map, Section No. 3d:

1. Changing from a C8-3 District to an R7-1 District property bounded by Boston Road, Hoe Avenue, and East 174th Street; and
2. Establishing within the proposed R7-1 District a C2-4 District on property bounded by Boston Road, Hoe Avenue, and East 174th Street;

Borough of the Bronx, Community District #3, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated May 10, 2010, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-251.

BACKGROUND

Approving this application amends the Zoning Map by removing a C8-3 District and subsequently extend an existing R7-1 District north to encompass Block 2991, Lot 1,3, 5 and 26. Block 2991 is a triangular block, bounded by Boston Road on the west and north merging with Hoe Avenue from the east and East 174th Street on the south. A C2-4 overlay is also proposed.

High Hawk, LLC (the applicant) anticipates construction of a mixed use, residential building at 1776 Boston Road, (Block 2991, Lot 5). This site consists of approximately 17,000 square feet of vacant property. The applicant proposes the construction of a building consisting of eight stories, offering 68 units for low income residents. Unit sizes include a total of four studios ranging in size from a minimum of 385 square feet, to the largest studio consisting of 420 square feet. There will be 49, one bedroom units ranging in size from a minimum of 566 square feet to a maximum of 631 square feet. Five three bedroom units consisting of 938 square feet will each feature two full service bathrooms.

Amenities include underground parking for seventeen vehicles, an outdoor area for passive recreation open to residents only consisting of 1,428 square feet, a resident community room encompassing 998 square feet and an outdoor terrace offering 951 square feet of space. Laundry room facilities will also be provided. Pending additional funding, a greenhouse offering 1,250 square feet of space and roof top recreational center for youngsters consisting of 600 square feet would also be made part of this development. Access to the residential section of this building will be via Hoe Avenue.

Retail will be accessible from Boston Road occupying approximately 10,000 square feet. Community service facilities will offer an additional ten thousand square feet of space.

The apartments would be affordable to those making 60 percent or less of the area median income. Financing will be realized from the Lower-Income Affordable Marketplace (LAMP) program.

Existing development in the surrounding community is typified by low to mid rise residential buildings. Retail development is found on Boston Road, Southern Boulevard and East 174th Street. Cross Roads Plaza, a major shopping center that includes a supermarket and additional chain-stores is located on East 174th Street, two blocks east of the proposed High Hawk site. Public transportation via the 2 and 5 trains is located on Boston Road at East 174th Street. Bus transportation operates on Boston Road, Southern Boulevard and East 174th Street.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application has been reviewed pursuant to CEQR and SEQR and received a Unlisted Declaration. The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on May 10, 2010.

COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community Board #3 held a public hearing on this matter on June 15, 2010. A unanimous vote recommending approval of this application was 27 in favor, zero opposed and zero abstaining.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

The Bronx Borough President convened a public hearing on this matter on July 13, 2010. Representatives of the applicant were present and spoke in favor of this application. No members of the public were present and the hearing was closed.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

Reviewing this application I am mindful that it pertains exclusively to amending the Zoning Map and the land use merits associated with such an amendment. Therefore, having reviewed the details of this zoning matter I have no objection to eliminating a C8-3 District and establishing within the same area, a R7-1/C2-4 District

I am however very distressed as to the proposed development which, if this zoning amendment were approved, would be constructed by the applicant. Specifically, the woefully small square foot size of many of the residential units is, for me a reason to recommend disapproving this application. Studio units consisting of a minimum of 385 square feet, one bedroom units as small as 590 square feet, two bedrooms with as little as 725 square feet, and three bedroom units offering 987 square feet, demonstrate why I believe the applicant should be required to reconfigure the proposed building.

Financial incentives encourage the construction of buildings offering a maximum number of units per structure with less concern given as to the size of each unit. These factors force applicants to build accommodations that are inappropriate for families, especially those that include numerous children. Over the long term such modest accommodations will also diminish the likelihood that families will want to remain in the building. This in turn discourages a family's commitment to their community.

I recommend approval of this application as it pertains exclusively to amending the Zoning Map. I do not however approve of the proposed development as presented at my public hearing pursuant to this application.