



Housing, Land Use, and Zoning Minutes

10 September 2024 at 6:30pm

Attendees

Committee members present: Hon. Signe Mortensen (co-chair), Hon. Liz Waytkus (co-chair), Hon. Barry Weinberg, Hon. Annette Robinson, Hon. Juan Colmenares, Hon. Ilana Mercado, Hon. Clayton Sanford

Committee members absent:

Public members present: Jared Knowles (virtual)

Other community board members present: Hon. Heather Jason (virtual), Hon. Patricia Caldwell (virtual), Hon. Vanessa Caughman

1 Call to Order

The meeting was called to attention with no quorum of 3 members. It was officially called to order at 6:47pm with 5 members present, moved by Clayton Sanford (CS) and seconded by Liz Waytkus (LW).

2 Adopt Agenda

A few amendments and issues were raised by participants. Patricia Caldwell (PC) raised questions regarding 150th Street and Convent Avenue. Edwin Torres inquired about the scaffolding situation in the CB9 area, specifically the amount and age of scaffolding. Signe Mortensen (SM) noted that these topics would be addressed under New Business. Lois Penny reported issues regarding stolen vehicles and unregistered vehicles parked at 600 W 138th Street (between Broadway and 12th Avenue. Signe Mortensen added a discussion on the Claremont Theater to the agenda.

A motion to adopt the agenda was moved by Annette Robinson (AR) and seconded by SM.

3 Adopt Minutes

The minutes were adopted, moved by LW and seconded by SM.

4 Introductions

Introductions were made by all members, including co-chairs, committee members, and guests.

4.1 New Members

New committee members were introduced: Clayton Sanford and Essence Divine White.

5 New Business Discussions

5.1 Claremont Theater

LW provided an update on the Claremont Theater, located at the southeast corner of Broadway and 135th Street. Recent changes to the façade were submitted to the [Landmarks Preservation Commission \(LPC\)](#) but were denied. Despite this, the changes have already been made. LW noted that the CB9 [Landmarks Presentation & Parks Committee](#) will review the matter at the

next meeting. Jared Knowles, who works for LPC, offered to pass along information regarding any violations associated with the changes.

5.2 Scaffolding Discussion

SM introduced a discussion on scaffolding, referencing borough president Mark Levine's "[Shed the Sheds](#)" initiative, which aims to reduce long-standing scaffolding across the city. Edwin Torres (ET) highlighted that the duration scaffolding stays in place has increased, noting that landlords often own scaffolding companies, which could present a conflict of interest.

There was general interest in drafting a resolution on this issue, and Ilana Mercado (IM) and Annette Robinson (AR) recalled a previous resolution on the topic, suggesting it might be worth revisiting. Clayton Sanford (CS) found a [city dataset](#) on the amount of scaffolding by district, in addition to [research](#) on the extent of scaffolding by land area. ET emphasized the need to examine how scaffolding disproportionately affects certain communities. SM also recalled from discussions related to the City of Yes that city agencies often lack the resources to adequately address scaffolding issues.

5.3 138th and Broadway Parked Cars

Lois Penny reported that the block at 600 W 138th Street is being used as a parking lot for stolen cars. She informed the precinct about the issue and noted that car owners are removing towing signs from their vehicles. AR asked when this problem began, and LP stated that it started at the end of June. Juan Colmenares (JC) mentioned that the issue had already been discussed at a [Uniformed Services & Transportation Committee](#) meeting and recommended reaching out to chair Solomon Prophete for further assistance. AR also suggested sharing the concern with the community council, particularly with Joyce Adewumi.

6 Old Business; Subcommittee/Taskforce Reports

6.1 MHCC Updates

Robert Stern from the [Morningside Heights Community Coalition \(MHCC\)](#) provided an update on the zoning plan and the organization's request for CB9's co-approval. In June, the City Council presented a revised version of the zoning plan, seeking buy-in from co-applicants. MHCC (as a co-applicant) approved the plan, along with BP and Council Member Shaun Abreu. However, CB9 has not yet formally approved this version of the plan. Stern mentioned that the current version has been sent to Chelsea Kelly and that he has reached out to Victor Edwards and CB9 for approval.

Both LW and SM expressed surprise, as they believed CB9 had already co-approved the plan. CS inquired whether the latest version of the plan is publicly available, to which Stern responded that only the previous iteration is currently accessible, while the current version is not.

6.2 Legislation We Are Watching

SM provided an update from Anita Cheng (AC) regarding [Housing Fund Development Corporations \(HDFCs\)](#) and [Tenant Interim Lease \(TIL\)](#) buildings. An upcoming City Council housing meeting is expected to address new legislation on TPT reform and HDFCs. SM noted that the Community Board is keen to learn more about this development. AC further reported that CM Abreu's office is working on legislation to correct errors in previous housing bills.

6.3 Developments We Are Watching

The report by Clayton Sanford is included:

- Most permitting activity corresponds to projects that we were already aware of.
 - 99 Claremont (McGiffert Hall at Riverside Church) had alteration permits issued in June for an internal demolition. According to the findings, the 44 units will remain.
 - 523 and 525 W 125th (Blue Flame) had more permitting activity on their demolition permits.

- 1440 Amsterdam (Manhattanville Houses air rights transfer, by 131st) is under construction. The building will have 490 units and 3.09 FAR. It is zoned R7-2 and will have a grocery store on the ground floor.
- 1727 Amsterdam (Health + Hospitals, 145th) had some permitting activity, with several permits with raised objections in late July.
- 1763 Amsterdam (Child’s memorial site, by 147th) has new building permits issued. The building will have 126 units and 3.98 community facility FAR in an R7A district. The first floor and cellar will be church facilities. Work is currently in progress.
- 1861 and 1871 Amsterdam (Harlem Collective, by 152nd) were demolished over the summer and permits for new buildings were issued. 1871 will have 7 units and 3.18 residential FAR + 0.17 commercial FAR, and 1861 will have 47 units and 3.81 residential FAR. Both have R7A zoning. Demolition work is ongoing.
- The 135th Crosscap ULURP (the one with the cantilever over the train tracks) was given a conditionally favorable response from Mark Levine and approval from CPC. It’s up for city council approval next.
- City of Yes Housing Opportunity was reviewed by all borough presidents, borough boards, and the CPC. Both Mark Levine and the Manhattan borough board gave conditional favorable recommendations, like CB9.

During the discussion, Patricia Caldwell (PC) raised concerns about the development at 454 Convent Avenue, which was mentioned in the Senior Action committee. SM clarified that this is an as-of-right project, previously a retirement home for nuns, sold by the diocese in 2019 to [ACMH](#), a non-profit that supports formerly homeless individuals. SM noted the connection to the 1727 Amsterdam development, as Heritage Health is moving to a different building on 141st and Amsterdam. PC expressed concerns about the impact of such developments on property values and the saturation of supportive housing in the neighborhood. LW suggested inviting ACMH to present at a future meeting, and PC emphasized the need for more information about the plan to house people with mental illness in the area.

BW added a report on 640 Riverside Drive, a building that was refurbished by [UHAB](#) after being in the TPT (Third Party Transfer) program. The building’s tenants, many of whom are rent-stabilized, are being asked to convert to shareholders in an indebted company, with no guarantee of receiving Section 8 assistance. BW recommended Attorney General involvement to address the situation.

6.4 Public Members Updates

SM encouraged people to apply to become public members and to take on specific projects.

6.5 NYCHA

SM noted that the board is seeking someone to attend the PACT meetings held by West Harlem Group Assistance.

6.6 RKO Hamilton Theater Taskforce Update

LW reported that there has been little movement regarding the RKO Hamilton Theater. The taskforce is still looking for someone to chair the group, as well as for updates from the owner or developer.

6.7 TIL

There were no updates on TIL (Tenant Interim Lease) at this time.

6.8 HDFC Updates

No new updates regarding Housing Development Fund Corporations (HDFCs).

6.9 Film and TV Taskforce Updates

SM mentioned that the Film and TV Taskforce is still looking for a chair. The taskforce involves communicating with the Mayor's Office and addressing community concerns about filming saturation and community benefits. IM, who chaired the taskforce in the past, noted that filming in the neighborhood has increased. There was also a call from a resident on Edgewcombe Avenue raising concerns about the frequency of filming in the area.

7 Action Items

There were no action items reported during this meeting.

8 Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned, with SM moving to adjourn, seconded by AR.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Clayton Sanford.

DRAFT