

Advisory Committee Meeting #1

Details

- Date: Monday, February 27
- Time: 3:00-4:00pm
- Virtual Zoom meeting

Attendees

Council District 35:

- Council Member Crystal Hudson
- Casie Addison
- Andrew Wright

Hester Street:

- Casey Peterson
- Cinthia de la Rosa
- Amron Lee

Advisory Committee:

- Kristin Brown, Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership
- Rabbi Eli Cohen, Crown Heights JCC
- Claudette Macey, Fort Greene Senior Council
- Mills Dor, Greater Direction
- Cea Weaver, Housing Justice for All
- Tara Duvivier, Pratt Center for Community Development
- Michele Bonan, Brooklyn Public Library
- Naima Oyo, Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy
- Taya Mueller, CB 2
- Michelle George, CB 8
- Dante Arnwine, CB 9

Notes

1. Welcome from CM Hudson
2. Introductions: name, affiliation, connection to neighborhood, one thing to make a land use planning process more inclusive in District 35
 - This has never been done before - district residents are often not involved in ULURP process
 - Outreach beyond the office - formality is the enemy of inclusion in government spaces
 - Use inclusive language
 - Hope to see this moving alongside other housing movements in the city
 - Broad and inclusive, address diverse needs
 - Being able to be out and be seen in the community is going to be important to connect people to this process - good to do a mix of in-person and virtual
 - Tap into parents of school-aged children, nursing homes, senior buildings, non-traditional modes of transportation
 - Need to do this in multiple languages and make everyone comfortable
 - Using many different formats: virtual, door-knocking, flyering, etc.
 - We can learn from Census outreach that happened: what areas of our community responded and which didn't as well, prioritization or centering of those voices who have historically been left out, putting extra intention into those communities
 - Making sure people have the ability to attend meetings and offering other opportunities for people to provide their feedback
 - Ensure there are lots of opportunities for people to tune in in many different ways
 - Activating green spaces
3. Meeting purpose and outcomes
 - Come together as a group representing the diverse communities within District 35
 - Provide an overview of the participatory land use planning process
 - Hear your feedback on the outreach and engagement process
 - Set expectations for the role of the Advisory Committee in this process
4. Project context
 - Issue statement
 - The current land use decision-making process in New York City is deeply flawed.
 - Community members often do not have a meaningful role in shaping the outcomes of a new project or building.
 - These conditions do not work towards fulfilling the long-term needs or aspirations of community members.

- A new approach is needed to ensure that community priorities are integrated in land use processes long before a project arrives for Community Board approval.
- Project goals
 - Understand community needs and priorities on a variety of issues (housing, open space, education, transportation, food access etc.)
 - Develop a District-wide vision for land use that integrates community priorities with a data-driven analysis of District needs
 - Create a new blueprint for how land use decisions are made at the local level that empowers and engages community members
- Land use framework
 - Our work will result in a community-driven land use vision and prioritization framework for District 35. This framework will serve multiple purposes. It can be:
 1. Used by developers or other entities to inform what types of development they should propose in the district;
 2. A checklist to ensure that a base level of community needs are integrated into any new development that is proposed in the district that's subject to Council approval;
 3. An accountability mechanism for community members to ensure that their needs and priorities are considered in the early phases of project development.
 - This process is the first of its kind and may serve as a pilot for other Council Districts.
- Hester Street role
 - Hester Street is an urban planning, design and development nonprofit that works to ensure neighborhoods are shaped by the people who live in them
 - Contracted by CM Hudson's Office through City Council Discretionary Funding
- Difference from parallel rezoning outreach process
 - Separate from Atlantic Avenue Mixed Use Plan (AAMUP): Parallel outreach and planning process specifically around an upcoming rezoning
 - Involvement of CM Hudson, DCP, CBs 2, 3, 8, and consultant WXY Studios
 - Findings can mutually benefit each process
- Role of the Advisory Committee
 - Knit together leadership from across a diverse district to provide guidance on how to meaningfully engage district residents and incorporate their feedback
 - Serve as an accountability mechanism for the planning process

- Support with outreach related to the planning process to expand the quantity and diversity of district residents participating in public engagement process
 - Not a formal organization or legal entity
 - Outreach and engagement plan overview
 - The engagement strategy is intended to produce a holistic understanding of community needs and priorities to inform future development in the District.
 - Project timeline for Advisory Committee meetings, public meetings, focus groups, survey, social media campaign, informal engagements, and interviews
 - Discussion
 - Long surveys don't usually get as many responses
 - Focus groups may work better for youth and seniors
 - Excited about the spacing in the timeline and think it will help grow word of mouth
 - Hoping you can do weekday day times for some meetings because 6pm doesn't work for a lot of people
 - Get this done in multiple languages and use social media
 - In terms of youth, tap the middle school government associations
 - Get into the schools as much as possible to reach students, parents, their grandparents, and so on
 - Include "Land Use 101 sessions" as early as possible so we're reaching beyond the informed choir
 - Summer youth employment children can help get the word out if this extends into the summer
 1. CUNY corps are in session now so that could be an alternative
 - Major Owens Health and Wellness Center is on the district's border, however is a great space to conduct and collect surveys
 - Survey fatigue is something to keep in mind
 - It's important that we slow down and do a really good job

5. ULURP overview

- Definition and origins in the City Charter
 - Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) is a standardized procedure whereby applications affecting the land use of the city are publicly reviewed. The City Charter requires ULURP for:
 1. Zoning map changes and zoning special permits
 2. Acquisitions and dispositions of City-owned property
 3. Site selection for capital projects
 4. Housing and urban renewal plans and projects pursuant to city, state, and federal laws
 5. Revocable consents, request for proposals, and other solicitations

- Common critiques
 1. Community Board votes are advisory
 2. Long-standing practice of 'member deference'
 3. Outreach not required outside the formal venues
 4. Projects almost 'fully-baked' when they enter the process
 5. Lack of citywide comprehensive plan for development results in hyper-focus on individual sites, fueling the NIMBY vs. YIMBY dynamic
- Development case studies in District 35
 - 142-150 South Portland
 - Bedford-Union Armory
- Discussion
 - How does this interact with the idea for a citywide comprehensive plan?
 1. This could be a framework that informs a comprehensive city plan if it ever comes to fruition
 2. This is not a district-wide rezoning, and there's no plan to engage in such a project.
 - For the Bedford-Union Armory, you have to look at where it started versus where it landed at the end of the ULURP process and the achievements in getting more affordable housing
 1. It lasted decades and needs were constantly shifting
 2. It would be nice to see a project improve over time in a less arduous way
 - Empire Blvd is storage box after storage box - things are haphazard and what are the ways we can change that?
 - If there's a comprehensive survey of sites available for development, you could capture expression of desire for what people would like to see there, which would slightly alter what is currently a more reactionary process where community needs/priorities are considered only after a development is proposed that doesn't meet them
 1. Don't think we'll get to site-specific scale, but more at the neighborhood level
 - We can encourage folks to focus on what they DO want rather than what they do NOT want - this can be more actionable, more creative, and moves discussion forward
- 6. Closing and next steps
 - Advisory Committee meeting schedule
 - Call to action for Advisory Committee members to assist with survey outreach