

Queens Borough President Recommendation

APPLICATION: ULURP #200230 ZMQ

COMMUNITY BOARD: Q14

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by Brisa Builders Development LLC and God's Battalion of Prayer Properties, Inc., pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter, for the amendment of the Zoning Map, Section No. 30c, by changing from an R4A District to an R6 District property bounded by a line 540 feet northerly of Beach Channel Drive, a line midway between Beach 66th Street and Beach 67th Street, a line 230 feet northerly of Beach Channel Drive, Beach 67th Street, a line 100 feet northerly of Beach Channel Drive, Beach 68th Street, a line 380 feet northerly of Beach Channel Drive, and Beach 67th Street, Borough of Queens, Community District 14, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated March 1, 2021, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-605 (Related ULURP #N200231 ZRQ)

PUBLIC HEARING

A remote Public Hearing was held via Zoom webinar and livestreamed on the Queens Borough President's website on Thursday, May 20, 2021 at 9:30 A.M. pursuant to Section 82(5) of the New York City Charter and was duly advertised in the manner specified in Section 197-c (i) of the New York City Charter. The applicant made a presentation. There were no other speakers. The hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

Subsequent to a review of the application and consideration of testimony received at the public hearing, the following issues and impacts have been identified:

- Brisa Builders Development LLC (the "Applicant") and God's Battalion of Prayer Properties, Inc. (the "Co-Applicant") seek a zoning map amendment to rezone 450, 444, 442, 438, 432, 430 and 426 Beach 67th Street (Block 16040, Lots 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22 and 24) and 430 Beach 68th Street (Block 16041, Lot 6) (the "Area to be Rezoned"), located in the Arverne neighborhood of Queens Community District 14 on the Rockaway Peninsula, from an R4A District to an R6 District;
- The applicants have also filed an application for a zoning text amendment to amend NYC Zoning Resolution Appendix F: Inclusionary Housing Designated Areas and Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Areas for Queens Community District 14, to establish and map the area to be rezoned as a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing ("MIH") Designated Area. The applicants propose mapping MIH Options 1 and 2 over the area to be rezoned to provide maximum flexibility for provided affordable housing;
- The proposed zoning map amendment would facilitate development of two new buildings on midblock property owned by the applicant on the east side of Beach 67th Street between Thursby Avenue and Beach Channel Drive. The first building would be a 9-story, 84 unit Affordable Independent Residence for Seniors (AIRS) building financed using NYC HPD SARA subsidy and State Tax Credits. The nonprofit organization, HANAC, based in Queens would provide services for the senior residents (aged 62 and over). The approximately 58,259 SF (1.88 FAR), AIRS building would be constructed on Block 16040 Lots 18, 20, and 22. A second approximately 71,996 SF (2.32 FAR), eleven-story building would be constructed on Block 16040 Lots 12, 14 and 16 and used for a proposed charter school (Use Group 3 community facility). The existing Battalion Pentecostal Assembly Church, located on Block 16040 Lot 24, is a two-story, 7,082-SF (0.23 FAR) house of worship/community center would remain on the site. There would be 15 parking spaces split between these uses;
- Another property to be rezoned is an existing eight-story nursing home located at 430 Beach 68th Street (Block 16041, Lot 6) on a 56,000 SF lot is not under the control of the applicant, There are no development plans for this midblock site located across the street from the applicant's development site. This property was included in the rezoning application at the request of the Department of City Planning. The nursing home is out of compliance with the existing R4A District the proposed rezoning to a R6 District would largely bring the building into compliance;
- The proposed development site is owned by God's Battalion of Prayer Properties, Inc and is developed with a two-story church, three-story and two-family residential buildings, a community garden, 34 open parking spaces that is also used as recreational space, and vacant lots. The Proposed Development Site includes 450, 444, 442, 438, 432, 430 and 426 Beach 67th Street, Block 16040, Lots 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22 and 24 (all of which are contemplated to be a single zoning lot). The Proposed Development Site is comprised of interior lots, with Lot 12 located approximately 230 feet north of the corner of the intersection formed by Beach 67th Street and Beach Channel Drive and Lot 24 located approximately 240 feet south of the corner of the intersection formed by Beach 67th Street and Thursby Avenue. The Proposed Development Site has a lot width of 310 feet, a depth of 100 feet and a total lot area of 31,000 square feet;

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- The surrounding area is mostly developed with one- & two-family homes, with multi-family walk-up buildings interspersed. The area also has small commercial buildings along Beach Channel Drive. While the new 11-story charter school would be the tallest building in the immediate neighborhood, there are a few 5- and 6-story buildings in the area. These buildings are occupied by two nursing homes, a senior housing building, a school, and a shelter;
- During the Community Board 14 (CB 14) Land Use Committee meeting several concerns and issues were raised. One of the main concerns raised was the rezoning of the Resort Nursing Home site, located across Beach 67th Street from the applicant's property from R4A to R6. The concern raised was that the 56,000 SF lot could be redeveloped under the R6 District provisions. Other concerns discussed included: safety, the height of the proposed buildings, amount of parking, request for community space, request for more than one laundry room in building, mosquito relief for area, flooding & sewer concerns, a guarantee that the school will be built, charter school concerns, and sewer system integrity. The developers were able to address these issues in ways that the board found mostly satisfactory, although the lack of parking was a concern that the committee was still unhappy about. The entire project has 15 parking spaces to be shared between the church, senior housing, and school. While within legal guidelines, the board felt this was far too few parking spots. The Community Board 14 Land Use Committee decided to vote against supporting the project, largely due to the inclusion of the nursing home and what they felt was insufficient community outreach;
- Community Board 14 (CB 14) conditionally approved this application by a vote of twenty-six (26) in favor, thirteen (13) against and one (1) abstention at the monthly meeting held on May 4, 2021. Discussion during the meeting were centered on concerns about the inclusion of the nursing home site in the rezoning application. There was some mention about the number of parking spaces provided and that many recent projects have far too few parking spaces. Some members spoke in favor of the project, citing the church's work and respected standing in the community. CB 14 members noted that they felt the nursing home rezoning was unrelated to the church project. CB 14's condition was as follows:
 - The application should be limited to the property owned by the church and that the nursing home site should be removed from the application;
- During the Queens Borough President's Land Use Public Hearing, Borough President Richards stated his commitment to local hiring and MWBE participation in all new construction projects and asked the applicants about their plan for this project. On behalf of the applicants, Brisa Builders Development LLC a MWBE company stated they are committed to building affordable housing and local hiring and have done so on other projects in New York City. Working with a local organization they were committed to hiring at a minimum 25% of workers and subcontractors on the project from the local community. The Borough President requested that commitment in writing which was received (see attached). Borough President Richards also brought up the street median which blocks larger vehicles from entering the site and that it should be cut to allow better access to the site. The applicants responded that there have been ongoing conversations with the Department of Transportation about opening up portions of the median. The applicants also stated that rezoning the nursing home site would bring the existing building into better compliance and that there is limited opportunity for any expansion of the nursing home. The Department of City Planning stated that the purpose of including the nursing home site was to bring the existing building into compliance.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the above consideration, I hereby recommend approval of this application:

- The applicant has committed to 25% of local hiring and participation of local subcontractors in writing. Attainment of a 30% goal would be closer to my longstanding commitment to community participation in development of their communities. As mobilization for construction begins, there should be regular reporting to the Office of the Borough President on the progress of meeting these local hiring goals;
- Hiring for this project should include local job fairs and other outreach conducted with the assistance of community based organizations.



PRESIDENT, BOROUGH OF QUEENS

June 4, 2021

DATE