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Borough of Queens*

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District Manager, Marie Adam-Ovide

**Public Hearing: ULURP Application: C 130170 ZMQ
St. Francis Prep Rezoning
61-00 Francis Lewis Boulevard**

Date: Monday, April 22, 2013 – 8:00 p.m.

Place: Hillside Manor
188-11 Hillside Avenue
Hollis, NY 11423

Attendance: Steve Konigsberg, Zoning Chair
Maria DeInnocentiis – Area 6 Chair
Dr. Allen J. Bennett
James Gallagher, Jr.,
Marc A. Haken
Robert Harris
Tami Hirsch
Mitch Lisker
Tammy Osherov
Steven Sinacori, Akerman Senterfitt LLP
Brother Leonard Conway, Principal of St. Francis Prep
Christian Schlendorf, Architect
Ian Hegarty, representing City Planning

Purpose of Meeting

In the matter of an application submitted by St. Francis Preparatory School pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the NYC Charter for an amendment of the zoning map, Section Nos. 10d and 11b, changing from an R3-2 District to an R4 District. The proposed action would facilitate a proposal by the applicant to enlarge an existing community facility building. The proposed development would add 58,893 gross square foot of floor area to the existing school building.

Zoning Chairperson, Steve Konigsberg called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m. There were nine (9) Board Members present; therefore, we did have a quorum. Mr. Konigsberg announced that the full Board will be voting on this issue on Wednesday, May 8, 2013. The Board Meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the Hillcrest Jewish Center located at 183-02 Union Turnpike.

Zoning Chairperson introduced Steven M. Sinacori from Akerman Senterfitt LLP. Mr. Sinacori is here this evening representing St. Francis Preparatory School, located at 61-00 Francis Lewis Boulevard.

- By this application, the school requests approval of an application for a Zoning Map Amendment to change from an R3-2 Zoning District to an R4 Zoning District. The purpose of the requested action is to increase the permitted floor area of the project area from 1

FAR to 2 FAR and facilitate the expansion of the school by 42,271 SF. Currently the school has exhausted all of its floor area.

- The proposed rezoning is necessary in order for the school to modernize and expand its facilities to better serve its students. It is not the purpose of the expansion to increase the number of students in the school, but rather to provide the most up-to-date facilities.
- The sole action necessary to facilitate the proposal is a zoning map amendment to Zoning Sectional Maps 10d and 11b. It is requested that the current zoning district for the project area – R3-2 be eliminated and replaced with a R4 zoning district designation, by extending the existing R4 zoning district to the south and west of the project area.
- The proposed development consists of: the demolition of parts of the existing South Wing of the school, an addition adjacent to the South Wing and a small addition to the front of the North Wing of the school.
- Parking will be reorganized so that the current number of parking spaces, 152, will be increased by 15 spaces.
- The proposal will allow for the modernization of an important educational resource for the borough and the city. Therefore, Mr. Sinacori respectfully requests the Board's approval of this application.

Brother Leonard Conway

Brother Conway has been the Principal at St. Francis Prep for the past 30 years. St. Francis Prep currently has about 2,600 students in the school. It accepts children of all faiths. Five years ago, Prep celebrated its 150th anniversary. At that time, a master plan was developed to modernize the facility. The students excel very well and the education process needs to be enhanced in order to compete with other schools. There was a three-phase plan: The first phase was the replacement of the infrastructure. In the second phase, a fitness center was built as well as an art education center. He is here tonight to ask the Board to approve a zoning change to allow the next phase which includes a three-story addition for the music and science programs. He wanted to ensure the Board that Prep is not doing this to increase the student population. He also wanted to ensure the Board that parking spaces will increase. They are doing this to build a better facility.

Christian Schlendorf

- Ms. Schlendorf is the architect for the project. She gave a presentation on the proposed plan.
- This application does include changing the zoning of a public school as well.
- The Music Department will be on the first floor, locker rooms will be on the second floor and the Science Department will be on the third floor including labs and a research department.
- Parking will be added and increased by 15 spaces on the site.
- The new addition will not be taller than anything else on the site. It is actually 1-story less than the current property.

Board Member's Questions and Comments

Marc A. Haken inquired about the area the applicant is looking to rezone. It includes a public school and parts of Cunningham Park. Are schools and parks zoned? Answer: Mr. Sinacori answered with respect to the public school, public schools have zoning but the Deputy Mayor has the power to override zoning.

Ian Hegarty, representing City Planning explained that they are going to pull this from Peck Avenue over to Francis Lewis Blvd. and the south side service road of the L.I.E. to bring the existing R4 into the existing R3-2. Zones don't dictate anything that can happen in parks. Park land is special under State and New York City law. The way it is treated in the zoning code is that park land does not have development rights.

Marc Haken asked if the zoning in anyway affects the public school. Answer: Ian Hegarty replied that schools are buildings and they are subject to zoning just like any other building. Can this public school, somewhere along the line, be sold and homes built in its place? Answer: That can happen to any school in the city. Frankly, that doesn't seem a likely possibility within the next 50 years.

Public Participation

Robert Corbino has been the Music Department Chairperson since 1980. 300 students are taught music each semester at the school. The school conducts a total of 11 music ensembles throughout the year. Prep is the first school ever to get credited specifically for music by the Middle States Association. Over 40% of their students participate in some way in the music program. Their music students also give back to the community. He is in support of the St. Francis Rezoning Project.

Jillian Ramann is a music student at St. Francis Prep. The Music Department is full of great and talented people, but unfortunately they do not have the necessary resources to accommodate everyone. She would love to visit one day after she graduates to see the Music Department with all the equipment and facilities that they need. She is eternally thankful to her orchestra for presenting her with so many opportunities and she can only hope that this Department will flourish.

Maryann Spicijaric has been the Science Department Chairperson for the past 10 years. She listed all the science programs at St. Francis Prep. She stated it is probably the best science program of any school in Queens. New facilities would allow the science faculty to take science education to the next level. The current labs are poorly designed and extremely outdated. She urges the Board to please help them provide that inspiration for their students and to allow them to do the work that they already do in an even more exceptional way.

Elaina Byrne is a science student and a senior at St. Francis Prep. She stated that that the reason why she came to Prep is because of the science program they offer. By building this new science wing with new state of the art labs, students will be able to have a more practical experience and better understanding and appreciation for science.

Motion

Dr. Allen Bennett made a motion to approve ULURP Application: C 130170 ZMQ, - St. Francis Prep Rezoning, seconded by Marc A. Haken.

Discussion

- Marc A. Haken would love to see St. Francis Prep's orchestra participate in giving back to the community by performing for schools and senior centers in our Community Board 8 District.
- James Gallagher questioned how many students are presently enrolled? Answer: 2,600
- Dr. Bennett said "We should just do it!"

Vote: **8 in favor** **0 opposed** **0 abstained**

Board Members who were in favor of BSA Calendar No. 86-13 BZ were:

Steve Konigsberg, Zoning Chair, Maria DeInnocentiis – Area Chair, Dr. Allen J. Bennett, James Gallagher, Jr., Marc A. Haken, Robert Harris, Tami Hirsch, Mitch Lisker and Tammy Osherov. Mitch Lisker was not present for the vote.

Adjournment:

This public hearing adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Barbara McKeon, CB8 Staff Member

April 23, 2013