



March 7, 2016

Commissioner Vicki Been
New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)
100 Gold Street
New York, NY 10038

Chairman Carl Weisbrod
New York City Planning Commission
120 Broadway, 31st Floor
New York, NY 10271

RE: Request for support to ensure a large, affordable supermarket, deeply and permanently affordable housing as part of any amendment to the Baltic Street Urban Renewal Plan (120 5th Avenue; Block 943, Site 240; Brooklyn, New York)

Dear Commissioner Been and Chair Weisbrod:

We are writing with regard to the proposal from Avery Hall Investments to amend the Baltic Street Urban Renewal Plan to allow the redevelopment of the site at 120 5th Avenue (including a 36,000-square-foot Key Food supermarket and parking lot) into a mixed-use development with 165 residential units above 52,000 square feet of ground floor retail.

We are deeply concerned that Avery Hall's project, as proposed, does not meet the community's need for a large, affordable supermarket and sufficient affordable housing for our diverse community – needs that were loudly articulated by over 400 neighbors from Park Slope, Gowanus, and Boerum Hill at a community meeting on February 9, 2016.

We were encouraged to hear that the de Blasio Administration shares our concerns and is open to working with the community to achieve these goals. Since Avery Hall needs a modification of the urban renewal plan, which must be granted by HPD and City Planning, we are confident that we can achieve a resolution that works for our community.

However, this will require substantial changes from the letter, dated June 11, 2015, which HPD sent to Avery Hall. In that letter, HPD indicated that it was prepared to proceed with changes to the Baltic Street Urban Renewal Plan as long as 25% of the residential units were affordable. The letter made no mention of maintaining a supermarket and also left open the possibility that the affordable housing requirements HPD negotiated could be modified contingent upon changes to, the now expired, 421-a tax abatement program. In response to the community's outcry, Avery

Hall has indicated that they are open to modifying their proposal. This is encouraging; however, we will need strong support from the de Blasio Administration to reach a positive resolution.

The original Baltic Street Urban Renewal Plan was approved by the City Planning Commission and the Board of Estimate in 1981, and will remain in effect until 2021, after a decade of vigorous organizing by the lower Park Slope Community, which gave rise to the birth of the Fifth Avenue Committee. That urban renewal plan established a set of land use controls that were designed to promote the redevelopment of the area for commercial, residential, and community facility use – including the development of the 36,000 square foot Key Food supermarket, which provides access to affordable, healthy food and, for nearly 35 years, has become a staple for thousands of residents of Park Slope, Gowanus, and Boerum Hill.

While Park Slope today is different than the Park Slope of 1981, the recent closure of two large, affordable supermarkets in the area, notably the Gowanus Pathmark and the Met Foods on Smith Street, has pushed those who depend on the Key Food supermarket for affordable, healthy food to advocate once more for inclusion of the development of a robust supermarket at this site.

Elimination of the Key Food supermarket would have a dire impact on the Park Slope, Gowanus, and Boerum Hill communities. Moreover, it is a significant change of use on this site and a significant diminution of the public purpose for which the site was developed under the urban renewal plan. While we agree that the creation of new affordable housing is a critical goal, we cannot support any change to the urban renewal plan that does not also require the long-term maintenance of a sizeable affordable supermarket on the site.

In recent weeks, the Fifth Avenue Committee, together with a dozen community groups from Park Slope, Gowanus, and Boerum Hill, with feedback from hundreds of community residents through surveys and attendance at the February 9th meeting, has articulated the following stakeholder priorities for this project:

1. Providing a large, affordable, accessible, community-oriented supermarket with a long-term lease, local hiring, and respect for workers.
2. Deepening the affordability of the project, ensuring that at least 10% of the units are affordable to families at or below 40% of area median income (Avery Hall has indicated that they intend to rent 20% of the project's 165 residential units at 60% AMI, 2.5% initially at 80% AMI, and 2.5 % initially at 100% AMI); and that there is a preference for residents who have been displaced from Brooklyn's Community Board 6.
3. Ensuring that the project's affordable residential units are required regardless of the presence of 421a or other relevant tax abatement and remain permanently affordable, so we do not face evictions or an expiration crisis in another few years.
4. Allowing for meaningful community input into the design and operations of the development.

We respectfully request that HPD and City Planning agree not to approve a modification of the urban renewal plan that does not conform to these goals. Avery Hall has agreed to meet with the stakeholder group in the near future. We request that you send representatives of HPD and/or

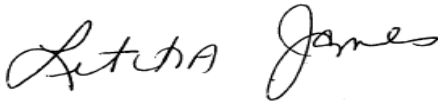
City Planning to this meeting, and that these representatives work with us to achieve the community's goals.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you require further information, please contact Catherine Zinnel in New York City Council Member Brad Lander's office at 718-499-1090 or czinnel@council.nyc.gov.

Sincerely,



Brad Lander
New York City Council Member



Leticia James
New York City Public Advocate



Scott Stringer
New York City Comptroller



Velmanette Montgomery
New York State Senator



Jo Anne Simon
New York State Assembly Member



Stephen Levin
New York City Council Member



Eric L. Adams
Brooklyn Borough President

CC: Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen
Susan Kensky, NYC HPD
Winston Von Engel, NYC DCP
Sayar Lonial, Chair, Brooklyn CB6
Craig Hammerman, District Manager, Brooklyn CB6
Pick Quick Foods, Inc.
Brian Ezra and Avi Fisher, Avery Hall Investments

Enclosures