Resolution for Retention of Contextual Zoning in Park Slope and Citywide

Whereas:

         The de Blasio Administration has recently advanced a major rezoning proposal, “Housing New York: Zoning for Quality and Affordability,” that would increase floor heights along street walls and on setback floors and reduce yard setback requirements throughout New York City neighborhoods , and greatly incentivize developers to add another one or two stories to completely fill out the allowable zoning envelop on Park Slope’s residential blocks, thereby overturning the protections created by contextual zoning citywide;

         The Park Slope Civic Council played an active role in community discussions supportive of contextual zoning, successfully advocating in 2003 for the establishment of contextual designations along side streets in Park Slope as part of the City-initiated upzoning of 4th Avenue and other avenues;

         The Park Slope Civic Council is concerned about protecting the historic character and scale of the neighborhood and has been a strong advocate for the expansion of the Park Slope Historic District, and whose efforts have been strongly supported by Park Slope homeowners;

         The Landmarks Preservation Commission has deliberately slowed the historic district designation process over the last two years, which delays landmark protection for many blocks within the North and Center Slope and leaves them at risk for demolition or out-of-character additions or alterations;

         The Park Slope Civic Council is likewise concerned about and supportive of preservation of existing housing affordable to low and moderate-income families, as well as the production of permanent affordable housing, as evidenced by its strong stand in favor of accelerating the construction of affordable housing within Atlantic Yards and of affordable senior housing for the city’s growing senior population;

         There is no assurance that the higher density allowed within the Mayor’s plan will produce any net increase in affordable housing and senior housing and may well decrease affordability throughout the city by the destruction of existing housing stock containing rent stabilized and rent controlled housing units;

         The lessons of the past ten years support the expectation that offering incentives to developers to build higher density buildings without the mandatory inclusion of affordable housing units in them will lead to tremendous luxury development throughout the city’s neighborhoods, including Park Slope;

         The de Blasio zoning proposal is being rushed through the environmental and land use review processes without sufficient opportunities for citizen participation and without any prior consultation with community boards; and

         Our resulting belief is that the de Blasio proposal would destroy the hard fought efforts over many years by neighborhood groups throughout the city to achieve a more balanced zoning approach whose objective has been the preservation of neighborhood character, open space, access to light and air, and quality of life;

Therefore, Be it Resolved, that the Park Slope Civic Council:

         Is opposed to the proposed blanket zoning changes, which provide building incentives for developers not necessarily related to the production of permanent affordable housing and senior housing;

         Is concerned about the proposal’s lack of consideration for the historic character and livability of neighborhoods throughout New York City, including Park Slope, and that it fails to assure a net increase in permanent affordable housing:

         Will continue to advocate to preserve the existing protections offered by the current contextual zones within Park Slope and neighborhoods throughout New York City;

         Is insistent that this proposed zoning plan be replaced by a neighborhood-specific approach that ensures adequate involvement by their residents and with due regard to their concerns ; and

         Requests that Park Slope’s elected officials publicly challenge the adverse and ill-conceived aspects of the proposed plan, advocate for important modifications to the plan, and take all necessary steps to preserve existing contextual zoning protections in Park Slope and throughout New York City.