

NEW YORK NEWS

“Terrorism is a national problem and New York is the primary target.— Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY)

Culver El Housing Project Clears Major Step

Continued from page 1
families along 37th Street between 12th and 14th Avenues, was certified by the City Planning Department yesterday.

Because the land for the project is currently owned by the city, which is seeking to transfer it to a community non-profit for development, the plan now enters a six-month public review process necessary for final city approval. Concurrently, Agudath Israel's affordable housing division, the Southern Brooklyn Community Organization (SBCO), will seek Department of Buildings approval for variances relating to matters such as height and back yard dimensions.

SBCO doesn't anticipate any objections from city agencies. The plan has been thoroughly reviewed and worked out with city officials and the local community board.

SBCO first proposed Culver Estates in 2004 to help alleviate a severe paucity of affordable housing in a neighborhood with little to no available housing stock. The proposal was received enthusiastically by the Administration of Mayor Michael Bloomberg, but has since sputtered through the rezoning process, from industrial to residential status.

Chaim Israel, SBCO director of housing development, said 17 buildings, each containing four condos, could be completed within a year and a half after final approval, which requires ratification by the City Council. However, a potential need to finance half the project at a time may double the timeframe, with move-in slated for 2014, Mr. Israel said.

The four- and five-bedroom units will eventually be sold by lottery to income-qualifying applicants. Prices haven't been set.

The Culver El housing project cuts across the seam of the 39th and 44th City Council districts.

Former 44th district Councilman Simcha Felder ini-



A drawing of the planned Culver Estates condominiums, an affordable housing project for Boro Park whose construction is expected to break ground early next year. The drawing, from Bricolage Designs architects, shows how the corner of 13th Avenue and 37th Street would look when the project is completed.

ated the project and is widely credited as its foremost proponent during his Council tenure, which ended in February when he left the Council for the position of city deputy comptroller. Former 39th district Councilman Bill De Blasio, now city public advocate, supported the plan avidly. Their successors, who both stressed affordable housing in their campaigns and began their terms this year, have collaborated to strongly back the project.

“This project will bring desperately needed affordable homes to the Boro Park neighborhood. I am glad to have worked with SBCO and City Planning to get the process rolling at last, and look forward to working with them to make it a reality,” Councilman Brad Lander (39th) told *Hamodia*.

“Building affordable housing in the community is one of my top priorities,” Councilman David Greenfield (44th) wrote to

Hamodia. “I look forward to continuing my work with Councilman Brad Lander to expedite the process of rezoning the Culver El site. *Bezras Hashem*, this should come to the New York City Council for a vote some time this summer.”

The tract of land involved in the project is part of the former route of the elevated Culver train line that was demolished in the 1970s. Currently, defunct industrial buildings are there.

For many, the Culver El project came to represent the affordable housing crunch in Boro Park. Though it has been the focus of intense anticipation in the community, it was officially in limbo for a long time, and will in fact deliver meager relief in relation to demand.

Long ago, city officials had forecast that the certification that materialized yesterday would come by April 2009.

SBCO develops, manages and helps people obtain affordable housing in Boro Park. Its sister organization, the Ocean Parkway Community Development Corp., services the Kensington neighborhood. The two divisions currently manage 450 units of housing they developed. Many other units have been developed and sold or are managed by other entities.

“Boro Park is a community whose population has grown by 15.6 percent between 1990 and 2000 while there has only been a 4.5 percent increase in housing stock,” according to a 2005 city press release on Culver El.

Affordable housing units were developed on one block of Culver El land about 12 years ago. SBCO sold 21 units in seven structures at subsidized prices. Those units are on 37th Street between 15th Avenue and Dahill Road. The land had been city-owned.

Schumer: NYC's Slice of Anti-Terror Funding Has Shrunk

NEW YORK — U.S. Sen. Charles E. Schumer yesterday revealed that the city's share of the Department of Homeland Security's Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) went from 25 percent of the total funding pot in 2005 to 18 percent this year.

“The failed attempt last weekend to detonate a bomb in Times Square was a disturbing reminder that, nearly a decade after the attacks of September 11th, 2001, New York City remains the single greatest target for terrorist attacks in the United States,” Sen. Schumer said in a press release.

The city's share of funding from UASI has decreased by more than \$56 million, 28 percent, in the last five years, according to Schumer. In 2010, of a total allocation of \$832 million, New York is slated to receive only \$151 million, or 18 percent of the total funding stream.

Sen. Schumer is calling on Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano to bring the city's funding level back to a minimum of 25 percent of the total pot. That would be an additional \$57 million.

“With this funding, the Lower Manhattan and Midtown Security Initiative will receive the needed resources to expand the downtown surveillance system to midtown Manhattan between 34th and 59th Streets,” Schumer's statement says.

The Lower Manhattan and Midtown Security Initiative entails deployment of over 3,000 security cameras in lower and midtown Manhattan, as well as 100 license plate scanners that check the numbers against a database. The cameras are programmed to detect the delivery of packages, unattended bags left for extended periods of time, and suspicious cars repeatedly circling the same block. Other features include mobile roadblocks and radiation detectors.

Last week, Sen. Schumer called on the Administration to fully fund the “Securing the Cities” program, which was zeroed out for FY2011 after Sen. Schumer succeeded in getting \$18.5 million for the city's radiological testing program.

Schumer added, “Terrorism is a national problem and New York is the primary target. New Yorkers cannot shoulder this burden alone. It's imperative the Department of Homeland Security provide appropriate levels of funding so that the NYPD can do everything possible to make New York safe and secure.”

A Department of Homeland Security spokesman took a different view than Sen. Schumer, saying that overall, the amount of federal anti-terror funding for New York has increased.

“In 2009, DHS awarded more than \$457 million to New York City to prepare for, respond to, and recover from terrorism and other threats — a 74 percent increase from 2005,” DHS spokesperson Matthew Chandler was quoted by *Newsday* as saying.

HASC Lobbies in Albany Against Program Cuts

NEW YORK — A group representing HASC Center's programs for individuals with developmental disabilities went to the state capitol last week to meet with legislators. This group consisted of program participants, program supervisors and coordinators. Their objective was to thank the legislators for their ongoing support and to impress upon them the need and importance of the many services provided by organizations like HASC Center. They also conveyed the trust that they, as constituents, placed in their government representatives in Albany to remember them when faced with important decisions about funding the services they receive.

HASC Center's mission is to

provide people with developmental disabilities in the Jewish community with the tools and guidance they need to achieve the highest level of independence and empowerment possible.

The group met with Senate Democratic Leader John Sampson, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Carl Kruger, Sen. Daniel Squadron, Sen. Eric Adams, Sen. Kevin S. Parker, Sen. Bill Perkins, Sen. Martin Malave Dilan, Sen. Rev. Ruben Diaz, Sr., Assemblyman Felix Ortiz, Assembly member Rhoda Jacobs, Assemblyman Karim Camara and Assemblyman James F. Brennan.

The legislators heard firsthand of the significant accomplishments individuals in the



HASC Center's program participants share their concerns with NYS Senate Finance Chairman Carl Kruger in the State Capitol in Albany, last week.

group achieved through participation in HASC Center's wide array of programs and services. They also heard about the many individuals and families waiting anxiously to receive services.

Lawmakers expressed to HASC Center's leadership that the meetings impressed them and underscored the need to continue supporting HASC's programs.