

Brooklyn Borough President Recommendation

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
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INSTRUCTIONS

1. Return this completed form with any attachments to the Calendar Information Office, City Planning Commission, Room 2E at the above address.
2. Send one copy with any attachments to the applicant's representatives as indicated on the Notice of Certification.

APPLICATION

NYPD EVIDENCE STORAGE ERIE BASIN – 180256 PJK

In the matter of the application submitted by the New York City Police Department (NYPD), pursuant to Section 1970c of the New York City Charter, for site selection and acquisition of a 937,034 square-foot (sq. ft.) property located at 700 Columbia Street in the Red Hook neighborhood of Brooklyn Community District 6 (CD 6). Approval will facilitate a lease renewal and continued use of two lots for vehicular evidence storage at Erie Basin.

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY DISTRICT NO. 6

BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE
 APPROVE WITH
MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS

DISAPPROVE
 DISAPPROVE WITH
MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS

SEE ATTACHED

BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

May 21, 2018

DATE

RECOMMENDATION FOR: NYPD EVIDENCE STORAGE ERIE BASIN – 180256 PQQ

An application was submitted by the New York City Police Department (NYPD), pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, for site selection and acquisition of a 937,034 square-foot (sq. ft.) property located at 700 Columbia Street in the Red Hook neighborhood of Brooklyn Community District 6 (CD 6). Approval would facilitate a lease renewal and continued use of two lots for vehicular evidence storage at Erie Basin.

On April 17, 2018, Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams held a public hearing on this acquisition request. There were no speakers on the item.

In response to Borough President Adams' inquiry as to how the continued operation of the evidence storage facility supports Erie Basin as a location for maritime-dependent uses, the applicant's representative stated that the facility is not utilized for maritime use.

In response to Borough President Adams' inquiry regarding the initial lease approval, which resulted in a lease payment to the City directed toward the maintenance of the Louis J. Valentino Jr. Park and Pier, and whether such provision would be included in the requested lease renewal, the applicant's representative confirmed that the obligation would continue.

In response to Borough President Adams' inquiry regarding the continuation of the evidence vehicle facility operation, which would preclude the extension of waterfront public access and/or a waterfront-enhancing use of the property, given that evidence facility is not a maritime-dependent or -enhancing use, and the justification for seeking a 25-year lease term, the applicant's representative stated that the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) is presently negotiating a 10-year lease, with the justification that there are no other sites available to host the evidence storage facility.

Consideration

Brooklyn Community Board 6 (CB 6) approved this application on April 24, 2018.

The proposed acquisition would allow the NYPD to retain its vehicle evidence storage facility at Erie Basin, on privately-owned property held by a maritime business, for a period of 10 years. The upland property is utilized by the NYPD Property Clerk Division to store evidence that is primarily vehicle evidence. This facility is one of six evidence storage sites maintained by the NYPD Property Clerk Division throughout the city. The primary NYPD vehicular evidence storage site is located adjacent to John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK). The Erie Basin facility is used for non-standard and inoperable automobiles that cannot be accommodated at the JFK facility. In addition to vehicles, the Erie Basin site has been used to store biological evidence. However, this practice was discontinued in 2012, after the facility was damaged by inundation from Superstorm Sandy.

The lots are located entirely on the Erie Basin breakwater, with one lot also improved by a 106,000-sq. ft. hangar structure. This building provides enclosed storage for biological and vehicular evidence. The building has not been retrofitted for flood protection since Superstorm Sandy. The second lot, which includes an in-water marine barge port within Erie Basin, contains a small administrative building where the NYPD coordinates vehicle drop-off and pick-up.

The NYPD use dates back to 1994, the effective date of the current lease, which expires in 2019. The Columbia Street Esplanade, which runs along a portion of the property and ends at the NYPD facility, was created pursuant to the original site selection and acquisition. The esplanade connects to IKEA's Waterfront Public Access Area via protected bike lane, and to the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) Red Hook Recreation Area via a shared lane. The esplanade includes a bicycle path, a public walkway, and seating. As a condition of the original

lease, the property owner is also required to convey \$50,000 of City revenues annually to NYC Parks for the maintenance of Louis J. Valentino Jr. Park and Pier.

The Erie Basin facility can accommodate up to 1,700 vehicles. According to the NYPD, the site is currently over capacity, with more than 2,700 vehicles. In 2017, the facility processed 4,175 motorcycles and vehicles; 1,597 vehicles as arrest evidence, 464 as forfeiture, and 2,084 as safekeeping. The facility is accessible via the southern end of Columbia Street and operates 24 hours a day, with regular weekday hours for the public. The staff consists of 36 civilian and uniformed employees.

The leasehold is zoned M3-1, and located within both the Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Business Zone (IBZ) and the New York Coastal Management Zone. The surrounding context consists primarily of industrial and maritime uses, including the barge port. The north side of Erie Basin is occupied by an IKEA store with its water's edge serving as green space. Access to the site along Columbia Street passes adjacent to the Gowanus Bay Industrial Park.

In 2015, Borough President Adams approved the NYPD Property Clerk Division's request to lease a warehouse in Sunset Park for short-term storage of biological evidence. The Erie Basin facility no longer accepts such materials but the existing DNA evidence remains on site, and the NYPD has not resolved a means to relocate it without risking damage. The NYPD Property Clerk Division is working toward a long-term plan to address the growing need for evidence storage facilities. In 2017, the NYPD received approval to acquire a site in Maspeth to store non-vehicular evidence. The agency anticipates this facility would be complete in the next five years, and that the remaining biological evidence at Erie Basin would be relocated there in the future.

Borough President Adams recognizes that vehicular storage requires large sites with proximity to major roadways, and that such spaces are difficult to acquire in New York City. He understands that the Erie Basin facility is helping to meet the NYPD's needs, and that approval would allow the NYPD Property Clerk Division to continue operations at the site. The NYPD has communicated that necessary electrical improvements would be made to the property, and that the scope of work would be coordinated with the owner to upgrade public access and amenities at the Columbia Street Esplanade.

Borough President Adams recognizes the near-term needs of the NYPD to accommodate vehicle evidence and the revenue the NYPD lease provides to help sustain the adjacent maritime bargeport use. However, he believes that the site's harbor location could one day incorporate a continuation of the public esplanade as a waterfront enhancing use and/or play a role in buffering the Red Hook peninsula from future storm-surge events at a later date. To date, no specifics for a Red Hook resiliency plan have been put forth, though this harborfront property should remain part of future resiliency conversations until such a time.

Meanwhile, the property would continue to serve a need for the NYPD and its lease provides an opportunity to continue the property owner's obligation to set aside \$50,000 of revenues from City payments toward the facility for improvements and maintenance at the nearby Louis J. Valentino Jr. Park and Pier. He urges that the 10-year lease duration and the \$50,000 annual payment be adequately demonstrated in writing prior to approval of this application for acquisition (new lease) by the City Planning Commission and/or City Council.

Recommendation

Be it resolved that the Brooklyn borough president, pursuant to sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter, recommends that the City Planning Commission and City Council approve this application with the condition that the lease executed by the New York City Department of Administrative Services (DCAS) on behalf of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) not exceed 10 years and require the owner to provide \$50,000 annually, allocated from City-provided revenues, to the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) as a funding stream for improvements and maintenance at Louis J. Valentino Jr. Park and Pier.