

Brooklyn Borough President Recommendation
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
120 Broadway, 31st Floor, New York, NY 10271
CalendarOffice@planning.nyc.gov



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 #: GREEN GEMS GARDEN ADDITION – 190452 PCK

An application submitted by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) and the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the site selection and acquisition of a property located at 151 Fountain Avenue. Such action would facilitate the expansion of the Green Gems Garden, an existing community garden, which abuts the proposed acquisition site.

COMMUNITY DISTRICT NO. 5

BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE
 APPROVE WITH
MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS

DISAPPROVE
 DISAPPROVE WITH
MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS

SEE ATTACHED

BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

August 29, 2019

DATE

RECOMMENDATION FOR: GREEN GEMS GARDEN ADDITION – 190452 PCK

An application was submitted by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) and the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the site selection and acquisition of a property located at 151 Fountain Avenue. Such action would facilitate the expansion of the Green Gems Garden, an existing community garden, which abuts the proposed acquisition site.

On July 2, 2019, 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 what improvements are required to combine the lot with the existing community garden, and whether the garden has a direct water source, the NYC Parks representative stated that the lot is incorporated into the full garden, which is permitted to use hydrant water by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Such access is facilitated by Green Thumb.

Consideration

Brooklyn Community Board 5 (CB 5) has not yet taken a position on this application.

The Green Gems Garden covers 13 tax lots on the southwest corner of a block bounded by Crystal Street, as well as Fountain, Glenmore, and Liberty avenues in Cypress Hills (Block 4191, lots 1, 2, 3-8, 45-48, and 106). NYC Parks owns 12 of the 13 lots, which were assigned to the agency as part of a 2002 Settlement Agreement with the New York State Attorney General to preserve 500 community gardens. With the exception of lot 6 (151 Fountain Avenue), the properties are all currently licensed through the agency's Green Thumb program. Licensing requirements stipulate that the community garden must be open to the public for at least 20 hours per week, allow residents to join on a first come, first serve basis, and provide information and signage on the garden's fence.

The aforementioned assemblage, together with the lot to be acquired, has been used as a community garden since 1994. At the time, the City was not aware that lot 6 was in private ownership. According to NYC Parks, Council Member Rafael Espinal Jr. has already allocated funding for the selection and acquisition of this site.

The Green Gems Garden has a total lot area of 22,400 sq. ft., with 125 feet of frontage on Fountain Avenue. Green Gems Garden contains 15 fruit trees and 24 raised planting beds, of which six are used by a local high school. It is also home to 28 chickens and rabbits. The garden provides environmental education programs, which focus on horticulture, sustainability, and wellness. The property proposed for acquisition, 151 Fountain Avenue, is 25 feet wide, with a lot area of 2,500 sq. ft. It has been vacant for some time, and currently provides passive open space that functions as an extended section of the garden.

The Green Gems Garden is located within an R5B district, established by the 2016 East New York rezoning, which mapped various contextual districts in parts of Cypress Hills, East New York, and Ocean Hill. The surrounding area includes residential buildings of one to three stories, and several parks and playgrounds within a mile radius of the garden.

Brooklyn Community District 5 (CD 5) has a relatively low open space ratio of 1.3 acres per 1,000 residents, compared to that of New York City as a whole, which was 2.83 per 1,000 residents in 2015. Borough President Adams supports initiatives that serve to increase the amount of open space officially available to residents of CD 5. He recognizes that the proposed actions would ensure the

continued operation of the Green Gems Garden as a contiguous green space. Therefore, he is supportive of NYC Parks' efforts to acquire 151 Fountain Avenue as part of the community garden, which would secure this local amenity in perpetuity.

Recommendation

Be it resolved that the Brooklyn borough president, pursuant to Section 201 of the New York City Charter, recommends that the City Planning Commission (CPC) and City Council approve this application.