Superblock Stewardship Advisory Committee Meeting
Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: February 17, 2015

Members in Attendance: Barbara Albrecht, Lynne Brown, Anne Hearn, Michael Hengerer, Neal Herman, Alison Leary, Kenny Lee, Larry Maslon, Allen Mincer, Julia O’Connor, Michael Patullo, Heather Skolnick, Eero Simoncelli

Members Not in Attendance: Rachel Belsky, Sewin Chan, Jeff Goodwin, Angela Kamer, Rosemary Scanlon

Invited Guest: Jason Hollander

1. Engagement and Programming Update

Following up on a request from the previous meeting in regards to developing an outreach plan to introduce the architects of the Coles project more widely to the NYU community, Chair Larry Maslon welcomed to the meeting Jason Hollander, Senior Director of Public Affairs, to discuss ways in which multimedia can be used to promote engagement with the architectural team.

Hollander outlined a multi-phase plan that includes creating video content (supplemented with social media) to engage with multiple constituencies. He noted that the focus of this initial phase of engagement would be to allow the community to get to know the architects as experienced and accessible professionals who are approaching the Coles project with enthusiasm and openness.

It was noted that information about the architects is currently available on the Coles Redevelopment page of the NYU website. Future phases of engagement will be determined following these initial efforts and the visioning meetings the architects plan to hold with faculty and students.

Brown then presented a general timeline for making decisions about the programming of the building, which included several steps to allow the architectural team to gather and refine information from building end-users, with ongoing direction from the University and input at key points from the Committee. In particular, Brown noted that the Committee would be consulted in the event that major trade-offs surfaced, especially in regards to deviations from the University Space Priorities Working Group’s recommendations. For example, the Committee may be called upon to provide input on the inclusion of a supermarket and/or cafeteria, which were not included in the USPWG recommendations; or to opine about including design features that may entail changes in square footage. It was agreed that issues of timeline, financing, and constructability would not fall under the purview of the Committee’s guidance.
Executive Vice President Alison Leary emphasized that the programming process is by necessity an iterative one that requires the testing and consideration of multiple ideas and strategies. Thus, she noted, it would not be prudent to draw conclusions about the building until the programming process has sufficiently progressed and an official synthesis has been developed.

2. Superblock Progress Report & Debrief

Communications Manager Heather Skolnick provided an update on the window replacement project in Washington Square Village. She reported that buildings #3 and #4 are expected to be completed late this spring, at which time work will begin on buildings #1 and #2. She noted that some residents have experienced difficulty with opening and closing the windows, given that they have not adequately worn in yet. She noted that a device to assist residents has been developed and can be obtained, following production, by contacting the Client Services Center. In response to a question from the Committee, Alison Leary indicated that a solution to allow for the installation of door screens is also being considered. Leary also noted that the volume of complaints during the recent cold spell has decreased significantly in comparison to a similar period last winter.

Skolnick also noted that other improvements to the Washington Square Village, including Local Law 11 façade repair work and roof replacement, have been advanced to reduce the total time of sidewalk bridging erected around Washington Square Village.

With regard to the window replacement in Silver Towers, Skolnick indicated that preparatory work is proceeding— with measurements completed and, window fabrication, sidewalk bridging approvals, underway. It was noted that a mock-up apartment with the new window and PTAC configuration is available for viewing upon request.

Skolnick provided additional updates on the following projects on the superblocks:

- **LaGuardia Retail Strip** – The conversion of the currently-vacant storefronts into NYU uses (an ITS computer lab and a 3-D printing lab) are slated to begin as soon as permits are approved by the Department of Buildings. The renovation will include external lighting improvements and the installation of new rooftop HVAC units with sound attenuating barriers.

- **Dog Run Relocation** – The Mercer-Houston Dog Run Association has approved the design of the proposed relocated dog run. The next step will be to obtain approval from the Landmarks Preservation Commission (staff level review).

Finally, Skolnick reported that the Superblock Progress Report, which is distributed regularly to residents of the superblocks, is opened by an average of 31% of residents at Washington Square Village and 35% of residents of Silver Towers. She also reminded residents that she has been holding weekly “office hours” in the lobby of #4 Washington Square Village, where she has been responding to residents’ questions, mostly about the window replacement project.

The Committee suggested that printed copies of the Superblock Progress Report be made available to residents in the building lobbies, and/or enlarged and posted in building display cases. Members also expressed that shorter reports with links to more information might be more well received by residents.

3. Gym Replacement Update
Deputy Chief of Staff Michael Patullo reminded the Committee that the Interim Fitness and Athletic Plan—a comprehensive document detailing the gym replacement strategy developed in conjunction with the Coles Advisory Committee—was distributed prior to the meeting. He called attention to the major facets of the plan, including the provision of fitness and athletic needs at 404 Lafayette Street, decreased membership rates, and the University’s plan to help defray the cost of YMCA membership. Patullo also noted that new corporate memberships would soon become available to all NYU employees, and that the interim NYU facilities would not include tennis, racquetball, or squash courts. It was noted that a communications strategy was in development to ensure that members of the NYU community received timely and comprehensive information about their options once the plans were finalized.

4. Semi-Annual Report

Larry Maslon asked that specific comments on the draft Semi-Annual Report and corresponding cover letter, which was distributed prior to the meeting, be submitted by Wednesday, February 25. A final draft of the report will be presented at the Committee’s next meeting for ratification prior to distribution.