Superblock Stewardship Advisory Committee Meeting
Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: Monday March 2, 2015,

Members in Attendance: Barbara Albrecht (via phone), Rachel Belsky, Lynne Brown, Sewin Chan, Jeff Goodwin, Anne Hearn, Neal Herman, Alison Leary, Kenny Lee, Larry Maslon, Allen Mincer, Michael Patullo, Rosemary Scanlon, Eero Simoncelli, Heather Skolnick

Members Not in Attendance: Michael Hengerer, Angela Kamer, Julia O’Connor

Invited Guests: Douglas Glorie, Molly MacQueen, Gus Maimus, Douglas Swann

1. Comments from the Chair

Chair Larry Maslon called the meeting to order and welcomed the invited guests from STV, Incorporated. He also recognized Rosemary Scanlon, who announced her retirement from her position as divisional Dean at SPS, effective June 2015.

2. Legal Update

Senior Vice President Lynne Brown noted that the New York State Court of Appeals—the State’s highest court—has decided to grant the petitioners’ request for leave to appeal. She reminded the Committee that the case was brought against the City, with NYU as a necessary third party. While the effects of this decision are not immediately clear, Brown emphasized that the University is in the process of conferring with its lawyers to better understand the possible outcomes of the continued litigation. Oral arguments are expected to be heard either in June (before the end of the Court’s current term) or in the fall (once the Court convenes for its next term), with a decision likely to follow a few months thereafter.

Brown also noted that the Court’s decision to hear the case does not preclude the University from continuing to engage the architects in the design process or with implementing general quality-of-life improvements to the superblocks, including replacing windows in Washington Square Village and Silver Towers.


Committee Member Barbara Albrecht, who chaired the Subcommittee on Construction and Mitigation, introduced representatives from STV, Inc. Albrecht reminded the Committee that STV had been chosen as the independent consultant to fulfill the University Space Priorities Working Group’s Recommendation to provide external independent review of the adequacy of the provisions
set forth in the Restrictive Declaration. STV, Albrecht noted, held several meetings with members of the Committee and NYU and has prepared a comprehensive report detailing its findings.

STV, led by Gus Maimus and Molly MacQueen, provided an overview of the findings presented in the report, which concludes that:

“The requirements set forth in the Restrictive Declaration...are very strict, and include some unusual additional requirements to provide for protection of the surrounding Greenwich Village community during construction. It must be acknowledged that there could be individual irritation from some construction activities, but the finding of this evaluation is that the Restrictive Declaration sets forth the correct procedures and substantive requirements, and if followed as planned will lead to a well-controlled environment and project.”

In addition, STV provided a summary of its findings in each of the mitigation categories listed in the Restrictive Declaration:

- Air Emissions
- Dust
- Noise
- Vibration
- Dewatering
- Pest Management
- Hazardous Materials
- Historical and Cultural Resources
- Traffic

Members engaged in discussion with the STV representatives, including on the topic of pest control. Albrecht noted that the report would be posted on the Committee’s public website.


A final draft of the Committee’s Semi-Annual Report was presented for review and approved by the Committee with no substantive changes.

The Committee then discussed the distribution plan for the report, which Lynne Brown noted would include a University-wide email distribution accompanied by Larry Maslon’s cover note, as well as a presentation at the March 26 meeting of the University Senate. Other methods, such as presentations at meetings of Senate Councils by members of the Committee and inclusion in standing newsletters, were discussed.

5. Discussion: Open Spaces on the Superblocks

Larry Maslon reiterated the need for the development of a cohesive and enforceable protocol for use of open space on the superblocks, which would allow the Office of Faculty Housing to work with residents to manage the complexes. In order to develop this protocol, the Committee discussed several options, including seeking outside expertise (possibly a landscape architect or property manager) and using expertise found within the NYU academic community. It was suggested that
inviting representatives from other similar large residential complexes with complex constituencies—e.g., Battery Park City, Stuyvesant Town, etc.—to address the Committee could be one way to begin this conversation. These complexes, members believed, could offer expertise and best practices, as well as specific guidance on landscaping, use of open spaces, enforcement, and access by non-residents.

The idea of examining the north and south superblocks in toto as one contiguous space (not necessarily as two independent complexes) was raised and discussed. While the general preference among members was that the needs and intricacies of Washington Square Village and Silver Towers were sufficiently distinct to warrant being treated as separate entities, it was emphasized that residents must be given adequate opportunities to vet any proposals. There was discussion about the way in which the input could be gathered from residents.

Members then discussed the composition and functioning of the tenants associations in Washington Square Village and Silver Towers. The representatives from each group (who also sit on the Committee) provided information about meeting times, representation/voting, accessibility of information, and constituent engagement. It was clear that there was neither uniformity of approach nor a robust set of protocols or practices in place regarding the governance of the tenant associations. Members discussed the appropriate role of the Committee, and of NYU, in the organization and functioning of the governance organizations on the superblocks and tabled the topic for further discussion at a later meeting.