Superblock Stewardship Advisory Committee Meeting
Meeting Summary

Meeting date: Monday May 11, 2015, 3:30-5:00PM

Meeting Location: President’s Conference Room, Bobst Library, 12th Floor

Members in attendance: Barbara Albrecht, Rachel Belsky, Lynne Brown, Jeff Goodwin, Anne Hearn, Michael Hengerer, Neal Herman, Angela Kamer, Alison Leary, Larry Maslon, Allen Mincer, Julia O’Connor, Michael Patullo, Rosemary Scanlon, Eero Simoncelli, Heather Skolnick

Members not in attendance: Sewin Chan

1. Comments from the Chair

Larry Maslon, Committee Chair, welcomed the Committee and called the meeting to order.

It was noted that this was the last regular SSAC meeting of the academic calendar. Recommendations were made to hold meetings over the summer, but not as frequently. It was also stated that a summer meeting should be scheduled to review the architects’ progress.

The Committee discussed the programming process for the new building and how they would be involved. The Committee understands that there will be trade-offs on how space is allocated given the parameters of the University Space Priorities Working Group (“USPWG”), interviews with the future end users of the spaces on how their needs and priorities have evolved since the USPWG report was written, and recommendations from the architects on space requirements for infrastructure (e.g. loading docks, elevators, computer and maintenance rooms). It was reiterated that trade-off discussions are a normal expectation during the early phases of the programming and building design process.

The Committee agreed that it would be impossible to design a building that everyone loves, but also believes that cutting 10% of each program out of the building may not be the correct approach to addressing space trade-offs. The Committee thinks it will be important to both learn from NYU’s past building projects and listen to the architects’ directives throughout the programming process to make the best recommendations possible.

Court of Appeals update

Lynne Brown, Senior Vice President for University Relations and Public Affairs reported the Court of Appeals hearing is scheduled for June 2nd in Albany. A decision is anticipated before the Court breaks for the summer in July.
2. Window Replacement Project Update

Heather Skolnick, Communications Manager, provided an update on the window replacement projects. The installations in Washington Square Village buildings 3 and 4 are complete and the team has begun work in buildings 1 and 2. A Silver Towers Tenants Association meeting is scheduled for this evening to discuss the details of the window replacement and PTAC (heating and cooling unit) installation project.

3. Guiding Principles and New Steps re: Open Space and Governance

Malson opened the discussion recommending that the Committee divide into two working groups, one for open space and one for governance. The working groups would be tasked with creating lists of recommendations on policies in these areas. These recommendations would be presented to the University to research, structure, and submit back to the Committee for approval for implementation.

Alison Leary, Executive Vice President of Operations stated that a comprehensive report on open spaces with renderings and plans had been conducted by the Joel Napac architecture firm. Leary offered to present the ideas proposed by the architect to the Committee for review.

The Committee reviewed some uses that do not currently have dedicated space on each block as relevant to different demographics: the nursery school’s need for outdoor play space; a space for the small children who live in both Washington Square Village and Silver Towers to play; space for active, moderately active and passive activity; and a variety of age appropriate areas. Several areas were discussed as possible play spaces including the grassy area behind the LaGuardia Place retail strip and the Oak Grove.

It was noted that construction of the new Mercer-Houston dog run is scheduled to begin in August and work is scheduled to be complete in early January 2016.

The discussion turned fencing around the superblocks. The Committee advocated for the removal of all redundant and unsightly fencing. For fences with a particular purpose (e.g. to keep dogs out or protect grass), the Committee agreed it is important for the University to use effective signage to express the purpose of the fences. It was recommended that a landscape architect make recommendations on appropriate fences. One member recommended that a handrail be installed on the diagonal path that leads from Bleecker Street into the Silver Towers plaza.

There was a discussion about the spaces used by the Community Agriculture club and the Steinhardt urban farming curriculum. The Committee felt these spaces could use better oversight and guidelines on usage.
The discussion concluded with tasking the governance subcommittee with the goals of guiding the Washington Square Village and Silver Towers Tenants Associations on self-governance through potentially establishing bylaws with election policies.