Superblock Stewardship Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: Tuesday, March 22, 2016, 2:00-3:30PM

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

Members in attendance: Barbara Albrecht, Anne Hearn, Michael Hengerer, Angela Kamer, Larry Maslon, Allen Mincer, Arvind Rajagopal, Eero Simoncelli

Members Not in Attendance: Lynne Brown, Administrative Liaison (ex-officio,) Jeff Goodwin, Neal Herman, Ezra Sacks, Erica Silverman

Representatives: Heather Banoub, Assistant Director Communications, Community Affairs (ex-officio)
Rachel Belsky, Project Director, University Relations (ex-officio)

Invited Guests:
- Jimmy Pisaniello, Assistant Vice President, Campus Safety
- Arlene Peralta, Senior Director, Community Engagement

1. Welcome and Comments from the Chair
Chair Larry Maslon welcomed the Committee and called the meeting to order. Maslon noted that Lynne Brown, Senior Vice President for University Relations and Public Affairs was unable to join the meeting.

2. Review of Items from Previous Meeting for Possible Discussion
Maslon asked the Committee if they had any final comments or reactions to the University’s response to the Quality of Life report submitted by the Committee to the University in December. The Committee had no comments and Maslon asked for an update on the enhancements to the open spaces presented by Mark Gordon, Director for Design, at the previous meeting. Heather Banoub, Assistant Director for Communications, reported that Gordon was working with an architect on designs and pricing, and a work schedule would be finalized in the coming weeks.

3. Report on Public Safety on the Superblocks
Maslon re-introduced Jimmy Pisaniello, Assistant Vice President, Campus Safety, and thanked him for returning to present his response to the Committee’s recommendations on enforcement around the Superblocks. Pisaniello thanked the Committee for their recommendations and explained that their recommendations were assessed and divided into three categories: concur with recommendation (no reservations), recommendation could work (things to consider), and alternative approach recommended. He began with the Committee’s recommendation to investigate if Public Safety officials can be empowered to write citations. It was not recommended that Public Safety officials be empowered to address quality of life issues because they felt the approach was too “heavy” and would alienate residents, build walls between Public Safety Officers and residents, and impact response to safety and security issues.
Pisaniello reported on how the Public Safety officers currently patrol the Superblocks (between 7:00am-9:00am; 6:00pm-8:00pm, and 11:00pm-1:00am). His recommendation was to standardized this patrol and adopt a community patrolling model where the same officers patrol the area daily. This model helps the residents become familiar with the officers and lends to building bridges as oppose to walls between the officers and the residents. Angela Kamer, a Committee member, recommended the officers patrol earlier in the morning (beginning at 5:00am). Pisaniello said he would be happy to adjust the patrol times or add additional hours, noting that the current time have been set based on “high traffic” hours (i.e. when residents are headed to work, coming home from work, and coming home from dinner). Pisaniello also expressed a concern that by dedicating officers to addressing quality of life enforcement, the response time to more serious emergencies would be diluted. He recommended hiring or recruiting “Quality of Life Ambassadors” to inform and educate residents on policies, and when necessary issue citations that are reviewed by a “Faculty Housing Community Standards Panel.” He did not recommend the use of fines.

Committee member Arvind Rajagopal asked Pisaniello if he could report on the types of issues reported around the Superblocks. The biggest quality of life issue is homelessness and the other issues that come with it (i.e. public urination, panhandling, and noise complaints). Maslon asked if there are other major issues being reported around the Superblocks. Pisaniello reported that according to the 6th NYC Police Precinct eight crimes had been reported between 9/1/2015 and 2/29/2016. These crimes included burglary, graffiti, petty and grand larceny (i.e. a broken car window and something stolen from the car); no violent crimes were reported. Committee member Anne Hearn asked if the police had any reports of drug dealing. Pisaniello said there were no active narcotic investigations and encouraged the Committee to call Public Safety and 911 if they see any suspicious activity.

Committee member Eero Simoncelli asked if the Public Safety officers patrol on Houston Street near the Silver Towers garage entrance. Pisaniello said this area is included in the patrol route. Simoncelli said he was concerned about this area since Silver Towers’ management recently eliminated the guards stationed in the garage. Simoncelli also expressed a concern about the Public Safety officers not being on continuous rounds during their shifts. Pisaniello said he would ask the Sergeants to review the officers’ responsibilities and expectations while on patrol.

Maslon asked the enforcement subcommittee for feedback on Pisaniello’s recommendation. Committee member Allen Mincer asked how the Quality of Life Ambassadors would address non-resident violations if the citations were adjudicated through Faculty Housing. Pisaniello saw this as an internal entity and said it would be difficult to enforce policies for those outside the NYU community. Mincer was pessimistic that policies would be adhered to without a mechanism to enforce policies against all individuals who use the superblocks. Pisaniello said an education campaign about superblock policies is an effective tool that can be used to gain community buy-in; citing the no-smoking campaign in front of Bobst and the Weinstein resident hall as a successful example. He explained that the more people who are involved in approaching and delivering the message of what is and is not acceptable resulted in these policies becoming ingrained among the community.

Maslon asked Pisaniello for recommendations on keeping the area around 181 Mercer Street safe when construction begins. Pisaniello said lighting is the most important part of keeping areas around construction sites safe. Mincer asked Pisaniello if he predicts the new building will make the area safer or not. Pisaniello said it was likely that the area would become safer as the building will bring more people to the area.

4. Update on Superblocks
a. **Landmarks Preservation Commission Update: Urban Farm**
Maslon reported that Brown sent all interested parties a memo regarding the urban farm behind Silver Towers on Houston Street. The memo included the Committee’s recommendation and that the University submit a formal application to the Landmarks Preservation Commission to re-establish the urban farm in its previous location. Maslon explained that the University is enlisting the expertise needed to create a layout and design of the proposed farm and Professors Berg and Bentley from Steinhardt’s Department of Nutrition and Food Studies were involved in the design phase.

b. **Landmarks Preservation Commission Update: Diagonal Pathway**
Rachel Belsky, Project Director, reported the 2011 LPC-approved master plan for Silver Towers eliminates the diagonal path that leads from the Silver Towers plaza to Bleecker Street because it is not part of the original I.M. Pei landscape. Belsky explained that when Greene Street Walk and a new east/west path between the toddler park and Silver Towers II open, LPC would likely require removal of the path, and replacement with lawn to become part of the Oak Grove. The Committee asked if the path could be widened temporarily, until these new paths open. Belsky said the University would seek feedback from the LPC staff to test whether the LPC might reconsider this master plan feature.

c. **Superblock Walk-Through Report**
Banoub reported back to the Committee about the regular walk-throughs around the superblocks to address maintenance and open space issues. The walk-throughs are attended by representatives from Public Safety, Faculty Housing, Community Affairs, Facilities Management, Construction Management, CBS Maintenance, and Cushman and Wakefield. Brown joined the last meeting and helped direct the group toward the types of issues that should be noted on the tours and addressed. The improvements addressed so far include:

- Removing the dumpster north of the Key Park.
- Pricing and design of a new fence and plantings around the Key Park.
- Pricing and design of the WSV driveway entrances and tree pits.
- Replacement of old public safety call boxes, which are no longer operational.
- Pricing to repair the steps to the Sasaki garden.

Banoub invited the Committee to take a tour of the superblocks once progress on the open space enhancements is made. Maslon asked if the fence and hedge would be removed from behind the LaGuardia Place retail strip this spring. If so, he hoped the Committee could finalize the policies for those grassy plots before the work was underway. Maslon recommended turning the larger space into a farm and using the smaller plot as a community space.

5. **University Program for Updates (Branding)**
Maslon and other Committee members complemented the new open space construction signage, and suggested that the University brand these improvements as a way to take credit and establish good will with the community.

6. **Qualifications and Traits for Faculty Housing Position**
Maslon recommended that the Committee react to a job description at an upcoming meeting or virtually, similar to how they reacted to the architect RFQs. The Committee re-stated their desire to see a high touch, high visibility position in Faculty Housing and said the person should have qualities similar to those who previously held this position.

Maslon told the Committee he would work with Brown to create a schedule through the end of the semester and the Committee agreed to cancel some meetings if there are too few agenda items.