Superblock Stewardship Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: Monday June 20, 2016, 11:30-1PM

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

Members in attendance: Barbara Albrecht, Anne Hearn, Larry Maslon, Allen Mincer, Ezra Sacks, Eero Simoncelli, Shawn Thibault

Members Not in Attendance: Jeff Goodwin, Angela Kamer, Arvind Rajagopal, Erica Silverman

Representatives: Lynne Brown, Administrative Liaison (ex-officio)
Heather Banoub, Assistant Director Communications, Community Affairs (ex-officio)
Rachel Belsky, Project Director, University Relations (ex-officio)
Arlene Peralta, Senior Director, Community Engagement

Invited Guests: Mark Gordon, Director for Design, Capital Projects and Facilities
Karen Gulino, Interim Vice President, Global Campus Safety
Erin Lynch, Assistant Vice President, Faculty Housing and Residential Services

1. Welcome and Comments from the Chair
Chair Larry Maslon welcomed the Committee and invited guests and called the meeting to order. He introduced new student representative Shawn Thibault, a sophomore in the Stern School of Business. Maslon thanked Shawn in advance for serving on the SSAC and conveyed that his participation in the coming year will be most welcome.

Maslon stated that during the summer, he’d like to continue to advance the superblock improvements and that the warm weather afforded an opportunity to continue to think about programming and rules for the open spaces.

Maslon reminded the committee that the next meeting is scheduled for July 11th.

2. 181 Mercer Street Update
As a follow up to the architects presentation given at the May 10th SSAC meeting, Sr. Vice President Lynne Brown conveyed that engineering and cost estimating studies have revealed that the below grade construction (specifically 3 or more levels below grade) is costly and complicated, requiring secant walls and significant dewatering. The MTA tunnel along Houston Street presents additional construction challenges. As a result, the below grade space will probably be scaled back with programming cuts anticipated. Brown said that Linda Chiarelli would attend the July 11th SSAC meeting to further explain the issues with below grade construction.
In response to a question from Simoncelli regarding the University’s ability to anticipate these types of construction challenges, Brown explained that while secant construction and dewatering were considered in initial project planning, the recently completed engineering and cost studies show very concretely the complicated engineering financial issues with below grade construction. These studies were not complete during initial project planning. Brown also noted that during ULURP the conventional approach is to ask for as much space as possible with the intention of scaling back during the actual project planning; this approach was used by NYU for the Core plan.

To compensate for the decrease in below grade space, Brown stated that 404 Lafayette Street will become permanent; the courts and the pool are priority uses at 181 Mercer Street, but some offices for athletics could be distributed off site, possibly to 194 Mercer Street or 404 Lafayette Street. The decrease in below grade space also puts pressure on the upper floors especially the podium, but Brown conveyed that a series of conversations are underway to sort through the process.

As a schedule update regarding start of work, Brown stated that the installation of the sidewalk shed and fence is expected to commence on August 1st and take approximately 4 weeks, with the interior and exterior demo to start around Labor Day. Communications to the local community regarding this work would occur two weeks in advance of the start of work, and could be reviewed by SSAC at its next meeting. Regarding the larger unveiling of building design, Brown stated that rollout would occur sometime in October following President Hamilton’s inauguration in late September. Other important academic building projects to be unveiled in the fall include 370 Jay Street and the Forbes building.

The rollout would include other new buildings, including 370 Jay Street and the Forbes building.

Following Brown’s update, Maslon asked whether the podium height was fixed, and whether rooftop programming might be affected. Brown responded that the height of podium is fixed -- it was fixed during ULURP -- and that rooftop programming was under review. Maslon also asked whether the communications to be released prior to work start in August could be coordinated with the lobby monitors, so that it could be displayed prior to the beginning of work. Mark Gordon responded that there is a design concept for the monitors and this timeframe might be possible.

3. Phase 1 Open Space Enhancements

Brown reported that funds have been added to the capital budget for superblock improvements, in a 3 to 4 year phase-in cycle. Funds have also been identified in existing budgets for operation and maintenance of the spaces. Brown urged the SSAC to memorialize their contribution to the improvements on the superblocks by taking credit for the completed and on going work done to date.

4. Update on Superblock Enhancements

Mark Gordon reviewed improvements expected in the 1st year budget:

- **Key Park Fence** – The existing fence will be replaced with the same fence type used around the Bleecker landscape planting beds; the shrubs adjacent to the fence will also be replaced. The Key Park will remain in continuous operation during fence installation. Work is scheduled for this summer.

- **North/South Driveway Enhancements** – Asphalt will be removed, grasses will be planted, and curbs will be repaired. Work is scheduled for this summer.
Grassy Area behind Bareburger – Grass here has recently been restored, but other enhancements (new fence, perimeter plantings, access points, signage) are on hold subject to SSAC input. In discussion, other issues surfaced regarding this space: screening the dumpsters; lighting; moveable furniture; storage for moveable furniture; whether the perimeter hedge should go inside or outside the fence; whether access should be by key, or sign-out sheet, or other method; and, whether usage should be limited to certain hours.

Gordon suggested a site visit to review and discuss these items, especially since programming for the space is being considered. Brown said her staff would set up a site visit prior to the next SSAC meeting.

Removing the gates in front of the east/west access paths (to/from LaGuardia Place) was also briefly discussed. Brown reminded the group that during ULURP the stated intention was to open up the superblocks to make them more publicly accessible, thus fence removal here is an institutional obligation.

5. Public Safety Discussion
Karen Gulino reported that over the summer call boxes will be replaced campus-wide, including on the superblocks. This will enhance visibility for Public Safety; a concurrent communications plan is part of this effort. Gulino noted that new call boxes had already been installed in some areas and replacement in the Sasaki Garden was expected in the coming months.

Gulino then described the patrolling initiative underway in Public Safety. Currently, Public Safety officers are stationed within the NYU buildings and do not patrol beyond building entries or in the streets. The initiative envisioned will create a new class of officer, “hand picked” and adept at, and trained in community relations. Patrols would be on foot or perhaps by bicycle. The initiative is currently in the conceptual planning phase, there are budgetary considerations and further buy-in is required. Planning is expected to continue for another 6 to 8 months before the initiative can be implemented; the program may start with a pilot program.

Sacks asked about the relationship between this patrol unit and the doormen, and Gulino replied that the bicycle patrol would forge relationships with the doormen and other members of the community, and that the doormen would have a number to call if assistance was needed.

6. Faculty Housing Position Update
Erin Lynch stated that the faculty housing position has been posted and that the position was expected to be filled by September. The new hire would be introduced to the superblock community in several ways including the fall Faculty Housing newsletter, meetings with tenants associations and other groups, and scheduled “meet and greets”. Lynch confirmed that the new hire’s office would be in 2 WSV in the Cushman and Wakefield offices.

7. Urban Farm Update
Brown provided a quick update on the urban farm – an application is expected to be submitted to Landmarks Preservation Commission next month with a hearing in late fall, subject to the Commission’s calendar. Sacks asked if the farm could be open to the public during certain hours. Brown responded that if public access was part of the program, it could be noticed with signage at the site.
Brown reminded the group that the next SSAC meeting is scheduled for July 11th and to send suggested agenda items to Maslon. She reminded the group that Linda Chiarelli and John Beckman were invited to the next meeting to provide updates on 181 Mercer Street and the lobby monitors respectively.