1. Welcome and Comments from the Chair
Chair Larry Maslon welcomed the Committee and invited guests and called the meeting to order. Maslon let the Committee know that this would be the last meeting until the fall semester.

2. 181 Mercer Street Update, Linda Chiarelli
Maslon thanked Linda Chiarelli for attending the meeting and for providing the Committee with an update on construction and design development at 181 Mercer Street. Chiarelli noted that the architects have been hard at work balancing building program, budget, and construction complexity. As a follow up to the report provided by Lynne Brown at the previous meeting (June 20, 2016), Chiarelli reiterated that engineering and cost estimating studies have revealed that due to site conditions the below-grade construction (specifically 3 or more levels below-grade) is very costly and complicated and the architects have been working on designs that scale back the below-grade space while minimizing programming cuts. One potential way to relocate program space is to move the building further out below-grade under the Green Street Walk; mechanical equipment and some program space may be located here freeing up space above grade. This idea will continue to be evaluated by Linda and her team.

The architects have also met with the user groups whose programs will be located in the building to discuss the design changes and revisit priorities for the spaces. The Department of Athletics’ office space will be relocated into leased space across the street from 181 Mercer Street. Chiarelli said the Department of Athletics will have equivalent or more office space square footage in the new space on Mercer and in 404 Lafayette Street than what they previously had in Coles. The design changes will also
move some of the Department of Athletics up to the ground floor in the building, which was desired by the Department, but was not part of the original design.

Tisch and Steinhardt were also asked to prioritize their needs and consider such options as shared design and shop spaces to be used by both undergraduates and graduates. For Tisch, a Proscenium theater at 350 seats remains and Steinhardt put a premium on ensemble and practice rooms. The architects are working with Turner Construction on pricing and schematics for the new designs. Brown let the Committee know that the architect’s design vernacular has not changed since they last presented to the Committee and there have been no changes to the shape and thinner massing of the building (May 10, 2016 meeting). Chiarelli also reported that the building’s programmatic users recognize the efficiencies created by the new building design and seem pleased with progress.

A Committee member asked Chiarelli why the team didn’t know about the construction complexity sooner. Chiarelli said that challenging sub-terrain conditions were fully realized during the boring work, but the full extent of implications are not known until the design phase when the construction requirements for the building come into clear focus. At that point one has a better understanding of the type of structure that needs to be constructed to support the weight of large-span spaces like athletic courts, arts theaters, and mechanical equipment required to support air handling to lower levels. With the complexity and costs of these features in hand it was thought not financially viable to go three or more levels below grade and deal with resulting complications from water and the nearby presence of the subway.

Maslon asked how much square footage is lost with the new design. Chiarelli said while the numbers are still in flux about 90,000 square feet of the approximate 850,000 square foot total may be lost from the podium, but some of that “lost space” can be picked up in other parts of the building. Committee member Eero Simoncelli asked if the Commons is still part of the design. Chiarelli said the Commons remains, but may be slightly reduced in size. Simoncelli also asked if it is safe to extend the building under the Greene Street Walk toward Silver Towers. Chiarelli said it is and the engineers say it would be possible to safely extend 181 Mercer Street closer to Silver Towers than planned. Committee member Anne Hearn asked if the University could return to the NYC Department of City Planning and request a reduction in the size of the community facility space square footage. Lynne Brown said the University would not because the NYC City Council wanted the community facility space and it was part of the agreement the University made to building 181 Mercer Street. Brown reminded the Committee that the 7,500 square feet of community space will include ground level office space and a welcoming space accessible to pedestrians from the Greene Street Walk. There will also be a place where community members can go in case of an emergency since the building will be connected to the CoGen Plant. Chiarelli added that the open spaces around the building will be another amenity that can be enjoyed by community members.

Maslon asked if the Committee should expect the building design to change from the architect’s presentation in May. Chiarelli said it should not differ markedly. The big question is how the building will be clad; Chiarelli said this is still a work in progress. Maslon said it will be important for the University and the Deans of the schools with space in 181 Mercer Street to talk about how the programming and design has changed as compared to the University Space Priorities Working Group recommendations. Discussion should emphasize how these new spaces benefit the academic missions of the schools and cannot be replicated elsewhere. Brown agreed and said her team, led by John Beckman would be working with the Deans and architects to create this narrative.
3. Communications Discussion, John Beckman

Brown welcomed Beckman who joined the meeting to lead the Committee in a discussion about communicating about 181 Mercer Street. Beckman said the University plans to unveil the 181 Mercer Street design and programming in the late fall via a communication to the University community, the project website, and videos on social media and direct email that explain the architects’ process of turning the University’s needs into a design. The 181 Mercer Street rollout will be part of a larger rollout of the University’s broader development plans motivated by academic mission -- including 370 Jay Street in Brooklyn, the Silver Building science expansion, and the Institute of Global Public Health and data science in the Forbes building.

Beckman asked the Committee what would be important for the rollout to include. Recommendations included:
- Conveying the programmatic importance of the building to the community,
- Holding information sessions and open houses with the architects in the new space in Washington Square Village,
- Holding events in partnership with the American Institute of Architects,
- Reaching students via a blast email; information sessions, especially for students who study related subjects; web visualizations to see what will be in the building; social media platforms; and through the Student Senators Council,
- Highlighting sustainable design features of the building (Chiarelli said these will include grass rooftops and a water retention system),
- Offering tours of the building and virtual tours on the website, and
- Discussing faculty concerns (i.e. how is University paying for the building) and community concerns (i.e. how building will change the area).

Heather Banoub walked the Committee through the 181 Mercer Street site plan pointing out where the construction fence will be located, where parking would be rendered inaccessible by the fence and how vehicular and pedestrian traffic patterns will change. Banoub confirmed that the site map would be blown up and posted in the Washington Square Village and Silver Towers lobbies.

Beckman also updated the Committee on the photo screen project for the Washington Square Village and Silver Towers lobbies. He expects the screens to be installed before the start of the fall semester and has been working with the NYU advertising and publications group to create templates to the categories discussed in previous meetings (construction updates, enhancement announcements, emergency notices, and programming events). Banoub will be updating the screen announcements until the new Faculty Housing communications position is filled.

4. Superblock Developments

Arlene Peralta updated the Committee on the creation of the Borough President’s Construction Committee. This Committee exists independent from the University and in addition to the Department of City Planning’s independent monitor. The committee is a vehicle to address construction concerns and to provide a forum for the University to provide construction updates, address concerns, and answer questions. The first meeting of the Committee was on July 15, 2016.
Rachel Belsky updated the Committee on the Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) application for the urban farm and new Silver Towers path. An informal meeting with LPC staff was held in early July, and staff recommended the University submit the application and begin the formal review process.

Maslon asked for an update on the new Faculty Housing position. Brown reported that Erin Lynch of Faculty Housing has the guidelines for the Committee’s recommendations for the position and the goal is to have someone onboard by the start of the fall semester. Brown said the Committee may stay involved and updated through the process.

5. Membership and Fall Meeting Schedule
Banoub passed out an availability matrix for Committee members to provide their fall schedules and Maslon said he would be in touch with the Faculty Senator Councils to identify new representatives to replace members cycling off the Committee this summer.