



CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, N.Y.  
Real Estate Committee – 2022  
City Hall, One Roosevelt Square  
Mount Vernon, NY 10550

**REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE**

Derrick Thompson – City Council President  
Dr. Darren Morton – Comptroller  
Stephanie Vanderpool – Assessor

Elias S. Gootzeit, Secretary  
914-665-2398

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**REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

For meeting held on  
Friday, July 29, 2022 at 3:30 pm

The Real Estate Committee Meeting was held on Friday, July 29, 2022 at 3:30 pm at City Hall, 1 Roosevelt Sq., 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl, Mayor's Conference Room, Mount Vernon, NY.

**Attendance:**

Derrick Thompson, Committee Chair (City Council President)– Not Present in the beginning.  
Stephanie Vanderpool, Assessor – Present  
Dr. Darren M. Morton, Comptroller –  
Joyce Brown, City Attorney – Present  
Elias S, Gootzeit, Legislative Assistant/Committee Secretary

**Guests:** Tracey Nelson regarding 157 Ellwood Avenue Block 2155 Lot 9; and Rev. Dr. Gregory Robeson Smith and Anthony Epps regarding the 1619 Development Group via Zoom.

**Summary**

There being a quorum represented by Comptroller Morton and Assessor Vanderpool, the meeting was opened at 3:45 pm with a Call of the Meeting and a Roll Call. Committee Chair Thompson arrived at 4pm. The minutes of June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 were distributed, reviewed and approved before 4pm.

**Guest Presentations:**

Self-introduction and presentation of Ms. Nelson regarding her interest in the property at 157 Ellwood Avenue. Assessor Vanderpool responded to Ms. Nelson's proposal by indicating that the property at 157 Ellwood Avenue was misidentified. The portion of the property that is owned by the City of Mount Vernon is an alley that is inadequate in size to accommodate a building. The City owned portion in Lot 9 and 10 which is a roadway, and not the house itself. There is a house on Lot 8 that is not owned by the City. The City will likely find a lesser use for the property, such as a charging station.

Ezron Henry introduced himself and his interest in 204? / 205? South Fifth Avenue Block 3084 Lot 4. The guest Ezron Henry...the property that matches block 3084-4 is 204 South 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. 204 South 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue is classified as a service/gas station which is the property he is interested in. Just to note, 205 S 5<sup>th</sup> is an abandoned apartment building owned by the Mount Vernon Urban Renewal Agency.

The second presentation, via Zoom, to the Mount Vernon Real Estate Committee was provided by the 1619 Development Group that included Rev. Dr. Gregory Robeson Smith, Anthony Epps, C Douglas Dixon, Mack Carter, Gordon Bell, Audre Oldacre and Eon Nichols. Each member of the Real Estate Committee was provided with a paper copy of: "1619 Development Group LLC"; "1619 Development Group, LLC Partial Members List" which summarized the backgrounds of each of the presenting panelist; and a PowerPoint that was presented on the screen as well as on paper of an "initial Discussion" from the Panel to the Real Estate Committee. Each of the panelist, within their spheres of expertise conveyed their experience throughout the region. They would seek a current market study to attract capital and create options. Mr. Nichols described how, in Downtown White Plains, near White Plains Hospital, he replaced an old residential government project in favor of mixed use affordable housing. Replaced older conceptions of space use with green space. In the beginning, the work addressed 450 units that later grew into 1000 units. There was no displacement of residents because the first built on open space and moved people to new space. All of the buildings would be paid for by the 1619 Development Group. There would be educational and retail spaces along with home health agencies and child care. They would have looked for a satellite police station except that they were relatively close to the existing police facility in the City of White Plains. The presenters described their involvement in successful restoration of spaces that were completed and hosted a visit from Vice President Harris. The presenters indicated is interested in all possibilities including the Zombie Homes and the Mount Vernon Train Station corridors... and what will matter to Mount Vernon Comptroller Morton noted that the 1619 Development Group is interested in partnering with the City of Mount Vernon to develop Zombie Homes in possession of the City as well as looking at total re-development in the transit development corridors. Dr. Morton suggested that the presenters should contact Planning Commissioner Rausse who is currently moving the Comprehensive Plan agenda that the City is pursuing Comptroller Morton noted that the Zombie Homes are being administered by the Planning Department under Deputy Commissioner Marlin Molina as to properties that are not owned by the City. Comptroller Morton continued that this [Real Estate]Committee addresses City owned properties. The Planning Department is trying to address bank owned properties. Comptroller Morton noted that there are about 20 City owned properties that are about to be appraised. There are residential sites and open sites. He also indicated that the City is looking for opportunities for homeownership and that "We" [the City] are not yet ready until we are clear about existing ownership of all properties that are under consideration. Comptroller Morton restated that the transit oriented development area requires discussion with Commissioner Rausse... noting that the process is bifurcated. Mr. Epps noted that the 1619 Development Group has technology and ability to act further in a coordinated manner as needed. REC Committee Chair asked whether the Group used PILOTS on their other development projects. The response was "yes"; but that the Group wants to be "bias" to Mount Vernon purposes... marketed to Mount Vernonites. Chair Thompson indicated that there needs to be further discussion-should not ask for PILOTS- the City does not benefit. The discussion encompassed a discussion of "control" even at Market Rate. Mr. Bell indicated that the Development Group would look to arrange development of ten properties to a batch; 25 batches in all and marketed toward disposition. Committee Chair Thompson expressed his concern for the stress on public services and infrastructure problems. It was noted by the presenters that the White Plains Comprehensive Plan was able to include the 1619 Development Group and was able to include all partners effectively. The Construction choice was use of manufactured housing which proved to be 20-30% faster. The use of modular construction has proven to cause 45% less carbon emissions. The 1619 Development Group noted that the speed of the contemplated work could result in a turnaround time of less than 12 months- making them viable relatively quickly. The 1619 Development Group sought suggested next steps from the Real Estate Committee. Comptroller Morton suggested that the City's internal conversation is needed in order to circle back with the Development Group.

## **Correspondence**

The following correspondence was received and read to the Committee by the Secretary:

1. The Correspondence from Tracey Nelson was read to the Committee following Ms. Nelson's presentation. She was present for the correction of the information regarding the ownership of the subject property at 157 Ellwood Avenue 2155.9;
2. The Correspondence from "Jet" Dzaferovic in behalf of Yves Scherer as to 152 South 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue was 3088.18;
3. The Correspondence from Andrea Bellony as to 230 South Third Ave 3109.8; 328 South First Ave 3120.35; 331 South Second Avenue 3130.35; 234 East Fifth Street 4064.1; 106 South Twelfth Ave. 3018.5
4. The Correspondence from Floyd Adams as to 42 Dell Avenue, Block 2077.1
5. The Request of Ruby Olisemeka in behalf of The Free People's Market to use Block 3088 Lot 14 at 142 South 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue between August 1, 2022 and October 20, 2023

## **Discussion**

The following discussion took place led by Assessor Vanderpool:

The City of Mount Vernon does not own the property at 42 Dell Avenue. The property at 127 Dell Avenue , also sought by Mr. Adams, was redeemed by the previous owner a few years ago, despite the listing on the City's computer indicating otherwise. Both the Comptroller and the Assessor noted

That as to all other properties sought, the City will not determine when to go to auction or negotiate a price until each property has received an appropriate appraisal from an independent source. Once that is done , the scheduling of an auction for each parcel with thereafter be on the agenda. Until that time, no sales pf City owned property will take place. This applies to the proposed use by Ms. Olisemka and the Free People's Market as to 142 South 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

There was also a discussion about how to develop the website so that it can be more informative to the public. We also discussed an email from Axel Ebermann that was forwarded to the members of the Committee . Comptroller Morton assured that there would be a documentable process by which the city determines how to transfer title of City owned property that follows the rules that will be designed and codified by the City Council,

As to Block 3088 Lot 14 at 142 South 4<sup>th</sup> the Comptroller noted that, like all the properties, we are doing a full appraisal. As to that point, the Comptroller was not sure that the City would be in a position to enter into a yearlong agreement with anyone until the City determines the feasibility of any particular person acquiring the property for a purpose or for some other use. The Comptroller noted that there may be some vacant lots that the Body may determine could be made available for gardening or declare for a municipal use like this. The immediate response is that we have to wait for our appraisal to come back. After we review all of that then we could circle back with her and consider what else we could do on a community benefit initiative on any other property. It may not be that one... it may be some other one; but the City will have to get back to her. The Assessor was in agreement. She also noted that the Secretary should respond to all of the correspondents with appropriate written responses from the Secretary presented to the Committee members before distribution.

**Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn at 5pm by Comptroller Morton seconded by Assessor Vanderpool and passed by roll call.