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THE CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD SIX
P.O. BOX 1672
NEW YORK, NY 10159-1672

VIA E-MAIL

June 28, 2017

Marisa Lago, Chair
City Planning Commission
120 Broadway, 31st Floor
New York, NY 10271

RE: East River Fifties Alliance/Sutton Place Zoning Text Amendments N 170282 ZRM

Dear Chair Lago:

At the June 27, 2017 Full Board meeting of Community Board Six, the Board adopted the following resolution:

Whereas, the Department of City Planning has certified the zoning text amendments proposed by the East River Fifties Alliance, Inc. and co-applicants, Manhattan Borough President Brewer, Senator Krueger, and Council Members Kallos and Garodnick, whose senate and city council districts overlay the mostly residential Sutton Place community and referred them to the board under the identifier N 170282 ZRM; and

Whereas, the board held two public hearings, one of which was conducted jointly with the Manhattan Borough President, on the proposed rezoning where the vast majority of the testimony and submitted written comments were in support of the text amendments; and

Whereas, the amendments would change the zoning of certain blocks generally bounded by the East River & FDR Drive to the east, East 59th Street to the north, 100 feet east of First Avenue to the west, and mid-block between East 51st Street and East 52nd Street to the south, herein referred to as "the subject area", with a Floor Area Ratio (or "FAR") of 10, to limit the height of buildings in the area to 260 feet, with an inclusionary housing designated area (IHDA) that would provide for an additional 2 FAR residential bonus and a 1 FAR community facility bonus (i.e., 13 FAR) in exchange for 1.6 FAR of affordable housing; and

Whereas, the current R10 zoning of this principally residential area allows for significantly taller buildings than has been within character of this neighborhood and if left unaddressed would otherwise allow for extraordinarily dissonant development, well outside the context of the current aesthetic and character of the Sutton Place community; and

Whereas, affordable housing, both on-site and equitably distributed throughout the city, has been a long-standing district priority for Manhattan Community Board Six; and

Whereas, the proposed text amendments seeks to expand affordable housing bulk for the subject area by 1 FAR beyond the minimum 0.6 FAR that would be permitted by the existing zoning text; and

Whereas, the subject area, while near the Midtown Special District (MSD), is not, in our considered view, a part of the Midtown commercial business district in either character, purpose, or aesthetic definitions and should be considered separate and apart from the business district so that the zoning of the MSD should in no way influence or determine that of the residential subject area; and

Whereas, the height limits for the subject area envisioned in the proposed zoning text amendments (i.e. 210' on narrow streets and 235' on wide streets without affordable housing, and 260' on narrow and wide streets only with participation in IHDA bonus) would be among several height limited areas immediately abutting the MSD; and

Whereas, the Zoning Resolution's rules allowing tower-on-a-base construction on wide streets in R10 districts would be inappropriate to the character and aesthetic on narrow streets in the subject area; and

Whereas, the Environmental Assessment Statement has reported that eight of the buildings in the subject area exceed the height limit envisioned; two of those outliers are located on wide streets and are largely ameliorated; and

Whereas, such non-compliant heights are, in any event, hardly extraordinary, given the multiple occasions that the city has revised zoning rules because such rezoning tends to occur after communities recognize the need to address the shortcomings of existing zoning framework; now

Therefore, be it resolved, that Manhattan Community Board Six does hereby express its support for the stated purposes and objectives of the zoning text amendments proposed by the East River Fifties Alliance and elected officials representing the area; and

Be it further resolved, that Manhattan Community Board Six requests the City Planning Commission to reconsider any objection to the proposed text change, taking particular note that the Environmental Assessment Statement projects a 130% increase in affordable housing under the proposed action over a no-action alternative.

VOTE: 33 in Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstention 0 Not Entitled

Best regards,



Jesús Pérez
District Manager

Cc: Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Liz Krueger, State Senator
Hon. Benjamin Kallos, Council Member
Hon. Daniel Garodnick, Council Member
Sandro Sherrod, Chair, CB6 Land Use & Waterfront Committee