DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING
CITY OF NEW YORK

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW DIVISION

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Department of City Planning

November 9, 2012

Robert R. Kulikowski, Ph.D., Director
New York City Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination
100 Gold Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10038

NOTICE OF LEAD AGENCY DETERMINATION AND REVIEW

Re: Halletts Point Rezoning
CEQR No. 09DCP084Q
ULURP Nos. 090484ZMQ, N090485ZRQ, 090486ZSQ, N090487ZAQ, N090488ZCQ, 130068MMQ, and other pending numbers
Queens, Community District 1
Type I Action

Dear Dr. Kulikowski:

The above-referenced application involves discretionary actions subject to City Planning Commission (CPC) approval. These actions are subject to review under City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR), Executive Order No. 91, and the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), 6 NYCRR 617.

Pursuant to Sections 5.03 and 5.05 of the Rules of Procedure for City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) as adopted June 26, 1991, the Department of City Planning, acting on behalf of the CPC, is assuming lead agency status for this application and is initiating the CEQR review. DCP will be conducting a coordinated review with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) who will be acting as involved agencies.

The applicant, Halletts A Development Company, LLC, in conjunction with NYCHA who would be a co-applicant for certain discretionary approvals affecting the existing NYCHA Astoria Houses campus, is requesting discretionary approvals (the "proposed actions") that will facilitate a mixed-use development on several parcels on Halletts Point along the East River in Astoria, Queens. The project site comprises all or portions of eight tax lots on the Halletts Point peninsula. In total, there would be development of eight buildings (Buildings

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1 through 8). Building 1 (Block 915, Lot 6) would be located on the block bounded by 27th Avenue to the south, 1st Street to the west, 26th Avenue to the north, and 2nd Street to the east. Buildings 2 through 5 (Block 490, Lots 1 and 11 and Block 916, Lots 1 and 10), including the mapped streetbeds of 26th and 27th Avenues between 1st Street and the East River, would be bounded by Hallet's Cove Playground (Block 490, Lot 100) to the south, the East River to the west, Whitey Ford Field (Block 913, Lot 1) to the north, and 1st Street to the east. Buildings 6 through 8 would be located within the existing NYCHA Astoria Houses campus (Block 490, Lot 101) bounded by 27th Avenue, 1st Street, and 8th Street.

The application proposes the creation of a Large-Scale General Development (LSGD) Plan that would include Buildings 1 through 5 and the NYCHA Astoria Houses campus (including Buildings 6 through 8). The creation of the LSGD would be facilitated by the alienation of a 10-foot wide strip of parkland of Hallet's Cove Playground to create a single zoning lot containing Buildings 2 through 5 and the Astoria Houses campus, including Buildings 6, 7, and 8. The use of an approximately 10-foot wide alienated portion of the Hallet's Cove Playground would require the jurisdictional transfer of parkland from NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to NYCHA.

The development of Buildings 6 through 8 would be facilitated by the disposition of NYCHA property which is subject to Section 18 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 and approval by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). For Buildings 6 and 7, the NYCHA property would be disposed of to the applicant (i.e., Halletts A Development Company, LLC) for development. Building 8 would not be developed by the applicant; rather, it is expected that this application would facilitate a future disposition action by NYCHA with the development entity and building program subject to a future request for proposals (RFP) by NYCHA.

The proposed mixed-use development would be comprised of affordable and market-rate housing, publicly accessible waterfront open space and esplanade, and neighborhood commercial uses including a supermarket. Implementation of the proposed project would require approval of discretionary actions by the CPC, including:

- Zoning map changes to rezone: a) Block 490, Lots 1 and 11; Block 915, Lot 6; and, Block 916, Lots 1 and 10 from M1-1 to R7-3/C1-4; b) part of Block 490, Lot 101 from R6 to R6/C1-4; c) part of Block 490, Lot 100 (i.e., the alienation parcel of Hallet's Cove Playground) from N/A to R6; and, d) part of Block 913, Lot 1 (parcel bounded by edge of Whitey Ford Field, centerline of 2nd Street, East River, and 26th Avenue) from R6 to M1-1.

- Zoning text amendments to: a) make part of Queens Community District 1 eligible for the Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) Program; b) exempt accessory parking located no more than 33 feet above the height of the base plane from the definition of floor area; c) make Block 490, Lots 1 and 11; Block 915, Lot 6; and, Block 916, Lots 1 and 10 an Inclusionary Housing designated area and add R7-3 base and maximum floor area ratios; d) require lot lines in approved LSGD to be treated as a street line for the purposes of applying minimum distance between legally required windows and walls or lot lines; and, e) permit a LSGD to be

applied for and granted even though such LSGD does not meet the ownership requirements if a portion of the LSGD is owned by the State of New York or a defunct corporation.

- LSGD bulk modification to allow for the transfer of floor area and lot coverage.
- Waivers of height, setback, floor area coverage, rear yard, and minimum distance between buildings requirements of the waterfront zoning regulations.
- Various waterfront authorizations and certifications to: a) modify requirements for location, area and minimum dimensions of waterfront public access areas and visual corridors; b) modify requirements within a waterfront public access areas; c) for phased development of waterfront public access areas; and, d) for waterfront public access & visual corridors.
- Changes to the City Map to: a) delineate a 10-foot wide public access easement within the eliminated portion of a public park, between First Street and the U.S. pierhead and bulkhead line; b) eliminate, discontinue and close of 26th Avenue, 27th Avenue, and a 10-foot wide portion of a public park, between First Street and the U.S. pierhead and bulkhead line and accompanying disposition; c) eliminate, discontinue and close of two portions of Astoria Blvd., between First Street and Eighth Street and accompanying disposition; d) delineate a 70-foot wide easement for street purposes within the two ends of Astoria Boulevard, between First Street and Eighth Street; e) delineate a public access easement within the closed portion of 26th Avenue and 27th Avenue, between First Street and the U.S. pierhead and bulkhead line; and f) establish an existing public park on the City Map as parkland on Block 913, Lot 1.

As noted above, NYCHA would be the co-applicant for certain discretionary approvals affecting the existing NYCHA Astoria Houses campus and those include the proposed rezoning of a portion of the Astoria Houses campus from R6 to R6/C1-4 and certain waterfront authorizations and certifications.

In addition to the proposed actions subject to CPC approval, the proposed project will require approval from other City, State, and Federal agencies, including: a) NYCHA board approval of the disposition of public housing property; b) approval by HUD under Section 18 of the U.S. Housing Act for disposition of NYCHA public housing property; c) NYS Office of General Services approval for disposition of a negative easement (i.e., lands underwater); d) permits and approvals by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) for in-water and tidal wetlands construction activities; e) State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit from NYSDEC; f) alienation of Parkland by the NYS Legislature; f) mayoral override of zoning resolution street tree planting requirements; g) HPD approval of an Affordable Housing Plan (AHP) pursuant to the Inclusionary Housing Program; and, potential financing from City and/or State agencies (HPD, NYC Housing Development Corporation, and/or NYS Homes and Community Renewal) for affordable housing construction.

The proposed actions would facilitate the development of a total of approximately 2.72

million gross square feet (gsf) on the project sites, consisting of a total of approximately 2.15 million gsf of residential space (2,573 housing units including 2,161 market-rate and 412 affordable housing units); approximately 69,000 gross square feet (gsf) of retail space (including an approximately 30,100 gsf retail space designed for supermarket use in Building 1); and approximately 1,439 garage parking spaces and 97 on-site surface parking spaces on the sites of Buildings 6, 7, and 8. The proposed project would also include approximately 96,000 sf (2.2 acres) of publicly accessible open space, including a waterfront esplanade along the East River and upland connections to 1st Street.

The proposed project's Buildings 1 through 5 would include residential, retail, and parking uses in low- to mid-rise bases and residential uses in high-rise towers. Ground floor retail would line portions of 1st Street and the demapped portion of 27th Avenue, leading to the waterfront. An approximately 30,000 gsf retail space (designed for a supermarket use) would be located on the ground floor of Building 1. The parking garages in the building cores may be topped by a rooftop terrace for use by the buildings' tenants. The structures on Buildings 1 through 5 would range from 160 to 300 feet in height (16 to 30 stories) and the low- to mid-rise bases would be a minimum of four stories and would range from approximately 40 to 80 feet in height.

Buildings 6 and 7 would contain new mid-rise buildings rising to a maximum height of 100 feet and 110 feet, respectively (10 and 11 stories). These structures would contain residential and retail uses and surface parking. Local retail uses would be located along 27th Avenue and surface parking lots would be provided at the rear of the buildings. The existing uses on these sites, including parking and trash facilities, would be relocated elsewhere within the NYCHA Astoria Houses campus.

In addition to the proposed development program for Buildings 1 through 7 by the applicant, the proposed actions would facilitate a proposal by NYCHA to dispose of the site for Building 8 along Astoria Boulevard for development pursuant to a future RFP. Building 8 would contain one new high-rise building rising to a height of 270 feet (27 stories). This structure would contain market-rate residential units and retail uses and garage parking. Local retail uses would be located on Astoria Boulevard at the intersection of 1st Street.

The proposed project would include improvements to stormwater and sanitary sewer infrastructure to support the new development. Other improvements would be made to the street network (reconnection of Astoria Boulevard, traffic directional changes, and pedestrian access) and transit services (an on-street bus layover facility) of the area.

As noted above, the application would also rezone a portion of the NYCHA Astoria Houses campus to include a commercial overlay over the existing R6 zoning district along Astoria Boulevard and 27th Avenue. Because of the configuration of the NYCHA buildings and the presence of NYCHA tenants, it is not expected that new retail uses would be developed in the ground floors of existing buildings within the NYCHA Rezoning Area.

According to the applicant, the proposed project is intended to transform a largely underused waterfront area into a new, enlivened mixed-use development. The proposed

new housing would support the City's plans to provide additional capacity for residential development, especially affordable housing. The proposed neighborhood retail would provide amenities that are currently lacking in the area and which would serve the existing residential population in addition to the project-generated population. The proposed project would also establish a publicly accessible waterfront esplanade with upland connections and a connection to Hallet's Cove Playground south of the site and Whitey Ford Field north of the site. The opening of Astoria Boulevard between 1st and 8th Streets would improve circulation in the area and provide a better connection with the surrounding community. The proposed bus layover facility would facilitate the provision of better bus service to the area.

Currently on the project site within the existing manufacturing zoning district are a few building structures and open lots predominantly vacant but for construction and telecommunications storage and parking plus an electronics and ink toner company. The NYCHA Astoria Houses contains 22 six- and seven-story residential buildings on an approximately 27-acre campus with a total of 1,103 residential units, as well as surface parking lots, a day care center and senior center, basketball courts and playgrounds, walkways, and other landscaped areas. The portion of the project site within the Astoria Houses campus is zoned R6 and contain parking lots, trash compactors, walkways, and a small amount of landscaped area.

Whitey Ford Field is an approximately 3.6-acre park containing a baseball field, bleachers, and open lawn area. It is under the jurisdiction of DPR although it is not mapped parkland (it is currently zoned R6). Hallet's Cove Playground contains an asphalt baseball field and basketball courts; the portion that would be subject to the proposed alienation action includes a number of trees, the park perimeter fence, and a portion of the perimeter sidewalk and baseball field back stop area.

For the environmental review, the reasonable worst case development scenario for the proposed actions would be the applicants' proposed project as described above. Absent the proposed action, the project site would remain as it is under existing conditions.

The applicant anticipates that construction of Buildings 1 through 7 would take nine years (i.e., completed by 2022). Although the timeframe for the future disposition and development of the site of Building 8 is not known, for the purposes of the environmental review it is assumed that Building 8 would also be completed by 2022. Therefore the analysis year for the proposed actions is 2022.

The proposed disposition of NYCHA property (under Section 18 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937) will require a federal approval from HUD subject to review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The New York City Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD) acts as a Responsible Entity for NYCHA's environmental reviews pursuant to 24 CFR Part 58. HPD would therefore serve as an Involved Agency under CEQR.

An Environmental Assessment Statement is attached. If you have any questions regarding this application, please contact the project manager, Diane McCarthy, at (212) 720-3417.

Sincerely,

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