

Announcement for all Upper West Side Residents and Park West Village Stakeholders

Lawsuit Filed Today Seeks
Environmental Review of Proposed “Columbus Village
Substantial Modification of the Project May Be Required
Buildings Department’s Inaction Called Negligent

**Open meeting planned for
Monday, April 14th
7:30 p.m.
at the Second Presbyterian Church,
6 West 96th Street (corner of Central Park West).**

In an action intended to force the developer of the proposed “Columbus Village” to comply with land use regulations and respond to community interests, an area resident filed suit today in New York State Supreme Court against the New York City Department of Buildings and eleven other defendants, plus 20 “John Doe” defendants to be named later.

“With the encouragement of the Department of Buildings, the developers have been acting as if City zoning laws, State statutes, and Federal legislation don’t apply to them, and have felt free to ignore community concerns about disproportionate scale, environmental impact and construction safety,” said Paul Buntin, the plaintiff and a resident of 372 Central Park West, one of the four condominium buildings in Park West Village. “This lawsuit intends to ensure the full public participation of all community stakeholders – owners, tenants, and businesses – in the planning process for our community.”

The environmental review process sought by the lawsuit would require public testimony concerning the impact of the proposed development on such factors as socioeconomic conditions, traffic, parking, transit, pedestrians, open space, shadows, and neighborhood character. The development plan would then have to be modified in order to mitigate the impacts identified by the public’s participation in the review process.

Jack Lester, attorney for the plaintiff, said: “The project would eliminate legislatively protected open space, access routes for vehicles and pedestrians, recreational facilities and the contextual planning for the community, and replace them with

increased congestion, density, pollution and incidence of asthma. It will destroy the unique neighborhood character and livability of the historic Park West Village.”

The proposed development plans for over 320,000 square feet of retail space, an underground parking garage and five residential towers. The central spine of the project along Columbus Avenue would create the longest pair of unbroken street walls along any avenue in Manhattan.

Thousands of residents, a public school, a health clinic and numerous businesses are within one block of the construction sites. The main construction area, which runs between 97th and 100th streets along both sides of Columbus Avenue, is the most extensive in any residential neighborhood in New York City.

Mr. Bunten noted that many neighborhood residents are looking forward to additional shopping options, including announced anchor tenant Whole Foods. “We want to work with Whole Foods and expect that they will come to the table as responsible citizens of the neighborhood,” said Mr. Bunten. “All of the people who live and work in a place should have an influence over the decisions made about it.”

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