

Scarsdale Inquirer 12/8/17

Freightway project picking up steam

By COREY BAUMER

SCARSDALE VILLAGE — We might not know exactly what it's going to be yet, but the Freightway renovation project is starting to pick up some steam.

On Dec. 5, the Freightway Steering Committee — responsible for recommending the best future use for the property — met at village hall to discuss what might become of the space just off Garth Road, currently inhabited by a tiered parking structure near universally ill favored in the community.

The committee recapped the principles already established as non-negotiable, which include: parking remaining a priority, the project being a mixed-use development that is supportive of the village center, the scale and height of the new property matching the established aesthetic, connecting the site to the village center and that the

project must be sustainable and green.

Two new principles were also introduced, including that the site be fiscally responsible in considering the long term, as well as keeping in mind the future of autonomous cars and ride shares and the encouragement to at least consider adding affordable and/or work force housing, which faced some pushback in terms of realism. "It sounds nice," committee member Jim Blum said, "but it falls apart once you start thinking about 'what does that mean?' This would have

to come from somewhere, and the two places it would naturally come from are either increasing the density [of the units] and potentially height and potentially a whole bunch of other things, or reducing the number of parking [spaces], and that is really going to become the point of tension, no matter what our wish list is."

It was decided this last principle would be combined into an entirely new stipulation focusing more broadly on community benefit.

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"Any future development of the Freightway site should be a signature project."

— FREIGHTWAY STEERING COMMITTEE VISION STATEMENT

Freightway renovation project picking up steam

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A preliminary vision statement was also introduced at the meeting. "Any future development of the Freightway site should be a signature project that positively contributes to the vibrancy of the village center while maintaining its current function as a commuter parking lot."

As for tangible next steps, BFJ Planning, the Manhattan-based planning company hired by the committee, wrapped up its public opinion surveys and workshops a few months ago. The committee and planning group will now work together to write and submit a working draft of their findings before the end of the year.

After the working draft is submitted to the village board of trustees, a few weeks will be allotted to internalize the results. The committee and trustees will meet again Jan. 25 at 7 p.m. to debrief the outcome.

As the meeting came to a close, the question of putting out a request for proposals was briefly introduced.

If the trustees find the efforts, which will be shown in the coming report, have led to some sort of consensus, an RFP is the potential next step.

While this decision was beyond the scope of the committee, it was concluded there will be more clarity on how to proceed after the committee's report with BFJ comes out.

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