



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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CHRISTINE BERTHET
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

July 27, 2015

Hon. Gale A. Brewer
Manhattan Borough President
1 Centre Street, 19th Floor
New York, NY 10007

2015 Borough Board/Community Board Resolution Recognizing the 50th Anniversary of the NYC Landmarks Law and Value of Preservation

Whereas: In 1965 elected officials signed The New York City Landmarks Law mandating the protection of historic resources as part of a comprehensive urban planning process and a “public necessity” that is “required in the interest of the health, prosperity, safety and welfare of the people,” and

Whereas: The legitimacy of this process and its public purpose has been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, and

Whereas: The Landmarks Law outlines the many reasons for establishing a means to designate and protect buildings and neighborhoods, including fostering civic pride, protecting and enhancing attractions, stimulating tourism and other businesses and overall, strengthening the economy of the city, and

Whereas: The New York Landmarks Preservation Commission has a 50-year record of review and approval of alterations to individual landmarks or buildings located within historic districts, and half of a century later, preservation continues to serve New Yorkers by helping to create a vibrant, livable city, and

Whereas: Preservation Stabilizes Diverse Communities. New York City is not a single monolithic entity but rather a great consolidation of neighborhoods. Preserving the character of those neighborhoods creates stability for the many diverse identities of New York and allows them to flourish without being lost, and

Whereas: Preservation Preserves Affordable Housing. Landmarks and buildings in the city's historic districts in all five boroughs provide protections against demolition, which in turn save hundreds of existing units subject to rent regulation, and

Whereas: Preservation Promotes Investment, Economic Development and Good Jobs. Preservation encourages investment in real estate while stabilizing property values and strengthening the city's tax base. It helps create and protect local jobs in the conservation, reconstruction, manufacturing, film and television, tourism, hospitality and other related industries.

Whereas: Preservation is Sustainable. The greenest building is the one already built. Most old buildings were designed with a sophistication of thought rather than a sophistication of technology, which, in terms of climate control and energy usage, integrates them with the environment in a way that most new buildings do not. Furthermore, repairing, rehabilitating and re-using buildings and materials saves money, fuel and energy without the waste, debris, noise and truck traffic that new construction generates when it involves the demolition of an existing building.

Whereas: The New York Times declared that preservation is an "environmental necessity" on the occasion of the a 50th Anniversary New York City Landmarks Law and the Landmarks Preservation Commission in April 2015, now

Therefore be it resolved that: This community board celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the Landmarks law in 2015 and the ongoing value of our community's distinctive character, landmarks and built heritage, and

Be it further resolved that: We urge elected officials and citizens throughout the city to support and defend the New York City Landmarks Law, a strong Landmarks Preservation Commission and the distinctive landmarks in our community, both those that are officially designated and those that are currently unprotected.

Be it further resolved that: We urge elected officials to strengthen relations between the community boards and the Landmarks Preservation Commission and ensure that the Commission is more responsive and accountable to the concerns of the community boards than it has been in recent years by providing timely responses to Requests for Evaluation of historic buildings and districts; allowing staff-level approvals and amendments only where appropriate; honoring the spirit of its own regulations with due enforcement rather than acceptance of specious arguments from non-compliant owners; and acting in a manner that does not reward scofflaws who build first and seek retroactive approval only when caught.

Sincerely,



Christine Berthet
Chair



J. Lee Compton
Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee



Betty Mackintosh
Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee

Cc Meenakshi Srinivasan, Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair