



RESOLUTION

Date: March 6, 2018

Committee of Origin: Land Use

Re: Amending the Zoning Regulations to address oversight of tall buildings.

Full Board Vote: 33 In Favor 1 Against 1 Abstention 0 Present

The phenomenon of supertall buildings has spread from the 57th Street corridor to the Upper West Side and Upper East Side. Two supertall buildings — at 200 Amsterdam Avenue and at 50 West 66th Street-- are in progress in the CB7 board district. These buildings, as designed, and similar buildings that have sprung up within the past several years or are now under construction, are jarringly out of context, block light and air, cast shadows (including into Central Park), consume energy out of proportion to any reasonable need of residents, and may create wind tunnel effects. That a supertall building could be constructed in areas zoned for a maximum of 10 FAR has taken the community, and presumably the City Planning Commission, by surprise. Each supertall building that has been built or planned has used one or more novel tactics to evade and confound the intent of the Zoning Resolution, including:

- large “voids” as high as 100 feet that do not contain floor area for zoning purposes;
- “mechanical spaces” (frequently near ground level) that are radically taller than required for their functional purposes;
- apartment ceiling heights up to 20 feet;
- gerrymandering open space to create a single zoning lot;
- development rights transfers over long distances under rules governing affordable housing.

While it could be argued that increasing the available housing stock with new apartment construction generally provides a benefit, these artificial mechanisms used to increase building height, employed solely to may make the residences in the building more attractive to potential high-end buyers, do not add to the housing stock. People do not reside in voids or oversized mechanical spaces. 20-foot floor-to-ceiling heights do not translate to higher occupancy; rather they just waste energy derived from non-renewable resources. Accordingly, it is

RESOLVED, that Community Board 7/Manhattan urges the City Planning Commission to begin, at once, the process of amending the Zoning Resolution to address loopholes that have been exposed and exploited over the past several years, before more and more supertall buildings are imposed on our community. The future shape of our city and community depends on swift action to address the supertall phenomenon. And it is further

RESOLVED, that Community Board 7/Manhattan invites our elected officials to join in addressing supertalls as an urgent issue, because further delay would increase the community's peril.