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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

OCTOBER 11, 2019 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM @ 1 Centre Street South
Religious Facilities Task Force (RFTF) Stakeholder Meeting #1 Minutes

- Data work in the future should include the following topics for study:
 - Comprehensive study and outreach with community members;
 - How many properties have been lost over the years through PLUTO or Department of Finance help;
 - Properties that have DOB or 311 violations;
 - Air rights transfer information; and
 - Green building law and impacts on RF development:
 - Developers have more of an incentive to tear down a facility if it is not landmarked in order to encourage green building code standards.
- Topics to incorporate into the RFTF Meetings:
 - Case studies by representatives houses of worship that have successfully re-developed or maintained their properties;
 - Case study scenarios of need for legal assistance: example – A house of worship in Brooklyn was stuck in litigation for a decade because of bad litigation, and as the building was laid to waste, had \$600k work of taxes that ate into 10-20% of their value and the City was unable to help; and
 - Early notification: Example - HPD may RFP out a site adjacent to a house of worship, and the house of worship could have had early notification of the land opportunity.
- Improvements:
 - Should let religious facilities know that an Action Book is being created ahead of time as information will not be released until the end of the year; and
 - Further outreach to uptown congregations and mosques to the RFTF.
- General comments:
 - RFs have a lack of information about financial assistance. Other than the landmarking process, they aren't sure what other resources they have;
 - HPD has a list of certified organizations that have skillsets to work with faith-based organizations on affordable housing or otherwise;
 - Someone brought up learning from religious organizations from Brooklyn who have been successful with their developments, however, there seems to be no successful endeavors from Manhattan to which we can draw a precedent; and
 - Some were concerned with developers abusing their tax credits from building affordable housing. HPD preservation tax credit regulations were brought up in this topics discussion.