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**Gale A. Brewer, Borough President**

*Via Email*

February 21, 2017

Kenneth J. Knuckles, Esq.  
Vice Chair  
City Planning Commission  
Calendar Information Office  
120 Broadway – 31<sup>st</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10271

**Re: 55-57 Spring Street Text Amendment - N 160244 ZRM**

Dear Vice-Chair Knuckles:

I write in regard to the application by JBAM TRG Spring LLC, for an amendment to Appendix A of Article X, Chapter 9 of the Zoning Resolution (“ZR”) to change the buildings located at 55-57 Spring Street (Block 495, Lots 44 and 45) from Area A (Preservation Area) to Area A1 (Mulberry Street Regional Spine) of the Special Little Italy District to allow existing ground floor retail uses of the buildings to be extended by approximately 1,757 square feet to the rear lot line.

The Special Little Italy District was established in 1977 to preserve and strengthen the historical and cultural character of the community, with regulations to retain the unique character of storefronts along Mulberry Street, preserve the vitality of street life and encourage new development consistent with existing buildings. Area A1 is noted primarily as a residential area with local shopping and Area A1 is a concentration of specialty shops. However, the commercial uses within the buildings at 55-57 Spring Street have historically been more characteristic of Area A1.

The proposed text amendment would extend the western border of Area A1 50 feet west by a depth of 120 feet from Spring Street to facilitate the expansion of the ground floors to the rear lot line. The increase in retail space is minimal; additionally, following discussions with Manhattan Community Board 2 (CB2), the applicant has committed to a Restrictive Declaration that would prohibit combining the ground floors into a single commercial space, having an outdoor café, and obtaining a wine or liquor license.

However, CB2 voted on February 16, 2017 to disapprove this application due to opposition from residential tenants and a concern for a potential adverse impact of further congestion to the existing sidewalk. The community board further stated the commercial expansion serves to benefit the applicant and not the community.

The concerns of the board are valid quality of life issues. Nonetheless, allowing retail on the ground floor and full lot coverage at the ground floor is consistent with both the existing neighborhood character on the affected streets and with the built form of neighboring properties. Therefore, I find the text amendment to be appropriate under a narrower lens of review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gale A. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "G" and "A".

Gale A. Brewer