



# THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

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## **LOCAL SENIORS TURN OUT FOR HEARING ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING AT 21 SPRING ST. SITE**

### ***Council Member Chin testifies in favor of LMDC funding for badly-needed affordable housing for elderly New Yorkers***

**New York, NY** – Council Member Margaret Chin joined advocates and over 50 seniors and local residents to voice her support for affordable housing at a city-owned lot at 21 Spring St. near Elizabeth Street in Little Italy before a hearing Thursday by the Lower Manhattan Development Corp.

Thursday's LMDC hearing was a crucial step in determining whether the agency will allow for deeper affordability at a site already designated as the future home of more than 60 affordable housing units. Council Member Chin is committed to setting aside those badly-needed housing units for elderly New Yorkers – one out of five of whom live in poverty, and face increasing pressures in terms of rising rents and tenant harassment.

“If we are truly committed to ensuring that all New Yorkers can afford to have safe, clean place to live and to ensuring that seniors don't have to choose between paying for rent or paying for medication – we can't afford to say, ‘I like affordable housing, but can't you build it somewhere else?’” said Council Member Chin. “We have to start standing up for what we believe in, and build affordable housing for seniors where we can.”

“As chairman of Greenwich House Caring Community Senior Advisory Board, I am constantly aware of the problems that older people are having in keeping their apartments and finding affordable housing. This affects the elderly as there are limited apartments in the area, and those are frequently walk-ups,” said Tom Connor, a member of Manhattan Community Board 2. “Seniors are one of the fastest growing populations in the city, and we need housing specifically set aside for them. This site is exactly where we should have affordable housing, in a place where seniors are familiar with the neighborhood, and where their families, friends and favorite stores are.”

“As the older adult population rapidly grows, it is incumbent upon all New Yorkers to plan for a community that supports its members across their lifespan,” said Bobbie Sackman, director of public policy at LiveOn NY. “In a densely populated and expensive city like ours, we need to make tough choices in order to commit ourselves to allowing older adults to remain in their neighborhoods in apartments they can afford.”

“From 2011 to 2014, we lost 11,623 rent-stabilized units that were largely occupied by long-time immigrant residents. Can you imagine if you are aging and can't afford rent and didn't know where you are going to live and how you are going to survive because we have far less affordable housing now?” said Cathy Dang, executive director of Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence. “CAAAV members want anti-displacement protections to stop the loss of housing and we want any new development to be affordable housing at the local area median income. Until we win those protections through rezoning or legislation, we have the moral responsibility to make up for our decades of loss and we can start by developing senior housing on the 21 Spring St. site.”

“This site, in the middle of rampant gentrification, provides a unique opportunity to restore balance to senior citizens in Little Italy/Nolita who are constantly subject to displacement, the majority of whom reside in buildings without elevators,” said Zella Jones, president of NoHo Bowery Stakeholders. “It seems only right that those who have lived and contributed in this area the longest have a chance to enjoy their remaining lives in the neighborhood they helped build.”

Set aside exclusively for use as affordable housing by the city Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development in 2012, the site is just one of many that would have to be developed in order to address the city’s affordability crisis – one that is particularly acute for the city’s growing ranks of seniors, who are expected to make up 15 percent of the population by 2030.

The city’s application to LMDC is for \$6 million for the development of the Spring Street site as affordable housing. The agency is expected to make their decision public next month.

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