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COMMUNITY CHALLENGE SUCCESSFUL: DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS HALTS 200 AMSTERDAM

I am greatly encouraged that the Department of Buildings has put the proposal at 200 Amsterdam Avenue on hold. In response to the zoning challenge filed by the Committee for Environmentally Sound Development, the proposal has been halted while the Department conducts a comprehensive audit of the building's compliance with Open Space requirements. I believe the zoning challenge shows clearly that the proposal does not add up.

In May, I joined in support of the zoning challenge filed by the Committee for Environmentally Sound Development. I want to congratulate Olive Freud, President of the Committee, for her vision and her hard work. Olive and her organization have a long track record of delivering for the Upper West Side, and I was proud to work with her on this issue.

The challenge demonstrated that the proposal's bizarre, gerrymandered zoning lot clearly flouted the spirit and the letter of Open Space requirements in place to protect residents' access to light and air. In response to this argument, the Department of Buildings has placed the proposal under a full audit and has demanded a more detailed accounting of the proposal's Open Space--an accounting, it is worth noting, that should have been included with the proposal from the very start.

While the Department awaits this information, a Notice of Intent to Revoke has been issued and the project will remain on hold. When the information is received, it must be followed with a thorough evaluation of the proposal's accounting of their Open Space requirements and a careful consideration of the concerns raised by the community through the zoning challenge.

This is not a final victory--it will take time for this audit to be resolved. I, along with partners like Olive and the Committee for Environmentally Sound Development and Borough President Gale Brewer, will keep up the pressure on the Department of Buildings.

But this action does represent significant progress, and, most importantly, it is evidence that when we work together--and when we drill down into the weeds of policy--we can make our voices heard.
