

# REAL ESTATE WEEKLY

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 2010



The REBNY Rental Committee, l-r: Gordon Golub, Citi Habitats, Inc.; Fritz Frigan, Halstead Property, LLC, co-chair of Rental Committee; David Perry, The Clarett Group; Douglas Wagner, Bond NY Properties LLC, co-chair Rental Committee; Gary Kiyon, Perfect RE Solutions Inc.; Gus Waite, TDG-TREGNY, LLC; Matt McKeaney, On-Site.com.

## Vornado's plan for midtown is just what the city needs



BY STEVEN SPINOLA, PRESIDENT  
REAL ESTATE BOARD OF NEW YORK

The 15 Penn Plaza Project is just what Midtown needs.

The Real Estate Board of New York supports the zoning and special permit applications for the Vornado project, which would become the city's third tallest tower and replace the Hotel Pennsylvania across from Madison Square Garden.

Expanding and enhancing the quality of commercial development in that area of Midtown is vital for the continued growth and vitality of that neighborhood and our city.

The 15 Penn Plaza project makes sound planning sense for the location and is consistent with city policy to encourage high density uses near transit nodes, like the planned Access to the Region's Core (ARC) project, that will construct two new commuter rail tracks under the Hudson River, expand Penn Station under 34th Street and double capacity between mid-town Manhattan and New Jersey.

It is important that we modernize our inventory of office space, environmentally and technologically to compete in the global marketplace

New York City has the largest office market in the country and the oldest buildings. The average age of the office buildings in the city is 69 years old.

It is equally important to attract the major corporate tenant or multiple commercial office tenants that we want to locate and expand in New York and to also have proper zoning in place to allow the building of up-to-date commercial projects quickly.

The environmental and land use review processes take many months, even years. This is too long a period of time and too uncertain a process for a prospective tenant or tenants to wait.

As the market eventually rebounds, New York needs to be ready to accommodate as many companies and jobs as possible.

Based on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the proposed 15 Penn Plaza project would have an extremely limited impact compared to an as-of-right project but would offer the commercial business district many benefits, including mass transit improvements such as reconstructed passageways, wider platforms, new entrances, a new ADA-compliant elevator and other circulation upgrades to alleviate crowding.

The city and state as a whole will benefit directly from the positive economic impact of the proposed project in terms of construction and post-construction job creation and related property tax revenue.

More than 15 government, not-for-profit and business groups who recently attended Manhattan's Community Board 5 meeting supported the plan for 15 Penn Plaza.

Those groups included the MTA, NJ Transit, Regional Plan Association, Tri-State Transportation, 34th Street Partnership Bid, Local 32BJ, The Durst Organization, Stonehenge Partners, Madison Square Garden, Macys, Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee, Building Trades Employer Association, Building and Construction Trades

Council of Greater New York, LDV Hospitality, transportation experts from Columbia University and Baruch and REBNY.

Despite the broad-based support and no speaker opposition, the Community Board, whose recommendations are advisory, voted 36-1 against the plan based partly on the developer not having a tenant.

The rezoning plan is now before Borough

*"REBNY supports the zoning and special permit applications for the Vornado project, which would become the city's third tallest tower."*

President Scott Stringer for his review.

Once built, 15 Penn Plaza will be a positive contribution to this business district's office inventory and to our city's economic future.

### Residential Rental Committee Roundtable

In the fast-paced rental market, agents are always looking to gain some more insight.

Many recently got the rare opportunity to consult informally with industry specialists on topics that agents face every day at REBNY's Residential Rental Committee annual Roundtable event in the Mendik Education Center.

The sold-out event had participants spending 20 minutes at each of the six tables that offered different topics of interest.

Topics and speakers were "Pledge to Excellence: Doing Rentals with Highest Degree of Ethics & Professionalism" with Fritz Frigan, Halstead Property, LLC; "Negotiating with

Tenants, Landlords & Owners" with Douglas Wagner, Bond NY; "Salesmanship in Rental Deals" with Gordon Golub, Citi-Habitats, Inc. "The FEE" with Gus Waite, The Real Estate Group of New York; "Advertising in Rentals" with Gary Kiyon, Perfect RE Solutions, Inc.; and "Changing Face of Brooklyn" with David Perry, The Clarett Group.

Some great tips included make sure you reach across all streams of media to promote your property, listen and watch your client when they are viewing the property because it can really reveal a lot and when writing the description look at the

property with the eyes of a consumer and ask "What would really entice them?"

On-Site.com sponsored the event.

### In other REBNY News:

Don't forget to register for the next Commercial Crossfire. The Commercial Brokerage Division presents "Has the Commercial Real Estate Market Bottomed? Where Do We Go From Here?" from 6-8 pm on Tuesday, May 4 at REBNY, 570 Lexington Ave., in the Mendik Center, Lower Level. The event is free but only for REBNY members. Seating is limited. You must register online at [www.rebny.com](http://www.rebny.com)

It's time to Tee Off and Serve it Up! Join many of your industry colleagues and sign up for the REBNY Spring Golf & Tennis Outing on Monday, May 24 at the North Shore Country Club in Glen Head. For participation and sponsorships, call Kathleen Gibbs at 212-616-5246.