

COMMUNITY BOARD #1 – MANHATTAN  
RESOLUTION

DATE: DECEMBER 18, 2014

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: PLANNING

COMMITTEE VOTE:	11 In Favor	0 Opposed	0 Abstained	0 Recused
PUBLIC VOTE:	1 In Favor	0 Opposed	0 Abstained	0 Recused
BOARD VOTE:	34 In Favor	1 Opposed	1 Abstained	0 Recused

RE: International Passive House Standard for New York City

WHEREAS: Buildings are a major source of greenhouse gasses, accounting for 39% of CO2 emissions and consuming 70% of the electrical load in the U.S. (U.S. Green Building Council) (USGBC). The energy used in NYC buildings contributes nearly three-quarters of citywide emissions (One City: Built to Last). To successfully reduce the threat of climate change, the CO2 emissions of our buildings need to be dramatically cut back while maintaining and improving the services they provide; and

WHEREAS: Passive House (PH) is a recognized world standard for energy-saving buildings of all types. The PH standard reduces heating and cooling energy requirements by 90% and overall energy demand up to 75% compared to conventional buildings while also providing the most comfortable and healthy inside environment; and

WHEREAS: Energy inefficient buildings in Lower Manhattan have resulted in costly tenant utility bills, contributing to the issue of housing unaffordability in our district; and

WHEREAS: The effectiveness of the PH Standard has been illustrated by tens of thousands of Passive Houses in the world, from Shanghai, China, to New York City; and

WHEREAS: The PH Standard will become a building code requirement in Brussels, Belgium in 2015, and is a core component of the European Union’s planned mandate of “nearly zero energy” buildings in 2020. A growing number of cities in the U.S., from San Francisco to Philadelphia, officially acknowledge the PH Standard as part of their efforts to promote sustainability; and

WHEREAS: Passive House is directly focused on reducing energy needs through the application of building physics, high quality construction and proven construction technologies including insulation, airtightness, heat recovery, solar energy, solar shading and incidental internal heat gains. Resulting reductions in building energy requirements can enable renewable sources to meet 100% of energy needs (“Net Zero” performance) or to supply surplus energy to the utility grid (“Net Positive” performance); and

WHEREAS: New York City is an environmental thought leader and standard setter. The City Council unanimously approved a plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050. Mayor Bill de Blasio issued the policy, One City Built to Last: Transforming New York City's Buildings for a Low Carbon Future, 2014, which recognizes the PH Standard and serves as an affordability, economic development, and public health plan. Further, former Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg published PlaNYC: A Stronger, More Resilient New York, a long-term sustainability plan in 2013 to be revised by the de Blasio administration in 2015; and

WHEREAS: New York City has exceptional potential as an economic engine for sustainability in the United States and the world. The integrated urban lifestyle of the city results in a low carbon footprint, ranking NYC's carbon profile as the 4th lowest in the nation. Passive House innovations can help solidify and extend sustainability leadership efforts; and

WHEREAS: New York Passive House (NYPH) is an established local resource of Passive House expertise. NYPH works with other local low-energy and sustainability stakeholders, and is in continual collaboration with the Passive House Institute (PHI), for the development and transfer of engineering and environmental technologies. PHI is an independent scientific institute in Darmstadt, Germany, that is responsible for developing the PH Standard and the evolving scientific research that underpins its worldwide implementation; and

WHEREAS: Lower Manhattan is a world-renown center for finance and innovation. It is appropriate that Lower Manhattan be the site of Passive House public and private demonstration projects; and

WHEREAS: Cost is a major consideration in construction projects. It is essential that all publicly supported PH undertakings be focused on reaching cost parity with conventional construction. PH cost parity has been accomplished on projects in Europe and in the U.S. With the collaboration of global PHI and NYC planning and policy expertise, it is possible to undertake an initiative of Passive House construction best practices with a goal of achieving cost parity in local demonstration projects; and

WHEREAS: New York City has in the range of 69,000 existing buildings according to the Department of Finance in 2007. Renovating our existing building stock to an energy efficient standard is critical to meeting carbon reduction goals and an incremental, renovation plan is needed. Passive House is effective in building renovations and the majority of Passive House projects completed to date in New York City have been renovations; and

WHEREAS: Maximizing energy efficiency in residential buildings will reduce tenant utility costs and improve overall housing affordability; and

WHEREAS: Passive House facilitates community storm resilience under the coldest and hottest weather conditions. This characteristic is described in New York City's Building Resiliency Task Force (BRTF) Report, issued in response to Hurricane Sandy, as Proposal #27 Maintain Habitable Temperatures Without Power; now

THEREFORE

BE IT

RESOLVED

THAT: CB 1 supports the investigation of the implementation of the PH Standard for its potential application to new construction and renovation in our community. It also encourages the completion of a public project in Lower Manhattan to demonstrate a zero-net energy standard and cost saving potentials; and

BE IT

FURTHER

RESOLVED

THAT: Community Board 1 supports working towards the adoption of a zero net energy standard, such as the PH Standard, into the New York City building code; and

BE IT

FURTHER

RESOLVED

THAT: CB 1 urges New York City administration to leverage its eco-leadership in construction, finance and innovation with an integrated promotional and green awareness campaign to gain support from government agencies and officials, developers, contractors, unions, real estate, buyers and the public and to normalize a zero net energy standard and the use of renewable energy in our city and across our country.