



Pictured l-r at last week's women's forum where they took part in a dealmakers panel discussion are: Laurie Golub, HFZ Capital; Leslie Himmel, Himmel Meringhoff; Nina Rocket, Olshan Frome Wolosky LLP; Sara Rubenstein, Lend Lease; Jennifer McCool, Related and; Jeanne Myerson, The Swig Company.
Photo by Mark Becker

NYU: Go big or go home

By KONRAD PUTZIER

A faculty-led NYU working group has called on the university to be bolder in its immediate expansion plans, citing a need for more classrooms, arts space and faculty housing.

The NYU Space Priorities Group's final report proposes to create between 817,000 and 899,000 s/f of academic space and housing on the site of the current Coles Sports Center at 181 Mercer Street. So far, the university's capital spending and financing plan has budgeted with a 670,000 s/f building at a cost of \$727 million on the site. Zoning allows for construction of up to 980,000 s/f.

The working group estimates that additional space will lead to added construction costs between \$128 million and \$201 million — keeping the development's total cost just below \$1 billion.

"This may mean additional borrowing and additional debt servicing costs beyond what is included in NYU's current plan," the report states.

The 26-member group — composed of NYU faculty and administrative staff — was established in 2012 to provide "definitive guid-

ance" on the university's expansion plan. Its final report offers proposals on the southern section of two blocks between Mercer Street and LaGuardia Place that NYU looks to expand on.

So far, NYU's \$3 billion expansion plan only covers construction on the southern block, of which Coles Sports Center is by far the biggest development site. Construction on the northern block cannot begin before 2022.

The expansion plan has proved highly controversial. The group Faculty Against the Sexton Plan (FASP) and residents have criticized that the development is "financially reckless" and would harm the neighborhood's character, but the working group's chair Ted Magder defended the expansion.

"FASP agrees with our main finding that the university needs more academic space," he argued.

"At some point, money does matter. We couldn't find anybody in the city who could give us a building for free. To choose not to build on Coles but outside the core would mean you would immediately add \$600 million in costs," he said, adding that having

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Women suit themselves at annual forum

By KONRAD PUTZIER, SARAH TREFETHEN AND HOLLY DUTTON

Top minds from across the real estate industry shared insights and exploits with more than 550 attendees at the third annual Real Estate Weekly Women's Forum last week.

In her morning keynote, Jodi Pulice, founder and president of JRT Realty Group, made a strong case for a bigger role for women in real estate.

"We are living in a time and economy where, in order to afford a certain lifestyle, both parents must at some point be in the workplace," she said. "We must empower our own children and lead by example."

But in order to carve out a bigger role for themselves, Pulice argued, women need to become more assertive. "I don't understand why women don't network as well as men," she said.

"When men walk into a room, they have this instant sense of camaraderie. They seem like they all know each other and you say, well this is weird. We need to build that

same sense of camaraderie."

Pulice recalled her long struggle to establish a minority-run business in the face of male indifference. She said the situation of women in real estate has improved — but not enough.

"My wish is that one day a business won't have to be certified as minority-run to be able to compete," she said to emphatic applause from the audience.

Panels at the day-long event included the perspectives of brokers,

developers and lenders from the commercial and residential worlds.

Millennials — the generation of people in their 20s now entering the workforce — were on the minds of more than one panelist.

Attracting office tenants in the technology and creative sectors means catering to a younger, more urban demographic, according to Ellen Baer, president and CEO of the Hudson Square Connection BID.

"They like being near each other,

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Developers lining up to do business with module makers

By SARAH TREFETHEN

FCS Modular, The joint venture-child of Forest City Ratner and Skanska Construction, is up and running in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, producing pre-fabricated building modules for the first residential tower at the Atlantic Yards site in Downtown Brooklyn.

But the new company has already attracted interest from other developers considering modular construction for their own projects, MaryAnne Gillmartin, president and CEO of Forest City Ratner, told a luncheon meeting of the Association of Real Estate Women Tuesday.

"Besieged isn't an overstatement," she said.

B2, the long-awaited first residential tower at the Atlantic Yards, is rising from the ground across the street from the Barclay's Center, one trucked-in apartment module at a time. The 32-story building is scheduled for delivery by the end of the year, and is on track to become the tallest modular building in the world.

And while FCS Modular is intended to support more buildings than the 15 towers planned for Atlantic Yards, Gillmartin said, B2 gets priority and will serve as an advertisement for the new building technology.

"We will take competitor business into the factory ... but right now the quest is to get this building

up," Gillmartin said. Forest City estimates that the construction-cost saving of modular construction is between 15 and 20 percent of the cost of traditional construction.

FCS Modular employs union labor, with workers earning a significantly lower wage per hour than their colleagues in the premium-demanding environment of traditional

high-rise construction. The trade-off, proponents say, is regular work in a safe environment, and an opportunity to bring a new generation of workers into the building trades.

Early criticism of the plans for B2 included concerns that pre-fabricated construction would produce an unattractive building, an idea

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Sitt runs Heiberger out of TOWN brokerage

By HOLLY DUTTON

Two real estate executives have gone from partners to bitter rivals. Days after he was fired as CEO of TOWN Residential

TOWN residential brokerage firm founder Andrew Heiberger has filed a lawsuit against developer Joe Sitt seeking an injunction to prevent Thor Equities from removing him from the firm's board of managers.

The suit also requested that his dismissal as CEO of TOWN be declared invalid. The ousted CEO

is seeking at least \$60 million in damages, according to reports.

Heiberger founded TOWN in 2010 after selling his previous brokerage, Citi Habitats, to Corcoran parent company NRT for reportedly \$49.6 million. Heiberger brought in friend and Thor Equities founder Joe Sitt as an equity partner in 2011.

In late January, it was reported that Heiberger had stepped away



JOE SITT

from his position as CEO of the firm, which he downplayed as the expiration of his three year contract, telling news outlets that he still had a 50 percent stake in the firm.

The shakeup left current president and COO of TOWN Jeff Appel, who joined the firm last

September, to step into Heiberger's shoes as president and CEO of the

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JODI PULICE

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