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# ZETLIN & DE CHIARA<sup>LLP</sup>

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## Queens, Long Island City Up-and-Coming Amidst Construction Boom

*Panelists at Commercial Observer's 5th Annual Brooklyn, Queens Forum discuss the attractive attributes of the borough*



*Michael Zetlin, Matthew Baron, Alan Suna, Stephen R. Preuss*

Some of the City's top real estate minds gathered at Ten Grand Street on October 31 for Commercial Observer's "5th Annual Brooklyn, Queens Forum," where **Michael Zetlin**, Senior Partner at Zetlin & De Chiara LLP, moderated a panel on Queens development.

"Around this time last year, many were anticipating Amazon's arrival in Long Island City, but here we are today, with no Amazon HQ2. But that change did not leave Queens down and out. Instead, the attention on Long Island City--and the whole borough of Queens--has brought new development and businesses within its borders," observed Zetlin.

Zetlin's panel reflected on the Amazon HQ deal and discussed the future of Queens development. Panelists included **Matt Baron**, President at Simon Baron Development; **Alan Suna**, CEO of Silvercup Studios and Principal of Silvercup Properties; and **Stephen Preuss**, Vice Chairman in the Capital Markets Group of Cushman & Wakefield.

Kicking off the conversation, Zetlin asked the panelists what we learned from the Amazon deal. Suna asserted, "Amazon never rejected Long Island City." Rather, it rejected the way government officials treated the company throughout the process.

The same great attributes that Amazon saw in Long Island City are still present," he said.

Baron echoed this sentiment but asserted that one big misstep was not including the voices of community members throughout the process. Learning from that mistake, Simon Baron Development is ensuring that his firm begins with community input as they work closely with New York City to develop 28 acres of waterfront in Long Island City.

Pruce offered an optimistic market outlook for Queens, highlighting the growth of prices over the past few years. "The market is very different from 18 months ago," he said. With the current access to capital, "people are just looking for the right opportunity."



*Michael Zetlin, Matthew Baron*

Baron, however, expressed concern that the City's new rent regulations will hinder development and be worse for New York City over the long term. "These state laws will affect the City in profound ways," he said.

All three panelists agreed on a number of attributes that make Long Island City attractive: proximity to Manhattan, widely available transportation and amount of physical space. Suna added that cheaper rents and a "cooler" atmosphere also help to attract young people to the neighborhood.

When Zetlin highlighted the ongoing construction boom, Preuss agreed, saying that Queens still desperately needs new product. He believes that whatever is built in the foreseeable future will be absorbed. These new developments are directly benefitting the residents of Queens. Preuss said, “People from Queens who want to stay here now have more options.”

To wrap up the panel, Zetlin asked, “Where do you see future development opportunities in Queens?”

Suna identified two opportunities for further growth in Long Island City: building new transportation options across the East River and developing spaces not adjacent to the East River. Baron said that the supply curve will begin to taper off on the residential side, but that there is

still great need for more commercial development in Long Island City. The neighborhood checks all of the boxes to grow into a commercial hub, he said.

Preuss believes there is plenty to develop outside of Long Island City as well, pointing to Sunnyside Yards and Jamaica as two examples. “Follow the 7 train out,” he said, illustrating the optimism held for the future of Queens.

“Between the developments mentioned today, and the many other exciting projects in the pipeline,” Zetlin said, “Queens is leading the City toward a bright future.”



*Alan Suna, Michael Zetlin, Mathew Baron, Stephen R. Preuss*