The City of New York

Community Board 12 - Manhattan
Washington Heights & Inwood

530 West 166th St. 6th Floor, New York, NY 10032
Phone: (212) 568-8500, Fax: (212) 740-8197
Website: www.nyc.gov/mcb12

George Fernández Jr., Chairman
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

March 25, 2015

Honorable Mitchell Silver
Commissioner
NYC Parks & Recreation
The Arsenal - 830 5th Avenue
New York, NY 10065

Hon. Meenakshi Srinivan, Chair
Commissioner
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building
1 Centre Street 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Commissioner's Silver & Srinivan:

At the General Meeting on Tuesday, March 24, 2015 Community Board 12 Manhattan, passed the following resolution with a vote of (27)In Favor, (0)Opposed, (1)Abstain, supporting the project proposed by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation to install an air conditioning and dehumidifying system in the basement of the Morris-Jumel Mansion and on the grounds of Roger Morris Park to serve the mansion's Octagon Room.

Whereas: The Morris Jumel Mansion ("MJM"), built in 1765, is the oldest house in Manhattan. MJM was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1961, the exterior was designated a New York City Landmark in 1967 and the interior was designated in 1975. It is located in Roger Morris Park, a New York City park within the boundaries of the Jumel Terrace Historic District. MJM served as General George Washington's headquarters during the Battle of Harlem Heights in the early part of the Revolutionary War and in 1790 President George Washington returned to MJM and dined with members of his cabinet, including two future presidents of the United States - John Adams and Thomas Jefferson; and

Whereas: MJM is operated as a historic house and museum by a not-for-profit corporation that is governed by a Board of Trustees ("MJM Trustees") and is managed by an Executive Director. MJM is owned by the City of New York through is Department of Parks and Recreation ("NYC Parks") and is a member of the Historic House Trust ("HHT"), a not-for profit founded in 1989 to help the City of New York to preserve its collection of historic houses located in city parks; and

Whereas: NYC Parks and HHT working in collaboration with MJM Trustees and Executive Director propose to install an air conditioning system in MJM's basement to serve its Octagon Room. The Octagon Room, located at the rear of MJM, is believed to be the first design of its kind the country. It originally served as MJM's ballroom, is the only room in MJM that the public may enter and, in addition to being an interpreted period room, is also currently used as a venue for special events. The purpose of the air conditioning project (the "Project") is to make the Octagon Room a more attractive, useable venue for meetings and events during the summer and to enhance its ability to generate earned-income for MJM; and

Whereas: The scope of the Project includes installing air conditioning and dehumidifying equipment in MJM's basement, replacing one basement window with a louver, installing six floor vents in the Octagon Room and installing a condenser unit outside MJM on the park grounds. The condenser will be located to the east of MJM near a rock outcropping that will partially shield it from view. Evergreen

shrubs will also be planted to further shield it, and it will be enclosed by a wood screen, made of either Douglass Fir or Red Cedar, similar in design to the wood lattice at MJM's porch. The floor vents will be made of wood and will be stained to match the flooring. A pipe vent will also be installed from the basement to the exterior at the east side of MJM; and

Whereas: Representatives of NYC Parks and HHT met with the Land Use Committee on March 4, 2105 to present and discuss the Project, the Land Use Committed passed a resolution supporting the Project, and the Project is scheduled to be considered by the Landmarks Preservation Commission at its April 7, 2015 meeting; now, therefore, be it

Resolved: Community Board 12-Manhattan supports the project proposed by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation to install an air conditioning and dehumidifying system in the basement of the Morris-Jumel Mansion and on the grounds of Roger Morris Park to serve the mansion's Octagon Room.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

for E. Smith

George Fernandez, Jr.
Chair

cc: Hon.Bill de Blasio, Mayor
Hon.Gail Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Letitia James, Public Advocate
Hon. Scott Stringer, Comptroller
Hon. Charles B. Rangel, Congressman
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, NY State Senator
Hon. Herman D. Farrell, Jr., Assembly Member
Hon. Guillermo Linares, Assembly Member
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member