

Community Board 12, Manhattan
Minutes for the Housing and Human Services Committee Meeting
November 5th, 2015 – Office Meeting Space
530 West 166th Street – 6th Floor
New York, NY 10032

Committee Members Present (7): Richard Lewis (Chair), Felipe Wityk Sanchez David Mattera, Ayisha Ogilvie, Estevan Nembhard, Barbara Frazier, and Katherine Diaz.

Committee Members Absent (1): Jay Mazur.

Public Member Absent (1): Christina Burgess.

Public (21): Joel Yoffie, Richard Solis, Eric Paul Ruiz (MSW -Lantern Community Services), Cheryl Miller, Thomas Mandelkow, Executive Vice President, CAO, CFO (Cerebral Palsy Association/NYS), Joe Pancari (Cerebral Palsy Association/NYS), Laura Lazarus, Executive Director (Lantern Community Services), Malachy Fallon (Lantern Community Services), Amy Berg (Lantern Community Services), Rafal Markwat, Board Treasurer and Project Manager (Lantern Community Services), Diana Santos (Lantern Community Services), Robert Wendel, Dana Windsor, Maria Lizardo (Executive Director – NMIC), Elizabeth Butler, Sara Fisher, Twanda Clay, Julius Gray, Larry Domenech (OPWDD Staff), Akiko Kyei-Aboogyee (UAI), Elizabeth Saffron and Natalie Espina.

Staff: Paola M. Garcia.

Welcome, Opening Remarks, and the Agenda. Richard Lewis, HHS Committee Chair called the meeting to order at 7:15pm. Arrangements were made to record the meeting to a digital audio file on an OLYMPUS © handheld device. Board members introduced themselves as did members of the public present. A quorum was present for the meeting. There were only two items for tonight's agenda: Two Public Hearing required by law. The chair as presiding officer of these hearing read the rules of conduct to the audience present to insure a fair hearing and closed the speakers list after giving a last call

Source Documents Released at the Meeting.

The following source documents (15) were distributed or made available at the meeting:

- **July 17th, 2015 Notice from the Lantern Group on a Proposed Construction of Supportive Housing at 444-446 West 163rd Street a/k/a "Savannah Hall".** Office copy available for inspection upon sufficient notice and written request.
- **Public Hearing Notices English and Spanish** posted at the site and immediate area for 444-446 West 163rd Street a/k/a "Savannah Hall". Office copy available for inspection upon sufficient notice and written request.
- **Talking Points: Additional questions for findings to determination on a committee resolution on the Lantern Organization application.** Office copy available for inspection upon sufficient notice and written request.
- **Savanna Hall – Architectural Drawings and floor plans – 13 pages. LMW Engineering Group, LLC 2539 Brunswick Avenue, 2nd Floor, Linden, NJ 07036 REYNALDO PREGO, PE 39 E20th Street, New York, NY DOB SUBMISSION 05/12/2014 – UAI Urban Architectural Initiatives, RA PC. OFFICE OF MENTAL HEALTH X 330 Fifth Ave, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10001.** Office copy available for inspection upon sufficient notice and written request.
- **- Cerebral Palsy Association OPWDD Placement Letter Request – September 30th, 2015 for an Individual Residential Alternative at 2183 Amsterdam Avenue consisting of two units.** Office copy available for inspection upon sufficient notice and written request,
- **Public Hearing Notices English and Spanish** posted at the site, all units the area for 2183 Amsterdam Avenue. Office copy available for inspection upon sufficient notice and written request.
- **Talking Points: Additional questions for findings to determination on a committee resolution on the Cerebral Palsy Association of NYS application.** Office copy available for inspection upon sufficient notice and written request.
- **Architectural Floor plans Units 2B and 3B at 2183 Amsterdam Avenue – Not current.** Office copy available for inspection upon sufficient notice and written request.

- **Completed CB12, M OPWDD Information Request forms for Units 2B and 3B.** Office copy available for inspection upon sufficient notice and written request.
- **CB12, M Rules for the Public Hearing.** Office copy available for inspection upon sufficient notice and written request.
- **Lantern Organization and Project Description of Savanna Hall.** Distributed by Lantern at the Public Hearing. Office copy available for inspection upon sufficient notice and written request.
- **PowerPoint® Presentation by Lantern Organization.** Office copy available for inspection upon sufficient notice and written request.
- **State needs 31,745 supportive housing units for homeless, report says.**
<http://www.capitalnewyork.com/article/albany/2015/11/8581513/state-needs-31745-supportive-housing-units-homeless-report-says>
- **N.Y. MHY. LAW § 41.34: NY Code - Section 41.34: Site selection of community residential facilities**
<http://codes.lp.findlaw.com/nycode/MHY/E/41/41.34>
- **N.Y. MHY. LAW § 33.02 : NY Code - Section 33.02: Notice of rights of the mentally disabled**
<http://codes.lp.findlaw.com/nycode/MHY/E/33/33.02>

PUBLIC HEARING I – The Lantern Community Services (Lantern Organization).

Testimony and Presentation.

Laura Lazarus, Executive Director Lantern Community Services www.lanterngroup.org - 494 8th Avenue, 20th Floor New York, NY 10001 - appeared and presented a PowerPoint © presentation on its OMH housing application.

Lantern Community Services (LCS) champions the independence and well-being of New Yorkers who are impacted by or threatened with homelessness. LCS provides permanent, affordable housing with on-site supportive services. The organization has been in operation since 1996.

Lantern Organization proposes to develop Savanna Hall, a mixed population new construction development in northern Manhattan. Savanna Hall, to be located on 444-446 West 163rd Street, is a planned block and plank seven-story residential building with community space for social services and recreation. Savanna Hall will create 73 units of permanent rental housing comprised of 72 studios and 1 one-bedroom apartment where the superintendent will reside.

- Thirty percent of units (22 studios) are allocated for low-income tenants with a preference for Community Board 12 residents. (60% AMI).
- Twenty-five (25) studios are reserved for OMH young adults aging some who also may be homeless and have aged out of foster care.
- Twenty-five (25) studios are set aside for homeless single adults living with special needs.

The project is designed to promote a supportive community, improve the independence and well-being of tenants, and increase the supply of affordable housing in the area. Savanna Hall will be located in Washington Heights, adjacent to Lantern's Audubon Hall. Building amenities will include a backyard community garden area, community space, social service offices, 24-hour security and a welcoming entry way.

Lantern Organization's social service wing, Lantern Community Services (LCS), provides innovative, on-site services to vulnerable New Yorkers living in permanent, supported housing programs. In a sustained effort to improve the health and mental health outcomes of all tenants, LCS has implemented several evidence-based models, each demonstrated to have measurable success. These include motivational interviewing, individual placement and illness management and recovery services. LCS leadership is committed to expanding these programs and researching new models to further develop the well-being of our tenants and their communities. In addition, LCS brings additional supports to our tenants in the areas of arts, culture and fitness, nutrition and the culinary arts, health and wellness and employment and education.

LCS will provide a full-time Housing Coordinator to assist all tenants with rent collection and any other housing related concerns. Savanna's team will collaborate with community-based resources to engage clients and foster self-sufficiency and overall wellness and to integrate more fully into the surrounding neighborhood. Lantern Organization is the project sponsor and developer.

The organization has a knowledgeable and experienced development team, with more than 15 years of experience and is currently managing the development and/or operation of 17 projects. Eric Galloway leads Lantern Organization. Amy Larovere, the housing consultant, has more than 20 years of experience with affordable housing development. Tony Shitemi of Urban Architectural Initiatives (UAI) is the Project Architect, and has designed several beautiful Lantern buildings including Prospero Hall. The contractor has yet to be determined.

The financing for Savanna Hall is structured as a bond deal. New York State Homes and Community Renewal will issue tax exempt private activity bonds for the project. New York State's Office of Mental Health will cover most of the debt will provide more than \$11.2 million of equity. State Medicaid Redesign Funding and other State funding is also being finalized.

Fact Finding, Discussion and Determination

From the Public Speakers List. An individual from the neighborhood appeared and testified on the effects the construction of this residential facility would have on the nature and character of the immediate area. A GOOGLE © satellite map was presented highlighted in various colored graphic indicators and purported to show:

- A condo building diagonally across the street from the purposed site;
- The Edgecombe Residential Treatment Facility (611 Edgecombe Avenue) sometimes called the Edgecombe Correctional Facility. It is a minimum security male residential treatment facility. The majority of inmates at this facility receive substance abuse treatment and is operated under the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision for males 16 years of age or older. The facility has no perimeter fencing and a low staff-to-inmate ratio. To assist inmates in their rehabilitation the facility has many work programs which enable inmates to work in local institutions.
- Audubon Hall located at 436 W 163rd Street adjacent to the proposed site and is owned by The Lantern Group. This Low Income Housing (LIH) project has been in service since 2002 and has a total of 70 low income units;
- Several "Section 8 building" (falsely labeled since they are HDHC properties [low income co-ops] and regular rent stabilized or free market rate multifamily buildings that are not low income distressed properties;
- Finally, the vacant lot and the site of the proposed construction of Savanna Hall (444-446 West 163rd Street).

The main contention voiced was that there is a high density of narcotic traffic (sales and distribution) on this block and the proposed population to be admitted to this new facility would only fuel these purported sales and distribution. This would not seem to be the type of environment for OMH/OPWDD youth who have aged out of the foster care system. The area also may not be the type of supportive housing conducive to formerly MICA (mental illness chemical abusers) homeless populations who might revert back to addiction.

The public wanted improved lighting in the area of the two buildings, perimeter patrols, on site urine testing, and a working relationship with the police and the Edgecombe Rehabilitative Treatment Facility.

Findings and Discussion. There was no police report or the presence of a representative from the 33rd Precinct present, although a prior request was made for them to appear. However, two committee members and members from the public present contended from their own experience that there was a history of heavy narcotic trafficking in the area.

NB: The Chair pointed out from the beginning of this discussion that the Mental Health Laws (copies had been distributed) requires the community board to essentially perform three tasks: (1) to determine if there is oversaturation or overconcentration of the same community residents; (2) assurances over the health, safety, welfare and rights of OMH/OPWDD clients to be placed; (3) to make a determination in forty (40) days following a notice of intent to place clients.

Unless it could be proven that adding OMH/OPWDD clients to this area was quantifiable as an oversaturation then no legitimate objection to the application could be made. In fact, the latest release of OMH facilities in the area fails to show any oversaturation.

That brings us then to the question of whether the health, welfare and safety of their potential clients in the model they presented would be at risk. The answer to that question is part of our determination.

Determination. LCS in defense of its operation claimed that there was residents are allowed to live independently, with assistance. There is 24/7 security staff, security cameras and a live-in Superintendent. Criminal activity and loitering are not tolerated (as rent regulated tenants with leases they can be evicted) and there is a full team of support staff present and trained in de-escalation techniques. LCS is also accountable to city, state, federal, and private funders

They further claimed that this 73-unit permanent supportive housing building is beautifully designed and when built will be well-maintained to improve and complement the aesthetic value of the neighborhood and that construction is expected to start in 2016. There is a garden and community space

The LCD proposed placement model is:

- 30% of the units at Savanna Hall are allocated for low-income tenants (60% AMI) with preference for Community Board 12 residents. LCS will partner with the Community Board and community organizations to provide updates before the lottery opens and outreach to community residents to encourage applications.
- 25 units set aside for “Emerging Adults” (aged out foster care youth)
- 25 units for formerly homeless single adults with special needs

The committee focused its foundation for a determination on the current LCS client model presented despite the supportive claims and facility programming. It was felt that variability of the client mix given all the narcotic issues rose surrounding this neighborhood pose a health, safety and welfare issue particularly to vulnerable and OMH youth aging out of foster care and this was not a good fit. It was also felt that the mix of these youth with single homeless adults was also not a healthy situation in a 72 unit single male facility consisting of small studios. Finally, the HUD standard of 60% AMI that HPD will use was not in line with the \$38,000 median income of our community district.

Given all these personal objections and observations by the committee and testimony from all sides it was decided to give Lantern Community Services another opportunity to amend its application and the model, if LDC would waive the 40 day time period for approval or disapproval by the board. LCS stated that they would like to work with the community to see a solution to the issues raised. LCS offered the public an opportunity to visit a similar facility (Prospero Hall in East Harlem). With that the matter was tabled was built by the same architect –UAI.

PUBLIC HEARING II -- The Cerebral Palsy Association of NYS.

Testimony and Presentation. Joseph M. Pancari, Executive Vice President, COO - CP Associations NYS (Central Metropolitan Services Office) 330 West 34th Street - New York, NY appeared and gave a presentation on their OPWDD application.

The Cerebral Palsy Association of New York State (CPA) in conjunction with the NYS Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) informed Community Board 12, Manhattan (CB12M) on September 30th, 2015 of its intent and request approval to place nine (9) developmentally disabled males in Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA) facilities in Units 2B and 3B of a twelve unit rent regulated building located at 2183 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10032.

Each person living in this purposed IRA will attend a day time rehabilitation program or work each weekday.

They have entered into a leasing arrangement to rent these apartments from the owner, Northern Manhattan Inwood Coalition (NMIC) and have certified that both apartments are ADA-compliant generally and or will bring it into compliance for this type of facility. Clients will be supervised on site by 1199 union certified OPWDD "Direct Support Professionals" with two per unit shift staffs who will work 24hours a day (from 6am to 2pm, 2pm to 10pm and 10pm to 6am) at the residence, supervise or prepare daily meals, consult with senior managerial staff and nursing services to ensure that residents take care of themselves, and provide assistance and encourage recreational and cultural activities.

Fact Finding, Discussion and Determination

A number of the building's residents and NMIC testified and warmly welcomed these new residents, but expressed concern about visitors staying overnight, making sure the building's public entrance door was kept locked and how will the staff be vetted. All these matters were satisfactory answered and resolved by CPA.

The HHS Committee Chair conducted a physical tour of the property to confirm if the building is a habitable space as claimed, search the property's available public records, requested The Cerebral Palsy Association of New York State to complete and notarize a detailed five page "OPWDD Placement Information Request" form. CPA was also requested to submit current architectural floor plans with dimensions so that the HHS Committee could make reasonable findings and make determinations regarding the safety and habitability and ADA Compliance of the proposed placement living spaces.

There was some concern with not having viewed ongoing apartment renovations, given only old floor plans and the lack of graphic renderings of the new units and requested to have them prior to the general meeting. The committee received assurances that The Cerebral Palsy Association of New York State will install hot water safety/shutoff valves, fire/smoke/CO detectors and alarms, gas shutoff devices, window guards and other preventive and ADA compliant measures as needed during the life of the occupants tenancy.

To allay current resident's concerns the committee requested and The Cerebral Palsy Association of agreed to establish an onsite residential advisory committee to facilitate meaningful liaison and to commit itself to a good-faith effort to meet regularly with community residents as well as the building's owners and management company regarding the building's governance and maintenance matters, in a sustained effort to maintain good neighborly relations with their staff, their clients, building residents.

The committee determined that there is currently no oversaturation of this type of facility in this area within CD12 and the committee proceeded to draft a resolution approving the Association's application with some conditions.

Votes (Y-N-A) Committee: (7-0-0); Public: (17-0-0)

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted by
Richard Lewis – HHS Committee Chair
November 5th, 2015