

January 8, 2004

Mayor Michael Bloomberg
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Extending Paid Detail To Bars and Clubs

Dear Mayor Bloomberg,

As a community blessed with a vibrant nightlife, Manhattan Community Board No. 4 applauds the City's recent initiative to update the 1974 Noise Code. We also respectfully urge you to consider, as another weapon in the City's quality of life arsenal, the extension of NYPD's Paid Detail Unit to cover nightclubs and bars.

Over 75% of cabaret licensed premises in Manhattan are in our Board area. Our community, especially west Chelsea, has seen a tremendous increase in nightclubs in the last 5 years. More are coming. According to the New York Times of November 9, no fewer than 5 plan to open within 2 square blocks of Chelsea, in an area already abundantly supplied with clubs.

While we welcome a vibrant nightlife in our city, no one in our community, neither resident nor business owner, welcomes it at the expense of our safety, the destabilization of our residential neighborhoods, and the deprivation of our basic right to sleep through the night.

Though Chelsea and Clinton are primarily residential, our mixed use nature is characteristic and pervasive. Bars and clubs, even when not inserted into a residential block, are never far from homes and apartment buildings, in front of which the vast majority of the problems occur. When clubs open and close, our streets are clogged with honking taxis and limos. Inconsiderate clubgoers use our sidewalks as their living rooms and our stoops and doorways as their urinals.

Club security can be very effective inside. That security, however, stops at the club's door. That's where Paid Detail can step up.

Run by the NYPD, Paid Detail allows New York City Police Officers to perform off duty, uniformed security work within the City. In effect, it is a program to have private entities pay for the security sometimes necessary to mitigate any negative aspects their operations may cause. Officers are taken from a database of available volunteers and the NYPD makes the assignments. Should the program be extended to cover nightlife establishments with liquor licenses, officers

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should only work outside the club and be rotated on a regular basis. Payment is made to the NYPD, who then pays the officers.

The appearance of a uniformed NYPD officer, even one off duty, can act as a deterrent for unacceptable behavior. Multiply that deterrent by the number of clubs hiring Paid Detail and the result can be a measurable improvement in the quality of another New York nightlife – the quiet one residents desperately want to be allowed to enjoy in their homes.

We do not stint in praise for our local police precincts. Their great efforts to anticipate and to respond to the increasing influx of clubgoers merits our gratitude. We cannot, however, realistically expect them to continue to do so with their currently restricted resources. Nor can we accept that vital police presence in one precinct should be reduced in order to cover a club in another.

We are aware that extending Paid Detail may not solve all the quality of life problems associated with bars and clubs in residential neighborhoods. And for it to be effective, Paid Detail officers may need to patrol beyond the front of the bar or nightclub, and be able to ticket honking cars and limos.

But, carefully and skillfully employed, it can make a much needed and welcome contribution. Paid Detail is already used as a effective tool to insure the safety of events in New York City. And Paid Detail for nightclubs is used regularly in lesser U.S. cities such as Los Angeles and Houston. It is even used in Boston, which apparently has nightlife.

The out of town reviews are good. It's time to bring it to New York.

Respectfully,



Walter Mankoff
Chair

Millie Glaberman
Co-chair
Quality of Life Committee

JD Noland
Co-chair
Quality of Life Committee

Cc: NYPD, 1 Police Plaza
10th PP
Midtown North PP
Midtown South PP
13th PP
Community Boards