

June 8, 2004

Hon. Meenakshe Srinivasan
Chair
Board of Standards and Appeals
40 Rector Street
New York, NY 10007

Re: BSA No. 183-04-BZ, Special Permit at 206 West 23rd Street

Dear Ms. Srinivasan,

After presentations at the Chelsea Preservation and Planning Committee and at a duly noticed public hearing at the regular Board meeting on June 2, 2004, Manhattan Community Board No. 4 voted 32 in favor, 3 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote that it had no objection to granting a special permit for a Physical Culture Establishment at 206 West 23rd Street.

According to statements made and documents submitted by the attorney for the applicant the proposed physical culture establishment on the second floor of 206 West 23rd Street will contain three rooms for massage by New York State licensed massage therapists in addition to a room for waxing and other rooms for auxiliary facilities. A large room at the front of the building is to be used as a nail and/or hair salon. This is the only floor to be occupied by the establishment, and there will be no rooftop activities. The facilities are already in place, since the floor was earlier occupied by an unlicensed operation that was shut down. It was stated that the applicants have no connection with the previous illegal operator. A brief statement was made by the principal applicant, who stated that she and her colleagues were experienced and wished to start their own business.

Since the facility is to be operated by licensed massage therapists in connection with related beauty-shop uses it appears to be a legitimate physical culture establishment. Since the proposed establishment is located on a major street in a mixed-use commercial district with businesses and stores of many types, it is consistent with existing and probable future neighborhood character. Provided that the investigation of the background of the principals and the inspections of the premises are satisfactory, the Board sees no reason to oppose the application.

As on previous occasions, the Board states that it sees no reason why this elaborate permit procedure, including such requirements as a ULURP-like process and environmental review, is

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required in a world where gymnasiums and beauty parlors with extended services are common in commercial districts, especially on local retail and service streets. It is an unnecessary burden on applicants, creating major costs and delays, particularly for small businesses that must invest money they often cannot afford, and wastes the time of applicants, Community Boards and the Board of Standards and Appeals alike. Everyone involved has better things to do. Some simple process of authorization after a routine investigation of the applicants and an inspection of the premises would avoid the relatively rare cases of abuse and encourage legitimate businesses.

Sincerely,



Walter Mankoff

Chair

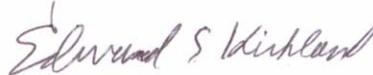
Manhattan Community Board No. 4



Lee Compton

Co-Chair

Chelsea Preservation & Planning Committee



Edward S. Kirkland

Co-Chair

Chelsea Preservation & Planning Committee

cc: Hon. Michael Bloomberg, Mayor
Hon. C. Virginia Fields, Manhattan Borough President
Local elected officials
Applicant