



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4

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J. LEE COMPTON
Chair

ANTHONY M. BORELLI
District Manager

January 5, 2006

Hon. Shaun Donovan
Commissioner
NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development
100 Gold Street
New York, NY 10038

Re: 500-508 West 52nd Street (portion of Clinton Urban Renewal Area Site 9C)

Dear Commissioner Donovan:

Manhattan Community Board No. 4 writes to express its preliminary support for the proposed redevelopment of the buildings at 500-508 West 52nd Street by Clinton Housing Development Company and The Dermot Company, as co-developers. The buildings are the only remaining undeveloped portion of Site 9C in the Clinton Urban Renewal Area (CURA).

The developers presented their written proposal to the community at the December 14, 2005 meeting of the Board's Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee.

The existing structures would be gutted and renovated. A one-story addition would be added on top of the 500 building, and two stories would be added to the 508 building. Fifty-eight residential units of varying sizes would be accommodated, at least 50% of which would be 2-bedrooms or larger.

The developers propose to use the City's New Housing Opportunities Program (New HOP) to develop approximately 49 units of middle and moderate income housing for individuals and families earning between 80% and 165% of Area Median Income (AMI).¹ Those limits would serve families of four that earn between \$50,240 and \$103,620 per year, a population that is underserved by current development practices in our district. This would be the first New HOP project in our district, and would provide much-needed permanent affordable housing in an area where development pressures are making it increasingly difficult for middle-income families to remain in the community. This Board has a long-time commitment to creating permanent affordable housing for low- and middle-income families who live in our community, and for the public service workers who serve our community as policemen, firefighters, teachers, librarians, nurses and the like.

The buildings were built in the early 1900s for industrial use, and were acquired by the City in 1969 for inclusion in the CURA. The site is designated for residential use in the Third Amended Urban Renewal Plan for the CURA, and the proposal to create additional affordable housing and retain and rehabilitate existing buildings is consistent with the Plan and the community's vision for the CURA.

Vested tenants, those who have occupied the buildings since the condemnation, include LeNoble Lumber and Sonny's Grocery. Over the years, the buildings have come to house artist studios and theater companies and

¹ To subsidize the affordability of the project, 9 of the 58 total units and the ground floor commercial spaces would be rented at market rates.

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The 52nd Street Project, an after school program. The proposal includes the assurance that a relocation plan would be developed for permanent relocation of the current commercial tenants to affordable space within the CURA. Development of satisfactory plans for relocation of these tenants within the CURA is a high priority for this Board, and will be a condition to our approval of the project. We have encouraged CHDC to meet with the existing tenants as soon as possible, and to keep the tenants and this Board fully informed of relocation plans as they develop.

CHDC is a non-profit housing organization with a proven record of undertaking similar projects in the CURA.² The Dermot Company is currently constructing the 627-unit "Mosaic" (formerly "Clinton Green") project adjacent to the buildings and across 52nd Street on CURA Site 8. Both developers have developed good working relationships with the Board, and have demonstrated a commitment to working with the community in developing their plans. We would be pleased to work with them on this project.

If the project moves forward, UDAAP and ULURP applications will be required, with ample opportunity for public consideration of the proposal in greater detail.

At this point, we are pleased to support the proposal in concept, and to encourage HPD to begin discussions with CHDC and Dermot about this project. In addition, we support the lease of the buildings to CHDC pending redevelopment, so that the City can be relieved of management responsibilities and pressing service needs can be met.

Sincerely,



J. Lee Compton
Chair
Manhattan Community Board No. 4



Anna Hayes Levin
Co-Chair
Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee



Simone Sindin
Co-Chair
Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee

cc: Local elected officials
CHDC
Dermot
All tenants
HCC

² Joe Restuccia, Executive Director of CHDC, is also a member of the Board and of its Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee. His interest has been disclosed, and he is not entitled to vote on any matter concerning this proposal that may come before the Board or the Committee, including approval of this letter.