



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: McKinney Welding Supply Co., Inc.

Dear Commissioner Donovan:

Representatives of McKinney Welding Supply Co., Inc. attended the December 14, 2005 meeting of the Board's Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee to request support for its revised proposal to secure a permanent home in Clinton Urban Renewal Area Site 7.

As you know, McKinney is a family-owned business that has operated at 533-541 West 52nd Street since 1943. It has been owned by the Mattiace family since 1962. In the 1970s its property was acquired by the City for redevelopment pursuant to the Clinton Urban Renewal Project Urban Renewal Plan. Pending redevelopment, the property was leased back to McKinney, whose business has continued uninterrupted.

Two years ago we wrote to support McKinney's efforts to purchase its property. Since then, the area has become increasingly residential, and we have come to recognize that maintaining an open yard for storage of compressed gas, one element of McKinney's existing business, is inconsistent with the area's development and an inefficient use of scarce land. McKinney has now returned with a proposal that involves the removal of its gas storage and delivery truck parking lot to a location outside the CURA. (McKinney is working with the Department of Small Business Services to identify an appropriate site.) They wish to continue to operate the balance of their business – retail sales of general gas supplies and hardware supplies – within the CURA.

Elimination of the gas storage and delivery truck parking lot would reduce McKinney's presence essentially to a specialized hardware store. This kind of use could easily coexist with surrounding residential uses, and the operation could be incorporated within a mixed-use building with a large residential component.

The Mattiaces have long been participants in the Clinton community's discussions about the remaining undeveloped properties in the CURA. Through those discussions, the area's residents, business owners, community organizations and other stakeholders have developed a collaborative and comprehensive plan intended to create more low and moderate income housing, while including such uses as commercial, retail, light manufacturing, cultural arts, not-for-profits and open/garden space. It has always been a part of that plan that productive, contributing businesses like McKinney should remain if at all possible.

In April 2005, HPD entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with LeNoble Lumber Co., Inc., another of the CURA's vested commercial tenants, concerning the incorporation of LeNoble's operations within future development of Site 7. We understand that a similar agreement is being finalized with Cybert Tire, yet another CURA commercial tenant. We therefore encourage HPD to pursue a memorandum of understanding with McKinney on terms substantially similar to those offered to LeNoble and Cybert Tire.

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Including space for McKinney's modified operations along with LeNoble and Cybert Tire in the development plans for Site 7 will advance this Board's goals concerning development within the CURA, which include maximizing the amount of affordable housing while accommodating existing commercial, light manufacturing, cultural and non-profit institutions on site.

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
Steven Mattiace, McKinney Welding.
Capalino & Company