



Chairperson , Martha Taylor

*The City of New York  
Borough of Queens*

**Community Board 8**

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District Manager, Marie Adam-Ovide

**INFORMATIONAL  
HEARING:**

**Services for the Underserved (S:US)  
Potential Community Residence  
185-24 80<sup>th</sup> Road  
Jamaica Estates, NY 11432**

**DATE:** Monday, March 28, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

**PLACE:** Hillcrest Jewish Center  
183-02 Union Turnpike  
Fresh Meadows, NY 11366

**ATTENDANCE:** Mark J. Lefkof, Area 7 Chair  
Martha Taylor, CB8 Chairperson  
Edward Chung, CB8 Board Member  
James Gallagher Jr., CB8 Board Member  
Bright Limm, CB8 Board Member  
Carmen V. Lopez, VP of Residential Services, S:US  
Doris Figueroa, Senior Vice President, S:US  
Amanda Duva, Director of Behavioral Services, S:US  
Steven Myricks, Director of Real Estate, S:US  
Henry Yam representing Councilman Rory Lancman  
Muhammad Rahman representing Assemblyman David Weprin  
Marie Adam-Ovide, CB8 District Manager  
Alma Karassavidis, CB8 Staff Member

**Purpose of Meeting:**

As provided in Section 41:34 of the Mental Hygiene Law, formal notification of the interest and intent of Services for the Underserved (S:US) under the auspices of the New York State Office For People With Developmental Disabilities to establish a community residence for six (6) developmentally disabled adults at the above address. This is a 24-hour Supervised Individual Residential Alternative (IRA) for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

Area Chair Mark J. Lefkof, called this Informational Hearing to order at 7:33 p.m.

He welcomed everyone to the hearing and asked everyone to introduce themselves. There were five (5) Board Members present. He explained the process and the purpose of this meeting. This is an informational hearing only. There will be no vote taken at this meeting and there will be no vote taken at the Community Board 8 Board Meeting being held on April 18<sup>th</sup>.

*Area Chair Mark J. Lefkof asked the representatives from Services for the Underserved (S:US) introduce themselves and make an opening statement on their plans for the proposed site.*

**Carmen Lopez** – *Vice President of Residential Services, S:US*. She explained that they are proposing to establish an Individual Residential Alternative (IRA) residence at 185-24 80<sup>th</sup> Road in Jamaica Estates. It is a six (6) bed, for co-ed adults between the ages of 21-35. S:US services Manhattan, Brooklyn, The Bronx and Queens. In Queens they have about ten (10) residences and two (2) Day Habilitation Programs.

The house will operate as a Supervised Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA) for six (6) adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. There will be a Program Director and an Assistant Program Director and a full certified staff on board over different shifts; morning, evening and overnight. They will assist the individuals on activities for the day and also help them to become independent within the community. There are some individuals who aspire to work or volunteer with different activities. Clinical staff members come to the house at least once a week. Behavioral support services are available. Nursing services are in place to monitor the nursing care. Residential Habilitation Services are available by the staff to personalize the services of the individuals. The program is designed to maximize the independence of individuals with developmental disabilities and their integration with the community. It will also focus on the individuals' life goals and provide opportunities to be productive and make a meaningful contribution to his/her living environment. Supervision will be provided 24-hours a day, seven days a week. The goal of the professionally trained staff will be to meet and fulfill the valued outcome/goals of the individuals receiving services. She explained that some of the individuals may have jobs. On the weekends they will go to the movies, restaurants, etc. S:US always encourages family members to be a part of their lives. They either come to visit the house or the individuals go home for the holidays.

**Amanda Duva** – *Director of Behavioral Services, S:US*. She informed us that there are twelve (12) Behavioral Intervention Specialists on staff and four (4) additional Behavioral Technicians who are on call and available 24/7. Behavioral Technicians work with the community outings and provide additional training to ensure that the staff are well trained and providing all the support that is needed. There are several certified staff members so they are working under their certification.

**Doris Figueroa** - *Senior Vice President, S:US*. Ms. Figueroa stated that their organization is provided oversight by the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities. They visit unannounced on an annual basis. In addition, the Senior Management Staff will go out to any of their sites at least 2-3 times per year to make sure that the homes are being maintained and the staff is providing services as expected.

**Steven Myricks** – *Director of Real Estate, S:US*. Mr. Myricks advised that the site was identified on January 10, 2018, was reviewed by the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities and passed saturation the same day. A fair market appraisal was performed on January 16, 2018 and received the fair market on January 30, 2018. A feasibility study was performed by an architectural firm and the house was deemed structurally sound. An estimate for the cost to perform modifications to the house was obtained.

**Doris Figueroa** - *Senior Vice President, S:US*. Ms. Figueroa stated that she has been with this agency for over 30 years. When they started they had two (2) residences and now have over 60 in four boroughs; Manhattan, The Bronx, Queens and Brooklyn. She assured the community that they take pride in these residences and keep them well maintained. The individuals living at these residences are encouraged to live their lives to the fullest and to fulfill their dreams.

Area Chair Mark J. Lefkof opened the floor for questions from the members of the board.

**Edward Chung** –

***What are the visiting hours for the families that come visit?***

**Answer:** [Carmen Lopez] – We do encourage our family members to visit during regular hours; morning or evening hours up until 9:00 p.m., but nothing overnight. We do ask any visitors or family to call us before they come as the individuals are active in the community so they may not be at home.

***What is their status regarding self-control? Have they been evaluated for that?***

**Answer:** [Amanda Duva] – When we go through the identification process, the behavioral specialists do a full evaluation in terms of their behaviors and skill set so that we can build on that. We do identify our steps to improve their functioning level.

***Will there be issues with them losing emotional control when they are out in the community?***

**Answer:** [Amanda Duva] – They are under constant supervision. All of the staff go through a training process from the behavioral support systems. If there are any issues, as with aggression, then we will provide additional support to minimize any problems.

**Answer:** [Doris Figueroa] – The staff receives training on an ongoing basis at a minimum of twice a year so that they are fully knowledgeable of all services our individuals need. They receive supervision 24-hours a day with a supervisor and manager on staff on every shift. There is adequate staff if an individual became aggressive they would be able to control the situation and take care of any issues.

**James Gallagher Jr.** –

***Is there going to be six (6) males or six (6) females?***

**Answer:** [Carmen Lopez] – It's co-ed.

***You mentioned that you had ten (10) other facilities in Queens. Are any of them within the Community Board 8 area?***

**Answer:** [Carmen Lopez] – No, not within this Community Board.

**Bright Limm** –

***The gentleman spoke about various procedures you go through in selecting the property including fair market value, structural assessment and things like that. What is the general policy as to how you choose which borough, and within each borough, which neighborhood? What are the principals that guide your decision?***

**Answer:** [Steven Myricks] – We first receive an award from the State which determines which borough we can develop. We then use our resources to start to look at different sites. When we find an address that we think might be feasible, we then run a saturation check. If it fails the saturation check then we can't do it. If it passes saturation then we go out and take a look at the property. That is how the process starts.

**Martha Taylor** –

***Will you be doing renovations?***

**Answer:** [Steven Myricks] – Yes.

***Will they be major or minor?***

**Answer:** [Steven Myricks] – There will be significant renovations in the area of approximately \$300,000.00.

***When do you expect to be moving the clients in?***

**Answer:** [Steven Myricks] – Before the end of the year.

***When you are done with the renovations?***

**Answer:** [Steven Myricks] – Yes.

***You mentioned something about twelve (12) staff members?***

**Answer:** [Carmen Lopez] – I believe Amanda mentioned there were twelve (12) on her staff, the Behavioral Dept. Staff. The number of staff in a house with six (6) individuals will be three (3) staff members on each shift to support them during the transition.

***The ratio would be 3-6. You will have three (3) staff members to six (6) individuals?***

**Answer:** [Carmen Lopez] – Yes. This is to help in the beginning for the transition until they become comfortable with the community. We will then make an assessment as a team. When we feel that they are comfortable in the community and know how to travel independently, we will go down to two (2) staff members per shift and Management staff.

**Martha Taylor** –

***I did a little research and found that you are a very well respected organization. I understand you are one of the best.***

**Answer:** [Doris Figueroa] – Thank you. I take pride in that. I am a registered nurse by profession and have been doing this since 1987 and am very proud of the organization.

**Marie Adam-Ovide** –

***My only concern is that when the Community Board contacts the agency that we get a response right away. Most likely we are going to be the persons getting the complaints. We will contact you and would want you to act very quickly, because if we do not hear from you we would have to write a letter to the State. I am pretty sure that you would rather resolve any issues yourselves and we would not need to go to the State.***

**Answer:** [Doris Figueroa] – I want to mention how our chain of command works. We have Carmen Lopez, Vice President of Residential Services. For each of the residences we also have Regional Directors who are supervising the Program Directors. There are so many people and will give you the information for each of them.

**Mark J. Lefkof** –

***Marie will give you her card and please send her an e-mail with the contact e-mails, phone numbers, cell numbers for 24/7 contact.***

**Answer:** [Doris Figueroa] – Absolutely. You will have full access to us 24-hours a day, except when we are on vacation, but there will always be someone available to contact.

**Marie Adam-Ovide** –

***If you do provide a cell phone number and you are on vacation, please leave a message that you are on vacation so that we know to contact someone else. That would be helpful. Thank you.***

**Answer:** [Doris Figueroa] – Yes, absolutely.

**Mark J. Lefkof** –

***Once you are functioning, we normally set up a community dialogue.***

**Martha Taylor** –

***We have to have a community dialogue, not normally, it is required.***

**Mark J. Lefkof** –

***I defer; it is required. This will be set up with members of the community, members of the community board and yourselves.***

**Answer:** [Carmen Lopez] – We do currently participate in all of our community dialogues.

***Did you previously say that you visit the site twice a year?***

**Answer:** [Doris Figueroa] – No. The New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities conduct a survey twice a year. The senior staff visits on an ongoing basis.

***How many cars and/or vans will you have? Will there be transportation vans for the residents?***

**Answer:** [Carmen Lopez] – Yes. We will have a mini-van. It's usually a six (6) passenger van. There would only be one.

***Will the staff be parked on the driveway or on the street?***

**Answer:** [Carmen Lopez] – Not all of our staff drive to work. Most of them use public transportation because of the situation with the alternate side parking.

*At the moment, there is no alternate side parking on that block, but is what we call “bus parking”. People from outside of our area park their cars there all day and take the express buses into Manhattan. If you are not parked on that block by 7:00 a.m., you will not get a spot.*

**Martha Taylor** –

*As I recall, you have a pretty long driveway?*

**Answer:** *[Carmen Lopez]* – Yes. Thank you.

**Edward Chung** –

*Are you leasing the building or buying the building?*

**Answer:** *[Steven Myricks]* – We are leasing it.

*Will you be responsible for the maintenance of the building on the outside and the inside?*

**Answer:** *[Steven Myricks]* – Yes. We are responsible for the maintenance of the grounds.

*How long will you have the lease?*

**Answer:** *[Steven Myricks]* – It is a 15 year net lease. There are no real estate taxes.

*Area Chair Mark J. Lefkof explained to the members of the community that were signed up for Public Participation that they would each have three (3) minutes to speak.*

### **Public Participation:**

**Susan Mintz** – Ms. Mintz spoke about Quality of Life issues of the area stating that this community residence would only exacerbate these issues. Below are some of her concerns:

- *Excessive traffic and congestion.*
- *Noise pollution from additional people traffic.*
- *Litter left on lawns and sidewalks.*
- *Parking problems due to weekday commuter parking to use express buses.*

*(Ms. Mintz provided a copy of her full statement and a petition signed by 18 residents who are in opposition of this facility).*

**Michael Reichwald** – Mr. Reichwald first thanked S:US for their work in the communities they service. He reiterated the concerns that Ms. Mintz reported. He stated that they feel strongly that this community facility would not be beneficial for the community.

- *House is located mid-block, which will cause more traffic backups.*
- *80<sup>th</sup> Road is a one-way thoroughfare for motorists who want to avoid the traffic on Union Turnpike.*
- *Students and staff traveling to St. John’s University.*
- *Three synagogues and a children’s daycare on next block.*
- *The Summit School uses about 25 buses to get students to their schools. 80<sup>th</sup> Road is their only access.*

*(Mr. Reichwald provided a copy of his full statement).*

**Mark J. Lefkof** –

*Are the residents being housed in this facility from the community? Are they from Queens, from the surrounding area or other boroughs? How are they selected?*

**Answer:** *[Carmen Lopez]* – 60% of the individuals will be from Queens. The rest will be from the Bronx and one from Brooklyn. When we are selecting the location, it is based on the need of the locations of the individuals.

***If any of the residents go out into the community they will always be accompanied by someone. Is that correct?***

**Answer:** [Amanda Duva] – Yes. There is 24-hour supervision. There will always be staff with them.

**Martha Taylor** –

***Have you already selected your residents?***

**Answer:** [Carmen Lopez] – We are in the process of screening the last two (2) but we have already selected 80% of the residents.

**Marie Adam-Ovide** – ***What are your plans for maintaining the cleanliness of the property and also maintenance of the grass?***

**Answer:** [Carmen Lopez] – We do all that. When the State comes to survey us, it starts from the moment they get to the property. Smoking has to be 50 feet away from the house so there is no smoking. If they find a cigarette, whether it is ours or not, we can get a citation. Therefore we need to make sure that our property is clean at all times. The egresses must be clear, the house clean, and there is no damaged furniture. We have to do a little bit extra, not only because we want these individuals to have a decent living environment, but also we have to abide by certain standards with the State. We also have a landscaping company that does come to do the landscaping. S:US also has central maintenance that come out if there is a leak, or a light bulb out or anything that needs to be repaired in the house. We are mandated to repair smoke detectors or anything that can result in imminent danger immediately.

**Marie Adam-Ovide** – ***Is that the same with snow removal?***

**Answer:** [Carmen Lopez] – Yes, absolutely.

*Area Chair Mark J. Lefkof stated that there will not be a vote taken tonight or at the Community Board 8 Monthly Meeting being held on Wednesday, April 18, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. The public is welcome to speak but must notify the Community Board ahead of time and will be put on the Public Participation list. The Board has taken the stand that it will not vote on any type of health facility serving the developmentally disabled that wants to move into our community for the following reasons:*

- 1. Saturation/Concentration has never been defined under the New York Site Selection Law.*
- 2. Finding the applicant an alternate site is almost impossible.*
- 3. The New York State law is in conflict with the Federal ADA guidelines.*

**Area Chair Mark J. Lefkof thanked everyone for coming.**

*This Informational Hearing was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.*

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*Respectfully submitted,  
Alma Karassavidis, CB8 Staff Member  
April 11, 2018*