

PENDING COMMITTEE APPROVAL
Bronx Community Board No. 8
Minutes of the Health, Hospitals and Social Services Committee
Held on
Wednesday, October 13th,2021 at 7:00pm
Via
Zoom Conference Call

Present:	Affiliation
Omar Murray	Chair – Health, Hospitals and Social Services Committee
Kimberly Ally	Community Member
Steve Froot	CB8- Committee Member
Sebastian Chittilappilly	CB8- Committee Member
Robert Kaplan	CB8- Committee Member
Karen Pesce	CB8- Committee Member

Absent:

Guest (s):	
Sylvia Alexander	CB8
Bob Bender	Vice-Chair, Bronx Community Board No.8
Lisa Daub	CB8
Eric Dinowitz	NYC Councilman, 11 th district
Jeffery Dinowitz	NYS Assemblyman, 81 st district
Erin Drinkwater	DSS/HRA
David Gellman	CB8
Matthew Okebiyi	AAPCI

***Please Note This Meeting was attended by over 400 Guests which include Board members and residents.**

The Committee meeting is called to order at 7:06 pm. The Chair opens with welcoming all member and guests to the October 2021 HHSS Committee meeting. This meeting is design to get more information on the proposed homeless to the located at 6661 Broadway, Bronx NY to house 130 adult males scheduled to be open in fall 2023. Since the Board office received this notification on this proposed shelter, the office has received numerous emails from community residents requesting more information and opposition to this proposal. There is a petition on change.org signed by over 1000 residents who oppose this shelter. The Committee Chair states Miss Erin Drinkwater, Assistant Deputy-Commissioner for Department of Social Services (DSS) will be speaking about the proposed shelter and the service provider is the African American Planning Commission (AAPCI) which is represented its CEO Mr. Matthew Okebiyi.

Drinkwater states in 2017, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced, “Turning the Tide on Homelessness in New York City,” his borough-by-borough plan for addressing homelessness and the unique challenges of those experiencing homelessness. This site will own and operated by AAPCI and will be 5 story tall and will have dorms shared by 8-10 men and will have outdoor recreational facilities and 24-hour security. The facility will have a 10pm curfew and will have onsite social services. The service contract with AAPCI and DSS will be for 34 years and the estimate costs for this contract will be \$195 million.

Questions about proposed shelter

When is this facility scheduled to open?

This transitional housing facility will serve 130 single adult men experiencing homelessness from this community and surrounding communities in the Bronx as they stabilize their lives and is scheduled to open in Fall 2023.

Who is the social services provider?

African American Planning Commission, Inc. (AAPCI) is the not-for-profit social service provider partner that will operate this site. AAPCI has extensive experience and expertise operating transitional housing facilities and helping to achieve significant housing placement outcomes for New Yorkers experiencing homelessness. Our partnership with AAPCI at this location will continue that work by giving 130 New Yorkers experiencing homelessness the opportunity to be sheltered in their home borough, closer to their support networks and the communities they last called home as they get back on their feet.

Who will be served by this facility?

The shelter will serve 130 adult males experiencing homelessness with priority offered to those with roots in the Bronx, including Community District 8, providing those who previously resided in the borough before experiencing homelessness the opportunity to remain closer to their support networks, including the anchors of life that we all rely on, like jobs, health care, community, family, friends, and houses of worship as they get back on their feet.

What services will be provided at this facility?

On-site services will include case management, individual and group counseling, permanency planning and housing placement assistance, support groups, independent living and life skills workshops, and support in finding and securing employment. Off-site service linkages will include, but will not be limited to, primary healthcare, health/mental health services, referrals to substance use treatment, vocational training, employment placement, GED instruction, conflict mediation, and legal services. Additionally, this site will have the ability to provide dedicated mental health services as appropriate to any individuals who may need them.

What is the average duration of stay?

The average length of stay for single adults in shelter is approximately one year.

How did the city select this site?

Not-for-profit providers propose new shelters through an open-ended RFP process, which means proposals are accepted on a rolling basis. When a proposal is submitted, the quality of the proposal (including the need for the proposed shelter capacity at the location, the viability of the building, the scope of the client services, the experience of the provider, pricing, and other operational matters) is evaluated and scored by agency program experts working with the Department of Social Services' Contracts Office in accordance with New York City Procurement Policy Board Rules. The proposal is also reviewed by Agency leadership for consistency with the borough-based approach, and the capacity and equitable siting goals that the Turning the Tide plan will achieve when it is fully implemented.

Councilman Dinowitz, Assemblyman Dinowitz and Board Chair Laura Spalter all stated opposition to the proposed shelter because of the location, the model and lack of information on the proposal. The Chair opened that floor for questions from the public. Many residents voiced their concerns and opposition to the shelter because of the following:

1. The location (Near to residential homes, parks, and playground)
2. Burden on Businesses
3. Decrease in home value
4. The Model (130 males, no women, or children)
5. Limited screening for occupants
6. Possibility of increased crime rate
7. Limited information about the service provider AAPCI: Board of Directors, pay schedule of staff, other facilities that provider operates, and services offer on site.
8. Increase burden on police dept.

The Chair notes this proposal will be reviewed by the land use committee and the mayor of office of contracts services (MOCS) will be having a public hearing

Meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.

Recorded and Submitted By:
Omar Murray