



Katherine Diaz, Chair
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

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June 29th, 2023

Hon. Molly Wasow Park
Commissioner
Department of Homeless Services
33 Beaver Street, 17th Floor
New York, NY 10004

RE: Resolution in Support of Bowery Residents' Committee Men's Shelter.

Please be advised that Community Board 12 Manhattan at its General Meeting on Tuesday, June 27th, 2023, passed a resolution with a vote of 29 in favor, 7 opposed, 2 abstentions, and 0, not voting due to conflict supporting Based on the information provided, Community Board 12 endorses the Bowery Residents' Committee single men's shelter development in Inwood.

Whereas: The Bowery Residents' Committee, Inc. (BRC) is a non-profit group that started on the Bowery 50 years ago and has grown over the years across four of New York City's five boroughs; and

Whereas: Since then, the BRC has created programs and facilities designed to serve the most vulnerable New Yorkers, including services like transit outreach, temporary housing, workforce development, long-term housing, and more; and

Whereas: BRC's achievements during FY22 were:

12,000 Individuals were served by BRC's Homeless Outreach Teams
4,828 Clients completed a BRC program
6,723 Individuals were placed in the shelter by BRC Homeless Outreach
3,399 People served per day
8,671 Individuals served by BRC's 34 integrated, holistic programs
704 Formerly homeless clients found stable, permanent housing; and

Whereas: Over the past few years, the BRC has transitioned from leasing buildings from landlords to building their shelters and housing. Most recently, in 2018, they built 500 beds shelter and 137 units of low-income and supportive housing in Fordham Road Landing Road in Bronx, NY; and

Whereas: In 2019, they assessed the viability of 3972 Tenth Avenue, Inwood, southwest corner of 212th Street for building and operating a high-quality shelter for people experiencing homelessness, and began their due diligence process including outreach to local stakeholders; and

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Whereas: In late 2020, BRC learned the site had a history as a burial ground for enslaved Africans and as a Lenape Ceremonial Site. In 1903, as the neighborhood was being developed, the burial ground was destroyed and the remains of those buried there were dishonored and discarded, and there is currently no recognition of any of the site's history in the immediate area or acknowledgment of those who were previously buried there; and

Whereas: BRC concluded that walking away from this history of trauma would not serve the need that exists to help heal it. They engaged and listened to the voices of hundreds of stakeholders: the descendant communities, the current community, PS-98 school representatives and parents, historians, spiritual leaders, and other experts, the workforce and clients of BRC, and many other stakeholders; and

Whereas: That process of inclusion and listening led to the establishment of the Advisory Group for the Inwood Sacred Site (AGISS), which recognized the direct connection between the history of this site, its relationship to the persecution and dehumanization, and marginalization of people and communities of color, and the root causes of homelessness today which disproportionately impact communities of color; and

Whereas: The Advisory Group for the Inwood Sacred Site (AGISS) includes Meredith Horsford (Chair), Executive Director, Dyckman Farmhouse Museum, Chief Ayanda Ifadara Clarke, Ajibilu Awo of Osogbo, Founder and CEO, THE FADARA GROUP, LLC, Carol Stevens, Church of the Good Shepherd Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Ministry, Curtis Zunigha, Cultural Resources Director, Delaware Tribe of Indians, Elizabeth Ritter (CB12), Natalie Espino, Manhattan Borough President's Office, other community leaders, and historians; and

Whereas: Recognizing these connections between our city's history of racism and the racism that still exists in our society, the AGISS recommended that BRC proceed with its residential program but do so in a manner that incorporates the site's history restores dignity to those who had been laid to rest there, and affords an opportunity and a space for reflection and education; and

Whereas: The BRC shelter development will also include a Sacred Site Memorial Space which will permanently memorialize the history of the site as the location of an enslaved African burial ground, as well as a sacred ceremonial location of the Lenape indigenous peoples; and

Whereas: In mid-to-late 2025, BRC will conclude the final construction of the site that will become a 32,000 gross square foot, 4 stories, state-of-the-art, 116-bed transitional housing program, and include the Inwood Sacred Site open to the public: and

Whereas: BRC will maintain communication with the local community stakeholders on

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progress and update any major developments or milestones in the construction and eventual opening of the site; and

Whereas: Construction commenced June 2023, with an 18-24 months' timeline and projected opening early to mid-2025; and

Whereas: The community will be informed of 67 job opportunities for residents as the project progresses, now, therefore, be it

Resolved: Based on the information provided, Community Board 12 endorses the Bowery Residents' Committee single men's shelter development in Inwood.

Sincerely,



Katherine Diaz
Chair

cc:

Hon. Anne Castillo, MOME Commissioner
Hon. Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate
Hon. Brad Lander, Comptroller
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman
Hon. Cordell Cleare, State Senator

Hon. Robert Jackson, State Senator
Hon. Alfred Taylor, Assembly Member
Hon. Manny De Los Santos, Assembly Member
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Council Member
Hon. Shaun Abreu, Council Member