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COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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The Social Services Committee of Community Board No. 2, Manhattan held its regular monthly meeting on April 29, 2021, 6:30pm via Zoom conference.

Committee Members Present: Susanna Aaron, Chair; William Benesh, Keen Berger, Cathy Sullivan, Adam Zeldin

Committee Members Absent With Notice: Wayne Kawadler

Committee Members Absent Without Notice: John Paul Deverna

Other CB2 Members Present: Carter Booth, Rich Caccappolo, Susan Kent, Jeannine Kiely (Chair), Lois Rakoff

CB2 Staff Present: Bob Gormley, District Manager; Josh Thompson, Assistant District Manager

Public Members Present: Rachel Yarmolinsky

Public Members Absent With Notice: Jessica Aaron

Public Members Absent Without Notice: Christopher Leonard

Agenda:

- 1) Update from NYC Department of Social Services (DSS) and Center for Urban Community Services (CUCS) on development of Paul's Place, a drop-in center and Safe Haven planned for 112-114 West 14th St.
- 2) Public discussion regarding data that would enhance the work of the Social Services Committee.

MINUTES: Item 1

Paul's Place was scheduled to open in December of 2020 but construction delays aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic pushed that to an expected opening date of June, 2021. The facility will house a drop-in center for street homeless, as well as a Safe Haven residence with 24 beds.

CUCS presented information on the development of this facility at two earlier meetings of the CB2 Social Services Committee, on November 29, 2018, and October 29, 2020.

The DROP-IN CENTER is located on the ground and basement floors and will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and has capacity for 75 adult individuals. CUCS will work in conjunction with the Manhattan Outreach Consortium, which provides housing placement, and medical and psychiatric care to individuals experiencing street homelessness in Manhattan. (See Minutes from Social Services committee meeting of September 22, 2020.) Clients can come and go as they please. The facility provides showers and laundry facilities; lounge chairs and televisions; meals; therapeutic activities; psychiatric and primary medical care services; transitional and permanent housing placement services; coordination with the Safe Haven located on upper floors.

The drop-in center will not provide beds, but clients are permitted to spend the night in reclining chairs. Paul's Place staff will also arrange placement for overnight stays at respite bed programs. These programs are generally operated by churches and community centers, although their employment was suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic. Most of these operators are members of the Emergency Shelter Network, a private not-for-profit organization. (Visit <https://www.esn-nyc.org> for more information.) Paul's Place staff will be responsible for transferring clients to respite programs in the evening and returning them in the morning. Clients will.

The SAFE HAVEN is located on the third floor of the building and provides transitional housing to individuals referred by the Manhattan Outreach Consortium. Unlike the general population seeking shelter in New York City, these individuals will not be required to undergo intake and assessment by the Department of Homeless Services. Rather, the low-threshold model of Safe Haven is specifically designed for those who have previously resisted shelter. About twenty similar facilities already operate in New York City and are deemed successful models for treating persistent street homelessness. Each facility aims to transition half of its clients into permanent housing each year.

Each client will have his/her own room; be assigned a case manager to develop an individualized service plan; will have access to psychiatric, substance abuse, and medical services and all the amenities of the drop-in center.

This facility will serve only adult men and women. Younger homeless individuals will be referred to appropriate facilities such as Safe Horizons. No one will be turned away outright.

The second floor of the building at 112-114 West 14th Street is primarily composed of offices for staff and client consultation. It also houses a terrace in the rear to accommodate smoking and socializing. Rules about this space and its hours have been left undefined while the staff evaluates the impacts of its use on clients and neighbors.

Clients entering Paul's Place will pass through a ferromagnetic detector to bar weapons from entering. The entrance to the facility will be well-lit. The security desk is sited at the entrance, with large windows facing the street, and additional windows flank the entrance door. The entrance door itself is set back some 16" to prevent clients from confusing it with the entrance to the building next door, which is private and not part of this facility.

Once it is open, Paul's Place will form a Community Advisory Board of local stakeholders to monitor the facility's operation.

MINUTES: Item 2.

The committee discussed the role that data might play in gaining a deeper understanding of the social services needs of our district. Areas of interest include mental health, food insecurity, homelessness, housing, the needs of seniors, and others. We agreed to continue the conversation to develop data-seeking projects relevant to our work.