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Community Board No. 2, Manhattan

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September 20, 2024

Hon. Susan Donoghue
Commissioner
NYC Department of Parks & Recreation
The Arsenal
830 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10065

Hon. Sarah Carroll
Chair and Commissioner
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Honorable Commissioner Donoghue and Chair Carroll:

At its Full Board meeting on September 19, 2024, Community Board #2, Manhattan (CB2, Man.) adopted the following resolution:

A resolution by Community Board 2 Manhattan expressing opposition to the demolition of the Dapolito Center.

Whereas:

A. The Dapolito Center building, constructed in 1908 and modified over the years, is of architectural and historic importance and is a building contributing to the historic and cultural significance of the Greenwich Village Historic District Extension II; and

B. The Landmarks Law affords the building considerable protection from unsuitable alteration and demolition, including “demolition by neglect”; and

C. At the creation of the Greenwich Village Historic District Extension II, the originally proposed boundary of the district was altered in order to include the Center; and

D. The building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places; and

E. Together with the adjacent library building, the notable Keith Herring mural on the west wall, the outdoor swimming pool, and the James J. Walker Park, the block is a welcome open area serving a variety of recreational purposes in Greenwich Village and is across the street from St. Luke's Place, one of the best-preserved blocks of row houses in the city; and

F. The building has been closed for 5 years and through the time of the closure and until recently it was understood by the community, based on information from the City and presentations to both the Parks and Landmarks Committees of CB2, that renovations would be carried out and the building would reopen as a recreation center; and

G. At a meeting of Community Board 2 July 10, 2024, of Land Use and Parks Committees concerning a new affordable housing building proposed for the block immediately south of the Center, a Parks Department representative, brought forward a proposal for recreation facilities in that building and that demolition of the Center was under consideration; and

H. A resolution was subsequently passed by the Board endorsing the use of certain parts of the apartment building for community recreational purposes and this affirmation was grossly misrepresented by the Parks Department as endorsing the demolition of the Dapolito Center; and

I. The Parks Commissioner later appeared in an onsite television interview explaining the demolition, despite CB2 never supporting demolition; and

J. The CB2 Board has had no further communication from the Parks Department since the meeting and there are no reports or engineering studies to support the necessity for demolition in hand; and

K. The CB2 Landmarks Committee, through which any request for approval of alteration or demolition of a building in a landmark district must pass, has had no notification; and

L. Concern has been expressed by members of the community, organizations concerned with historic preservation, elected officials, and members of the CB2 Board about the proposed demolition; and

Therefore be it resolved that Community Board 2 Manhattan recommends that New York City restore the Dapolito Center in accordance with Landmarks Law and ensure the building remain under city ownership and devoted to a civic purpose.

Vote: Passed, with 22 in favor, 5 opposed (R. Caccappolo, A. Fernandez, D. Gruber, R. Kessler, F. Sigel), 3 abstaining (R. Sanz, E. Siegel, E. Smith), and no recusals.

We respectfully request that your agency take action consistent with the positions expressed in the above.

Sincerely,



Susan Kent, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Chenault Spence, Chair
Landmarks & Public Aesthetics Committee
Community Board #2, Manhattan

SK/fa

cc: Hon. Daniel Goldman, U.S. Representative, 10th District
Hon. Eric Adams, Mayor of the City of New York
Hon. Brad Lander, NYC Comptroller
Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Adrienne Adams, NYC Council Speaker
Hon. Christopher Marte, NYC Council, 1st District
Hon. Carlina Rivera, NYC Council, 2nd District
Hon. Erik Bottcher, NYC Council, 3rd District
Hon. Brian Kavanagh, NY State Senate, 27th District
Hon. Brad Hoylman-Sigal, NY State Senate, 47th District
Hon. Grace Lee, State Assembly, 65th District
Hon. Deborah J. Glick, NY State Assembly, 66th District
Gregory Cala, Community & Intergovernmental Associate