



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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BURT LAZARIN
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

July 1, 2019

George Nashak
Executive Director
Care for the Homeless
30 East 33rd Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10016

**Re: 427 West 52nd Street
Care for the Homeless Women's Shelter**

Dear Mr. Nashak,

At the May 16th, 2019 meeting of Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4)'s Housing, Health, and Human Services (HHHS) Committee, Care for the Homeless (CFH) presented details on the operations of the 52nd Street Women's Center scheduled to open this summer. By vote of 45 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote, MCB4 voted to endorse this plan with the conditions that the operational security plans are implemented as detailed below and that CFH will participate in the Community Advisory Board as established by MCB4.

Background

MCB4 would like to thank CFH for providing details on the operations of the 52nd Street Women's Center scheduled to open this summer. The 120-bed shelter for single women at 427 West 52nd Street replaces a mother and child shelter run by Covenant House for nearly thirty years until 2018. While MCB4 is pleased that this site will again be operational, there are some concerns that the Board would like to highlight and keep in focus to ensure minimal conflict with neighboring residents. Security, Quality of Life disturbances and an open dialog with all possible stakeholders are top priorities.

Our District has among the highest concentration of social service facilities in New York City. As such, MCB4 and the community have had a good deal of experience working with providers on mitigating strategies to integrate such services into the community. CFH presented an outline of measures to address many community concerns, including a detailed security plan. CFH is a highly experienced provider of healthcare and homeless services that has successfully operated Susan's Place, a shelter for 200 women in the

Bronx for over 10 years. MCB4 encourages CFH to continue to work with the community and to adjust operations if necessary. MCB4 recognizes Care for the Homeless has already done considerable outreach and has been thoughtful in the planning of this site, but nonetheless, the sheer size of this shelter warrants caution.

CFH's goal is to transition the Center's residents to permanent housing by providing holistic social services. CFH's plans for the 52nd Street Center are a comprehensive blueprint for potential success with prevention of quality of life conflicts with the existing neighbors. Details of the operational plan are outlined below.

52nd Street Women's Center Operational Summary and Services Provided

A resident-focused facility with healthcare and social services

- The 52nd Street Women's Center will have dedicated direct care staff for residents. Staff includes:
 - Psychiatrist
 - Nurse practitioner
 - Registered nurses
 - Case managers
 - Housing specialists
 - Recreation coordinator
 - Driver
- The health center will operate during morning and evening hours so that clients' needs and schedules can be accommodated.

A resident-focused facility with recreation space and a computer lab

- There is state of the art recreation space for our residents within the facility.
 - On the top floor, there is a 400 sq. ft. computer lab with workstations and printers and a lounge area where clients can watch TV.
 - There is a 2000 sq. ft. secure terrace on the penthouse level that residents can use for smoking or for fresh air.
 - There is a dining space of 1400 sq. ft. with TV and chairs where clients can spend time. CFH will provide three meals per day plus snacks for residents.
 - There will be a full-time recreation coordinator who will organize events and activities for the residents which will focus on everything from health and wellness, arts and crafts, and entertainment and games.
 - On-site laundry

House Rules:

- No loitering or smoking in front of the building, especially the entrance to the building.
- CFH staff will continually monitor resident impact on the community and will take appropriate action should it be required.

MCB4 is reassured by the degree of on premise services encouraged by CFH's commitment to a community partnership as outlined below:

- Neighbors will have a telephone number at the site that will be picked up 24/7 in case of a serious concern.
- CFH is committed to promote open and honest communication with the community. CFH has agreed with MCB4 to create a Community Advisory Board that will meet regularly to assess the shelter's impact on the neighborhood and to keep neighbors apprised of shelter activities.
- CFH's full-time shelter director will be available to meet with neighbors as requested.
- CFH staff will participate in the appropriate committee of MCB4 to keep the Board posted of shelter activities and receive feedback.
- CFH staff will establish a relationship with the Midtown North's (18th Precinct) Neighborhood Coordination Officers (NCOs).

The Board encourages CFH to reach out to all the neighborhood schools and Block Associations/Tenant Groups in the area they may not have already engaged. Based on experience with other large facilities within the district, communication is helpful, but a well-designed security plan is essential to ensuring community support. CFH provided the Board with details around their security plan for the Women's Center as outlined below:

Summary of Care for the Homeless 52nd Street Proposed Security Measures:

NYPD Devised Security Plan

- CFH has created a security plan based on NYPD's security assessment of the building incorporating their standards and recommendations.
- CFH will provide 24/7 security coverage at the facility: staffing will include 3 certified security guards and one security shift supervisor on every 8-hour shift.
- Security shifts are 8 am to 4 pm, 4 pm to 12 am, and 12 am to 8 am.
- There will be a guard assigned to operate a magnetometer at the entrance and provide access to incoming residents and staff.
- All security staff will be CFH employees, directly responsible to the program director.
- One guard will monitor the CCTV system 24/7.
- Guards will conduct routine interior and exterior patrols.
- There will be routine health and safety inspections by CFH and by oversight agencies.

State of the Art Security Apparatus

- CFH has installed 43 security cameras throughout the building, also covering the outside perimeters of the facility.
- Exterior cameras overlooking the street are vandal-resistant with night vision and motorized movement for focus.
- The feed of security cameras can also be accessed remotely by CFH management.
- A buzzer entry device is installed at the entrance

- All entrance and exit doors will be fitted with alarm devices which will sound at the attempt of unauthorized access.
- CFH personnel will have panic buttons connected to the security desk in the front. Security staff will be notified immediately if assistance is required.

Neighborhood patrol

- CFH security guards will conduct routine exterior patrols along the block as well as monitoring the exterior of the facility with 4 CCTV cameras 24/7.
- This added security will make the block safer with the establishment of the shelter.

Conclusion

MCB4 is encouraged by the steps taken by CFH ahead of the opening of the 52nd Street Women's Center. Understanding all potential scenarios cannot be anticipated, it is vital that CFH continues to maintain open communication with all stakeholders and is prepared to make adjustments to their method of operations as needed while we integrate the new residents to the neighborhood.

Sincerely,



Burt Lazarin
MCB4 Chair



Maria Ortiz, Co-Chair
Housing, Health &
Human Services Committee



Joe Restuccia, Co-Chair
Housing, Health &
Human Services Committee

cc: Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker, City Council
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senator
Hon. Richard Gottfried, New York State Assembly
NYC Department of Homeless Services