



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4

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J. LEE COMPTON
Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.
District Manager

October 5, 2006

Hon. Shaun Donovan
Commissioner
NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development
100 Gold Street
New York, NY 10038

Re: Irish Arts Center – Clinton Urban Renewal Area Site 9A

Dear Commissioner Donovan:

We were pleased to learn that the City, acting through the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with The Irish Arts Center concerning its permanent relocation within the Clinton Urban Renewal Area. Following relocation of Cybert Tire Inc. to CURA Site 7 (see our letter to you dated April 11, 2006), Irish Arts, which now occupies another City-owned building in the CURA, proposes to purchase the Cybert Tire garage at 726 Eleventh Avenue from the City for a nominal price and convert it to a 15,000 square foot performing arts and cultural center.

Pauline Turley, Executive Director of The Irish Arts Center, attended the September 13, 2006 meeting of the Board's Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee to request support for its proposal to secure a permanent home.

The Irish Arts Center has rented 553 West 51st Street from the City since 1972, and has been the sole tenant of the property for the last 34 years. In that time, it has transformed an abandoned garage into a theater, exhibition space and classrooms. Programming includes professional theater performances, classes (in Irish music, dance, history, theater, language and literature), concerts and musical workshops, Irish folk dance evenings and workshops, film screening and documentary film making, cabaret and comedy evenings, and exhibitions of Irish visual arts, sculpture and photography.

The permanent relocation of The Irish Arts Center would provide the Center with security of tenure and a newly renovated building brought up to code standards, making future physical and programming expansion possible. It would also ensure that the many services now provided by the Center would remain available to the Clinton community.

The Center has received funding from the Clinton Seed Fund to study the site's environmental condition, develop preliminary architectural schemes and cost estimates, and create a development plan for the project. This pre-development work will be essential to determining the feasibility of this project, and Ms. Turley has committed to presenting the results of these efforts to the Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee in the coming months.

In the meantime, we are delighted to express our preliminary support for this project.

Sincerely,



J. Lee Compton
Chair
Community Board 4



Anna Hayes Levin
Co-Chair
Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use



Simone Sindin
Co-Chair
Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use

Cc: John Warren, First Deputy Commissioner, HPD
Pauline Turley, The Irish Arts Center
Local elected officials