



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4

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Chair

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

October 10, 2006

Shaun Donovan
Commissioner
Department of Housing Preservation & Development
100 Gold Street
New York, New York 10038

Doug Apple
General Manager
New York City Housing Authority
250 Broadway
New York, New York 10007

**Re: Hudson Yards/West Chelsea Affordable Housing Commitments
NYCHA Sites—Fulton Houses (18th Street, 9th & 10th Avenues), Elliot-Chelsea Houses (25th
Street & 9th Avenues), Harborview Houses (54th to 55th Streets, 9th & 10th Avenues)**

Dear Messrs. Donovan & Apple,

In 2004 and 2005 Manhattan Community Board #4 worked in cooperation with the Mayor's Office and the City Council to ensure affordable housing commitments were made as part of the major rezonings of the Westside in Hudson Yards/Hell's Kitchen and West Chelsea. The process included the Department of City Planning, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, city, state and federal elected officials and a broad range of community stakeholders including the Hell's Kitchen/Hudson Yards Alliance and Afford Chelsea. By the end of these rezonings, the public process resulted in two Points of Agreement documents (the Points) between the Mayor's Office and the City Council which detailed a number of commitments arising from the rezonings including affordable housing.

The Points included affordable housing commitments totaling 28% of all units for Hudson Yards and 26% of all units for West Chelsea. Part of the affordable housing agreements included the City's commitment to finance affordable housing on certain public sites. The NYCHA sites are a subset of the public sites. The Board is pleased that HPD and NYCHA cooperatively working together have begun the process to develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) to make the City's commitments for the NYCHA sites a reality.

The Board first was briefed by HPD and NYCHA in late August 2006 and requested that both agencies meet with affected NYCHA Tenant Associations and attend a public meeting of Affordable Housing Task Force in September. On September 5, 2006 NYCHA and HPD met with the Elliot-Chelsea Tenants Association and on September 13th, 2006 met with both Harborview Tenants Association and Fulton

Houses Tenant Association. Each Tenant Association meeting was attended by over 150 NYCHA tenants. The Board's Affordable Housing Task Force, which had a similar presentation by NYCHA and HPD, was attended by over 50 community residents and stakeholders.

After considerable debate by the Task Force members, the Board makes the following recommendations and approves the proposed developments in concept regarding the NYCHA sites, subject to following conditions:

Public Process

Because the 3 sites are owned by NYCHA, a public authority, their disposition to a private developer is not subject to the City's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) process.

- However, the Harborview Site, being located on a platform over the Amtrak rail cut, will be subject to a Department of City Planning Special Permit, and therefore full ULURP.
- With the each site, however, NYCHA and HPD will require each awarded developer to present its designs and project details to the Board immediately following its selection, and to consult regularly with the Board as project designs and plans are finalized, so that public comment and input from community stakeholders can be considered.
- HPD and NYCHA will provide the Board with a copy of the final RFP

Physical Description of Developments

Harborview Site

Two 15 story rental buildings with an estimated 210 apartments.

Elliot-Chelsea Site

One 20 story rental building with an estimated 128 apartments.

Fulton Site

One 20 story rental building with an estimated 100 apartments.

The Board requests that the RFP require:

- high quality in the design of the proposed developments
- the project designs take into account the design context of existing buildings on the surrounding blocks

Household Income Mix

Harborview Site

The proposed RFP calls for 210 units, with 155 affordable and 55 market rates. The Board cannot support this proposed income mix.

Affordable Units

The RFP currently calls for income ranges from 61% to 165% of median income, which is consistent with the Board's longstanding affordable housing policy on income mix. However, the proposed mix is at a variance from that specified in the Points and therefore warrants further discussion by the Task Force. The Board will comment on this change at its November meeting.

Market Rate Units.

This site is located in the Clinton Urban Renewal Area, a 6 block site which was condemned by the City in 1969 for use as affordable housing. This site remains one of the last to be developed. Market Rate units on this site are not appropriate. The Board believes its use must be maximized for affordable housing. The Board is aware of the financial encumbrances on this site: construction on platform over the Amtrak cut, inclusion of NYCHA parking and height limits.

However, the Board believes it is possible with additional public financing and creativity in project structure that the needs of the community and the financial needs of NYCHA can be met. The Board requests to work with NYCHA and HPD in the coming month to eliminate the Market Rate component at this site.

Elliot-Chelsea Site

The 128 apartments shall be affordable to households earning between 80%, 125% and 165% of New York Area Median Income (see attached chart), that is low, moderate and middle income households.

Fulton Site

The 100 apartments shall be affordable to households earning between 80%, 125% and 165% of New York Area Median Income (see attached chart), that is low, moderate and middle income households

Apartment Distribution

The apartment distribution will include studio, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom and 3 bedroom units. The majority of the units will be 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units. At least 40% will be 2 or 3 bedroom units.

Community Preference for Rentals

- 20 % of the units on each site will be rented with priority given to eligible NYCHA residents in the following order:
 - The subject developments in Manhattan Community Board #4
 - Manhattan NYCHA developments
 - Other NYCHA developments
- 50% of the units, after meeting the NYCHA preference, will be rented to residents of Manhattan Community Board #4
- The Board also requests an additional 5% preference for New York City government employees—both uniformed and civil servants, including such affiliated agencies such as NYCHA itself.

NYCHA Tenant Parking

All or a portion of all three sites contain NYCHA tenant parking. All tenant parking will be replaced under the following conditions:

- No NYCHA tenant who now has a parking space on any site will lose access to a NYCHA parking space as result of these developments
- NYCHA parking spaces currently on the sites, will either be relocated to another NYCHA parking lot within each NYCHA development or to a garage within the new developments
- NYCHA tenants will receive no increase in parking rates other than those increases customarily charged by NYCHA
- Relocation of NYCHA parking will not permanently displace any existing NYCHA open space
- During construction of the NYCHA sites, HPD and NYCHA will make provisions for temporary parking for the affected NYCHA tenants.

Open Space

Harborview Site

This site contains multiple open space issues, which need to be resolved as part of and companion to the proposed RFP, both through public and private action:

- Relocation of the basketball courts currently on the site to a location acceptable to the Harborview Tenants Association and Manhattan Community Board #4
- The improvement and redevelopment of the open space, currently a concrete plaza, to the east of the proposed development, through a combination of public and private funds
- The improvement and redevelopment of “the Plaza”, south of and adjacent to the Harborview senior building, through a combination of public and private funds

Quality of Life

Elliot-Chelsea Site

The relocation of the Elliot-Chelsea garbage dumpsters and the envelope of the proposed new building must take into account the following:

- The neighboring building, to the north of the site, the Heywood, is a recent residential conversion
- The Board acknowledges the Heywood’s southern lot line windows will be sealed by the proposed building
- Garbage dumpsters for Elliot-Chelsea must be enclosed in a single story structure and located with maximum separation from adjacent Heywood lot line windows
- The footprint and building envelope of the proposed building should take into account the apartment line in the southwest corner of the Heywood, for which the only windows are on the light well.
- The structural integrity of the Heywood must not be impaired.

All Sites

Developers must be committed to high standards of care in building maintenance and operation.

Sustainability

Sustainable/"green" building practices should be required. This Board strongly supports the use of design and construction practices that significantly reduce or eliminate the negative impact of buildings on the environment, including in particular those practices that will reduce impacts on area residents and workers and local infrastructure. As a matter of public policy, the RFP should require the developer(s) to use as many "green" building practices as possible or any other standard established pursuant to Local Law 86 of 2005 applicable to City-owned or City-funded capital projects.

Ground Floor Uses

No cabaret or nightlife uses will be permitted at any sites. No liquor licenses will be permitted at any site.

Harborview Site

The ground floor uses will include NYCHA tenant parking, residential or a community facility.

Elliot-Chelsea Site

The ground floor use will be retail

Fulton Site

The ground floor use will be a community facility, with a youth center listed as the preferred use.

Application and Credit Training and Assistance

NYCHA has agreed to provide workshops for training and assistance to NYCHA tenants on how to apply for this housing. Such workshops shall be scheduled at least 6 months prior to marketing of the proposed developments.

RFP Release Schedule

The Board understands NYCHA and HPD's desire to release the RFP in October 2006, but requests its release be delayed until November to allow resolution on the income mix and market rate units at the Harborview site. Although the Hudson Yard affordable housing commitments date from January 2005 and West Chelsea's from May 2005, the Board did not receive detailed proposals for the NYCHA sites until August 2006.

At the Affordable Housing Task Force meeting of September 21, 2006, many Board Members and community residents raised questions about the above issues. Given the matter was presented to the general public only one week ago, the Board believes this matter deserves further public discussion. The Board looks forward to working with NYCHA and HPD to arrive at an acceptable solution.

Overall, the Board is happy to be part of the process to bring the Hudson Yards and West Chelsea housing commitments to fruition. It congratulates both NYCHA and HPD on this endeavor to bring much needed affordable housing to the Chelsea, Hell's Kitchen and Clinton communities.

Sincerely,



Lee Compton
Chair
Manhattan Community Board #4



Joe Restuccia
Chair
Affordable Housing Task Force

cc: Speaker Christine Quinn
Council Member Gail Brewer
State Senator Tom Duane
Assemblyman Richard Gottfried
Congressman Jerrold Nadler
D. DeCerbo, City Council, Land Use Division
A. Borelli, MBPO
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C. Rivetti, NYCHA
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R. Cestero, HPD
H. Leicht, HPD
R. Visnauskas, HPD
C. Zern, HPD
P. Gonzalez, Eliot-Chelsea Houses TA
J. Pelsey, Fulton Houses TA
M. Guzman, Harborview Houses TA
Heywood Condominium