



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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District Manager

February 5, 2014

Honorable Corey Johnson
Office of Councilmember Corey Johnson
224 West 30th Street, Suite 1206
New York, NY 10001

**Re: 512 West 23rd Street, Block 694 Lot 40 (the "Site")
EMS Facility (the "Facility")**

Dear Councilmember Johnson:

As you know, Manhattan Community Board 4 ("CB4") has been working with residents, businesses and representatives of the New York City Fire Department ("NYFD") to address the impacts from the EMS Facility located beneath the High Line at 512 West 234 Street for many years. However, due to the difficulty of finding a permanent site for this vital EMS facility, based on the information listed below provided to us by Richard Bass, attorney for some of the affected buildings and residents, we call on you to work with the relevant City agencies to relocate the Facility as soon as possible -- after your determination of the validity of the below listed concerns:

- The ULURP application (C120177 PCM) for the site selection and acquisition of the Site failed to disclose to the public review decision makers and general public that (i) the Site's development rights were sold as part of the High Line development rights transfer process (ZR Section 98-33), and (ii) that the Site no longer has any remaining development rights.
- The ULURP application also failed to disclose (i) pedestrian conflicts between the Facility and High Line egress/23rd Street pedestrian, (ii) noise and air impacts to the contiguous residential buildings from the Facility vehicles, and (iii) illegal parking and impact to surrounding area by EMS staff who park their private vehicles.
- EMS built an additional 3,656 square feet on the Site in violation of ZR Section 98-35, which required a monetary contribution to the High Line Improvement Fund and a certification by the City Planning Commission Chairperson, neither of which occurred.
- The Facility and related activity (storage of spare vehicles and other material/equipment) violates the letter and/or spirit of the Special West Chelsea District.

- More importantly, the current Site was flooded during Storm Sandy, and therefore may not be able to serve the host community effectively during future periods of devastation.

MCB4 asks that you work with all relevant City Agencies in order to have DCAS commission and conduct a full scale site selection review for a permanent EMS Facility for the west side of Manhattan. This full scale review process has long been promised, but has never been conducted. MCB4 believes that alternative sites do exist in our community, and that many commercial developers would welcome the opportunity to work with the City of New York in finding a new location for this very important facility.

MCB4 understands that the EMS function is extremely important to the west side of Manhattan and agree that until a permanent location is found, the current location serves a vital civic need. However, the current Facility site significantly impacts the host community, possibly violates both the letter and spirit of the West Chelsea High Line supportive zoning regulations and is vulnerable to recurrent flooding. For such an important lifesaving installation, there should be a more thorough site selection and public review process, and we believe that there is a better site solution that what exists currently.

We look to you and your office for leadership in helping to relocate this important EMS Facility.

Sincerely,



Christine Berthet
Chair



David Pincus
Chair
Quality of Life Committee