



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

October 12, 2010/Calendar No. 4

N 110074 PXX

IN THE MATTER OF a Notice of Intent to acquire office space submitted by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, pursuant to Section 195 of the New York City Charter for use of property located at 470 Vanderbilt Avenue (Block 2009, Lot 1) (Human Resources Administration), Community District 2, Borough of Brooklyn.

WHEREAS, on September 15, 2010, the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) submitted a Notice of Intent to acquire office space pursuant to Section 195 of the New York City Charter for the use of space located at 470 Vanderbilt Avenue (Block 2009, Lot 1), Community District 2, Borough of Brooklyn, which is intended for use as offices by the New York City Human Resources Administration; and

WHEREAS, this application (N 110074 PXX) was reviewed pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and the SEQRA regulations set forth in Volume 6 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations, Section 617.00 et seq. and the New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Rules of Procedure of 1991 and Executive Order 91 of 1977. This application was determined to be a Type II action which requires no further environmental review; and

WHEREAS, the Notice of Intent was referred by the Department of City Planning to Brooklyn Community Board 2 and to all Borough Presidents pursuant to Section 195 of the New York City Charter; and

WHEREAS, the Chairperson of Community Board 2, in a letter dated September 20, 2010 to the Chair of City Planning Commission, stated that Community Board 2, by a vote of 27 to 1, with one recusal, recommended approval with the following conditions:

1. The Department of Parks and Recreation should plant 200 street trees within the area bounded by Cumberland Street and Lafayette, Washington and Atlantic avenues during the next two planting seasons. That these plantings should be in addition to those already arranged with Green Fort Greene Clinton Hill and the Myrtle Avenue Revitalization Project.
2. Jobs available with contractors and the owner of 470 Vanderbilt Avenue in connection with the renovation and operation of the building should be listed with the Fort Greene Association and other designees of Community Board 2.
3. HRA should contact the Fort Greene Association chairperson with descriptions of the services that will be provided to clients at 470 Vanderbilt Avenue. HRA should develop an outreach program with FGA to encourage local residents to seek the available resources.

WHEREAS, the Brooklyn Borough President has not submitted a recommendation; and

WHEREAS, no recommendations were received from other Borough Presidents; and

WHEREAS, the City Planning Commission held a public hearing on the application on September 29, 2010 (Calendar No. 11); and

WHEREAS, there were 13 speakers in favor and one opposed; and

WHEREAS, representatives from the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), the Department of Human Resources Administration (HRA), the Office of the Deputy Mayor for

Operations, the Department of Transportation (DOT), the owners of 470 Vanderbilt, the Fulton Area Business Alliance and local businesses appeared in favor; and

WHEREAS, a representative of the Fort Greene Association appeared in favor of the lease and later submitted a letter supporting the lease with the conditions that additional on-street parking be identified and additional street trees be planted in the area; and

WHEREAS, seven letters were submitted to the City Planning Commission in support of the lease from the Pratt Area Community Council, from three owners of nearby businesses and from three nearby residents, citing the benefits on the surrounding neighborhood of adding activity to a primarily vacant site; and

WHEREAS, one resident of the surrounding area testified in opposition to the proposal and a letter in opposition was also received from a resident of the surrounding area citing concerns over the impact on the area of the number of people who would visit the site each day; and

WHEREAS, a letter was received from a resident of the surrounding area suggesting that with respect to this action and Atlantic Yards that a full Environmental Impact Study should be performed by the City under ULURP which is outside the scope of this action; and

WHEREAS, the public hearing was closed; and

WHEREAS, the Commission believes that the proposed lease would bring activity to a long-vacant building, would bring additional customers to support the Fulton Avenue Business Improvement District and would save the City money by reducing leased space and reducing duplicative functions; and

WHEREAS, the Commission acknowledges the recommendations of the Community Board, and is pleased to note that the representative of the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Operations stated at the Commission's public hearing that the Parks Department has agreed to survey the site to identify opportunities for street tree planting within the next two years; and that the representative of the Fort Greene Association stated at the Commission's public hearing that HRA had reached out to them with descriptions of the services that will be provided to clients at 470 Vanderbilt Avenue and that the building's owner had reached out to them and will provide notice of job opportunities as they become available; and furthermore that the representative of the Department of Transportation stated at the Commission's public hearing that they have met with Community Board 2 and that they are working together to identify opportunities for additional on-street parking in the area; and

WHEREAS, the Commission notes that the proposed lease would occupy a significant portion of a long-vacant building with office uses, which are allowed as-of-right in a C6-3A zoning district, bringing activity to a primarily vacant block and additional customers to businesses along Fulton Street and Vanderbilt Avenue; and

WHEREAS, the City Planning Commission, in reviewing the proposed location of office space has considered the following criteria of Article 7 of the Criteria for the Location of City Facilities as adopted by the City Planning Commission on December 3, 1990 pursuant to Section 203 (a) of the New York City Charter:

a) Suitability of the site to provide cost-effective operations.

The proposed facility at 470 Vanderbilt Avenue is of sufficient size and would be appropriately renovated for cost-effective HRA operations. The space is currently vacant and in good condition and would require an office build-out to make it suitable for HRA's needs. The state-of-the-art facility would allow for the consolidation of services into a larger facility, and would reduce overhead by eliminating the duplication of services. HRA would transfer a number of citywide and Brooklyn-specific functions from its current offices at 210 Livingston Street and 35 4th Avenue in Brooklyn and from 330 West 34th Street in Manhattan. Among the functions that would be relocated to 470 Vanderbilt are the Medical Insurance and Community Services Administration and their Medical Assistance Program and Adult Services Program and the Family Independence Administration's Brooklyn division, their citywide Office of Training Operation, their citywide Income Clearance Program, and the Linden Model Job Center. Altogether, approximately 1,880 employees and 1,500 clients a day would visit the offices at 470 Vanderbilt Avenue. The indoor queuing space for clients at 470 Vanderbilt Avenue would be double what is currently provided at the existing facilities. Additionally, the space would be fully ADA compliant.

b) Suitability of the site for operational efficiency.

470 Vanderbilt Avenue has adequate access to public transportation. The C subway line has a station within a block of the building and several others (G, B, Q, R, 2, 3, 4 and 5) are within a 10-15 minute walk to the site. There are also numerous bus lines that intersect the surrounding blocks, including the B25, B26, B69 and the B45. The B25 and B26 lines run continuously along Fulton Street (connecting with the B, Q and R at DeKalb Avenue and the 2, 3, 4 and 5 at Nevins Street,) with scheduled service every 7-9 minutes during rush hour. The B69 runs along Vanderbilt Avenue connecting with Downtown Brooklyn. The B45 line runs two ways on Atlantic Avenue (connecting with the 2, 3, 4, 5, B, Q, D, N and R at Atlantic Avenue-Pacific Street,) with scheduled service approximately every 8-10 minutes throughout the day. Additionally, the Long Island Railroad Atlantic Terminal is within a 10-15 minute walk to the site. Finally, the building owners have agreed to provide shuttle service for HRA staff during peak hours to and from Atlantic Terminal.

c) Consistency with locational and other specific criteria for the facility stated in the Statement of Needs.

The proposed relocation was in the Citywide Statement of Needs for fiscal years 2010-2011.

d) Whether the facility can be located so as to support development and revitalization of the city's regional business districts without constraining operational efficiency.

The proposed space is not located within a regional business district. Its location is, however, consistent with criteria outlined in the Statement of Needs for the relocation of HRA offices and is consistent with the Mayor's policy for the consolidation of city office space. The Fulton Street Business Improvement District also runs along the Fulton Street side of the building.

WHEREAS, the Commission has determined that the application warrants approval and therefore adopts the following resolution:

RESOLVED, by the City Planning Commission that the Notice of Intent to acquire office space submitted by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services on September 15, 2010 for use of property located at 470 Vanderbilt Avenue (Block 2009, Lot 1). Community District 2, Borough of Kings, is hereby **APPROVED**.

The above resolution, duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on October 12, 2010 (Calendar No. 4), is filed with the Office of the Speaker, City Council in accordance with the requirements of Section 195 of the New York City Charter.

AMANDA M. BURDEN, FAICP, Chair
KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, Esq., Vice-Chairman
RAYANN BESSER, IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E., ALFRED C. CERULLO, III,
BETTY Y. CHEN, MARIA M. DEL TORO, RICHARD W. EADDY,
NATHAN LEVENTHAL, ANNA HAYES LEVIN, KAREN A. PHILLIPS, Commissioners



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Chairperson

ROBERT PERRIS
District Manager

September 20, 2010

Amanda M. Burden, FAICP
 Chair, City Planning Commission
 22 Reade Street
 New York, New York 10007

Dear Ms. Burden:

Brooklyn Community Board 2 has reviewed and made a determination on a proposed lease acquisition in 470 Vanderbilt Avenue on behalf of the Human Resources Administration (HRA). A Notice of Intent was submitted for the acquisition on May 25, 2010 and subsequently withdrawn. The Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) has informed the community board it plans to submit a new Notice of Intent in the near future.

Representatives of DCAS and HRA presented the proposed lease at the June 9, 2010 general meeting of Community Board 2. The community board reacted with concern about clients loitering outside of the facility and possible intermingling between clients, HRA staff and other tenants of 470 Vanderbilt Avenue. The membership also expressed concern about how HRA staff would commute to the proposed facility and the adequacy of near-by public transportation and parking. As a result of these concerns, Community Board 2 voted to recommend the City Planning Commission disapprove the lease acquisition.

Representatives of DCAS, HRA and the property owner responded to the concerns at the August 23, 2010 meeting of the executive committee of Community Board 2. In particular, the community board was told:

1. Clients for the programs now at 330 West 34th Street will enter the building at Atlantic and Clermont avenues. Staff will enter from Clermont Avenue, roughly in the middle of the building. Clients for the programs now at 210 Livingston Street will enter from Clermont Avenue, further north.
2. First floor queuing and seating capacity will be increased from the current locations as follows:

Current Location	Queuing Space		Seating	
	current	planned	current	planned
Livingston Street	78 linear feet	135 linear feet	50	112
West 34th Street	98 linear feet	192 linear feet	52	164

3. DCAS stated the doors to the queuing and seating areas will open a half-hour (8:00 am) prior to services being available.

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4. HRA stated it will be hiring additional security officers who will encourage clients to go inside.
5. I asked about the possibility of cameras on the exterior of the building and was told those could be installed.
6. HRA stated there are only five (+/-) people at the two existing facilities with DOT-issued parking placards and no curb space would be allocated for agency-only parking.
7. The Department of Transportation (DOT) has identified curb space where 121 parking spaces can be freed-up, including by the elimination of the 4-7pm parking prohibition on the south side of Atlantic Avenue and changing regulations on Cumberland Street and other locations. A representative of DOT stated the agency will take no action except in consultation with Community Board 2. A presentation on these strategies is scheduled for the September 21 meeting of the community board's transportation committee.
8. Kenneth K. Fisher, Esq., of Cozen O'Connor, stated the owner is negotiating with DCAS for shuttle service for two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening. Community Board 2 understands that a shuttle bus would only be available to city employees due to liability concerns.

Based on the above representations, Community Board 2 voted 27 in favor, one opposed, no abstentions (27-1-0) to recommend the City Planning Commission approve the lease acquisition. In addition to the above, the community board's vote is conditioned on the following, which incorporates recommendations received from the Fort Greene Association.

9. The Department of Parks and Recreation should plant 200 street trees within the area bounded by Cumberland Street and Lafayette, Washington and Atlantic avenues during the next two planting seasons. These plantings should be in addition to those already arranged with Green Fort Greene Clinton Hill and the Myrtle Avenue Revitalization Project.
10. Jobs available with contractors and the owner of 470 Vanderbilt Avenue in connection with the renovation and operation of the building should be listed with the Fort Greene Association (FGA) and other designees of Community Board 2.
11. HRA should contact the FGA chairperson with descriptions of the services that will be provided to clients at 470 Vanderbilt Avenue. HRA should develop an outreach program with FGA to encourage local residents to seek the available services.

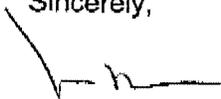
During a meeting with me during the summer, GFI Development Company, the property owner, stated it would provide community space in the building. I request the City Planning Commission take whatever measures are necessary to ensure that this offer and the above requests are made a part of the commission's determination.

I am grateful to the mayor's office and all of the city agencies that provided answers to the questions and concerns of Community Board 2. The additional information provided changed

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almost universal opposition to near unanimous support. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



John Dew

cc: Hon. Marty Markowitz
Brooklyn Borough President
Hon. Letitia James
New York City Council
Assistant Commissioner Jeffrey Kondrat
Department of Citywide Administrative Services
Executive Deputy Commissioner Kathleen Carlson
Human Resources Administration
Andrew Zabler, Chief Executive Officer
GFI Development Co. LLC
Phillip Kellog, Manager
Fulton Avenue Business Alliance
Paul Palazzo, Chair
Fort Greene Association
David Haberer, President
Clinton Hill Society

JD:RP