



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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Delores Rubin
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

August 1, 2016

Carl Weisbrod
Director
City Planning Department
120 Broadway,
New York, NY 10271

Re: The Women's Building at 550 West 20th Street

Dear Mr. Weisbrod:

On the recommendation of its Chelsea Land Use Committee, Manhattan Community Board No. 4 (CB4), at its scheduled meeting on July 27, 2016, voted, by a vote of 35 in favor, 1 opposed, 0 abstaining and 0 present but not eligible to vote, to support the concept of the Women's Building but not to support the proposed zoning overrides until the Board has had the opportunity to review their impact on the community and the Special West Chelsea District.

CB4 is excited that the former Bayview Correctional Facility will be transformed into a center to support social activism, providing space primarily for nonprofit women's organizations. We are pleased that the applicant plans to work with the state's Historic Preservation Office on the redevelopment and that the main building will not be demolished or built over, and that many of that building's unique historic features are to be preserved, including the Seamen's Chapel, the large pool with aquatic mosaics and the decorative Art Deco brick façade.

However, the Environmental Assessment prepared for the Women's Building indicates that the project will require fifteen zoning overrides, including waivers for floor area, building height and setback, and yard, use and sign regulations. Since CB4 only received a detailed description of each proposed override and the reasoning behind the requests on July 15th, three days before the July 18th Chelsea Land Use Committee meeting, there was not sufficient time for adequate review and analysis.

The Board therefore is unable to support the application for the overrides at this time. Once we have reviewed the proposed waivers and discussed them with the applicant, and allowed for public comments, we will make specific recommendations on each request.

CB4 appreciates that the NoVo Foundation and the Goren Group have kept CB4 updated on the progress of the project and have offered the community tours of the building. We look forward to continued engagement with them as the Women's Building develops.

Sincerely,



Delores Rubin
MCB4 Chair



John Lee Compton, Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee



Betty Mackintosh, Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee

cc: Hon. Brad Hoylman, State Senate
Hon. Richard Gottfried, State Assembly
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Corey Johnson, City Council
Goren Group