



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JOHN WEIS
Chair

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

September 9, 2010

Christopher O. Ward
Executive Director
Port Authority of New York New Jersey
225 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10003

Re: Alice's Garden

Dear Mr. Ward:

Alice's Garden has long been a relaxing oasis in a busy section of the Clinton neighborhood. Located on West 34th Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues, near one of the approaches to the Lincoln Tunnel, this small but hearty community garden has persevered as one of the few open spaces in Manhattan Community District 4.

The garden was for many years maintained primarily by community resident Alice Parsekian. While there were at times some issues of access to the garden, it has long been seen as a valuable public resource. With Alice's passing in January, the time has come for the garden to be made even more accessible and available to the public. The Clinton community truly cherished the refuge the garden provided them and has been saddened by its temporary closure to the public.

While there has been a presentation by the 34th Street Partnership proposing to turn the space into a plaza geared towards the business community similar to the plazas in Herald Square, Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) feels strongly that this space should continue to be used for open space accessible primarily to the residential community of the neighborhood, as well as local office workers.

CB4 believes that the garden should be redesigned in a manner that will make it more available for community use. Of course, any redesign should include a thoughtful redevelopment of the site and any other adjacent property owned by the Port Authority in order to successfully incorporate the site into the long term plans for the Access to the Region's Core (ARC) project. The garden should be managed in an approach similar to Bob's Park on West 35th Street. The garden should remain a key park, with keys available for purchase from CB4 for \$2.00, with a night lock which prevents after-hours access, as it was before it was temporarily closed.

The Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association (HKNA) has a long history as a thriving neighborhood association. Created with the mission of protecting existing neighborhood character and community identity and enhancing public open space amongst its goals, HKNA has been an active member of the Hell's Kitchen community since 1997. HKNA has already successfully leased three parcels of land from the Port Authority for use as community open space. HKNA has effectively managed a community garden, a small park, and a dog run at West 39th Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues. The small park is currently closed for construction but will be re-opening for neighborhood use this spring.

Until Alice's Garden is able to be fully redesigned, CB4 requests that the Port Authority lease the site to HKNA for use as community open space. HKNA will take on the responsibility of posting the garden's hours, providing information on how to obtain a key, and maintaining the space. HKNA will ensure that the garden continues to be available to the community during the construction period for the ARC project.

CB4 and HKNA have had a long and successful partnership with the Port Authority in improving the physical surroundings of the Lincoln Tunnel and Dyer Avenue approaches. The preservation and redesign of Alice's Garden should be another effort in that long and beneficial partnership.

Sincerely,



John Weis
Chair
Manhattan Community Board No. 4



John Doswell
Co-Chair
Waterfront & Parks Committee

signed 9/9/10
Lisa Daglian
Co-Chair
Waterfront & Parks Committee

CC: CB4 Elected Officials
Alexandra Sica, Port Authority of New York New Jersey