

Brooklyn Borough President Recommendation

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
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INSTRUCTIONS

1. Return this completed form with any attachments to the Calendar Information Office, City Planning Commission, Room 2E at the above address.
2. Send one copy with any attachments to the applicant's representatives as indicated on the Notice of Certification.

APPLICATION

SHIRLEY CHISHOLM CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTER – 160084 PQK

An application submitted by the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) and the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, for the acquisition of a child care center located at 69-71 Saratoga Avenue within the Ocean Hill section of Brooklyn Community District 16 (CD 16). Approval will facilitate the continued provision of child care services at the site.

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY DISTRICT NO. 16

BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE
 APPROVE WITH
MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS

DISAPPROVE
 DISAPPROVE WITH
MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS

SEE ATTACHED

Epi L. Adams

BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

October 18, 2017

DATE

RECOMMENDATION FOR: SHIRLEY CHISHOLM CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTER – 160084 PQQ

An application submitted by the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) and the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, for the acquisition of a child care center located at 69-71 Saratoga Avenue within the Ocean Hill section of Brooklyn Community District 16 (CD 16).

On October 12, 2017, Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams held a public hearing on the acquisition request. There were no speakers on the item.

In response to Deputy Brooklyn Borough President Diana Reyna's inquiry regarding the number of contracted seats at the Shirley Chisholm Childhood Education Center, and the criteria for selecting children to fill such seats when vacancies arise, the ACS representative stated that ACS contracts 85 of the center's seats, all for pre-school children. There are currently available EarlyLearn NYC seats at the Shirley Chisholm Childhood Education Center. Furthermore, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) has contracts at this site to serve pre-kindergarten three- and four-year old children.

In response to Deputy Borough President Reyna's inquiry regarding the number of uncontracted seats available at Shirley Chisholm Childhood Education Center, the ACS representative expressed that ACS does not track private, uncontracted seats at Shirley Chisholm Childhood Education Center.

In response to Deputy Borough President Reyna's inquiry regarding the anticipated duration of the proposed lease and the City's rights to renew, the DCAS representative expressed that the property will be encumbered for a period of 10 years. DCAS also discussed exterior and interior repairs that will be made to the facility prior to the commencement of the lease.

In response to Deputy Borough President Reyna's inquiry regarding the incorporation of streetscape improvements and stormwater management best practices, including rain gardens, the ACS representative stated intent to follow up with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on the possibility of installing rain gardens at the site. The DCAS representative also discussed a New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) street tree program targeted toward child care and senior centers.

In response to Deputy Borough President Reyna's inquiry regarding the process for filling hiring opportunities at Shirley Chisholm Childhood Education Center, the ACS representative clarified that ACS does not administer the hiring process for Shirley Chisholm Childhood Education Center, and referred to the Day Care Council of New York (DCCNY), which posts openings for the City's child care centers.

In response to Deputy Borough President Reyna's inquiry regarding outstanding repairs at Shirley Chisholm Childhood Education Center, the DCAS representative clarified that ACS and the landlord are jointly responsible for ongoing maintenance of the facility, and that ACS would manage and oversee necessary repairs.

Consideration

Brooklyn Community Board 16 (CB 16) approved this application with conditions on September 26, 2017.

The facility is leased to SCO Family of Services, which operates the site as Shirley Chisholm Childhood Education Center, under a contract with ACS. The facility is the sole occupant of a two-story, privately-owned building, located in the Ocean Hill section of CD 16. The SCO Family of Services leases approximately 28,100 square feet (sq. ft.), which includes approximately 18,850 sq. ft. of interior space and 9,250 sq. ft. of rooftop play area. The facility is subdivided into various activity spaces, including classrooms and offices.

Shirley Chisholm Childhood Education Center is an EarlyLearn NYC program provider. This program is administered by ACS and offers subsidized quality child care for qualifying families. The facility serves up to 85 preschoolers, aged three to four years. It contains three classrooms for 47 four-year olds and two classrooms for 34 three-year olds. There are currently available EarlyLearn NYC seats at Shirley Chisholm Childhood Education Center.

Child care services encompass a variety of activities and programs, which are determined by the child's age, developmental stage, and hours in child care. Shirley Chisholm Childhood Education Center provides educational services, meal services, and supervised playtime, with 30 professional, para-professional, and support staff. The child care center's operation enables parents to work, attend school, or acquire vocational training while their children receive care. It operates from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM, providing full-day services during school breaks and in the summertime.

The facility is situated at the intersection of Macon Street and Saratoga Avenue. The Shirley Chisholm Childhood Education Center is accessible via public transportation, including the Nassau Avenue Express J train at the Halsey Avenue station and the nearby B7 bus.

Borough President Adams supports the continuation of Shirley Chisholm Childhood Education Center, which is a valuable community asset. Moving forward, Borough President Adams believes that ACS and DCAS should take steps to secure the ability to lease the site for a 20-year term, inclusive of two five-year renewals and an opportunity to purchase in the future. The agencies and landlord should also investigate opportunities to advance stormwater management practices and streetscape enhancements, in consultation with CB 16 and local elected officials.

Lease Duration

Borough President Adams is adamant about preserving and protecting critical community space for Brooklyn's young people, and has expressed concerns about the short-term leases associated with prior child care center site acquisition applications. As more areas of Brooklyn become magnets for real estate development, Borough President Adams remains concerned that landlords might elect to pursue potentially more lucrative uses resulting in discontinuing use as child care. Borough President Adams has already witnessed this profit-seeking practice in other parts of Brooklyn; examples of such cases include the Bushwick United Learning Center and the Swinging Sixties Senior Center, both located in Williamsburg. The prior property owner of the Swinging Sixties Senior Center had been attempting to displace the center — which had served the community for decades — for more lucrative redevelopment opportunities. Fortunately, after five years of uncertainty for the home of Small World Child Care and the Swinging Sixties Senior Center, neighborhood non-profit St. Nicks Alliance, along with the Conselyea Street Block Association, closed on acquisition of the building, thereby avoiding the fate of the former Bushwick United Learning Center, which served, on average, 110 children of low-income families. The center was recently shut down after an extended eviction battle with the landlord when the center's most recent 10-year lease ran out, and the City failed to complete proper lease renewal paperwork in a timely manner.

It is Borough President Adams' policy for the City to secure lease-renewal terms that allow the City the ability to secure initial terms of no fewer than 10 years, exclusive of multiple shorter term

leases, and include the right for renewal of the lease to secure the child care center use for up to 20 years. Such terms, inclusive of multiple shorter term renewals, allow landlords to facilitate building improvements, when needed, while providing ACS with a check and balance that the facility remains in good working order. It is imperative that the City take actions through its land use process to adequately demonstrate to the community that the City is truly their partner, through securing facilities for such much-needed services. Whether provided directly through the City or through non-profits, the Ocean Hill community has a legitimate need for supportive services that work to enhance the lives of area residents.

Borough President Adams applauds the latest efforts of ACS and DCAS to negotiate for longer lease terms with a preferential opportunity to purchase with terms, conditions, and qualifications to be negotiated and subsequently memorialized in the lease. He believes that an initial long-term lease with a built-in right to renew that achieves a 20-year duration would adequately guarantee that Shirley Chisholm Childhood Education Center remains a community asset for decades to come. Borough President Adams believes that the DCAS-negotiated lease should also include two five-year renewal terms. Additionally, he believes that the DCAS-negotiated lease terms should include a provision that would ensure the City has an opportunity to purchase the property if it is marketed for sale.

In order to afford the City the greatest flexibility in securing the site for continued provision of child care services, Borough President Adams calls on the City Planning Commission (CPC) to approve the application without a specific duration of time.

Stormwater Management Policies

Borough President Adams' policy is to introduce best practices to manage stormwater runoff. He believes that sidewalks with nominal landscaping and/or adjacent roadway surfaces are potential resources that could be transformed through the incorporation of rain gardens. Rain gardens provide tangible environmental benefits through rainwater collection, improved air quality, and streetscape beautification. Tree plantings can be consolidated with rain gardens as part of a more comprehensive green infrastructure strategy.

Such modification would reduce the development's carbon footprint and mitigate energy costs. In addition, blue/green roofs, permeable pavers, and rain gardens would divert stormwater from the City's water pollution control plants. According to the "NYC Green Infrastructure 2015 Annual Report," green infrastructure plays a role in addressing water quality challenges and provides numerous economic, environmental, and social benefits.

Borough President Adams believes that the perimeter of sidewalk area fronting the center provides an opportunity for the construction of a rain garden. Such a rain garden might be integrated with street tree plantings, as there are no trees along the sidewalk surrounding the child care center. The planting of street trees would provide shade on days of excessive heat, as well as other aesthetic, air quality, and enhanced stormwater retention benefits. It should be noted that a rain garden would require maintenance commitment and attention from the landlord, and/or the child care center. Maintenance includes cleaning out debris and litter that can clog the inlet/outlet and prevent proper water collection, regular inspection to prevent soil erosion, watering during hot and dry periods, and weeding to keep the plants healthy and uncongested for proper water absorption.

Borough President Adams believes that ACS and/or DCAS should consult with DEP and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) for consideration regarding the inclusion of a rain garden with integration of street trees. ACS and DCAS should pursue lease provisions to clarify any maintenance obligation associated with such improvement as part of the

lease agreement. Where the agencies have interest in implementing an enhancement, consultation should be initiated with CB 16 and local elected officials prior to agreeing to take action.

Streetscape Improvement Policies

Borough President Adams' policy is to make neighborhoods more welcoming for the pedestrian through various beautification measures that make streets more aesthetically appealing. He believes that sidewalks with nominal landscaping are potential resources that should be transformed through planting additional trees, providing street planters, and incorporating rain gardens according to his stormwater management policies. In addition, he seeks opportunities to provide seating. Planting street trees provides for shade on days of excessive heat, as well as other aesthetic, air quality, and stormwater retention benefits.

Borough President Adams supports the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) CityBench program, which aims to increase the amount of public seating on New York City's streets, particularly in areas with high concentrations of senior citizens. These benches make streets more comfortable for pedestrians and transit riders, especially those who are disabled or elderly. Borough President Adams believes that the provision of street seating at child care centers through DOT programs is justified by the City's investment in leasing and improving such facilities. Furthermore, street seating is beneficial for congregation during drop-off and pick-up periods, when sidewalks outside child care centers become very crowded.

Borough President Adams believes that street furniture should be coordinated by ACS with DOT, utilizing the CityBench and Street Seats programs, which recently received additional funding to further their efforts throughout the city.

ACS should consult with DEP and NYC Parks for consideration of the placement of tree pits and street trees placements. Where appropriate, such placements could also be integrated with the construction of a rain garden.

ACS and DCAS should pursue lease provisions to clarify any maintenance obligation associated with such improvements as part of the lease agreement based on whether these enhancements might be best achieved and/or maintained by the landlord or the operator, Shirley Chisholm Day Care Centers. All such enhancements should be considered in consultation with CB 16 and local elected officials prior to agreeing to take action. Borough President Adams encourages ACS and DCAS to reach out to his office for help in opening and coordinating dialogue with NYC Parks and/or DOT on such matters.

Recommendation

Be it resolved that the Brooklyn borough president, pursuant to section 201 of the New York City Charter, recommends that the City Planning Commission (CPC) and City Council approve this application.

Be it further resolved that:

1. As part of the execution of the lease, the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) commence negotiations with the landlord in order to:
 - a. Secure a right for renewal of the lease with the addition of two five-year renewal terms

- b. Include a provision that would ensure the City has an opportunity to purchase the property if it is marketed for sale on behalf of the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS)
 - c. Coordinate with the landlord to determine maintenance obligation should rain gardens and/or street tree plantings be installed along the sidewalk in front of the building
2. The City Planning Commission (CPC) approve the application without a specific duration of time to ensure that ACS and DCAS will not need to file another ULURP application to sign a long-term lease
3. ACS and/or DCAS coordinate with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, (DEP) the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks), and the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding the installation of CityBenches, a rain garden, and/or the provision of street trees, in consultation with Brooklyn Community Board 16 (CB 16) and local elected officials