

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 #: 460 ATLANTIC AVENUE CHILD & SENIOR CENTERS– 190176 PQK

An application submitted by the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS), the New York Department for the Aging (DFTA), 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 and senior center located at 460 Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn Community District 2 (CD 2). Such actions would facilitate the continued provision of child care and senior services at this site according to a lease.

COMMUNITY DISTRICT NO. 2

BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE
 APPROVE WITH
MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS

DISAPPROVE
 DISAPPROVE WITH
MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS

SEE ATTACHED

BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

January 22, 2019

DATE

RECOMMENDATION FOR: 460 ATLANTIC AVENUE CHILD & SENIOR CENTERS – 190176 PQK

The New York City Administration for Children’s Services (ACS), the New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA), and the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) submitted an application pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, for the acquisition of a child care and senior center located at 460 Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn Community District 2 (CD 2). Such actions would facilitate the continued provision of child care and senior services at this site according to a lease.

On January 7, 2019, Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams held a public hearing on this acquisition request. There were no speakers on the item.

In response to Borough President Adams’ inquiry regarding the number of contracted seats at the 460 Atlantic Avenue Child Care Center, and the criteria for selecting children to fill such seats when vacancies arise, the ACS representative confirmed that the center is contracted for 100 seats. The representative clarified the eligibility criteria as a parent or guardian having income no more than 200 percent of the federal poverty level and having a reason for care, which includes working, being in school or at a job training program, seeking work for up to six months, or not having a permanent home.

In response to Borough President Adams’ inquiry regarding the terms of the proposed acquisition, the ACS representative clarified that ACS is seeking a 10-year lease as the base term, with two five-year renewals, pending negotiations between DCAS and the landlord.

In response to Borough President Adams’ inquiry as to what steps ACS is prepared to take to coordinate with the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) to address pedestrian safety along Atlantic Avenue at Nevins Street, the ACS representative stated that ACS has reached out to DOT regarding traffic calming measures on Atlantic Avenue. The DFTA representative noted that DFTA has met with the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) to discuss façade improvements and street calming.

In response to Borough President Adams’ inquiry regarding what consideration has been given to incorporating streetscape improvements to existing features, such as involving a community arts organization to create a mural, adding a street bench as part of DOT’s CityBench initiative, and expanding the tree pits to advance best stormwater management practices through utilization of rain gardens, the ACS representative expressed that the agency has reached out to an arts program at Pratt Institute, and has also discussed stormwater management strategies with DCP and DOT.

In response to Borough President Adams’ inquiry regarding the process for filling hiring opportunities at the child care center and the senior center, the ACS representative stated that the 460 Atlantic Avenue child care center advertises openings on the New York Day Care Council website. Such openings may also be found on the websites of schools that offer early childhood education programs. The DFTA representative noted that the senior center has a Brooklyn-based workforce and sometimes recruits additional staff from local schools of social work.

Consideration

Brooklyn Community Board 2 (CB 2) waived its right to review this application on December 12, 2018.

The 460 Atlantic Avenue facility is a four-story, privately-owned building located in the Boerum Hill section of CD 2. The facility is shared by a child care center and a senior center. The child care center

is operated by Strong Place for Hope, under a contract with ACS. Strong Place for Hope leases 23,564 square feet (sq. ft.) of interior space on the second, third, and fourth floors, as well as a 5,500 sq. ft. rooftop play area. The child care center is subdivided into various activity spaces, including six classrooms, offices, and accessory spaces. The senior center is operated by the Spanish-Speaking Elderly Council-RAICES (RAICES) as the Times Plaza Senior Center, under a contract with DFTA. The agency leases 18,246 sq. ft. of the building's basement and ground floor, which includes activity spaces, a cafeteria, food pantry, and offices.

The facility's main entrance is on Atlantic Avenue, which provides access to both the child care center and the senior center. The building has additional frontage on Nevins Street, which provides secondary egress for the child care center.

The EarlyLearn NYC program is administered by ACS and offers subsidized quality child care for qualifying families. The facility serves up to 100 children, aged two to five years. Current enrollment at the child care center is at 76 percent of capacity.

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. The child care center provides educational services, meal services, and supervised playtime, with 26 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 senior center provides meal service, social services with application assistance, and social activities with a focus on mental health. The facility serves a diverse clientele of seniors aged 60 and older, and employs 23 staff. RAICES also uses this location to prepare and distribute catered meals for its other facilities in Brooklyn and Queens. The senior center is open from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

460 Atlantic Avenue is highly accessible via public transportation, with the nearest subways at the Atlantic Terminal, DeKalb Avenue, and Hoyt-Schermerhorn Street subway stations. Atlantic Terminal is served by the Seventh Avenue Express 2 and 3 trains, the Lexington Avenue Express 4 and 5 trains, the Central Park West Local/Sixth Avenue Express B train, the Sixth Avenue Express D train, the Broadway Express N train, the Queens Boulevard/Broadway/Fourth Avenue Local R train, and the Second Avenue/Broadway Express Q train. The B, N, R, and Q trains also stop at DeKalb Avenue. The Hoyt-Schermerhorn stop is served by the Eighth Avenue Express A, the Eighth Avenue Local C, and the Brooklyn-Queens Crosstown Local G trains. The B63 and B65 buses travel along Atlantic Avenue and make several stops near the facility.

Borough President Adams supports the continuation of the 460 Atlantic Avenue Child Care & Senior Center, which is a valuable community asset. Moving forward, Borough President Adams believes that ACS, DCAS, and DFTA 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 2 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 a child care facility. 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 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 and DFTA 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 Boerum 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, DCAS, and DFTA 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 the 460 Atlantic Avenue Child & Senior Centers remain a community asset for decades to come. Borough President Adams believes that the DCAS-negotiated lease should ideally result in 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 New York City Planning Commission (CPC) to approve the application without a specific duration of time.

Advancing Vision Zero Policies

Borough President Adams is a supporter of Vision Zero, one component of which is to extend sidewalks into the roadway as a means of shortening the path where pedestrians cross in front of traffic lanes. These sidewalk extensions, also known as bulbouts or neckdowns, make drivers more aware of pedestrian crossings and encourage them to slow down.

In 2015, Borough President Adams also launched his own initiative, Connecting Residents On Safer Streets (CROSS) Brooklyn. This program supports the creation of bulbouts or curb extensions at dangerous intersections in Brooklyn. During the program's first year, \$1 million was allocated to fund five dangerous intersections in Brooklyn. By installing additional curb extensions, seniors will benefit as more of their commutes will be spent on sidewalks, especially near dangerous intersections. At the same time, all users of the roadways will benefit from safer streets.

Borough President Adams acknowledges the recent sidewalk improvements resulting in Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance ramps and tactile indicators. Therefore, it might not be fiscally

prudent to reconstruct the corner right away. Though, he believes there remains an opportunity to implement a protected and painted sidewalk extension, per his CROSS Brooklyn initiative, at the southwest intersection of Atlantic Avenue and Nevins Street, which would facilitate safer pedestrian crossings to 460 Atlantic Avenue.

Therefore, ACS, DCAS, and/or DFTA should consult with DOT regarding the provision of painted curb extensions, on this corner of Atlantic Avenue and Nevins Street.

Borough President Adams urges DOT to explore the implementation of protected and painted sidewalk extensions. Should implementation meet DOT criteria, ACS, DCAS, and DFTA should consult with CB 2 and local elected officials before undertaking such improvements. Such painted roadway modifications might require a maintenance agreement that indemnifies the City from liability, contains a requirement for insurance, and details the responsibilities of the maintenance partner (as would be the case for a standard sidewalk extension).

Borough President Adams urges DCAS to incorporate the maintenance obligation into the lease terms for the 460 Atlantic Avenue Child & Senior Centers to facilitate implementation. He believes it would be appropriate to have the landlord, or either the child care center or senior center operator, enter into such a maintenance agreement as responsible parties.

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, which 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 2017 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 existing street tree plantings along the center's Atlantic Avenue frontage. 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 a 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 dry and hot periods, and weeding to keep the plants healthy and uncongested for proper water absorption. In addition, it may be possible to expand the tree pits along the facility's Atlantic Avenue frontage to include more plantings, which would increase infiltration at this location and also make the site more pleasant for its uses.

Borough President Adams believes that ACS and/or DFTA should consult with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) for consideration regarding the inclusion of a rain garden along Nevins Street, with integration of street trees and expanding existing the Atlantic Avenue tree pits to include more plantings. ACS, DCAS, and DFTA should pursue lease provisions to clarify any maintenance obligation associated with such improvements as part of the lease agreement. Where the agencies have interest

in implementing an enhancement, consultation should be initiated with CB 2 and local elected officials prior to agreeing to take action.

Streetscape Improvement Policies

Borough President Adams' policy is to make neighborhoods more welcoming for pedestrians 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 above referenced stormwater management policies. In addition, he seeks opportunities to provide seating.

Borough President Adams supports DOT's 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 and senior centers through DOT programs is justified by the City's investment in leasing and improving such facilities. Furthermore, street seating is beneficial for large gatherings of people, particularly 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 and DFTA 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 expansion of existing tree pits and the placement of new street trees. Where appropriate, such improvements could also be integrated with the construction of a rain garden.

ACS, DCAS, and DFTA 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 operators, Strong Place for Hope and RAICES. All such enhancements should be considered in consultation with CB 2 and local elected officials prior to agreeing to take action. Borough President Adams encourages ACS, DCAS, and DFTA to reach out to his office for help in opening and coordinating dialogue with NYC Parks and/or DOT on such matters.

Borough President Adams believes that a portion of the 460 Atlantic Avenue façade could be enhanced via a community arts project such as a mural. Therefore, DCAS should encourage the landlord to engage with a local arts organization to facilitate the building's beautification through a mural in consultation with CB 2 and local elected officials, to help identify an appropriate community arts group to undertake such a project. If no such locally-based organization steps forward, ACS and DFTA should pursue the City's promotion of Publicolor's Fresh Coat initiative, which transforms neglected schools and neighborhood facilities through vibrant murals and organized collaboration. The program uses painting projects to teach participants important and transferable work habits such as arriving on time, having a good attitude, taking initiative, being a team player, and leading by example.

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:

1. That 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 pit enhancements be undertaken along the sidewalk in front of the building and/or the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) would implement a protected paint sidewalk extension as Vision Zero enhancements for the intersection of Atlantic Avenue and Nevins Street, in consultation with Brooklyn Community Board 2 (CB 2) and local elected officials
 - d. Encourage the landlord to engage with a local arts organization to facilitate the building's beautification through a mural in consultation with CB 2 and local elected officials, to help identify an appropriate community arts group to undertake such a project
2. That that ACS and the New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA) should pursue the following:
 - a. Engage with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to consider the appropriateness of installing a rain garden along Nevins Street and with the DEP and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) to consider the appropriateness of enlarging the existing tree pits along Atlantic Avenue, in consultation with CB 2 and local elected officials
 - b. If no such locally-based organization steps forward to facilitate a mural, engage in promoting the City's Publicolor's Fresh Coat initiative
 - c. Engage DOT to consider utilizing its CityBench and/or Street Seats programs adjacent to 460 Atlantic Avenue