



Fort Independence Park Neighborhood Association

Philip M. McDonnell, President | Karen Argenti and Lynn Schwarz, Vice Presidents | Kristin Hart, Secretary
3332 Giles Place, Bronx, NY 10463
Voice (347)614-0005 | Fax (888)763-8399
Visit us on the web – www.fipna.org | fipna@fipna.org

PRESS RELEASE 1/6/2010

Contact: Kristin Hart at 347-275-2194

Community Board 8 Land Use Committee Meeting on 1/14/2010 Supportive housing for homeless at 3469 Cannon Place FIPNA: It is too big and wrong for this neighborhood

On Thursday, January 14, 2010 Bronx Community Board 8's Land Use Committee will continue their review of the Urban Pathways, Inc. (<http://www.urbanpathways.org>.) application and request for a letter of recommendation to construct a 90-unit building on the vacant lot at 3469 Cannon Place (aka 3461 Cannon Place, or aka 3482 Fort Independence Street, on Block 3258 Lot 120). This lot, originally addressed on Fort Independence Street, is just north of Cannon Heights (3400 Fort Independence Street). The lot is a steep, rocky cliff with a 50' difference between Cannon Place (a narrow, one-way street) and Fort Independence Street, the busier street below. Community residents are gearing up and developing lists of concerns. The meeting will be held at the Kingsbridge Heights Rehabilitative Care Center at 3400 Cannon Place, Bronx, NY 10463.

“While Urban Pathways may have a good program, the scale of this facility at this site is totally inappropriate and unacceptable – it is too big and in the wrong place,” stated Lynn Schwarz, FIPNA Vice President.

“The huge project they are proposing will leave a disastrous footprint on our landscape. This densely populated neighborhood has its fair share of facilities. It is a diversified mix of single family homes, large housing complexes, and small apartment buildings; major social, health and educational institutions; and a large regional water system facility – the Jerome Park Reservoir,” stated Kristin Hart, FIPNA Secretary. “A facility of 8-10 residents is the most that this neighborhood can support,” she continued.

FIPNA research reveals the following review of the community's programs:

- Kingsbridge Heights Rehabilitation and Care Center, a 400-bed nursing home (the size of a large hospital in NYS) located within ½ block on the same narrow curved street
- Existing group home on Fort Independence Street within ½ block
- new supportive housing facility ¼ mile away at 3882 Orloff Avenue
- Fort Independence Houses, a 21-story, 342-unit low-income housing authority project 2 blocks away¹
- the new 72-unit Jericho Project, another 60-40 mixed use near Kingsbridge Road, partnering with the Veterans Administration Hospital -- less than a mile from the site²
- other low income housing, either in place or under construction

Rather than increase funding for Section 8 vouchers to stop homelessness, once again, city hall chooses not solve a problem, but engage developers. The large amount of taxpayer money required to purchase this property and construct the planned facility on a virtually unbuildable site should be used in a much more productive manner -- at a smaller, more suitable, easier to build site. Social problems, such as homelessness, can not be solved by segregation; but instead by integration, mainstreaming and increase social service funding.

“Segregating the homeless population into such a large group seems destined for failure,” stated Karen Argenti, FIPNA Vice President. “This is just a simple trick of the Bloomberg Administration to solve the problem quickly while making money for their friends the developers.”

“It would be more useful to rehabilitate the clients in a small group home environment rather than build what appears to be an enhanced SRO. FIPNA already has experience in how clients in large groups were mistreated by the nursing home owner during the recent labor strike, stated Phil McDonnell, President of FIPNA. He continued: “Smaller is better, has less impact on the neighborhood, and is a proven method of integrating activities of daily living.”

###

¹ The New York City Housing Authority . <http://bit.ly/5EwH2G>

² Jericho Veterans Supportive Apartment Program partnered with the James J. Peters Bronx VA Medical Center to launch Jericho's Veterans Supportive Apartment Program (<http://bit.ly/8ecyVV>)