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The City of New York **Manhattan Community Board 8**

Julia Richman Education Complex/Hunter College Committee
Committee Meeting
May 12, 2008 at 7:00PM
New York Blood Center, Auditorium

Community Board Members (Present): Elizabeth Ashby, Michelle Birnbaum, Deirdre Breslin, Richard Burg, Jonathan Horn, Jane Parshall, Ellen Polivy, Barry Schneider, Judith Schneider, David Kleckner, Teri Slater, Sarah Chu, George Fuchs

Committee Members (Excused): Helene Simon

1. Public Session on Julia Richman Education Complex (JREC) and Hunter College Land Swap

- Members of the community, JREC, and Hunter College spoke regarding how they feel about the project and commented on the new Brookdale RFP.
 - Key issues raised by proponents of the Land Swap included: how science programs at Brookdale are affected by their distance from Hunter's main campus, how proximity would benefit both faculty and students, how the addition of a science building would benefit Hunter and the surrounding community, that the Land Swap is an as-of-right project, and that the new RFP is not due until May 22, 2008.
 - Key issues raised by opponents of the Land Swap included: the relocation of current Brookdale dorms, JREC's recent architectural award, possible ramifications of the Brookdale RFP, removing schools from the Upper East Side when existing schools are overcrowded, increase of activity in an already traffic burdened area and potential cost to taxpayers.
- In executive session, Committee members decided to take a position on this as-of-right project that does not have an application before the Community Board at the present time.
- The following resolution was made:

WHEREAS, the Julia Richman Educational Complex (JREC) is a vital, nationally-acclaimed educational asset located in Manhattan Community District 8 (CD8); and

WHEREAS, public schools in CD8 are severely over-crowded; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for more, not fewer public school seats in CD8; and

WHEREAS, relocating the JREC schools to Hunter College's Brookdale campus, a site approximately 2 miles away and located beyond CD8, would reduce the availability of public school seats located within CD8 to residents of CD8; and

WHEREAS, the relocation would destroy important relationships between JREC and the community; and

WHEREAS, destruction of these relationships would include and not be limited to : 1) depriving neighborhood children of access to JREC's two gymnasiums that are heavily used by community organizations such as Yorkville Youth, and 2) depriving various orchestras the access to an already existing, well-maintained and acoustically-exception auditorium; and

WHEREAS, destruction of these relationships would include and not be between JREC's PS 226 school for children with autism to many welcoming partner institutions in the heart of the Upper East Side – such as Lenox Hill Neighborhood House – which enables the students to gain vocational training and assimilation in close proximity to JREC in comparison to the relatively desolate relocation site at the Hunter Brookdale campus; and

WHEREAS, replacement of the JREC building with a brand-new building located down-town at the Hunter College Brookdale campus would be unnecessarily costly to New York City taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, the monetary costs to the public would include tearing down an existing building that recently underwent a multi-million dollar renovation, constructing a new building to house laboratories for the public institution that is Hunter College, and constructing a new building at the Hunter College Brookdale campus to house the current JREC schools; and

WHEREAS, all of these costs would require the expenditure of public dollars; and

WHEREAS, these public costs would be reduced substantially if Hunter College constructed its new laboratory facilities at its own Brookdale campus without the need to tear down and construct a new building to house the JREC schools; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Manhattan Community Board 8 states its firm opposition to the destruction of the JREC facility and relocation of the JREC schools to accommodate Hunter College's intention to site new laboratory facilities at the current JREC location.

VOTE: (10-3)

- Voting in favor: E. Ashby, M. Birnbaum, D. Breslin, J. Horn, J. Parshall, E. Polivy, D. Kleckner, T. Slater, S. Chu, G. Fuchs
- Voting against: R. Burg, B. Schneider, J. Schneider