

16th Street Action
16thstreetaction@gmail.com
April 4, 2007

In regards to: 575 5th Ave Brooklyn, NY 11215
Fifth Avenue Committee
621 DeGraw Street
Brooklyn, New York
11217

Dear Madam or Sir:

In the preceding weeks we have attended various meetings to learn more about the proposed project at 575 5th Ave. At the last meeting (YMCA – Monday, March 26, 2007 @ 6:30pm) NYC Councilman Bill de Blasio stated that this project needed to be explained to the community better than it had been up to that point. Since the meeting we have not heard from the FAC nor has any information been posted on their website concerning 575 5th Ave. The FAC recently had volunteers on 16th Street and 5th Avenue who were seeking support for “*Affordable Housing*” but they were not able to answer direct and specific questions about the facility nor did they divulge the supportive housing for the mentally disabled aspect of the project unless challenged (Although we did not speak to all members who were representing the FAC we did speak with quite a few and have documented our findings). The fact remains that many in our community still have questions about this project. This letter and 27 question attachment is an attempt to clarify the issues that concern many residents who we have spoken to. As one of the strategic priorities of the FAC are “engagement and accountability” as quoted below from the FAC website:

“The strategic planning process has heightened FAC’s awareness of the strength that would come from more actively engaging our stakeholders in our work. We want people in the neighborhood who share our vision to see FAC as their vehicle for shaping the future of this neighborhood. FAC recognizes that with greater degrees of participation, there must also be greater accountability in decision-making. Toward this end, FAC will develop and improve mechanisms for genuine, substantive input and participation from community residents, individuals we have assisted, and those who share our vision. We will seek to strike the appropriate balance between community input and organizational effectiveness.”

it is our hope that the FAC will make an honest attempt to answer these questions in a clear, detailed manner so it may relieve the concerns that local residents and businesses have communicated to us. We would appreciate the response to the attached questions be in writing and directed back to us via our email 16thstreetaction@gmail.com .

Respectfully yours,
16th Street Action

cc: Community Board 7 - Jeremy Laufer
NYC Councilman - Bill de Blasio
Brooklyn Borough President - Marty Markowitz

Questions for the FAC concerning the planned facility at 575 5th Avenue

1. Why wasn't the community advisory board put into place before the project entered the public hearing process?
 - a. *Do you think the addition of the community advisory board in the planning stages of this project would have helped the communication process with the community concerning the 575 5th Ave project?*
2. In FAC flyers you claim to have communicated with 80 business owners about this project but we have personally interview local businesses around the proposed supportive housing location and couldn't find one who had knowledge of the development.
 - a. *How do you explain this discrepancy?*
 - b. *Could you give us a list of the business owners you have spoken to?*
 - c. *Is the FAC aware that many local businesses are not in favor of this project in its current design?*
 - d. *Does the FAC have any plans on how they will address the concerns of local businesses?*
 - e. *Could you give us the details of these plans?*
3. Does the FAC have a standard operating procedure that its facilities operate with?
 - a. *If so can we get a copy?*
 - b. *When can we get a copy and review the standard operating procedure?*
4. Does the FAC have a standard operating procedure concerning its general disciplinary procedures that its facilities operate with?
 - a. *If so can we get a copy?*
 - b. *When can we get a copy and review the disciplinary standard operating procedure?*
5. How does the community report disruptive behavior by a tenant and what is the time frame involved for FAC to deal with the issue? (Please assume a worst case scenario where a tenant has become a major problem for the facility and community)
 - a. *Please list the step by step process a community member would have to undertake and a time frame for each step to get the matter resolved.*
6. How is the decision made to remove a tenant who is disruptive to the facility or the community?
 - a. *Is this decision made by FAC alone?*
 - b. *Will the community have any input in this process?*
 - c. *Who makes the final determination?*

7. What is the specific procedure that the FAC will use to remove a tenant who is disruptive to the facility or the community?
 - a. *Please list specific steps and estimated time frame for each step.*
 - b. *If housing court is involved who will represent the community?*
 - c. *Can you give us an example of the process and the time frame involved?*

8. Will the community have an active roll in the screening process?
 - a. *How many community members will be allowed on the screening committee?*
 - b. *Will this committee be advisory or the decision maker?*
 - c. *How will the members from the community be chosen?*
 - d. *Please explain the screening process in a detailed manner.*
 - e. *What is the total number of persons on the screening board who will not be community members?*
 - f. *Who will make the final determination of the tenant acceptance?*

9. When a tenant is being screened is a criminal and mental history search done and is it available to the persons who are screening potential tenants?
 - a. *Will this information be taken into consideration when selecting potential tenants?*

10. On this web site (<http://www.dhcr.state.ny.us/ocd/pubs/html/litc10.htm>) it states that the FAC will only provide social services for the Warren Street Facility for three years and after that date the social services will be provided optionally. Is the new facility at 575 5th Ave also going to provide social services for the first three years and have optional coverage from that time on?
 - a. *Why is there only coverage for three years at Warren Street?*
 - b. *After the three year period how many social service persons will staff the facility to provide care for the residents of Warren Street & 575 5th Ave?*
 - c. *Please explain “optional support” in a detailed manner?*

11. What guarantee does the community have (Other than your past track record) that the FAC will continue to manage the facility into the future?

12. If a tenant who is mentally ill decides to discontinue his medication what will the FAC do to ensure that the tenant will not become a danger to himself or the community at large?
 - a. *Please detail what will be done in this situation.*
 - b. *Will the FAC or social services at the 16th Street location monitor if tenants who have to take medication are indeed taking their medication?*
 - c. *Can the FAC compel someone to take their medication?*
 - d. *What is the disciplinary action for a tenant who does not take their medications?*
 - e. *Please detail the escalating disciplinary process.*
 - f. *Please provide examples of how this process worked in the past.*

13. If a tenant who was a former drug addict becomes an active drug user what will the FAC do to ensure that the tenant will not become a danger to himself or the community at large?
 - a. *Please detail what will be done if a tenant relapses into active addiction.*
 - b. *Will there be random drug testing for tenants in the facility?*
 - c. *If so what are the disciplinary actions for a tenant who fails a drug test?*
 - d. *Please detail the escalating disciplinary process.*
 - e. *Please provide examples of how this process worked.*

14. What supportive services will be available to the tenants of this facility?
 - a. *Will these services be made available for people who do not live in the facility?*
 - b. *Will medication be dispensed at this facility?*
 - c. *Will medication be dispensed to anyone who is not living at this facility?*

15. How many social support persons will be on staff at the 16th Street facility?
 - a. *Please list the hours they will be there.*

16. Will social services have a staff member onsite 24 hours a day?
 - a. *It not why?*

17. Will the social services support personnel who staff this facility be fully trained and accredited social workers or are they liaisons to social workers?
 - a. *If there is a mixture of the two please document the ratio.*

18. Is there an active boundary of where the security of the facility is confined?
 - a. *Will the security area covered extend to the front area of the building?*
 - b. *Will the security area covered extend to the side area of the building on 16th Street?*

19. Will security cameras cover the entire outer perimeter of the facility including the 16th Street side?
 - a. *Will the security cameras be monitored 24 hours a day?*

20. What will be the on-site security staff's responsibilities cover?
 - a. *Is there a standard operating procedure for security?*
 - b. *If so can we get a copy?*
 - c. *When can we get a copy and review the security standard operating procedure?*

21. Has there been criminal activity surrounding the Warren Street facility?
 - a. *Please give us a list of all police involvement with the Warren Street facility from the projects inception to the current date and how these situations were resolved.*
22. Have there been complaints by neighboring residents of the Warren Street facility?
 - a. *How were those complaints resolved?*
 - b. *Please give examples.*
23. Why doesn't the FAC change the design of the project to take the Brooklyn Borough Presidents recommendations which would probably be much more in line with what the community desires?
24. Can the entrance to the 16th Street facility be moved to 5th Ave?
25. Can the FAC include parking on a lower level to replace the loss of parking due to the development?
 - a. *The immediate area will soon have 100 new families due to the amount of new condos that have been developed in the last year and many businesses rely on the municipal parking lot for their customers to be able to shop and provide services yet the only solutions we have heard from the FAC is that we will gain two extra parking spots due to the parking lot driveways being phased out and a plan by the DOT to install muni-meters at some unknown later date.*
26. Why does there seem to be a lack of communication regarding this project as many in the immediate area did not know of its inception?
 - a. *Could the FAC have done more to inform people of the facts regarding the project?*
 - b. *Can the FAC now do more to inform people of the facts regarding the project?*
27. When answering the preceding questions please cite any and all sources for the facts being presented.
 - a. *Please state the differences between FAC opinion and fact.*
 - b. *We ask that all questions and sub questions be answered.*
 - c. *We seek to understand the details and specific processes that the FAC will use when operating the facility at 575 5th Ave and other named facilities.*