

COMMUNITY BOARD 1 – MANHATTAN
RESOLUTION

DATE: APRIL 25, 2023

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: NEW BUSINESS

BOARD VOTE: 35 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained 0 Recused

RE: Request For Proposal (RFP) for the Adaptive ReUse of the Manhattan Detention Center's (MDC) Existing Two Towers at 124 and 125 White Street

WHEREAS: The demolition of the Manhattan Detention Complex (AKA The Tombs) has long been opposed by Manhattan Community Boards 1 and 3 (CB1, 3) , neighborhood non-profit organizations including Neighbors United Below Canal (NUBC), Tribeca Trust, North Tribeca Alliance, civic preservation groups including the Historic Districts Council, elected including NYS Senator Brian Kavanagh, NYS AM Grace Lee, City Council Member Christopher Marte, and many residents, workers and businesses in lower Manhattan; and

WHEREAS: In January 2023, State Senator Brian Kavanagh, State Assemblymember Grace Lee, City Councilmember Christopher Marte and Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine wrote a letter to Deputy Mayor Sheena Wright and Department of Design Commissioner, Thomas Foley urging the City to “seriously explore strategies that might allow for adaptive reuse” of the existing two buildings comprising the existing Manhattan Detention Center, stating “it is crucial that we ensure that every possibility has been fully explored including a serious feasibility study...”; and

WHEREAS: In March 2023 a meeting was held with CB1, NUBC, Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ), the NYC Department of Corrections (DOC), the NYC Department of Design & Constructions (DDC), officials from the Mayor's Office, NYS Senator Brian Kavanagh, NYS Assembly Member Grace Lee, City Council Member Christopher Marte, Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine, representatives from Congressman Daniel Goldmans's office, William Sharples, Principal of SHoP Architects and health experts from NYU Langone Health to discuss the community concerns, status of the pending FOIL requests and the alternative proposal of Adaptive Reuse of the two existing towers of the MDC located at 124 and 125 White Street; and

WHEREAS: At this meeting CB1, the elected officials and community representatives demanded that demolition of the 2 Towers be halted until: 1. Adaptive ReUse be thoroughly explored; 2. The documents requested via FOIL and any and all studies done to date considering adaptive reuse of the existing buildings were forwarded and time given for review; and 3. further discussion could take place; and

- WHEREAS: At this meeting the City promised to promptly respond to all FOIL requests, provide all documents and to consider the option of issuing an RFP for the study of Adaptive Reuse and meet again before moving forward with demolition of the 2 towers; and
- WHEREAS: The *City's Strategic Blueprint for Construction Excellence* describes the need for complex projects to have Capital Project Scope Development (CPSD) studies done prior to the formal initiation of a project and allocation of capital dollars. At the March meeting, CB1 requested for the completed surveys and studies that were used for the MDC CPSD, and has not to date received this information; and
- WHEREAS: City representatives have not yet provided requested documents that accurately demonstrate whether a comprehensive completed feasibility study of whether the carceral criminal justice reforms would be possible through adaptive reuse and an alternative to full demolition and new construction of a replacement facility; and
- WHEREAS: City representatives have not yet provided requested documents indicating that the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) and NY State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) have met and reviewed the demolition plans of the Tombs, the 4th tower of the Criminal Court House which is a NYC Landmark eligible and NY State Registry-eligible building; and
- WHEREAS: On or about April 17, 2023, the City obtained the permit to move forward with the demolition of the north tower of 124 White Street. This permit was issued without informing all of the elected officials or community members until during the April 19 CB1s Quality of Life (QoL) Committee when Lauren Micir (AECOM - Project Management Team), Rick Peterson (Gramercy Group Inc.) and Jeff Margolies (DDC) were asked whether the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) had yet issued the demolition permit for the MDC; and
- WHEREAS: At the 4/19/23 CB1 QoL meeting, there was a ground swell of surprise, dismay and outrage at the lack of transparency and communication in learning of the issuing of the DOB demolition permit and great concern that the City had again failed to provide any documentation to prove their assertion that the adaptive reuse of the 2 existing MDC towers was not feasible; and
- WHEREAS: At the QoL meeting, CB1, NYS Senator Brian Kavanagh, NYS Assembly Member Grace Lee, City Council Member Christopher Marte, NUBC and community members all called for an immediate halt to demolition of the two towers and urged that the decision to move forward with demolition be rescinded until an RFP for an independent study on adaptive reuse is provided and reviewed; and
- WHEREAS: On April 21, 2023 Senator Kavanagh's office shared with leadership at CB1 that the Deputy Mayor Meera Joshi committed to "pause for the next two weeks on any action that would be in conflict with adaptive reuse of the existing structure at

124 White Street and to a meeting at City Hall in the coming week to continue the conversation we began on March 2, 2023”; now

THEREFORE
BE IT
RESOLVED

THAT: CB1 believes this upcoming meeting and the current two week pause is insufficient as a response to the community’s clear interest and commitment to ensure the adaptive reuse of the existing MDC; and

BE IT
FURTHER
RESOLVED

THAT: CB1 demands that the City put a pause on the demolition of the Manhattan Detention Center at 124 and 125 White Street until a Request for Proposal to determine the feasibility of adaptive reuse of the 2 towers is completed and reviewed by all stakeholders including the elected officials, CB1, NUBC and the community.