

Sean E. McCarthy

Village Architect

sean mccarthy

From: Vladimir Klimenko [vladimir_klimenko@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 18, 2012 5:04 PM
To: sean mccarthy
Cc: Ken Wray; Sonya Munroe; Pat Munroe
Subject: Please enter into the record re: Open Door facility

Hello Sean.

I have asked my neighbor Sonya Munroe to read the following statement at Thursday's hearing. If for some reason she is unable to do so, I would appreciate it if someone else could read it aloud.

Thank you.

Vladimir Klimenko

July 18, 2012

Sleepy Hollow Planning Board
28 Beekman Avenue
Sleepy Hollow, NY 10591

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VILLAGE OF SLEEPY HOLLOW

Dear Board Members:

We are writing to inform you that the Webber Park neighborhood is not unanimous in its views on the proposed Open Door facility at the Broadway location. Our family, which lives in Webber Park, recognizes the validity of concerns about increased traffic congestion and parking problems on our street. Webber Park often feels like a tranquil refuge, something our neighbors understandably value and seek to preserve. It may well be that, if the new facility is opened, our neighbors may sometimes have to park their cars two or three blocks from their homes. Nevertheless, we believe that the need to provide health care to families in our larger Village community outweighs parking and traffic concerns. When all is said and done, health care - especially for those who can least afford it - is a vital need, whereas parking remains an issue of convenience.

Opponents of the proposed facility have raised valid points about the safety of increased pedestrian traffic at the Broadway intersection. This merits thoughtful attention. We should note, however, that street crossing issues may be a lesser priority - and a lesser health risk - for people who stand to benefit from the expanded services that Open Door would offer at its new location. We are not hearing objections on the grounds of traffic safety from people in the Beekman Ave. area on the west side of Rt. 9.

We believe that some of the objections to Open Door among some of our neighbors are motivated by fears about declining property values. To that we can offer a three-part response:

1. When it comes to property values, we feel your pain. We bought our very first home, in Webber Park, near the top of the housing bubble.
2. It's a major election year. Why get fixated about the potential economic harm stemming from a health care clinic down the street? Webber Park home values have declined over the past few years. But the housing bust occurred because of decades' worth of unregulated greed on Wall Street, not the proximity of hard-working Ecuadoran immigrants on the other side of Route 9. Let's re-channel some of that impressive organizing energy in order to elect a Congress that cares more about the American dream of home ownership than it does about narrow corporate interests.
3. Let's be perfectly honest. Historically, arguments about threats to property and property values have been used by

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stronger and wealthier groups to marginalize the poor, immigrants, and racial minority groups well before Lincoln emancipated the slaves. Most beneficiaries of Open Door are working class, people of color, recent immigrants or their children, and renters who may not even own cars. Opposition to the proposed new facility stems mainly from mostly white, middle-class home-owners. We are not suggesting that the latter are motivated by racial or class prejudice. Nevertheless, it would be naive to ignore the demographics of this controversy amidst the all the talk about traffic and parking.

We are long overdue for learning to think more inclusively about our fellow human beings. Webber Park may be our neighborhood, but our community, in the larger and deeper sense, does not stop at Rt. 9. This is particularly true when it comes issues of basic human needs. We reach more of our own humanity when we come to understand this. When all is said, there is no "us" and "them," there is no "wrong side of the tracks," no bantustan west of Broadway.

Affordable quality health care is a moral imperative. We urge the Village to seriously address issues of parking, safety, and congestion raised by members of the Webber Park community, but to do so in the context of approving Open Door's proposal for a new facility.

Please add this letter to the public record.

Sincerely,

Vladimir Klimenko
Cynthia Scharf
Nadezhda Klimenko

64 New Broadway
Sleepy Hollow NY 10591