



OFFICE OF THE BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT  
THE BRONX COUNTY BUILDING  
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October 14, 2010

Linda I. Gibbs  
Deputy Mayor For Health and Human Services  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Robert K. Steel  
Deputy Mayor For Economic Development  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Deputy Mayors Gibbs & Steel:

I write to express my deepest concerns regarding your offices positions pursuant to the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Redevelopment and Planning Process for the Muller Army Reserve Center (ARC). Our three offices are participating on the Muller ARC Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA) required of the BRAC Process for the reuse of the military building at 555 Nereid Avenue. Most recently your representatives on the LRA have indicated their support for using the facility as a 200 bed men's homeless shelter. Local elected officials at all levels, including my office, have expressed support for relocating the National Guard units from the Kingsbridge Armory to the ARC, and are opposed to the homeless shelter proposal.

The primary purpose of the LRA is to balance the needs of the homeless with the needs of the community, as well as to ascertain the benefits of redevelopment options for the ARC site. This transfer from one military use to another would entail the least cost to the City, which in these extremely difficult economic times is no small accomplishment and would result in essentially no impact on the surrounding community. Additionally, the transfer would facilitate the development of desperately needed schools in the Kingsbridge Heights community with no acquisition cost.

There are already 160 homeless units being planned within a three-block radius of the Muller ARC. One project, being developed by Project Renewal, will be across the street. Department of Homeless Services Commissioner Seth Diamond confirmed that this project is moving forward during his September 22, 2010, presentation to the Bronx Borough Board. A second homeless project is being developed by Praxis. This new construction project is a 60-unit supportive housing building financed through the Department of Housing Preservation and Development's Supportive Housing Loan Program and will house 42 formerly homeless adult, single men, and 18 families.

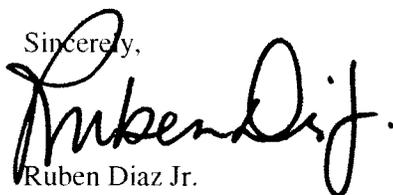
Deputy Mayors Gibbs & Steel  
October 14, 2010  
Page 2 of 2

While the scope of the Muller LRA project is borough-wide, the impact of multiple new homeless shelters on the Wakefield and Woodlawn communities is being ignored. Bringing 360 units/beds online at the same time within a three-block radius will have a tremendous impact on a low-rise, middle-class, homeowner community that currently plays host to the largest number of group homes in the borough. The very purpose of the LRA is to balance the homeless and community needs, not to consider one in isolation of the other. The relocation of the National Guard units to the ARC balances not only the borough-wide need for additional schools, but demonstrates a sensitivity to the burden of special needs facilities already within Bronx Community Board #12, which is home to 888 special needs units, of which 207 are already for the homeless.

I am further perplexed by the lack of consideration of off-site units for the two homeless respondents. Both groups will have homeless facilities that would open around the same time a reuse for the Muller ARC would be implemented. One of the organizations is developing two buildings within a mile from the Muller ARC, one of which will be for homeless, single adult men. Both organizations are or would need to receive significant municipal subsidies to undertake their projects. I fail to understand how these projects do not meet the military's homeless accommodation requirements.

I would like to sit with both of you as soon as possible to discuss the future of the Muller ARC. This has been a long process that all parties involved would like to see come to an end. In doing so, we cannot push forward a decision without balancing the needs of the borough and the affected communities in considering the best uses and accommodations. I look forward to speaking with both of you.

Sincerely,



Ruben Diaz Jr.

RD:p&d/wr

CC: Daniel Glasson, Office of Economic Adjustment  
Shaun Donovan, Secretary, United States Department of Housing & Urban Development  
Adolfo Carrión, Jr., Region II Administrator, United States Department of Housing & Urban Development  
New York State Senator Jeffrey Klein  
New York State Assemblymember Jeffrey Dinowitz  
New York State Senator Ruth Hassel-Thompson  
New York Assemblymember Carl Heastie  
New York City Councilmember Oliver Koppell  
Father Richard Gorman, Chairperson, Bronx Community Board #12  
Mary Lauro, Wakefield Taxpayers & Civic League, Inc.  
Christine Sheridan, Woodlawn Heights Taxpayers Association