

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 120139 PQX
Ezekiel P. Rivers Learning Center & Bronxworks Senior Center
August 12 2012

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Administration for Children's Services, the Department for the Aging, and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the acquisition of property located at 200 West Tremont Avenue (Block 2877, lot 522), Borough of the Bronx, Community District 5, for continued use as a child care center and senior center.

BACKGROUND

Approving this application will facilitate the renewal of a lease agreement for use of an entire six story building located at 200 West Tremont Avenue, in an R6 zone, in Bronx Community District 5. The proposed lease renewal is for a period of five years and provides for use of the subject property consisting of 42,793 square feet. Of this total, 26,067 square feet will continue to be utilized by the Ezekiel P. Rivers Learning Center which is overseen the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). This child care center occupies the fourth, fifth and sixth floor plus the building's roof. Also located on the premises is the Bronxworks Heights Senior Center, administered by the Department for the Aging (DFTA). This facility will continue to occupy 16,726 square feet. Senior citizen activities function on the second and third floor of the building plus an exterior patio. Both the child care center and senior center have operated at this location since the 1970's.

The Ezekiel P. Rivers Daycare Center serves approximately 120 pre-schoolers during the work week. Hours of operation commence at 8 a.m. and conclude at 6 p.m. Participating children are taken to and from the daycare center by their parents or guardian. The daily program includes a nutritious hot lunch plus two snacks. Programming includes supervised playtime, group interaction programming specifically created to encourage the socializing skills of the youngsters and educational programs focusing on the alphabet and number system. The staff includes professional, para professionals and support staff, the total of which is twenty six people.

The daycare facility includes a library located on the fourth floor consisting of 204 square feet. There are also six playrooms average 700 square feet each located on the fifth and sixth floors. The play roof used for active recreation offers 6,519 square feet of space.

The Bronxworks Heights Senior Center serves approximately 114 senior citizens. The hours of operation are between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday-Friday. One hot meal is offered. Programming includes educational and recreational activities focusing specifically on health promotion and nutritional education. A staff of six employees is on site. Medical assistance is also available if necessary.

The senior center includes space for a variety of activities including billiards, arts and crafts, plus an exterior patio area for passive recreation. Two rooms set aside for computer use are also provided.

The daycare and senior center functions are accessible through separate entrances. Likewise, dining accommodations are separated. ADA mandated elevator services are provided and shared by both operations.

Development of the surrounding community includes six story residential buildings and one and two family homes. Retail activity is located on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard (University Avenue) three blocks east of the subject property. Bus transportation is also available on the boulevard. There is now subway access within a five block radius of the site.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application was reviewed pursuant to CEQR and SEQRA and received a Type II Designation meaning that the proposed use poses no threat to the environment. This application was certified as complete by the City Planning Commission on May 7, 2012.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community Board 5 did not submit a vote on this application.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

The Bronx Borough President convened a public hearing on this application on July 31, 2012. Representatives of the applicant were present and spoke in favor of this application. There being no members of the public wishing to speak, the hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

The West Bronx community served by the Ezekiel P. Rivers Learning Center and Bronxworks Heights Senior Center, surely benefits from both these vital operations. This is especially so, given that the population profile of Bronx Community District 5 includes some of the borough's youngest citizens and a growing senior citizen community.

Extensive research demonstrates that pre-schoolers benefit from the kind of activity the Ezekiel P. Rivers Learning Center offers. So too, social interaction is essential for the physical and mental well being of our older citizens. Consequently, I am pleased to endorse this lease renewal and recommend approval of this application.