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OF

THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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July 12, 2023

Dr. Ted Long
Senior Vice President
NYC Health+Hospitals
50 Water Street
New York, NY 10004

Dear Dr. Long:

I write regarding the numerous issues raised during a meeting with neighbors of the Stratford Arms, located at 117 West 70th Street, which took place on June 28, 2023. More than 60 people attended the meeting, held at Blessed Sacrament Church, located at 152 West 71st Street. All issues raised at the meeting are ongoing and have been reported subsequently.

Neighbors are asking for the following issues to be addressed:

1. Smoking (cigarettes and cannabis) and drinking alcohol outside the Stratford Arms and other buildings on the block.
2. Sex in cars, particularly cars parked adjacent to the building at 130 West 70 Street, which has a sidewalk shed that has been up for years.
3. Many mopeds, scooters, and other motorized bikes driving against traffic on both Broadway and West 70th Street as well as impeding street cleaning on alternate side parking days.
4. Trash accumulating along the block and in tree pits/planters.
5. Public health and safety—specifically urinating and/or spitting on sidewalks and leaving behind used hypodermic needles.
6. Sitting on stoops and obstructing front doors.

The primary request was for a neighborhood Code of Conduct to be distributed to residents of the Stratford Arms. As part of the Code of Conduct, neighbors are requesting H+H implement a curfew for residents (with exceptions for those who are working) as is the practice at Department of Homeless Services (DSS) facilities.

Neighbors also requested: greater NYPD presence on the block; eliminating the “No Parking” space in front of Stratford Arms (as was only relevant in the past when the building housed tenants with medical needs); a copy of the contract between American Musical and Dramatic Academy and the City (I have asked for all HERRC contracts but only received some); and a bicycle corral that is not on the block. I

understand your office is already working with DOT to install a bicycle corral.

I feel, and I imagine you agree, that the most constructive thing to do is connect services to those living at the HERRC. HERRCs run by H+H are an optimal model to address the enormously difficult situation in our city. You have done an exceptional job operating these sites and tailoring health, wellness, and logistical supports to asylum seekers based on their specific needs.

The Stratford Arms HERRC (along with your location at 207 West 85th Street—also in my district) is not like the other HERRCs in the H+H portfolio. It is not a hotel in a crowded commercial district; it is an apartment building on a quiet residential block. At Stratford Arms, residents need support acclimating to the neighborhood.

My office is working with New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE), a non-profit with expertise and language access, to develop workshops for residents of Stratford Arms that focus on how to live and work in a New York City neighborhood. The first workshops will take place on Wednesday, July 26 at either the Stratford Arms or a nearby church.

The workshops with NICE will be most effective if H+H staff are active participants and collaborators. Certainly it would help for staff and residents to be on the same page about neighborhood norms and community expectations. This type of support for those living in HERRCs is absent from the “Guest Responsibilities” document that residents must read and sign when they enter your agency’s care.

I have heard loud and clear from H+H that staff “can’t patrol guests” once they step outside of the building. They can, however, buy into, model, and reinforce positive behavior.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response and to working together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gale A. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Gale A. Brewer

cc: Hildalyn Colon Hernandez, Deputy Director, NICE, 71-29 Roosevelt Ave, Queens, NY 11372