



October 2, 2019

Steven Banks  
Commissioner  
NYC Human Resources Administration  
4 World Trade Center, 42<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10048

Dear Commissioner Banks:

We write in opposition to the proposed changes to the resident population at the HELP-USA-run shelter at 237 West 107<sup>th</sup> Street. We take issue both with the process employed by your agency and, more pressingly, with the substance of the proposed change.

On September 16<sup>th</sup>, some elected officials received phone calls informing them of the shelter's transition from a women's shelter to a men's shelter. We asked the Community Board (CB) to take up this issue and on September 24<sup>th</sup>, over 70 shelter and neighborhood residents attended the CB 7 Health and Human Services Committee meeting. Everyone attending that night asked that the current shelter population of women remain. The Committee then unanimously passed a resolution requesting that the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) keep the shelter as is. No one from DHS attended that meeting, either to present information or to answer questions. In addition, on September 26<sup>th</sup>, CB 7 wrote a letter to HRA reiterating its position. On September 30<sup>th</sup>, over 100 shelter and neighborhood residents met in a nearby church. Shelter residents expressed anxiety about the lack of information, while neighbors expressed their strong support for the women at the shelter as well as their equally strong opposition to changing the current resident population to men.

As the elected representatives of the neighbors and residents of 237 West 107<sup>th</sup> Street, we have a primary responsibility to advocate for our constituents. Many of the women who currently reside in the shelter have jobs (some work for the City of New York) and all are members of our community. We want them to remain here.

Because there has been no formal communication, presentation at the Community Board or for community residents, rumors abound. We are only able to determine your agency's proposed plans for the women and the building through individual phone calls to members of your staff. This is in itself a disservice to all who are actively engaged in our communities.

We ask that you reconsider your proposed change to the resident population at the 107<sup>th</sup> Street shelter, and that your agency communicate with all involved. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your response.