

Elmhurst United Newsletter

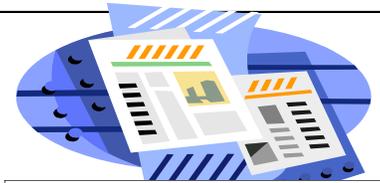
Contact Us

Tel (347) 395-1775

Panamprotest@gmail.com

ElmhurstUnited@gmail.com

The mission of Elmhurst United is to support Elmhurst residents in their efforts to decrease and eventually eliminate its homeless shelters through transitioning the homeless from shelters to homes while protecting the rights of the constituents and preserving the integrity of the Elmhurst community.



On April 16, 2015, the five-year - \$42 million dollar Pan Am Homeless Shelter Contract reached the Office of the Comptroller, Scott Stringer. This is the **final stage of the contract** in which Scott Stringer has up to 30 days to either sign or reject the contract. It is imperative that we contact his office at (212) 669-3916 and our elected officials to urge them to reject this contract.

The contract needs to be rejected because it violates administrative code 21-124 which requires Tier II (Pan Am Shelter) shelters to have a cooking facility in each unit. Additionally, this contract needs to be rejected because it is too expensive. At a cost of over \$3,700 per room per month it is an egregious waste of taxpayer funds. Signing the contract would be fiscally irresponsible. At this price, shelter residents can raise a family in a decent apartment, not in a cramped tiny jail-like room.

It has been almost a year since the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) moved over 200 families into the former Pan Am Hotel, without any notice to the local community. This was made after denials by DHS' Assistant Commissioner, Lisa Black, citing that the Pan Am site was not suitable because it lacked cooking facilities in each unit.

Local residents held three vocal protest rallies against DHS' decision. In attendance at the rallies were local politicians who came to voice their concerns about the impact of one of the largest homeless shelters into a neighborhood totally unprepared for a shelter of this size. The local politicians that came to the rallies include:

City Councilman Daniel Dromm, representing Elmhurst/Jackson Hts. He expressed his outrage at not being informed in advance and cited his displeasure in DHS' decision and raised

issues about the overwhelming size of this shelter in an already over congested community.

Assemblyman Moya, representing part of Elmhurst, and a politician up for re-election – stated he would vigorously work to get the shelter closed.

State Senator Toby Stavisky – stated her displeasure with the lack of notice and suggested DHS cap the number of homeless residents at the Shelter and not add additional residents as permanent housing are located.

Congress Member Grace Meng – did not attend any event, but sent her representative to convey her concerns about the shelter and the lack of advance notice.

Assemblyman Jeffrion Aubry representing the other part of Elmhurst failed to attend any of the community's rallies/hearings and ignored local residents' requests for his support.

Local residents say a homeless shelter of this size impacts the emergency services, i.e. police, fire, ambulances. It further strains the most overcrowded school district in the City and the aging infrastructure (electric, water, sewer) of the community. Neighbors are also concerned about security, as no criminal checks are made before a homeless resident is accepted into the facility nor any periodic warrant sweeps. How safe are the homeless family residents and the community?

Since the rallies, the Pan Am Shelter continues to be an eyesore, with garbage littering its sidewalk, and uncollected garbage piling up and blocking public sidewalks. Mice and over-sized rats infest the area around the garbage. Numerous complaints by neighbors remain unresolved.

Dromm - decided that he no longer supports local residents who do not support the shelter. He says "shelter residents are his constituents too".

Moya - ignored our numerous calls to his office

regarding a follow-up to his commitment to close down the shelter. He made many impassioned and impressive promises, but has never followed thru.

T Stavisky – personally attended and testified at the Contract hearing to convey her concerns about the shelter. But no visible action since.

Melinda Katz, Borough President-refused to re-appoint Jennifer Chu to Community Board 4. Ms. Chu is an Elmhurst community activist and a founding member of Elmhurst United. Numerous calls to Ms. Katz's as to why a qualified and active member of the Community Board (which will have 7 empty board seats in 2015) was not re-appointed remain unanswered.

Scott Stringer – City Comptroller-Mr. Stringer's Director of Community Affairs, Jesse Campoamor met with members of Elmhurst United on April 1st. Concerns raised by EU will be forwarded to Mr. Stringer's attention. Despite numerous requests for a face to face meeting with Scott Stringer to discuss our concerns, this has not happened.

Tony Avella – State Senator representing Bayside, Flushing has assisted Elmhurst United in its efforts to expose the wasteful cost of homeless shelters, and the living conditions of its residents.

News Update:
Website

Elmhurstunited.org

www.cometcivic.com

Rating	Politician	What have they done for you lately:	Page 2 
↓	Assemblyman F. Moya	Failed to follow-up on commitments made to the Elmhurst Community	<div style="border: 2px solid blue; padding: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Volunteers</u></p> <p><u>Requested:</u></p> <p>Join Elmhurst United by sending us an email. Please provide your name, address, EMAIL, telephone.</p> </div>
↓	Assemblyman J. Aubry	Never supported community	
↓	Councilman D. Dromm	No longer supports local residents who protest the Pan Am shelter and has not done much to assist the Elmhurst Community	
↓	Congress Member G. Meng	Silent on the matter	
↔	State Senator T. Stavisky	Some assistance but may not be enough	
↑	State Senator T. Avella (represents- Bayside Flushing)	Supported EU in its efforts to expose the shelter as a waste of tax payer funds and urged the City to reject the Pan Am contract	
↓	Borough President M. Katz	Refused to re-appoint Elmhurst resident, J. Chu to Community Board 4 and declined to justify her decision to her constituents	

What can you do?

Making Elmhurst a great place to live requires all its residents to do their share.

Residents need to report any suspicious activities including drug, prostitution, graffiti, petty larcenies etc.,

Litter and dirty sidewalks needs to be swept or reported to 311 (if possible, obtain a service number and email to elmhurstunited@gmail.com)

Garbage piled up in public trash cans and uncollected garbage needs to be reported to 311 (if possible, obtain a service number and email to elmhurstunited@gmail.com)

Sighting of rodents including mice and rats need to be report to 311 and/ or the Department of Health

These quality of life issues may seem minor at first, but they all add up. By taking action on these issues, you alleviate the problem before it grows into a major headache. As a reminder, all calls to 311 or any city agency can be made in any language and can be made anonymously. We can all make Elmhurst a better place to live and work.

We need volunteers for the Elmhurst Neighborhood Block Watch. Sign up now to join. Help us keep your family safe and secure. Send us an email at : panamprotest@gmail.com

It isn't easy living at the shelter either....

At a cost of over \$3,700/month/room, you would think a homeless resident at the Pan Am shelter would be living in the lap of luxury. Not so- Just to list a few problems:

- Numerous reports by its residents of no heat and no hot-water throughout the winter season
- Peeling paint – a possible lead paint issue
- Garbage piled high near the shelter with rodent activity
- no cooking facility in each living unit (a Tier II shelter without a cooking facility in each living unit is illegal under NYC administrative code)
- no annual inspection of boilers

Politicians have long relied on the forgetfulness of its voters. Do not allow them to believe we can be ignored and forgotten. Commitments were made, and if they cannot fulfill these commitments, they do not deserve another term. HOLD them accountable.



Vote. If you've not done so yet, register to vote. Elected officials who have done nothing to support your cause and have not earned your vote should not remain in office. If you need to register, sign up at

www.elections.ny.gov/ . Help this cause by exercising your right to VOTE.