



Robert V. Hess  
Commissioner

33 Beaver Street  
17th Floor  
New York, NY 10004

212.361.8000 tel  
212.361.8001 tty  
212.361.7977 fax

November 10, 2008

Henry L. Butler, Chair  
Community Board 3  
Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Plaza  
1360 Fulton Street, 2nd Floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11216

Dear Mr. Butler:

Thank you for allowing me to attend your community board meeting on November 3, 2008 and for providing the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) with an opportunity to address the community's concerns regarding the Sumner Avenue Armory.

As I stated at the meeting, DHS has no plans to change the current shelter operations at the Sumner Avenue Armory. DHS contracts with Black Veterans for Social Justice to operate a single adult men's shelter at the site. The shelter has a total capacity of 200 beds and DHS has no plans to expand the capacity at this location or to relocate men's intake to the Sumner Armory.

In listening to the issues raised at the meeting, I believe that DHS must do more to be a good neighbor and to create a forum where we can address community concerns on an ongoing basis. To meet this objective, I have asked my staff to work with the community board to establish a Community Advisory Board (CAB) at the Sumner Avenue Armory within the next 30 days. In addition to addressing issues at the Sumner Avenue Armory, the CAB will also allow DHS to share information about key agency programs and to provide regular updates on other programmatic changes that may or may not impact the community. For example, the CAB will be utilized by DHS to inform the community about the closing of Bellevue shelter and intake center at 30<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan.

At the meeting, some questioned the number of people coming to the site via buses and indicated that there are pictures and video footage disputing our information. If community members have this footage, I am requesting that your office assist DHS in obtaining the footage so that we can properly investigate the problem. To the best of my knowledge, there are currently no buses that arrive at the location with clients prior to 10:00pm and no bus arrives any later than 2:00am. My staff is currently exploring a plan, when possible, to utilize smaller passenger vans rather than buses to help mitigate some the complaints from the community regarding noise from idling buses. We are also working with our street outreach teams to address concerns about increased street homeless around the Sumner Avenue Armory.

I look forward to a continued dialogue with the community board on this matter and to working with you to ensure that residents of the Bedford Stuyvesant community are well informed about DHS and the shelter operations at the Sumner Avenue Armory. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Robert V. Hess