



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Tony Avella

Senators Avella and Klein Commend Third Rejection of Pan AM Contract

TONY AVELLA September 2, 2015

(Queens, New York) Today, State Senator Tony Avella and State Senator Jeff Klein commended New York City Comptroller Stringer for his rejection of Samaritan Village's proposal to convert the former Pan Am hotel into a permanent shelter. This marks the third time Comptroller Stringer rejected the project out of concern for various violations and the location's absence of kitchen facilities.

The former Pan Am hotel was converted into an emergency six month shelter that Samaritan Village subsequently attempted to make into a permanent homeless shelter. An application was submitted by Samaritan Village in November for a five-year contract with the Department of Homeless Services, amounting to \$42 million. However, because of health and safety concerns, as well concerns about Samaritan Village's blemished history of managing funds, the \$42 million contract was denied twice by the Comptroller in May.

Pan Am is one of many temporary City shelters to be converted into a permanent shelter without notifying the surrounding community. In the case of Pan Am, the community voiced their concerns for the insufficiencies of the facility to their elected officials and contributed greatly to Stringer's decision to reject the proposal. State Senator Klein introduced the bill S.4542, which would require the New York City Planning commission to hold a public community forum prior to the approval, modification or denial of a shelter site or lease renewal. As in the case of Pan Am, the community knows its own area best and was well aware of Pan Am's deficiencies.

“I commend Scott Stringer for his consistent opposition to the transformation of Pan Am into a permanent shelter. It is shameful that Samaritan Village continues to push for a contract that is so glaringly in violation of city code. Regardless of one’s socio-economic situation, an individual has the right to a clean and safe environment. Pan Am lacks kitchens, has unreliable hot water and is troubled by an array of health and safety issues. The City should be allocating funds for homeless shelters that can cater to basic human needs rather than facilities that warehouse families. This project would have never gone as far as it has if the community was given proper notice and been able to voice their input. That is why, as a cosponsor of the bill, I urge the Assembly to pass the companion legislation to State Senator Klein’s bill, and incorporate valuable community feedback into this process,” **said State Senator Tony Avella (D-Queens-Bayside).**

"Residents in Elmhurst spoke loud and clear when they declared the Pan Am site would inadequately serve homeless families. I once again applaud New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer for rejecting a \$42 million, five year contract to Samaritan Village a third time. This violation-plagued building drew serious concerns from elected officials and neighbors, who all understand the need to house the homeless. The community knew the troubles this particular site posed and that's why including community input in social service setting is imperative. The Senate overwhelmingly passed my legislation which would require community input and a City Planning Commission decision before a homeless shelter or any other social service provider move into a neighborhood. I urge the Assembly to act on this legislation," **said State Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx-Westchester).**