



CENTRAL VILLAGE BLOCK ASSOCIATION

The Grand Village Block Association is a forum for residents of Barrow, Jones, Canalia, Leoy, Bleecker, West 4th Street & Sheridan Square

December 1, 2025

Mayor-Elect Zohran Mamdani

Incoming First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan

Incoming Chief of Staff Elle Bisgaard-Church

Re: Restoration and Reopening of the Tony Dapolito Recreation Center, 1 Clarkson Street, Manhattan

Dear Mayor-Elect Mamdani, Incoming First Deputy Mayor Fuleihan, and Incoming Chief of Staff Bisgaard-Church,

As community and preservation organizations representing thousands of residents of Lower Manhattan and New Yorkers from across the five boroughs, we write to strongly urge you to ensure that the landmarked and much beloved Tony Dapolito Recreation Center, now closed for more than five years, is restored, modernized, and reopened. We have been deeply dismayed by the Parks Department’s ongoing effort under Mayor Adams to demolish the building.

Community support for restoring and reopening the Tony Dapolito Recreation Center has been overwhelming and consistent. That has manifested in near unanimous public opposition to demolition expressed at Manhattan Community Board 2 meetings; a [resolution issued by that community board overwhelmingly opposing demolition and calling for restoration](#); nearly 40,000 letters sent by nearly 5,000 people to various public officials calling for the Center to be restored and reopened; and multiple letters from more than 20 community groups and preservation organizations from across New York City and State calling for the same. Additionally, more than

200 people attended a [rally on June 1](#) of this year calling for restoration and reopening of the Center, and [Councilmember Bottcher has called for a redesign process](#) that would “retain, at minimum, the existing facades of the building, while also exploring new uses that allow for the preservation of as much of the building’s historic interior as feasible,” and that “preservation should be a foundational component of any future proposal.”

For the past five years, the Parks Department has allowed the Tony Dapolito Recreation Center to remain idle, despite earlier assurances that it would be repaired and reopened. No meaningful repairs have been undertaken to date. **Further, the department itself confirmed on public record in a community board meeting that approximately \$120 million in capital funding had been allocated to the site but remains unused. This prolonged inaction despite access to capital funding for repair has been a source of deep frustration for the community.**

None of the issues with the building are beyond the scope of repair, and none of the updates needed are incompatible with continued use of the building for recreational purposes, even if some spaces may no longer be used for the same purposes that they have in the building’s most recent incarnation. **Indeed, during a site visit with Councilmember Bottcher’s office and multiple stakeholders, the Parks Department’s Deputy Director of Engineering already [confirmed](#) that each identified problem could be repaired.**

While the Parks Department has proposed creating supplemental recreational facilities across the street at 388 Hudson, which this community supports, that initiative cannot substitute for the long-promised rehabilitation of the existing Tony Dapolito Recreation Center, a facility with deep roots and enduring significance to the neighborhood. **Moreover, a building is needed on this site to serve the outdoor swimming pool adjacent to the Tony Dapolito Recreation Center, which the Parks Department intends to retain; thus, even with a new recreational facility at 388 Hudson Street, the need for a public recreation center on the site remains.**

Further, this structure was quite intentionally landmarked in 2010 as part of the Greenwich Village Historic District Extension II, recognizing its importance to the history of our city. **The Center’s deteriorated condition is a direct result of deferred maintenance and a failure to undertake needed repairs, upgrades, and restorations as is required for a landmarked facility.** We urge you to call upon the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) to pursue a failure to maintain violation against the Parks Department to compel it to begin the process of repairing the building, as the LPC has [already been called upon to do](#). Disturbingly, they have thus far refused to do so.

We were heartened to [hear Mayor-Elect Mamdani promise to “follow through”](#) on the commitment to repair the Tony Dapolito Recreation Center during a town hall in September of this year. To that end, we urge you to put forward a plan to repair, modernize, and reopen this cherished public facility as soon as possible at the start of the administration. To allow it to be destroyed would be incredibly damaging to the regulations which exist to preserve and protect all our city’s recognized historic properties, and would erode a vital public facility at a time when public resources have already suffered from prolonged political neglect.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Sommer Omar
Founder
Coalition to Save the Public
Recreation Center Downtown



Andrew Berman
Executive Director
Village Preservation



Erin Quinn Purcell
President
Westbeth Artists
Residents Council



Augustine Hope
President
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David Mulkins
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Kim Beck
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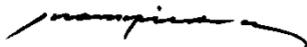
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/s/ Dr. Cynthia Maurer
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/s/ Steve Gould
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/s/ Kathy Arntzen
Kathy Arntzen
President
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