

Canandaigua VAMC Public Hearing Summary

February 26, 2009 6:00 PM

1. Welcome and Introductions

- a. Mr. Craig S. Howard, the Director of the Canandaigua VAMC, brought the meeting to order. Once the Pledge of Allegiance was completed, Mr. Howard gave a brief overview of the CARES process and described the current projects that are underway to improve services on the Canandaigua Campus. Mr. Howard pointed out that Building 14 is currently vacant and that annual costs are high to maintain a vacant building. Mr. Howard stated his personal confidence in the quality of care provided at Canandaigua and looks forward to the continuation of that level of quality.

2. Enhanced Use Lease Overview

- a. Mr. Jay Halpern, Senior Advisor, VA Office of Asset Enterprise Management, provided an overview of the goals and objectives of the current EUL process. Mr. Halpern provided examples of how this project is being utilized in other parts of the country to help veterans and cited sources of funding that are available to make these projects successful. Mr. Halpern said he is confident in the program and believes that it will provide valuable services to the Canandaigua VA.

3. Unmet Veteran Needs

- a. Mr. Kevin O'Hagan, Program Specialist at the Canandaigua VA, gave an overview of the current needs for certain populations of veterans that are not met. Returning veterans, women veterans, frail and elderly veterans, terminally ill veterans, veterans with mental and physical challenges and veterans in transition from treatment are all in need of services. Mr. O'Hagan supports the proposed project, as it will help provide services to these underserved veteran populations.

4. Enhanced Use Lease Timeline

- a. Mr. Richard Pryzdia, the Pruitt Group, explained the timeline for completion of the EUL process.

5. Questions and Answers

- a. Members of the public were given an opportunity to express their opinions, ask questions and respond to statements made by VA.
- b. Several members of the public expressed concern that veterans would not get preferred placement from the selected developer. The members of VA consistently stated that this program was developed to serve veterans and that any use of Building 14 would have to meet VA's strict requirements.
- c. Members of the public addressed concerns that local representatives would not be on the selection committee. VA said that someone from the Canandaigua VAMC and the VISN would be on the review committee to ensure that there was local representation.
- d. The question was asked whether or not the bids would be open to the public. VA responded that, under federal contracting rules, bids are required to be sealed and will not be open to the public.

- e. Issues regarding transportation for veterans were also discussed. VA indicated that transportation to and from services, both on and off campus, was very important and would be addressed with any potential developers.