

SOF Construction Task Force Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Situation?

In mid-January of this year, Toll Brothers told SOF that they will build two luxury condominiums adjacent to SOF. A 12 story building on 22nd Street (west side of the school) and an 18 story building on 23rd Street (north side of the school). Toll Brothers has not yet filed plans with the Building Department, so there is no schedule as to when demolition of the existing buildings will begin.

Construction cannot be stopped by legal means, but we can advocate for our children's best interests through political action.

What is the Task Force's Mission?

The mission of the SOF Construction Task Force is to ensure the well being of our students and their academic environment. Our goal is to find the best viable solution to protect our children's health and safety and minimize disruption to their learning during construction.

What are the Task Force's Objectives?

- 1) Ideally, to find temporary alternative space during the construction period, or
- 2) Secondly, to insist on all possible health and safety protections if SOF stays at its current location.

How Will the Task Force Achieve its Objectives?

1) MONITORING

This construction project is "as of right." In NYC zoning code terms, this means that the builders, Toll Brothers, do not require any local approvals, such as from Community Board 5. Nor do the developers have to ask for any variances to perform work. They need only satisfy the Department of Buildings that they comply with the building code. Thus, our legal options are very limited.

However, because they do need to get appropriate permits, we are monitoring for compliance with existing laws and will be asking you to call 311 whenever the developers fail to get those necessary permits.

2) POLITICAL ACTION

Advocacy is our best weapon. Task Force members have already reached out to many state, city, and local politicians. We are gathering momentum for political support. Please call your local politicians. (LINK). Your phone calls will reinforce our efforts to meet with the politicians to present our demands.

3) **MEDIA**

We need to get our story out in our community and city. There is no policy or regulatory framework in place to protect children when demolition and construction are being undertaken next to a school. It is a completely unacceptable situation and we need to get the word out.

What Does the Task Force Need from Parents?

Political Connections – if you know anyone in the New York City or State political sector, please let us know who they are and whether you are willing to contact them directly. We have background information you can share with the politicians.

Media Connections - Please share your media contacts with us if you have them. We are now creating press kits.

Make Phone Calls – Call our elected officials, then call them again. We need parents to first call and then email the Department of Education and the politicians

Sign the Petition.

Stay Informed and Be Responsive -- We need our parent community to stay informed and read information as we send it out and to be responsive. We will need you to sign petitions, make calls, share ideas and share contacts. We may also need you to show up at a press conference or other events. Only together can we deal with the challenge the school is currently facing.

Who Are the Task Force Members?

All members are parents of children at SOF.

John C. Coleman, Construction and
Advocacy Randy Wood, Architecture,
Construction Cathy Albisa, Advocacy
Jose Davilla, Advocacy
Michael Propper, Advocacy
Lynne Strongo Shinozaki, Advocacy

Thank you for your help.

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