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POSTAL REGULATORY
COMMISSION
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By Priority Mail

September 30, 2013

Postal Regulatory Commission
901 New York Avenue N W, Suite 200
Washington, D. C. 20268-0001

Received

OCT 17 2013

Office of PAGR

Re: Petition for Review and Application for Suspension: Closure of Stamford,
Connecticut Downtown Historic Post Office on September 20, 2013

Dear Commissioners:

I am filing the attached application for review of the sudden and unexplained closing of the historic Stamford, Connecticut post office located at 421 Atlantic Street, Stamford Connecticut on Friday, September 20, 2013 without advanced planning or input from the public or the public meeting and notice to customer required by postal regulations for closing a post office. The petitioner is Kaysay Abrha, of Stamford Connecticut who is a postal customer who had a post office box at the closed main post office. I have attached the Request for Review.

I have also enclosed an Application for Suspension regarding the same post office closing.

Sincerely,



Drew Backstrand

Enclosure: Petition for Review Application for Suspension

**PETITION TO REVIEW
CLOSURE OF STAMFORD CONNECTICUT MAIN POST OFFICE**

Date of Closure: September 20, 2013 at 5 p.m.

Action: Closure of a Post Office Retail Location (Discontinuance)

**Post Office Closed: Stamford, Connecticut located at 421 Atlantic Street,
Stamford, CT 06901.**

APPLICATION FOR SUSPENSION OF DETERMINATION

Reasons for Relief Requested: The Postal Services (“USPS”) closed the Stamford, Connecticut main post office on September 20, 2013 at 5 p.m. in violation of its own notice and public meeting requirements before a closure. The USPS closure violates other applicable provisions of federal historic preservation and related federal laws applicable to the national program of the USPS to dispose of excess postal facilities.

Facts Relied Upon: The Stamford main post office was closed on September 20, 2013 at 5 p.m. with two days’ posted notice on the building. This action is a closure because there is no replacement post office in the downtown area for customers with replacement post office boxes for the customers. No sixty days advance notice was provided to customers, employees or other persons affected by the closure in violation of the USPS rules and no public hearing to discuss the community effect of the closing was conducted by the USPS. The requirement to provide sixty (60) days’ notice to customers, employees and other persons affected by the closure and to conduct a public hearing about the effect of the closing upon the public is set forth in 39 C. F. R. 241.3. This action is also in violation of Section 302 of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act that sets forth service standards for postal service. The actions here have eroded the service standards to downtown Stamford Connecticut customers of the post office.

I am an affected user of the post office and citizen filing a Petition for Review and an Application for Suspension of the sudden and unexplained closing of the historic Stamford, Connecticut. There has been no opportunity for me to discuss this at any public hearing and the USPS did not give me proper notice of this closure of the facility. This closing occurred: (i) without notice required by the USPS regulations regarding closure of a facility 39 CFR 241.3, and (ii) without any analysis of or cost benefit analysis of the closing, or consideration of the effect on the community, the effect on the USPS employees or the need to provide the maximum degree of effectiveness and regular postal service as required by 39 U. S. C. 404(d)(2)(A) of the United States Code.

The downtown post office in Stamford is listed on the national registry of historic buildings and was built in 1916. It has a long tradition of use for public purposes. It is in the central business district of the Stamford, Connecticut community. The postal service has just closed this facility on two days’ notice without any meaningful input from the community it serves, the postal customers, the City of Stamford or any other constituency groups affected by this precipitous decision made in haste without provision of a replacement facility. These actions violate the spirit of and the rule set forth in Section 302 of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006. It also violates Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act in that it does not appear that the USPS had done anything to comply with the consultation process set forth in Section

106. I do not believe that the USPS has done any study or analysis of how this closure will affect the post office box users and other users of that facility.

In addition, the USPS is not exempt from the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act because the national plan to downsize the post office and sell off many of its facilities, including many historic post office buildings, like the Stamford, Connecticut post office, that are on the National Registry of Historic Buildings, requires compliance with the NEPA, in that the USPS must assess the environmental and community effects of selling these USPS assets. To my knowledge the USPS has not complied with the provisions of NEPA applicable to it.

I am asking that the PRC and the Postmaster General suspend this closing and that the USPS reopen the Stamford, Connecticut post office until such time as the USPS has complied with its Congressional mandate to consider the needs of postal service customers, its workers, and the community at large and conduct a public hearing before it closes the facility. In addition, the USPS must comply with the provisions of law that require it to explore the continued public use of this national historic building before it closes and sells building to a private development company that will forever cut off any future public use of this building.

We request a hearing before the PRC of the issues involved and the record of actions by the USPS in regard to its quixotic treatment of this national historic treasure by its slight of hand. In August, 2010 this post office change was described as a relocation of facilities (as announced by the USPS in a public hearing) but now it is clear that this is a closure and there is no replacement facility opening September 21. The September 19, 2013 posting on the building admits as much, in that it says "At this time, we have not yet found a permanent new location. But we will continue to explore all of our alternatives to find a new permanent location to provide you with full postal services within the immediate area." In other words YOUR POST OFFICE IS CLOSED AND WE DO NOT HAVE A REPLACEMENT LOCATION NEARBY TO REPLACE IT.

The notice further reads that "We are working to build up our 317 West Avenue location to provide our current Atlantic Street PO Box customers with a new PO Box at that site by late fall or early winter. MORE TO THE POINT, WE CLOSED YOUR PO BOX AND YOU WILL NOT HAVE ONE FOR SEVERAL MONTHS.

In addition, the sale process for this historic building which we believe to be flawed, in violation of law and without any consideration of the continued public use of the buildings for the local community in which it was built with U. S. taxpayer money. Specifically the historic Stamford, Connecticut post office is an example of Mediterranean Neoclassical architecture, quite unique in the Stamford community and of great historical significance to the community. This structure, with its exterior comprised of terra cotta ornamentation on masonry structure with red clay tile roof, is an iconic example of the Mediterranean Neoclassical architectural style. We believe from the record around the country that the USPS has no coherent written plan to

preserve and protect these historic works of art created by WPA artists during the 1930's or these historic buildings. We believe that under the federal laws and regulations applicable to the sales process of the Stamford, Connecticut post office has been inherently flawed, will not maximize the return on the real estate assets entrusted to the USPS, ignores federal law on historically registered and protected buildings and must be subject to judicial review before all of the historic post office buildings are sold in violation of federal law and regulations as this one is soon to be sold.

Drew Backstrand