



# NORWOOD NEWS

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# DOWNZONING FINDINGS REVEALED

*Report finds Bedford Park and Kingsbridge Heights can be downzoned*



Photo by Adi Talwar

**JOHN REILLY AND** his wife Lois Harr stand across the street from their private home at East 202nd Street in Bedford Park (left). The couple hopes a report supporting downzoning of the neighborhood can prevent construction of a much taller building two houses down (right).

By **DAVID CRUZ**

At its June 14 meeting, Community Board 7's Land Use/Zoning & Housing Committee approved the findings of an independent study that would limit height restrictions on new buildings in two Bronx neighborhoods, despite the study's author recommending more neighborhoods

be assessed before submitting them to the city.

For Lois Harr, a resident in Bedford Park, the motion represented a victory in preventing further construction of high-rise properties in Bedford Park and Kingsbridge Heights, the two neighborhoods studied. Concerns of overdevelopment at a rapid

clip in Bedford Park had especially prompted the study.

"Time is running out," Jean Hill, committee chair, said at the meeting. "So we need to jump on it."

But even as the committee approved the results, it still needs the full board's approval, which won't happen until September when the

board convenes again. Even then the city would have to give final approval of any zoning changes, which could take months. This offers a window for developers to continue its sweep of Bedford Park and Kingsbridge Heights, neighborhoods where two-story homes abound.

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## IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

## Bronx BP Releases Report on G&amp;T Inequity Fix



**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT RUBEN** Diaz Jr. (at podium) standing alongside Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams (l), outlines recommendations to fix the Gifted & Talented program within the public school system.

By DAVID CRUZ

Roughly a week before the Albany Legislature would vote for mayoral control, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and his Brooklyn counterpart released a report outlining ways to equalize the public school system's gifted and talented program (G&T), claiming it grossly excludes minority students.

At a news conference alongside Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, Diaz urged the New York City Department of Education (DOE), which has implemented the advanced academic program, to "fix the pipeline so we can have more and more diversity."

The pair's report lists ways to repair what has long been a nagging problem: G&T programs that keep black and Hispanic students out of them despite comprising a combined 70 percent of the public school system's student body. The disparity is prevalent in the Bronx. Overall, there are only 10 District G&T classes offered in the Bronx, compared to 16 in Manhattan, 27 in Brooklyn, 29 in Queens, and eight in Staten Island. Students from kindergarten through third grade take the test in January and get their results in April. Should a student score a 90 or above, they are eligible for a G&T class and must register by June to begin classes in September.

G&T programs, offering more robust instruction to elementary and middle school students than regular academics, has been viewed as promoting a bias by

having fewer G&T programs in minority neighborhoods when compared to affluent, predominantly white, communities. G&T programs are often seen as a gateway toward specialized high schools, offering even greater education and academic advancement to students.

The de Blasio Administration has attempted to give greater access to the G&T system, though the report called the recent implementation "small steps."

Nine recommendations were made to fix the inequity, which includes guaranteeing a G&T spot to any qualifying student within their community, free test prep service expansion, and free public transportation fare provided by the DOE.

Diaz and Adams collected the findings through their G&T Task Force they launched earlier in the year. The group, made up of educators and parent advocates, collected testimony from parents that was later used to develop the recommendations.

Among those who testified was Theodore James, a Bronx parent, who said at a March 20 hearing that taking his daughter to a Manhattan G&T program posed a logistical problem. "And we didn't have the funds to pay for a private bus so we had to pass on that opportunity," James said.

Norwood resident Yajaira Adorno who also testified at the March hearing, said the recommendations were practical, pointing especially to

the mandate that gets all students tested by pre-kindergarten. "I think it's an injustice that while the DOE has opened more G&T programs in some districts, many students have to wait for a third grade seat," she said. "This means students who would benefit from a G&T program starting in kindergarten will not be challenged or receive the rigorous and project-based academics they should receive."

Diaz had predicted the Albany Legislature would extend mayoral control of schools, a policy effected during the Bloomberg Administration. The policy shifted control away from borough presidents, charged with assigning two members to the defunct Board of Education. Opponents of the Board of Education long argued the power shift towards that body would create corruption and chaos within the public school system, pointing to several such cases before its demise in 2002.

A spokesman for the DOE had told the *Norwood News* in an article covering the March 20 hearing that it has made it a point to send out mailers explaining the G&T program in multiple languages. "[G]ifted and specialized programs are one option for students and their families. There is much more work to do to ensure equity and excellence at every public school in New York City," the spokesman said.

**Editor's Note:** The report can be found at <http://on.nyc.gov/2sQkL84>.



# Affordable Housing for Rent



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  - Municipal employees (5%)

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1 bedroom		\$882	19	→ 1 person	\$32,195 - \$40,080		\$1,254	4	→ 1 person	\$44,948 - \$66,800
				2 people	\$32,195 - \$45,840				2 people	\$44,948 - \$76,400
2 bedroom		\$1,065	19	→ 2 people	\$38,503 - \$45,840		\$1,511	6	→ 2 people	\$53,795 - \$76,400
				3 people	\$38,503 - \$51,540				3 people	\$53,795 - \$85,900
				4 people	\$38,503 - \$57,240				4 people	\$53,795 - \$95,400
3 bedroom		\$1,224	10	→ 3 people	\$44,538 - \$51,540		\$1,740	4	→ 3 people	\$62,229 - \$85,900
				4 people	\$44,538 - \$57,240				4 people	\$62,229 - \$95,400
				5 people	\$44,538 - \$61,860				5 people	\$62,229 - \$103,100
				6 people	\$44,538 - \$66,420				6 people	\$62,229 - \$110,700

<sup>1</sup> Rent includes gas for cooking.

<sup>2</sup> Household size includes everyone who will live with you, including parents and children. Subject to occupancy criteria.

<sup>3</sup> Household earnings include salary, hourly wages, tips, Social Security, child support, and other income. Income guidelines subject to change.

<sup>4</sup> Minimum income listed may not apply to applicants with Section 8 or other qualifying rental subsidies. Asset limits also apply.

## How Do You Apply?

Apply online or through mail. To apply online, please go to [nyc.gov/housingconnect](http://nyc.gov/housingconnect). To request an application **by mail, send a self-addressed envelope to: 2264 Morris Avenue: c/o Bronx Pro Group 1605 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd Bronx, NY 10453**. Only send one application per development. Do not submit duplicate applications. Do not apply online and also send in a paper application. Applicants who submit more than one application may be disqualified.

## When is the Deadline?

Applications must be postmarked or submitted online no later than **September 5, 2017**. Late applications will not be considered.

## What Happens After You Submit an Application?

After the deadline, applications are selected for review through a lottery process. If yours is selected and you appear to qualify, you will be invited to an interview to continue the process of determining your eligibility. Interviews are usually scheduled from 2 to 10 months after the application deadline. You will be asked to bring documents that verify your household size, identity of members of your household, and your household income.

## Español

Presente una solicitud en línea en [nyc.gov/housingconnect](http://nyc.gov/housingconnect). Para recibir una traducción de español de este anuncio y la solicitud impresa, envíe un sobre con la dirección a: **2264 Morris Avenue: c/o Bronx Pro Group 1605 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd Bronx, NY 10453**. En el reverso del sobre, escriba en inglés la palabra "SPANISH." Las solicitudes se deben enviar en línea o con sello postal antes **5 de septiembre 2017**.

## 简体中文

访问 [nyc.gov/housingconnect](http://nyc.gov/housingconnect) 在线申请。如要获取本广告及书面申请表的简体中文版，请将您的回邮信封寄送至：**2264 Morris Avenue: c/o Bronx Pro Group 1605 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd Bronx, NY 10453**。信封背面请用英语注明“CHINESE”。必须在以下日期之前在线提交申请或邮寄书面申请 **2017年9月5日**。

## Русский

Чтобы подать заявление через интернет, зайдите на сайт: [nyc.gov/housingconnect](http://nyc.gov/housingconnect). Для получения данного объявления и заявления на русском языке отправьте конверт с обратным адресом по адресу **2264 Morris Avenue: c/o Bronx Pro Group 1605 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd Bronx, NY 10453**. На задней стороне конверта напишите слово "RUSSIAN" на английском языке. Заявки должны быть поданы онлайн или отправлены по почте (согласно дате на почтовом штампе) не позднее **5 сентября 2017**.

## 한국어

[nyc.gov/housingconnect](http://nyc.gov/housingconnect) 에서 온라인으로 신청하십시오. 이 광고문과 신청서에 대한 한국어 번역본을 받아보시려면 발송용 봉투를 **2264 Morris Avenue: c/o Bronx Pro Group 1605 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd Bronx, NY 10453** 으로 보내주세요. 봉투 뒷면에 "KOREAN" 이라고 영어로 적어주세요. **2017년 9월 5일까지** 온라인 신청서를 제출하거나 소인이 찍힌 신청서를 보내야 합니다.

## Kreyòl Ayisyen

Aplike sou entènèt sou sitwèb [nyc.gov/housingconnect](http://nyc.gov/housingconnect). Pou resewva yo tradiksyon anons sa a nan lang Kreyòl Ayisyen ak aplikasyon an sou papye, voye anvlop ki gen adrès pou retounen li nan: **2264 Morris Avenue: c/o Bronx Pro Group 1605 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd Bronx, NY 10453**. Nan dèyè anvlop la, ekri mo "HATIAN CREOLE" an Anglè. Ou dwe remèt aplikasyon yo sou entènèt oswa ou dwe tenbre yo anvan dat **septanm 5, 2017**.

العربية تقدم بطلب عن طريق الإنترنت على الموقع الإلكتروني [nyc.gov/housingconnect](http://nyc.gov/housingconnect). للحصول على ترجمة باللغة العربية لهذا الإعلان ولنموذج الطلب الورقي، أرسل منظوف **2264 Morris Avenue: c/o Bronx Pro Group 1605 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd Bronx, NY 10453**. يجب إرسال نماذج الطلبات عن طريق الإنترنت أو ختمها بختم البريد قبل 5 سبتمبر، 2017. على الجهة الخلفية للمنظوف، اكتب باللغة الإنجليزية كلمة "ARABIC".





# In celebration of Independence Day, this week we asked readers what they think is the current state of the country.



I hear health reform isn't going well and tens of thousands could die. The fate of Planned Parenthood remains uncertain. According to "Freakonomics," abortions actually reduce the crime rate, which I believe is true because a lot of candidates for abortion are not fit to be parents. The part that angers me the most is the denial of climate change and going against 99 percent of scientists. There are already strange deaths and phenomena happening in the wildlife, weather and the environment. Denials like this are a slap in the face to Mother Nature and unwinding the progress the entire world has made, so the current state of America is not great.

**Victor Chu**  
Long Island City, Queens



I think we're doing pretty good except for the fact that we've got a president who doesn't know what he's doing with the economy, taking away Medicaid and Social Security and all the other stuff for poor people. Everything he's doing is for the rich and the middle class, that's it. He's not doing anything for the economy out here. All he cares about is putting up his wall; that's all he's doing and it concerns me a lot. Sooner or later there's going to be civil war.

**Hector Bruno**  
Bedford Park



After 241 years, I feel the state of our nation is good, but with Donald Trump as president he has turned the government inside out. So now there is no trust or stability as far as confidence in our leaders or the government. Right now the United States has a lot of good programs for the youth. America is strong and the ongoing war with ISIS is going to go on for God knows how long. He's not stable and the government is not stable. The Democrats are trying to keep the balance of this whole situation.

**Renaldo Shadow Rivera**  
Wakefield



At the present time America is doing better, but the president has issues with politics. He makes false accusations and they're still unsure what to do on healthcare. They want to take away Medicare from the people who have no money, like the poor. Everything else is great right now. The president's Tweeting is unconstitutional.

**Edwin Tosca**  
Bedford Park



We've made a lot of progress since we were first founded, but that progress has been stalled for the last few years. America needs to start shaping up and fast because right now all we have to cling to is our freedom. I'm not sure what else we got. And that freedom is being encroached upon.

**Jonathan Burgos-Santiago**  
Kingsbridge

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# CB7 Chair Wins Third Term By Narrow Margin

By DEBORAH CRUZ

Newly re-elected Community Board 7 Chair, Adaline Walker-Santiago, cheered herself as she heard the election results in the race for the post, narrowly keeping her position at the June 20 CB7 general board meeting. The news came as the board announced its district manager is slated to return.

In their last meeting before the elections, the buoyant Walker-Santiago won the race by a slim margin of 13 votes to opponent Jean Hill's 12. Gloria Bent, another board member on the ballot, threw a wrench into the race when she withdrew her bid for chair at the last minute.

"I am so happy I'm re-elected; we got a lot done in the past two years. We have a very progressive agenda and after the election we went right back to work," Walker-Santiago said.

This is the second time Walker-Santiago has been re-elected, having won her first re-election in 2015. Like the current race, the board was virtually split over Walker-Santiago's victory. Since her win in 2015, Walker-Santiago has kept busy, attempting to offer more exposure to the board.



Photo by Deborah Cruz

**52ND PRECINCT COMMUNITY AFFAIRS** Detective June Cortez (r) addresses Community Board 7's executive committee.

Some events she's helped organize include a Veterans Day breakfast and a Women's Empowerment event.

With Hill having opted out as trea-

surer to run for chair, the treasurer post went to Anthony Perez, a board member whose professional job is executive director of the Bronx Demo-

cratic County Committee. "I am happy that I was elected to serve as treasurer of Community Board 7," Perez said in response to his victory. "I'm looking forward to working alongside our executive board and fellow CB7 members to move our board forward and continue to find better and more effective ways to serve our community."

The news came as the board announced Andrew Sandler's return as the district manager for CB7, which covers Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge Heights, Fordham, and University Heights. His return is on a part-time basis, working solely between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Sandler had been on medical leave since late January. He had applied for a reasonable accommodation request as part of his return to work. It's active from September until June, when all the boards go on a summer hiatus.

Barbara Stronczer, Robyn Saunders, Andrew Laioisa, and Nora Feury kept their positions as vice chair, second vice chair, third vice chair and secretary, respectively. The current executive board members will remain in their positions until September

## Hate Has No Business Here



Photos courtesy Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District

**EXPECT TO SEE** more signs like this one (inset) located at Anthony's Famous Deli, 169 E. Gun Hill Rd., hung at stores around the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District. The Norwood business strip, running along Jerome Avenue between Mosholu Parkway and East Gun Hill Road, and along East Gun Hill Road between Jerome and Webster avenues, joined a campaign dubbed "Hate Has No Business Here" to spread a message of tolerance across Bronx commercial corridors.



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# Rampage at Bronx-Lebanon Hospital

By DAVID CRUZ

Bronx-Lebanon Hospital is slowly getting back to normal a week after a former employee went on a shooting rampage, killing one doctor and wounding six others before turning the gun on himself, police said.

The Friday before the Fourth of July weekend went “from a normal to a horrifying day” inside the hospital, said Mayor Bill de Blasio at a press conference two hours after the shooting rampage. De Blasio quickly ruled out terrorism, adding it was an act of workplace violence.

“This was a horrific situation unfolding in the middle of a place that people associate with care and comfort – a situation that came out of nowhere,” de Blasio, flanked by NYPD and government officials at a news conference outside the medical center, said.

## Shooting

Police identified the gunman as Dr. Henry Bello, 45, who had worked at the Claremont hospital until 2015 when he was forced to quit amid sexual assault claims. Bello had already been in trouble with police in 2004 when he was charged with sexual harassment and unlawful imprisonment of a 23-year-old woman. A report by *The New York Times* said Bello had a history of financial troubles, addiction, and had currently been staying at a homeless shelter in Manhattan. He was last employed at the city’s Human Resources Administration. Despite his checkered past, Bello’s background checks at Bronx-Lebanon and HRA were cleared since he pled to lower level infractions.

On June 30 just before 3 p.m., Bello returned to the Bronx hospital, sneaking in an AM-15 rifle under a white lab coat he was wearing, according to NYPD Commissioner James O’Neill. He then went up to the 16th floor and opened fire, killing a female doctor identified as Dr. Tracy Tam, 32, an attending physician who was covering for a colleague that day. He shot six others, seriously wounding five, while shooting the sixth victim in the leg. The five seriously wounded were fighting for their lives as of press time. Bello made his way to the 17th floor, setting himself on fire, and triggering the fire alarm system. He then committed suicide by shooting himself. Bello purchased the firearm at Upstate Guns and Ammo, a weapons store in Schenectady, New York 10 days before the shooting.

It’s unclear whether the victims were the intended targets.

## Employees Take Cover

A massive police response got underway moments after the shooting, with staffers and patients rushed out of the 17-story hospital that rests along the busy



Photo by David Cruz

**NYPD COMMISSIONER JAMES O'NEILL** (at podium) briefs reporters on the shooting that killed two and injured six.



Image from Facebook

**DR. HENRY BELLO**



Photo courtesy NYPD

**AM-15 RIFLE** used by Dr. Henry Bello.

Grand Concourse between 172nd and 172rd streets. Officers from various precincts were called in to assist, along with the Norwood’s 52nd Precinct cordoning off the scene, which happened within the 44th Precinct.

Patient care technician Nana Cisee was on her lunch break when she heard the



Photo by David Cruz

**EMERGENCY SERVICES UNIT** officers stand outside Bronx-Lebanon Hospital hours after a shooting rampage inside the medical center.

gunshots. She was missing her left shoe by the time she evacuated the hospital.

Technician Janet Jones was on the 15th floor when another employee alerted her about the shooter.

“At the same time there was an announced ‘Code Red: Fire,’” Jones said. “But the one who came down said, ‘No! Gunshot!’ And said she literally heard the gunshot, and when she heard it she came to our unit. That’s how we were aware of what was going on.”

A physical therapist, who declined to give her name, said she heard loud shots on her floor as she prepared notes. “We didn’t know what happened,” she said, visibly shaken. “The police came, and yelled ‘police,’ and escorted us outside.”

Lewis Jefferson, an employee at the hospi-

tal, said he heard the shots and saw blood on the staircase of the hospital’s top floor.

Meantime, Dr. David Wong, an orthopedist at the hospital, said the hospital had never seen an incident like that before.

It’s unclear what type of security standards are set at Bronx-Lebanon Hospital, a nonprofit hospital that sees 1.1 million and 140,000 emergency room patients walk through those doors yearly.

“After the investigation, we need to see how this can be prevented in the future,” Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., who stood next to de Blasio at the news conference, said. He described the shooting as something “straight out of a movie.”

*Additional reporting by Reggie Francois and Devin Dae Tucker.*

# Reconstruction to Begin on Step Street in Kingsbridge

By DEVIN DAE TUCKER

A step street in Kingsbridge is set to undergo a \$6.6 million reconstruction following years of complaints.

The multi-agency operation among the New York City Department of Design and Construction (DDC), the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), and local officials, united to “make the necessary upgrades that will allow this step street to flourish, and create a safer, more efficient passageway for the community,” according to DOT’s Bronx Borough Commissioner Nivardo Lopez.

The 230-foot long step street, comprised of 10 flights of concrete steps, connects Heath Avenue and Kingsbridge Terrace. It will be given a complete facelift that will include new granite steps, lighting, trees, drainage and benches. The restoration will also include granite inclines flanked by the step street to allow cyclists to carry their bikes up and down the stairs easily.

To ensure public access and safety, the sidewalks will be widened at Heath Avenue and Kingsbridge Terrace and temporary wooden steps will be put in place for pedestrians throughout the construction period.

Step streets are common in the northwest Bronx, thanks to its geographically hilly layout. Kingsbridge, known for its peaks and valleys, has four step streets within its neighborhood borders.

The project came after several years of complaints by residents who saw the step street slowly crumbling.

Among those complaining was Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, who represents Kingsbridge. “I first brought these particular step streets to DOT’s attention because I was so appalled at their terrible condition. I believe that this newly rebuilt step street will demonstrate how much communities can benefit from well maintained, well-lit pedestrian routes,” Dinowitz said.

The project is expected to wrap up in late 2018.

This is one of two step streets on Heath Avenue. Residents have also utilized the aging step street at Summit Place by Heath and Bailey avenues, which has little adequate lighting and loose steps. Trash is routinely thrown there, making for an unpleasant walk up or down, according to J. Nicolas Reyero, who runs the Facebook group, Friends of Summit Place.

“The problem on Summit Place between Heath and Bailey Avenues is far worse than the [West 229th Street] step street,” Reyero said.



**A RENDERING OF** how the step street will look following the reconstruction.



Photo by Devin Dae Tucker

**(L-R) COMMUNITY BOARD 8 chair Dan Padernacht, Bronx DOT Commissioner Nivardo Lopez, New York City Department of Design & Construction Action Commissioner Ana Barrio, and Councilman Fernando Cabrera hold a ceremonial ground-breaking that will revitalize the step street (background) in Kingsbridge.**

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# Agencies Dole Out Fines; Fordham Stores Learn to Avoid Them

By REGGIE FRANCOIS

Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Lorelei Salas headed to East Fordham Road the morning of June 23. Although anytime is a good time to shop in the Bronx's largest shopping district, she was there to educate.

Salas was joined by Councilman Ritchie Torres and officials from the city Department of Small Business Services (SBS), Department of Sanitation and the Fordham Road Business Improvement District (BID) for a door-to-door trek for Business Education Day along the Bronx' Fordham Road BID.

Salas said that DCA's goal was to reach at least 80 businesses along the East Fordham Road strip to keep owners updated on the city's rules when it comes to cleanliness, safety and business practices. "Small business owners often don't have time to come out and visit our agency where we're located," she said, "so we're bringing information to them on all of the regulations they need to



Photo by Reggie Francois

**AN OFFICIAL FROM THE** Department of Sanitation speaks with Sammy Levy (center), a supervisor at Pretty Girl, on Business Education Day.

comply with."

Wilma Alonso of the Fordham Road BID said the nonprofit group strives to provide logistical support for DCA on Business Education Day. "We alert the business that this will be just a visit, that it will not create any summons or inspections," Alonso said. "We

just want them to comply with all the rules, so they can avoid tickets."

The agencies handed out informational packets to business employees that included a violation checklist to avoid fines. Common policies that general retail stores violate include failure to keep an

don't want to get any tickets," Levy said, adding that he and the other employees usually follow the workplace laws

During the Bloomberg Administration, small businesses in the outer boroughs were hit without warning with more fines and increased inspections than businesses in Manhattan. As the public advocate then, Mayor Bill de Blasio released a report in 2013 that revealed how the city generated revenue from these increased small business inspections and fines.

Torres said the 40 percent decrease of small business fines is a result of reforms under de Blasio and a corrective approach to small businesses. "We see it as proactive outreach to small businesses. Supporting small businesses has been a priority for both the mayor and the City Council," Torres said, "and the collaboration between those two branches of government has had a real impact in driving down fines against small business."

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Photo by Reggie Francois

**THE DEPARTMENT OF** Consumer Services gave business employees informational packets (pictured) to help them improve their business practices for Business Education Day.

updated and clearly visible refund policy and to give a complete receipt. Receipts must have the name and address of the business, cost of each item purchased, the transaction date, a separate line for tax, and a section that shows whether the business is a licensee of the DCA.

Sammy Levy, a supervisor at Pretty Girl located at 203 E. Fordham Rd. has been working there for 15 years. He was aware of Business Education Day. "We



Photo by Reggie Francois  
**DCA COMMISSIONER LORELEI SALAS**

# 52nd Precinct Open House

Photos by Devin Dae Tucker

**THE 52ND PRECINCT** held the third annual Open House, an outreach celebration that brought kids and residents of Bedford Park and Norwood to the stationhouse for an afternoon of music, food, and raffles.



**THESE YOUNGSTERS** are attracted to this docile police horse at the open house.



**DREAMS OF BEING** a cop one day or just admiring the wheels? Either way, this young boy gets to mount a police motorcycle.



**(L-R) 52ND PRECINCT** Community Council President Brenda Caldwell and council members Sallie Caldwell, Patricia L. Newland, Barbara Stronczer, Grace Seimer, and Mary Vallati share a moment at the raffle table.



**(L-R) THE FIVE-TWO'S** Crime Prevention Officer Frank Pacella, coordinator of the NYPD Explorers program Jerry Landon, and 52nd Precinct Community Council President Brenda Caldwell are among those helping at the open house.



**KIDS LIVEN UP** the dance area grooving to the sounds of pop songs playing at the open house.



**THIS GIRL SITS** for a set of butterflies at the face painting station.

## The Bronx Celebrates America



Photo by Miriam Quinones

**INDEPENDENCE DAY CAME** five days early in the Bronx as fireworks light up the night sky on June 29 at the holiday celebration held at Orchard Beach. Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. hosted the yearly gathering, which attracted hundreds of spectators. Food vendors were on hand, and the annual Bronx Empanada Eating Contest did not disappoint.

## Beautifying Mosholu Parkway



Photo by Miriam Quinones

**THESE VOLUNTEERS FROM** the Bedford Mosholu Community Association, Friends of Williamsbridge Oval and employees from the New York City Department of Parks spent a few hours cleaning up debris at Mosholu Parkway while planting some perennials near the Webster Avenue entrances to the leafy parkland.

## The Push to Get Citi Bike to the Bronx

By **DEVIN DAE TUCKER**

Bring Citi Bike to the Bronx!

That's the call from supporters and organizers who've proposed a \$12 million expansion plan to include bringing the rental bikes to the Bronx and other low-income neighborhoods in New York City.

The price tag accounts for .01 percent of the city's 2018-19 Fiscal Year budget and could mean transportation availability for more than six million New Yorkers, according to organizers. The daily rental price is \$12 while a three-day pass runs \$24.

The prospect of the bikes coming to the Bronx sparked logistical questions from Norwood resident Edward Aucay, who suspected that "lack of space that might be required to have Citi Bike transportation to even be available" in Norwood could hamper any of the blue-colored bikes to come to the neighborhood.

George Laing, a Norwood resident who routinely exercises at Williamsbridge Oval Park, said the bikes could inspire Bronx residents to "exercise more and give them that other option."

Meantime, Byron Young, who works in the neighborhood, thinks it's unfair the bikes were not here to begin with. "I hope they bring it to everyone and hopefully they give discounted rates to people in under-resourced communities," Young said.

Transportation Alternatives, a group of activists committed to improving New York City's public transportation infrastructure, says the expansion would bring 2,000 cycles to the Bronx, mostly in the South Bronx, Highbridge, Mott Haven and along the Grand Concourse.

"Look at public transportation. The buses are slow and subways are infrequent. This is good, given the need for transportation," said Transportation Alternatives Bronx orga-

nizer Erwin Figueroa. "You also have to look at the health aspect, too, and getting people active." The Bronx has been ranked the unhealthiest county seven years in a row.

The groups have also called for expanding the service to Staten Island. The proposed plan would expand the program from 6,000 bikes and 332 stations to 12,000 bikes and 700 stations. Currently, more than 65,000 Citi Bike daily trips during peak season have been recorded. There are more than 126,000 annual Citi Bike members.

Statistics show that Citi Bike provides more daily transportation than the green-colored taxicabs.

"We believe everyone's ability in access for all New Yorkers to a conservancy of open spaces, especially in low-income neighborhoods and having an infrastructure in place," said Deborah Martin, executive director of the New York Restoration Project (NYRP), a non-profit organization providing and preserving open community spaces. It serves as the city's only citywide conservancy.

Safety issues now become paramount, as the influx of a larger bike-sharing program would call for more bike lanes. On June 12, Dan Hanegby of Brooklyn was fatally hit by a bus while using a Citi Bike. His death was the first in the history of the bike share program since it began in 2013.

But Laing remains confident. With the city having already carved out 170 miles of bike lanes, greenways, and paths across the Bronx, he thinks the new bikes won't "cause too much traffic."

A citywide petition started by Transportation Alternatives urging Citi Bike expansion has collected more than 5,500 signatures and will be delivered to Mayor Bill de Blasio when it reaches its goal of 10,000.



Photo courtesy Flickr

**THE CITI BIKE PROGRAM** was first introduced in New York City in 2012. The bikes are predominantly seen in Manhattan.

# Celebrating Centenarians at St. Patrick's Home

By DEVIN DAE TUCKER

St. Patrick's Home for the Aged and Infirm held its annual Centennial Celebration for their residents who have reached the milestone of 100 years of age.

The senior residence honored five centenarians: Julia Bizzarri, 104, Annina Walsh, 102, Antoinette Cortina, 102, Sr. Benigna Consolata, O. Carm., 101, and Mary Palermo, who is 99 years old and hitting the century mark in November. Honorees Irene Kuchma, 100, and Mary Cordillo, 99, also received recognition but were not present.

"This is indeed a wonderful celebration for all of us who have the privilege of knowing or being related to these wonderful women," said St. Patrick's Home Administrator Sr. Kevin Patricia. "The women who we are pausing to recognize this day have lived full lives that provided a purpose in their lives by giving loving care to those with whom they shared their lives, their energies, their strengths and their love."

The event featured dancing, live



Photo by Devin Dae Tucker

**(L-R) CORPORATE COMPLIANCE OFFICER** Sr. Shawn Flynn, volunteer Donna Berna, pastoral care assistant Maria Ordonez, Director of Pastoral Care Kathy Mayer, recreation leader Kathy Dawkins, administrator Sr. Kevin Patricia, Director of Recreation Janet Kibassa, recreation leaders Janet Olivieri and Natasha Williams, and dementia leader Noeline Harrington, pose with centenarians (l-r) Sr. Benigna Consolata, O. Carm.; Mary Palermo; Julia Bizzarri; Antoinette Cortina; and Annina Walsh.

swing music, catered food, a cake made in honor of the centenarians, and a liturgical dance performed by Janet Kibassa, the home's director of recreation and other staffers. Kibassa

began this annual celebration more than a decade ago and understands the impact it has on residents, their families and staff.

"This is my 14th year at St. Pat-

rick's Home and I've been doing it since year one," Kibassa said. "It's a pleasure to have them with us and it's always a blessing to have them and that's the best part of this celebration, to see our centenarians all dressed up, looking very nice and having fun."

Mayor Bill de Blasio and First Lady Chirlane McCray offered their greetings to the centenarians, congratulating honorees "on the wonderful occasion of your birthday," in a statement sent to the home. "May this be a joyous time as your loved ones gather to celebrate this exciting milestone!" de Blasio added.

Fifteen minutes into the gathering, Sr. Kevin Patricia took to the podium, and quoted from author Bo Bennett to encapsulate the honorees' moment.

"Those who improve with age embrace the power of personal growth and personal achievement and begin to replace youth with wisdom, innocence with understanding, and lack of purpose with self-actualization," Sr. Kevin read.

# 52nd Precinct Increases Patrols at St. James Park

By REGGIE FRANCOIS

The 52nd Precinct is upping patrols in and around St. James Park in Fordham after noticing a rise in gang-related disputes over the last month.

"St. James Park is going to be a big concern for us," said Deputy Inspector Peter Fiorillo in a 52nd Precinct Community Council meeting. "I'm already starting to see problems in there."

The precinct has identified four gangs that have been involved with the activity: Bloods, Crips, Black Kings and Trinitarios. Over the past month, Fiorillo cited two shootings with no injuries and four stabbings. He said the goal is to make the park, and surrounding area, as safe as possible by having a couple of police officers patrol the area all day, every day.

Residents have a range of feelings about St. James Park and more police officers patrolling the area. Bronx native Dawn Sweeney, 48, works near St. James Park at an animal clinic. She usually comes to the park to walk her dog and enjoys coming there dur-



Photo by Reggie Francois

**ST. JAMES PARK** (pictured) has seen an uptick in crime over the last month, police say. The 52nd Precinct is now looking to increase patrols.

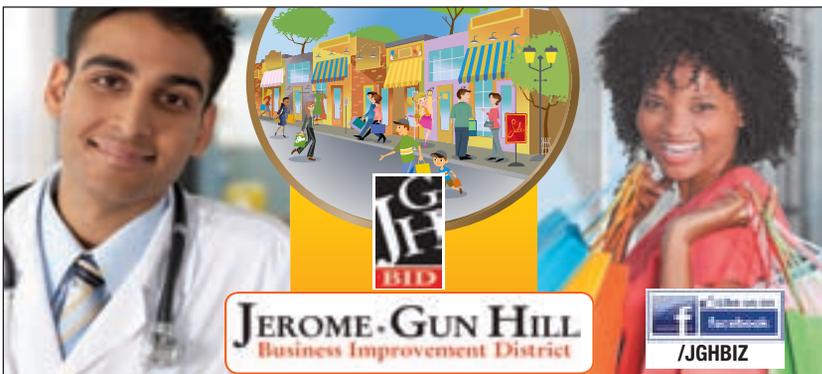
ing the day. "I won't come out here at night, though, because at night you tend to get these fights that go on," said Sweeney. "And you get your drug deals that come through because, when you walk, you can see the little baggies."

Gabe Lorenzo of Kingsbridge does not usually hang out at St. James Park, but he believes 24-hour cop supervision would benefit the park. "If you look now, there's people here all the time," said Lorenzo, adding the night usually invites criminal activity.

Twenty-five reported incidents surrounding St. James Park between June and August of 2016 included felony assaults, grand larceny, robberies and burglaries, according to the New York City Digital Crime Map. The last murder in the area was in 2015. The victim was identified as 21-year-old Henry Leal.

Fordham Heights resident Sammy Torres, 23, does not think increased police presence will be effective. "That's creating an unsettling environment for everyone," he said. "Having police in the parks, around everywhere, kind of makes it feel like we're animals being watched by trainers."

"For the most part, I have to say that the park has quieted down since the mid-'90s," said Sweeney. "Because when I used to come through, in the evening, like seven, eight o'clock at night, a lot of people used to be here, very rowdy. But now they're barbecuing with their kids [and] playing basketball."



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### TRIPS

Lake Compounce Amusement Park & Water Rides, Connecticut: Saturday, July 8, 2017, at 9 a.m. from East 163rd Street and Southern Boulevard.

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## NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

### Free Summer Meals

Free summer meals for children age 19 and under is available until Sept. 1 at public schools, community pool centers, New York City Housing Authority complexes, libraries and other locations around the city. No registration, documentation, or ID is required to receive breakfast or lunch. Nearest school location is PS 8, 3010 Briggs Ave. Breakfast is 8 to 9:15 a.m. and lunch from 11 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. For additional locations and times, go to <http://bit.ly/UuevOA>.

### College & Resource Fair

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge R., hosts a College & Resource Fair on July

20 from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. Admissions recruiters from public and private colleges and universities will be available to share information. Workshops on preparing college applications, essays and financial aid forms will be available. For more information, call (718) 579-4230.

### Senior Health Fair

A senior health fair takes place on July 21 from 1 to 3 p.m., in Monroe College's Mintz Auditorium, 2501 Jerome Ave. On-site health services, music, and lunch will be available to seniors. RSVP is required to receive a lunch ticket. To RSVP, call (718) 933-2034 or email [rsvpsenatorrivera@gmail.com](mailto:rsvpsenatorrivera@gmail.com).

### Sen. Bailey Office Hrs. at MMCC

Constituent service hours by the office of state Sen. Jamaal T. Bailey are now available at Mosholu Montefiore Community Center (MMCC), 3450 DeKalb Ave., every first and third Wednesday of every month from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and every second and fourth Wednesday from 1 to 5 p.m. For more information, call (718) 547-8854.

### Excelsior Scholarship

Applications for the state Excelsior Scholarship, offering tuition-free scholarships for SUNY and CUNY students, are available to those whose families make up to \$100,000 annually. To be eligible, students must

be New York State residents, plan to attend a SUNY or CUNY two- or four-year college, take 30 credits per year (including summers and winter session), among some of the requirements. The deadline is July 21. To learn more, and to apply, go to [hesc.ny.gov](http://hesc.ny.gov).

### Preserving NCBH

Volunteers are needed to join the Bronx Healthcare Coalition, which seeks to ensure North Central Bronx Hospital remains a public hospital. For more information and to join, email [Bxhealthcoalition@gmail.com](mailto:Bxhealthcoalition@gmail.com).

### Bird Walks

Free bird walk tours, sponsored by Councilman Andrew Cohen with

guides provided by the New York City Audubon Society and Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy, are scheduled for every Saturday through July 29 from 8 to 9:30 a.m. at the Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy. Meet at the VC Nature Center. For more information, contact Joseph McManus at [mcmanus638@aol.com](mailto:mcmanus638@aol.com).

### Housing Assistance

Free housing assistance on topics relating to tenant harassment, denial of repairs/services, evictions, overchargers, and more are available at the office of Assemblyman Victor Pichardo every Thursday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 2175 Jerome Ave., Suite C. For more information, call (718) 933-6909.



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# Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

## EDITOR'S PICK

### Summer Activities at VC Park

Van Cortlandt Park, West 242nd Street and Broadway, offers a variety of summer activities including:

**Rowboating on VC Lake:** Fridays through Sept. 1 from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m., free. Enter the park at VC Park South and Bailey Avenue. Meet near the lake.

**Barefoot Dancing:** Thursdays through Aug. 3, on the VC House Museum lawn (details under "Events").

**Horseback Riding Instruction:** Daily lessons by the Riverdale Stables. For more information, visit [riverdalestables.com](http://riverdalestables.com).

**Fishing:** Join the Rangers on Aug. 13 at noon for free fishing program catch and release only. NYS fishing license is required.

**Swimming:** Outdoor pool open daily through the summer from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. (closed from 3 to 4 p.m.). Also offered are learn to swim programs (info: (718) 760-6969 ext. 0); details under "Events."

**Learn to Play Tennis:** For beginners, through Aug. 11, from 9 a.m. to noon at Indian Field Courts (info/register: (718) 760-6999).

**Art Classes:** Tuesdays from 2 to 3:30 p.m. from July 19 to Aug. 9 at Woodlawn Playground for Painting Nature; and on Fridays through Aug. 25 at 6:30 p.m., for Twilight Hike & Draw (meet at Nature Center).

For more information and a detailed schedule, call (718) 601-1553.

### Onstage

Train Park, Orloff Avenue and Gale Place. For more information, call (718) 931-9500.

Bronx Council on the Arts presents free concert, July 18 from 7 to 9 p.m., featuring Ginetta's Vendetta, at the Amalgamated

Bronx Arts Ensemble presents free concerts: July 9 - **Golden Oldies**, songs of the '50s and '60s, in Van Cortlandt



Photo courtesy Wave Hill

**STEEL PAN ARTIST Lyndon Achee** (pictured) and his Quintet are set to play at Wave Hill on July 12 (check under "Events" for more Wave Hill performances).



Photo courtesy Malcolm Pinckney/NYC Department of Parks  
**THE CITY HAS OPENED Van Cortlandt Pool** (pictured) for the summer (check under "Events" for more information about pools this summer).

Park, Rockwood Drive Circle at Mosholu Avenue and Broadway, at 2 p.m.; and July 16 - **Mozart in the Afternoon**, at Fordham University, Keating Hall, 1st floor, at 4 p.m. For more information, call (718) 601-7399.

free until noon Saturdays and Tuesdays all year. For more information and a schedule of events including tours and walks, call (718) 549-3200.

### Library Events

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents for children: **Macaroni:** (ages 3 to 12), summer reading program, band, dance and puppet, July 15 at 2 p.m. Adults can enjoy: **Computer Basics:** July 18 at 2 p.m. (online registration required). For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org).

The Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for children: **Bilingual Birdies: Spanish:** (ages to 12 years), summer reading program, including music, puppets and games, July 7 at 10:30 a.m.; **Tie-Dye:** (ages 5 to 12), to create a shirt (limited amounts available), July 12 at 1 p.m. (phone or in-person registration required); and **Crafts:** (ages 3 to 12), July 19 at 1 p.m. Teens/adults can enjoy: **Craft-eens:** Different craft projects each Wednesday at 3 p.m., July 12 and 19. Materials will be provided. Adults can attend: **Knitting Circle:** Thursdays at 3 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

The Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Place (near Kingsbridge Road), offers for children: **Kids Get Active Fridays at 2:45 p.m.:** (ages 5 to 12), dance moves on the Wii game console, July 7 and 14; **Preschool Story Time and Craft at 11:15 a.m.:** (ages 3 to 5), featuring books, puppetry, dramatics, crafts and flannel boards, July 6, 13 and 20; and **What is Transportation:** (4-part series for ages 3 to 12), to learn how we get around by land, air and water, in addition to hands-on activities including creating boats and airplanes, July 12 and 19 at 11:15 a.m. Adults can attend: **Computer Basics:** July 6, 13 and 20 at noon. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

**NOTE:** Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to [norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org](mailto:norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org), and should be received by July 10 for the next publication date of July 20.

New York Botanical Garden presents **Celebrating 100 Years of Jazz**, July 14 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Tickets are \$40/member; \$45/non member. For more information, call (718) 817-8700.

### Events

Williamsbridge Oval presents free special events: July 13 - **Morning Yoga** at 9:15 a.m.; and July 17 - **Tiny Prints: Toddler Day** (ages to 5 years), to play games and sing songs, from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. For more information, call (718) 543-8672.

NYC Department of Parks offers free swimming at **outdoor swimming pools** through Sept. 10. The nearest outdoor pool to Norwood is Van Cortlandt Park Pool at West 242nd Street and Broadway. The second nearest outdoor pool is Mapes Pool at East 180th Street and Prospect Avenue. Outdoor pool hours are from 11 a.m. until 7 p.m. with a break for pool cleaning between 3 and 4 p.m. For more information, call 311.

Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy presents **Barefoot Dancing**, featuring demonstrations and teaching, on the VC House Lawn from 6:30 to 8 p.m.: July 6 - Bulgaria music & dance; July 13 - West African; July 20 - American Indian dancers. For more information, call (718) 430-1890.

**Wave Hill**, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects:** Wet Felting Florals, to make a floral-fabric landscape, July 9 and 10; and Handmade River Rafts, to make rafts out of foam trays, foam sheets, and reeds, July 15 and 16; both in the WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also scheduled is **Lyndon Achee Quintet**, July 12; and **Gretchen Parlato** (jazz singer) & **Alan Hampton** (strings and vocals), July 19; both at 7 p.m., on the grounds (\$10/ticket; \$6/students/seniors 65+; \$4/ages 6 to 18). Grounds admission is

## Downzoning Findings Revealed

(continued from page 1)

For now, the committee plans to submit the study's final results to various city and state housing agencies that partly finance any high-rise projects primed for the two communities. The committee is now looking to meet with the New York City Department of City Planning, which regulates the character of neighborhoods.

Harr, who has lived in her Bedford Park home for 37 years, has closely tracked the board's progress in downzoning the neighborhood with her husband John Reilly, who ironically enough has a background in housing. Together, the pair found the study worth promoting, notwithstanding the full board's input. The report, she said, "sends a message that public money and zoning shouldn't displace people from existing affordable housing. Such outsized projects should have to prove that they will not have adverse impacts on the people who currently live here." CB7 members usually honor the recommendations made by its committees.

In Bedford Park, concerns of overdevelopment are powered by the infusion of new development projects which have enveloped the neighborhood since 2011 when portions of Webster Avenue in Bedford Park were rezoned for new, taller properties. Between the arrival of new residences in Bedford Park, and impending projects for Kingsbridge Heights, the committee has been kept busy hearing about new residential or commercial properties arriving to the neighborhood. In its capacity, the committee either supports or rejects those projects.

The streets assessed in Kingsbridge Heights lie just in the shadow of the Kingsbridge Armory, expected to house the world's largest ice hockey center. This has sparked fears of gentrification and displacement of its current stock of two- and three-family homes near the armory.

That displacement, in the case of both neighborhoods, oftentimes come in the form of buyouts developers present to homeowners, at rates higher than the home's actual value. It's a cost of doing business for developers, and a tactic frowned upon by residents hoping to preserve a neighborhood's identity.

The study into whether the two neighborhoods could hamper developers from building taller properties, a process called downzoning, was prepared by Collective for Community,

Culture, and Environment (CCCE) with an official report drafted by Paula Caplan, the group's CEO.

### Bedford Park

CCCE's study of Bedford Park focused on a collection of suburban-like streets off the Grand Concourse, between East 201st and East 204th streets, extending east toward Mosholu Parkway South's service road. CCCE's findings, based on analysis and input from residents at a hearing in November last year, found that the neighborhood could downzone the property to allow a maximum of four- or five-story properties, translating to R5B and R5D zoning distinctions. The current zoning is an R8, allowing for eight- to 10-story buildings.

CCCE's study also concluded that the commercial area included in the Bedford Park study, concentrated at the Grand Concourse and East 204th Street, could use more commercial properties. In her outline, CCCE recommended changing the commercial zoning distinction to a C2-3, allowing for commercial properties as tall as nine stories.

### Kingsbridge Heights

Kingsbridge Heights also has the potential for small-scale properties, according to CCCE's report. The study focused on Kingsbridge Road between Sedgwick and Creston avenues, and the streets between West Kingsbridge Road and East 190th Street. The area is currently zoned as an R6, R8, and C1-2, allowing for a mix of detached

homes, six-story residences, and low-rise businesses.

In its findings, CCCE found that the residential blocks between West Kingsbridge Road and East 190th Street should only see four-story properties, revising the zoning rules from an R6 to an R5B or R5D respectively. CCCE made concessions for the neighborhood's commercial strip, recommending that taller commercial properties be built along the area of East Kingsbridge Road between Jerome and Creston avenues. West Kingsbridge Road between University and Jerome avenues should include even taller commercial properties, according to the report.

### Conclusions

Though the committee accepted the findings, CCCE concluded the study should expand to Jerome Avenue between Mosholu Parkway and Bedford Park Boulevard, to make for a powerful argument of downzoning Bedford Park to the city.

"Pairing zoning actions to protect low scale neighborhood blocks with measures that allow more development on wider streets and transit corridors constitutes sound planning policy, and also tends to improve the likelihood of approval," the report read.

Kingsbridge Heights, for instance, had little input from its residents, with CCCE suggesting another visioning session take place in that neighborhood (the only visioning session to take place was in Bedford

Park).

Though the results leaned favorably for residents yearning to keep their neighborhoods as suburban-esque as possible, the speed at which results will become official city policy is too slow to stop the potential construction of a high-rise apartment building at 267 E. 202nd St. a narrow neighborhood in Bedford Park. The property houses a two-story building once occupied by six families that were displaced last year when a devastating fire ripped through the property. The tenants were in the middle of a court battle with the new building owner, Peter Fine, who sought to evict the tenants shortly after he purchased the property in early 2016.

Fine was issued a permit by the New York City Department of Buildings in May to place a wooden perimeter fence around the property. There are no other building permits on record to indicate what type of housing he intends to build. Fine has been in the real estate business for some years, most recently opening a luxury apartment building in Miami, Florida.

With the lot falling in an R8 district, Fine can build any property without any approvals so long as it falls within the zoning restriction of 10 stories or less. Harr, who lives two houses from the fenced off property, is now bracing for changes.

"My whole life is about to be turned upside-down by some guy in Florida who has nothing to do with this area," Harr said.

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