

NORWOOD NEWS

Vol 28, No 9 • PUBLISHED BY MOSHOLU PRESERVATION CORPORATION • APRIL 30-MAY 13, 2015



INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER:
THOUGHTS ON DE-CRIME BILL | PG. 4



**FIRST EVER CB7 VETERANS
COMMITTEE FORMED | PG. 3**

ICE RINK LEASE FREEZE

Construction on Armory could sit until March 2016



Photo by Adi Talwar

CONSTRUCTION FOR AN ice skating arena at the Kingsbridge Armory (pictured) may not happen until March 2016, more than two years after the New York City Council approved the project.

By DAVID CRUZ

Though developers of the Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC), slated to be built inside the cavernous Kingsbridge Armory, ensure the project is progressing, there are signs it hasn't churned along as much as it wants the public to think.

Part of what could explain

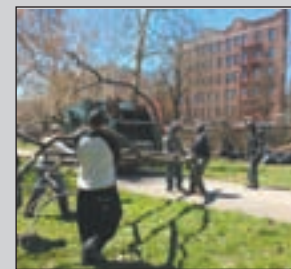
KNIC Partners LLC's lax movement on building the Armory is the group's lack of financing. It remains short of the \$350 million needed to fully bankroll the project, prompting the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) to place the project's lease in escrow, a procedure that guarantees

the lease so long as the developer can ultimately show it has financing earmarked for the project.

KNIC is allowed to access the Armory, under a license with the EDC, but it's shy of a signed lease agreement with the city, contradicting reports that a lease had been signed.

"The Armory is a unique asset, therefore KNIC is obligated to demonstrate full funding to complete the first phase of the development before they start construction," said an EDC spokesperson. "Placing the lease in escrow is not uncommon on a large complex project such as this

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IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST



Progress Moves, Though Slowly, On Proposed Oliver Place Park

By **WILLIAM MATHIS**

Community Board 7's efforts to see the building of a new park in a run-down lot on the outskirts of Bedford Park advanced some, albeit minimally, during a meeting with representatives from various city agencies on April 22. And behind the slowdown of work are unseen hindrances that could explain why the empty lot has remained untouched for decades.

The vacant lot rests on the corner of Oliver Place and Decatur Avenue, a T-shaped intersection with the surrounding area being mostly residential buildings. The lot has long been considered a blight to the community, rather than a resource. "It has become a site of drug use, dumping, graffiti, you name it, it's there," said Barbara Stronczer, the chair of Community Board 7's Parks and Recreation Committee.

But ironically, the lot is also the only local recreational site for young people, given the long distance to the nearest park. During warmer months, organized basketball games are held inside the angled lot, despite heavy discarded debris strewn about.

Despite a massive effort by the community last December to clean up the lot and convert it to a playground, city officials at the meeting listed a number of barriers that stand in the way. The obstacles include an unknown amount of infrastructure located underneath the site, encroachments on the site by neighboring buildings and, of course, cost.

The committee would ultimately pass a motion to send two letters to begin to resolve these issues.

It will send one letter to the city



Photo by William Mathis

THIS DECATUR AVENUE LOT still remains a dump despite a push from community activists.

Department of Environmental Protection to request information about the locations and delve into how deep the extent of the department's infrastructure goes. Without that information, the committee cannot begin to develop a park proposal. Any potential park installations cannot impede the DEP's 24/7 access to its infrastructure, said Shane Ojar, director of Community Partnerships for the DEP's Bureau of Communications and Intergovernmental Affairs. Ojar agreed to respond to the committee in about a month.

The committee also resolved to send a letter to the Department of Transportation, which currently owns the site,

to request an assessment of encroachments. Property owners in two neighboring houses have built additions that go beyond their property lines and onto the city-owned land. The property owners will have to remove these before the Parks Department will even consider taking on a park building project there, said Larry Scoones, a representative from the Parks Department who attended the meeting.

Once the board resolves these issues, the community will need to make a formal proposal for the park that's to be approved by the DEP and the Parks Department.

Committee members expected more substantial progress than information requests to emerge from the meeting. "I am disappointed," Stronczer said. "I thought we would have more information from the two agencies."

Once these issues are settled, the park's future will come down to money. After a meeting between the committee and community members last December, the Parks Department and DOT each conceived rough cost estimates for a project at the site. Each estimate came out to \$4.5 million and neither plan included a playground, a primary request from the community.

But community members remained optimistic and vowed to keep fighting for the park that will best serve their community. "We're gonna tell them what we want and put the pressure on them," said board member William Francis.

For now, the DOT will install a locked fence around the property by early May to prevent its further misuse, according to a department representative at the meeting.

Public and Community Meetings

COMMUNITY BOARD 7 will hold its general board meeting on Tuesday, May 19 at the Cherkasky Auditorium at Montefiore Medical Center, 111 E. 210th St., at 6:30 p.m. CB7 committees are held on the following dates at the board office, 229A E. 204th St., at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Veterans Committee meets May 4; Executive Committee meets May 5; Public Safety & Quality of Life meets May 7; Health & Hospitals meets May 7 at 7:30 p.m.; and Senior Services meets May 13. For more information, call the Board office at (718) 933-5650.

THE BEFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION meets at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy, So., Apt. B1 (lobby floor), on May 6 at 8 p.m. For more information, call (718) 367-2230.

First Ever CB7 Veterans Panel Answers Call of Duty

By DAVID CRUZ

Community Board 7 voted to form a committee aimed at improving the lives of U.S. military veterans, a panel unseen in other local community boards.

"We're not doing case management, but we want to try to point people in the right direction to get the social services that are required to improve and sustain their quality of life," said Amjad Mujaahid, the newly appointed chairman of the Veterans Committee.

The committee was unanimously recognized by the Board at its April 17 General Board meeting, and is poised to be included in its bylaws. Overall, the committee aims to support vets in several areas including health and nutrition, housing and home ownership, social and legal referral services, and employment and small business opportunities, among more.

Mujaahid has been with the Board for over a year. His inspiration to form a veterans committee came after encountering a distressed military man on the verge of transitioning back into civilian life. The man, married with



Photo by David Cruz

THE FIRST EVER VETERANS Committee in Community Board 7 convenes. The Board approved the recognition of the committee at the April 21 general board meeting.

children, did not know where to access information regarding assistance to aid him, information that Mujaahid believes should be readily available to all vets, part of a broader mission by the committee. It also aims to forge relationships with elected officials and groups that work towards helping veterans.

Among the members is William Francis, a five-year Board member and U.S. Air Force vet, who often had explored the possibility of forming a veterans committee, yet was unable

until now.

"Every generation has a responsibility to improve on what the last generation has done. Now it's our turn for this new generation, to give veterans the support that they want and need as they transition back into civilian life, especially when it comes to employment, housing, family support, and health care," said Francis, who will serve as vice chair along with Carlos Rodriguez, a Board member and Army veteran, who will serve as secretary.

Community Board 7 covers Nor-

wood, Bedford Park, Fordham, University Heights, and Kingsbridge, which is home to the James J. Peters Veterans Hospital. A spokesman for the hospital said the VA is willing to dole out useful information for vets, though it was non-committal over whether a VA representative can attend meetings.

There are currently just under 5,000 veterans within Community Board 7's boundaries, part of the nearly 35,000 vets living in the Bronx, according to U.S. Census figures. Yet, veteran committees haven't been formed throughout the city.

"We are the tip of the spear, leading the way for the rest of the Bronx to get on board to support veterans and their families," said Mujaahid.

The committee hopes to receive feedback that may help identify the most pressing issues from veterans within the district. The first order of business was throwing the support for holding a veterans job fair on June 19 at the Bronx Library Center. The group plans to meet the first Monday of every month at 6:30 p.m.

With Jasmine Gomez.

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE

This week we asked readers their thoughts on the proposed bill in the New York City Council that would decriminalize such low-level crimes such as transit fare-beating.



I once had an emergency and I hopped the train and [the fine] was \$100. So I feel that it's not worth it jumping on the bus or train because you're being charged more than 50 times what the fare costs. And don't be late to pay because that's another \$50. I ended up paying \$180 because I was in a rush. I was lucky because they didn't arrest me.

Sheleque Burgess
East Harlem



I don't think there's really anything wrong with it. There could be an emergency and they have to get somewhere and some people can't afford a MetroCard and it's an emergency and you hop on the bus. Children do it every day to go to school.

Olando Smith
University Heights



It's a crime. I think all of the small Broken Windows crimes that should be considered a crime, because I believe it leads to bigger crimes. They should get a summons and they should check people's records when they get arrested for small crimes. They could have outstanding warrants.

Luis Cruz
Norwood



It's a crime. We pay our fares but they don't want to pay theirs. That's the crime. If you don't have the money, don't go.

Charles Parker
Parkchester



I paid \$1.25 and now and it's \$1.35 [senior fare]. Young people get on the bus and tell the bus driver that they don't have money. The bus driver lets them ride for free. And I've got to pay more. They should keep the law the way it is.

Maria Bodden
Parkchester

Editor's Note: Have an idea for an Inquiring Photographer question? Send suggestions to dcruz@norwoodnews.org.

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New Norwood News Sales Rep Doubles as Borough Booster

The award-winning *Norwood News* is pleased to announce that Vivian R. Carter has joined the paper as advertising representative. Carter is now reaching out to local businesses and not-for-profit groups to boost the benefits of advertising in the local newspaper that has been serving the northwest Bronx since 1988.

"I've always admired the history and mission of the *Norwood News*," she said. "Local newspapers serve an important purpose, particularly in areas like this that would otherwise be overlooked. Under the direction of our editor, David Cruz, this paper quietly does its job of producing quality news for an unassuming corner of the borough that is also home to powerhouse institutions—from Montefiore Hospital and Fordham University to the Wildlife Conservation Society and the New York Botanical Garden. What a great cultural legacy!"

Carter is meeting with businesses, large and small, to help them craft messages and packages of print and online ads to reach their target audiences. From a simple business directory listing to a full-page color ad on the back page, she handles all the de-



VIVIAN R. CARTER

Photo by David Cruz

tails to make it happen.

Carter comes to the *Norwood News* with extensive media education and experience—she has a bachelor's in journalism from Northwestern University, plus graduate degrees from Fordham University and Brooklyn College. She worked for Times Mirror Publishing and later, for *The Wave* in Rockaway Beach, where she generated hundreds of thousands in sales, helping to launch ad campaigns for some of the peninsula's hottest new restau-

rants, condominiums, health providers and fitness clubs. She also wrote a column on local non-profit cultural, recreational and ecology groups, and created the area's first local events blog, *Oy Vey Rockaway*. In 2012, her book, *Images of America: Rockaway Beach*, was published by Arcadia.

Carter traveled extensively after Superstorm Sandy's devastation, and recently decided to move to the Bronx. "The northwest Bronx has excellent medical services, fabulous parks and

cultural programs at the numerous college campuses, libraries and museums, awesome transportation options, and stunning architecture. What more could you want? Oh, great food!"

Carter is a fan of Arthur Avenue, enjoys an occasional Gun Hill stout at Bronx Ale House, likes to attend concerts at Lehman and view the monuments at Woodlawn Cemetery. In addition to selling advertising, she teaches architecture and design workshops in schools and libraries in Westchester and the five boroughs. She is also a licensed New York City sightseeing guide, and conducts tours for the Municipal Art Society of NYC.

Carter will be leading a free walking tour called "Way Out in Norwood: 8 Bronx Landmarks in 2 Hours," on Sunday, May 3, from 1 to 3 p.m., rain or shine. If you'd like to join her for the tour, you can register online at www.mas.org/janeswalk/. Meet at the Moshulu Parkway station of the 4 train (bottom of staircase on west side of Jerome Avenue) at 1 p.m. One of the stops on the tour will be the Reservoir Keeper's House at 3400 Reservoir Oval East, home of the *Norwood News*.

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Spring Cleanup at Mosholu Parkway



Photo courtesy Office of Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj

VOLUNTEERS HAUL THIS dead tree limb off Mosholu Parkway, part of an extended cleanup job on April 25. A handful of volunteers spent a couple of hours working to spruce up the scenic dale, with plenty of help from Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj of the 86th Assembly District, who sponsored the event.

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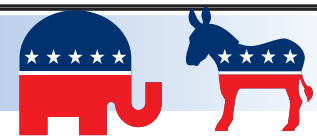
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THE BRONX BELTWAY

By DAVID CRUZ



Torres' Time

Some of the Bronx beltway's brightest stars came out in support of their star, Councilman Ritchie ("The Rookie" as one guest phrased it) Torres, who flashed his Obama-like smile all night during his fundraiser. At Michaelangelo's restaurant in Belmont, across the corner from where Torres claimed victory as Council Member during the 2013 election cycle, Torres worked the room extensively, shaking hands with residents from all corners of his 15th Council District.

The turnout featured a cross section of the Bronx, with folks coming from faraway Throggs Neck and sections of Bedford Park, an example of Torres' jurisdictional reach. One political operative compared Torres' district to that of a "starfish," though it's more like an octopus, with tentacles all over the Bronx.

With an off year in the election cycle, Torres lucked out with the turnout, given the scant races during this political season. One organizer said the function netted "a lot" of money with a number of lobbyists

vying for Torres' attention. That's a good thing given Torres' paltry sum of campaign cash on hand, just \$140,048, according to campaign finance records.

An interesting side note on September Primaries, one unnamed political insider called Assemblyman Jose Rivera, who has been spotted making some rounds, an untouchable should anyone want to run against Rivera again. "You can go door to door to meet every single primary voter, and be nice to you, and they'll still vote for Jose Rivera. The man's a legend. The name Rivera carries a lot of weight," said the source with an air of confidence.

Sign of a New Bronx

Have you caught the enormous sign seen at the Hutchinson River Parkway by the ever-ballooning Hutch Metro Center? It's a picture of a gentleman in a suit, his back turned to us as he overlooks a cityscape (could be the Bronx, though it bears similarities to Manhattan) from atop a wooden deck. Above the sign reads, "It's Here. Welcome

The New Bronx," a slogan coined by Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. aimed at putting the Bronx's accomplishments on a pedestal (and there are many).

The New Bronx has garnered a following, though it's inspired critics who took to social media to blast the billboard.

"The Bronx is not for sale," wrote prolific Bronx blogger Ed Conde Garcia, one of the more pronounced Diaz detractors.

King's Court(case?)

Councilman Andy King is expected to be named in a sexual harassment lawsuit.

A report by *Capital New York* said the suit alleges King fired a staffer from the Black, Latino and Asian Caucus for which King serves as chairman, for rebuffing his advances. King certainly has clout in his district given the large turnout at his recent State of the 12th Council District, so it'll be interesting how his base reacts to this. Should he resign under pressure, King would be placed in the pantheon of tarnished politicians in the borough. The Bronx Beltway hopes that's not the case.

King's office declined comment, deferring to the press office from the New York City Council which only emphasized that the Council stresses a healthy, workplace environment.

'Zombie' Homes

The walking dead of homes are alive and well in the Bronx, and Senator Jeff Klein wants to put an end to that plague. Zombie properties are foreclosed homes seized by banks but never given the proper upkeep as it churns through foreclosure messes.

Klein and Assemblywoman Helene Weinstein want banks to maintain regular upkeep to empty homes, as they often turn into havens for vermin and squatters. Stiff civil fines run up to \$1,000 a day for neglected homes, which is perhaps

chump change for multi-billion dollar banks. Collected fines would go to a maintenance fund managed by the State Attorney General. So in essence, the banks are being forced to pay for these foreclosed homes anyway.

Sizzurp

For politicians looking for a cause, here's one: sizzurp, a.k.a. purple drank. Police officials doled out information on the trendy drug of choice at One Police Plaza. The cocktail is a mix of Sprite, behind-the-counter cough syrup and a hard candy to cover the medicine taste. At times alcohol is used as a substitute. It's popular among teens, says one cop source, all sharing responsibility in concocting the dangerous tonic, mostly at schools, with students bringing in the key ingredients separately.

In some cases, school safety officers inadvertently clear a student to use cough syrup after feigning they need it to soothe their ails. If prescribed cough syrup is out of reach, users likely opt for Robitussin.

Decriminalizing Offenses

With sizzurp making the rounds, who knows whether it'll actually be deemed a criminal offense given Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito's bill to decriminalize petty quality-of-life crimes such as public urination or fare beating, effectively weakening punishment. Mark-Viverito's voice holds a lot of weight, so one can expect most of the Bronx Council Delegation to be on board.

But Councilman Jimmy Vacca, whose district is largely conservative, is put in a tough spot. Vacca, who was appointed Deputy Leader by Mark-Viverito, is walking a political tightrope as he must balance the needs of his boss with the needs of his district's social conservative base. Vacca did not want to comment on this.

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Crime Stats Still Up in 52nd Pct.

By WILLIAM MATHIS

Crime within the 52nd Precinct continues to rise, though police ensured community members at a recent meeting it intends to stem the increase.

CompStat figures show felony assaults, grand larcenies and robberies have gone up compared to the same 28-day period in 2014. The worst increase is among robberies, which rose to 33 percent, a number described by one police official as “skyrocketing.” The uptick in robberies has pushed crime towards positive territory within the 52nd Precinct, even as crime numbers in most Bronx precincts have decreased when compared to the same time last year.

Captain Linda Rock-Wright, standing in for commanding officer Inspector Nilda Hofmann at the 52nd Precinct Community Council meeting, blamed part of this increase to shoppers’ carelessness. One of the more brazen robberies happened at Fordham Family Pharmacy on April 4, with thieves robbing the place of Oxycodone and Percocet tablets, \$400 cash and lotto tickets. The thieves are still on the run.

The precinct has several programs to reverse the trend, Rock-Wright noted. Those include the How Not to Be a Victim program, the Crime Prevention Office and also the potential for the precinct to reallocate resources in response to crime.

Carlos Ortiz, a local resident, expressed his frustration over a number of late-night muggings of people coming from the 4 train station at Jerome Avenue and Mosholu Parkway. Rock-Wright could not provide him information on whether any arrests have been made in those cases.

“We know mugging is considered a robbery and we have increased robbery arrests,” Rock-Wright responded. She also opened the possibility of increasing police foot traffic around transit stations where residents have been victimized.

“It is up to the community to try and make things work,” said Brenda Caldwell, president of the Community Council. “We all come together for the concerns of the community that surrounds the Five-Two.”

CROTON FILTRATION PLANT UPDATE



Photo by Moses Bustos

CFMC BOARD MEMBERS listen to community input regarding construction of the Croton Water Filtration Plant. They’re joined by representatives of elected officials, the New York City Department of Environment and New York City Department of Parks.

Water Rates Rise as Trees Still Pending

By MOSES BUSTOS

At the latest Croton Facilities Monitoring Committee (CFMC) on April 20, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced a 3.24 percent water and sewer rate increase for the 2016 fiscal year. The agency, which has oversight on the long-overdue Croton Water Filtration Plant project, has passed the cost to building the water plant, which is four times over budget, by raising water rates.

The news was one of several items that came out of the latest CFMC meetings, the first one in several months.

And, as it’s been the case for years, worries over the environmental impact of the plant, rising budget needs and frequent delays persist among Bronx community members that the plant’s seemingly endless development is draining the borough’s budget. Similar complaints were made against the New York City Parks & Recreation Department over traffic lane obstructions, unsound park designs, and the disappearance of entire forested areas in neighborhoods where the Parks Department capi-

tal projects are currently in development. Several months ago, the Parks Department ensured 553 new trees would be replanted in what’s now deemed a sparse forest, with trees now being replanted around the perimeter of the Jerome Park Reservoir, the site where filtered water rests.

A walkway abutting the reservoir’s perimeter remains closed, with DEP officials citing security concerns. Activists have fought for the opening of the reservoir, noting it would be an ideal space for recreational walkers.

The CFMC, a major pipeline of communication between the Bronx public and the various government entities involved in the plant’s development, experienced its own share of delays recently, after its chairman, Fr. Richard Gorman, who doubles as chair of Community Board 12, was unavailable due to personal health problems. Adaline Walker-Santiago, chairwoman of Community Board 7, took the reins to lead the committee.

Since their last assembly, construction has continued at the plant, where disinfection of the New Croton Aqueduct and electri-

cal infrastructure work is scheduled to finish by the end of April.

Andrew Penzi, a Parks Department spokesman, assured committee members that the public’s input on construction practices is noted, and their concerns regarding the inefficiencies of capital project development will be relayed to the appropriate authorities.

Although both the DEP’s data and the Parks Department’s development schedule projected a positive future for Bronx neighborhoods, some community members were not convinced. The DEP, which owns the reservoir space, passes maintenance responsibilities to Parks. Activists have long held the relationship between DEP and Parks as questionable given the lack of inter-departmental cooperation and communication.

In light of these concerns, Andrew Sandler, aide to Councilman Andrew Cohen, agreed to circulate DEP Mitigation Plan reports and make them available to the CFMC. He also assured the committee that Cohen has already allocated funding necessary to continue monitoring the wetlands, as well as fund a forest restoration initiative.

Be Healthy

30

Percentage of non-emergency patients
who visit the emergency room.

(Source: American Journal of Managed Care)

Vital
Stats

Treating a Teddy Bear a Lesson on Caring for People

By JASMINE GOMEZ

The Pediatric Emergency Department at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore (CHAM) treats about 600,000 patients a year, about 150 to 200 a day, making it a goal for the hospital to decrease the stress and fear that overcome many parents and children during a visit to the emergency room.

To ease some of the common fears children and parents often feel when entering an emergency room, CHAM will host a Teddy Bear Hospital on May 9. There, children can learn how to be comfortable within a healthcare setting while also getting tips on how to stay as healthy as possible. To do that, they'll need the help of a teddy bear.

Children 12 and under and their parents or guardians are invited to bring in their "injured" teddy bears or stuffed animals for a simulation of would be treatment were the bear an actual patient at the pediatric emergency department. Teddy bear "patients" will encounter the



Photo courtesy Montefiore Medical Center
THESE TWO LITTLE girls get a lesson on caring for the sick with help from their plush toys at last year's Teddy Bear Hospital sponsored by the Children's Hospital at Montefiore. Alongside the girls are Dr. Nicole Hollingsworth, EdD, Assistant Vice President of Community and Population Health at Montefiore Medical Center (right), and a CHAM pediatrician (left).

different stages of an emergency room visit which include triage, a meeting with a doctor who will assess and treat the teddy bear's condition, as well as a

consultation session where the kids will learn how to care for their bear after discharge.

"A primary goal of the event is to educate children and families about what happens in the emergency room, to decrease fear of coming to the emergency room when the child encounters a trauma," said Dr. Nicole Hollingsworth, EdD, Assistant Vice President of Community and Population Health at Montefiore Medical Center. Hollingsworth finds that children who have attended the Teddy Bear Hospital exhibit bravery in place of fear should they go back to the ER. This is due to their familiarity with an emergency room visit following the event.

Another aim of the event is to provide parents with information about preventive care and the use of primary care services before a situation becomes drastic. This can include taking preventive action against asthma to ward off an asthma attack. A study on emergency room visits

shows that 30 percent of visits to the ER turn out to be non-emergency, meaning a visit to a primary care physician could have been utilized instead. "It's good to engage with healthcare providers before you're sick because prevention is important," explained Hollingsworth.

Attendance at Montefiore's annual Teddy Bear Hospital is set to increase this year, as organizers of the event expect at least 400 children to show, compared to the 300 who attended last year. Children can also tour an ambulance and the Wakefield Campus Emergency Department and interact with costumed characters such as McGruff, the crime safety dog.

The Teddy Bear Clinic runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The program will present information in both English and Spanish. The first 400 children will receive a backpack filled with a teddy bear, information on how to keep fit, Teddy Graham cookies, a water bottle, and a Berenstain's Bears book about a visit to the ER.

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Bailey Avenue a Stretch Too Chaotic, Say Residents

By JENNY SHARP

Concerned residents describe Bailey Avenue in Kingsbridge as a hotbed of logistical dysfunction and a hazard to public safety.

At a Community Board 7 general board meeting on April 21, two residents painted a picture of the residential and commercial street, often treated like a parkway rife with speed, traffic, and little regulation.

The stretch of road, running parallel to the Major Deegan Expressway, extends nearly a mile from West 225th Street to Sedgewick Avenue without a stoplight. Flanking the other side of Bailey Avenue are residential homes, businesses, and PS 310, resting at the corner of Bailey Avenue and West Kingsbridge Road. Longtime resident Helene Wilson, who has lived in the area for 25 years, was the most vocal at the Board meeting over her frustrations with the state of Bailey Avenue.

Among her complaints were traffic, speed, illegal car washes operating on the street, and 18-wheelers taking up parking spots and leaving their rigs for extended periods of time. Drag races have been known to happen



Photo by Jenny Sharp

IT MAY BE a long road ahead to ease the culture of speeding and near misses on Bailey Avenue.

there, with lack of regulation, traffic lights, and police presence. “We used to have police officers that used to sit back here and clock the speed,” said Wilson in a follow-up phone interview. “Now this is a dead spot, a real dead spot.”

The Police Department and the Department of Transportation have installed a speed enforcement camera that’s functional when school is in session. There is also a crossing guard outside PS 310 who directs traffic at the start and end of each school day.

Wilson is adamant that these measures are not enough, saying that the

intersection at 225th Street near the school needs more than one crossing guard to properly protect the children and that the camera does very little to reduce speed. “I don’t see any change.”

The office of Councilman Fernando Cabrera, whose district Bailey Avenue falls in, confirmed that this thoroughfare is both a known problem and also a concern for Cabrera. Chief-of-Staff Greg Faulkner said Bailey Avenue is high on the office’s list of areas that need more attention, but that many efforts have been bogged down by bureaucracy. “I wish it was easier and we

could make that decision locally,” he said, explaining that requests for security cameras must be submitted to the police headquarters at One Police Plaza for the final decision. Similarly, the installation of a new stoplight is a federal matter and must comply with the government standard. Before tools such as speed bumps can be implemented, the Department of Transportation dispatches an assessor to the area to determine whether these additional steps would help or hurt the flow of the street.

But while the issues described by Wilson are detrimental to quality of life, they are not life-threatening. Faulkner explained that Cabrera’s requests for security cameras on Bailey Avenue have been consistently denied in favor of areas with higher rates of more violent crime. “Folks need to let us know when these things are happening,” said Faulkner, explaining that reporting complaints to the 311 hotline helps representatives prove necessity to bureaucratic entities. “Homeowners should get involved,” he said, because it “provides additional eyes and ears.”

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Monroe College Empowers Teens



Photo courtesy Monroe College

BRONX TEENS LEARNED what it takes to be a man at a morning workshop hosted by Monroe College, with support from AimHigh Empowerment Institute. Male teens connected with professional mentors, who espoused AimHigh's three pillars of "competence, confidence and character." Among the esteemed guests was WCBS-TV journalist and anchorman Maurice DuBois. A full story can be found on www.norwoodnews.org.



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Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

EDITOR'S PICK

Mother's Day at NYBG

The entire family can celebrate Mother's Day at the New York Botanical Garden the weekend of May 9 and 10 with a garden party featuring live music, games, picnicking, dance performance on the Conservatory Lawn, and more. Children's activities include crafting birds' nests, Mother's Day cards, and creating giant chalk drawings in the Everett Children's Adventure Garden. There will also be a roaming photographer on hand. A Mother's Day brunch will be held on May 10 in the Garden's Terrace Room which includes a spread of omelets, carving table fare, and desserts. For more information, call (718) 817-8700.

Onstage

• The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents Celia Cruz H.S.'s big band, **Full Swing Ahead** and girls band, **Sophisticated Ladies**, concert, May 6 at 6 p.m.; and **Red Hot & Live**, featuring Afrobeat Nigerian icon, drummer, dancers and performers, May 9 at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

• Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., presents **Old School Hip-Hop**, featuring numerous live artists, May 9 at 8 p.m. (tickets are \$45 to \$60). For more information, call (718) 960-8833.

Events

• Montefiore Medical Center, 111 E. 210th St., presents **The Beat of the Bronx**, Culture for a Cause, in its Grand Hall, Tischman Learning Center (Gun Hill Road entrance), May 7 from 6 to 9 p.m. Events include live music, local artists, great food, prizes, and more. All proceeds will be reinvested into the Bronx community (tickets: \$20/pre-sale; \$25/at the door; includes entrance and one raffle ticket). For more information, visit www.wearethebronx.org/beatofthebronx.

• The Fordham Road BID presents its Mother's Day themed **sidewalk sale** May 7 to 9, noon to 7 p.m. on Fordham Road between Washington and Jerome avenues. For more information, visit fordhamroadbid.org.

• The Mosholu Montefiore Community Center presents its **B'N Fit Annual Teen & Community Walk**, a fundraising event on May 2 at 8:30 a.m. at the New York Botanical Garden. Sign up for \$10 at mmcc.org. Free for children 10 and under when accompanied by a paying adult. The team or individual that raises the

most money wins a trophy and a \$100 gift card. For more information, call (718) 882-4000 ext. 350.

• Bronx Community College, 2155 University Ave., hosts the 37th annual 10K/5K Run & 2-Mile Walk, May 2. The **Run the Bronx** begins at 10 a.m. sharp and registration starts at 7 a.m., followed by an award ceremony and post race refreshments. For more information, call (718) 289-5162.

• Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse (165th Street), presents free **First Friday**, May 1, 6 to 10 p.m. For more information, call (718) 681-6000.

• Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: Ephemeral Creatures in Clay, to sculpt mythological creatures from clay, May 2 and 3; and Sachets and Floral Fantasies for Mom, to hear stories about animals and their mothers, then decorate a special card for Mom and make a fragrant sachet gift filled with lavender and decorated, May 9 and 10; both in WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Grounds admission is 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: **Preschool Story Time at 11 a.m.**: (ages 3 to 5 years); and **Toddler Play Time at noon**: (ages 18 to 36 months); both on April 30, May 7 and 14; **Hands-On Projects at 4 p.m.** (ages 7 to 12): Flower Making: April 30 and Chicken Nest Making: May 14; and **Family Time**: (ages 3 to 6; preregistration required), reading aloud and crafts, May 9 at 11 a.m. Kids can sign up at the Children's Information Desk for **Spring Into Reading!**: Reading club, Sundays through May 31 ending

with a celebration. Includes reading aloud, movies, puppet shows, craft workshops, and more. Reading logs will be kept at the children's information desk (free gift when you sign up). Adults can enjoy **Patron Lending Event**: Learn if you're eligible for free internet service, May 1 at 4 p.m. and May 4 at noon; **Bronx Heroes Comic Con: Women in Comics Convention**: Learn about the comic book industry, meet writers, join discussions and workshops, receive free comic book while supplies last, May 2 at 11 a.m.; and **MS Word 2010 for Beginners**: May 7 at 2 p.m. (advance in-person registration required). For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

• The Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for children: For teens/young adults, there is **film**: "Unbroken," May 9 at 1:30 p.m. Adults can enjoy **Jewelry Club at 11 a.m.**: bring your own materials

to create original jewelry, April 30; and **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 kids: **Get Active Fridays**: (ages 5 to 12), dance and zumba, May 1 at 3 p.m.; and **Toddler Time**: (18 to 36 months), stories, action songs and nursery rhymes, May 11 at 6 p.m. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

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NOTE: Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org, and should be received by May 4 for the next publication date of May 14.

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

Food Assistance Programs

Information on several food assistance programs including the federal SNAP/food stamp program, WIC, school and summer meals, senior meals, and more is available by calling the New York Coalition Against Hunger office at (212) 825-0028. Information on Bronx food programs is also available in English at <http://bit.ly/1FksQB3> and Spanish at <http://bit.ly/1aYB1GG>.

Free Tutoring

Free tutoring in math, history, English and science is available for students ages 12 to 21 at Sistas & Brothers United, 103 E. 196th St., 3rd fl., Mondays to Fridays from 3 to 6 p.m. For more information, call (718) 584-0515 ext. 243 or (347) 481-6180.

Free Legal Help

Free legal services are available at the office of Councilman Andy King, 940 E. Gun Hill Rd., Fridays through June 26. Legal

consultations include criminal, NYCHA, tenant/landlord, public assistance, wills, healthcare proxies, contract disputes, family law issues, and civil litigations. For more information and to schedule an appointment, call (718) 684-5509.

Bird Watching

Bird Walks at Van Cortlandt Park are available for free each Saturday from 8 to 9:30 a.m. until November. Anyone interested can meet at the Nature Center, 246th Street and Broadway. For more information, contact Joseph McManus at McManus638@aol.com.

MMCC Pre-K Applications

The Mosholu Montefiore Community Center is accepting applications for its Pre-K, Head Start and child care programs at the Van Cortlandt Village Child Development Center, located inside the VC Jewish Center, 3880 Sedgwick Ave. For more information, call (718) 543-0231 or (718) 882-4000.

Ice Rink Funds Delay Lease

(continued from page 1)

and will help move this important and exciting project forward to the benefit of the Kingsbridge community.”

Under the lease terms, KNIC is mandated to show it has the required funds by March 2016 to begin phase one of the project, which is obligated to be completed by August 2018.

“Our fundraising is on schedule and we are continuing with the forward progress of this transformative project,” said Mark Messier, CEO of KNIC LLC. “We are excited about the support we have received from investors and the community – all partners in helping us make this inspiring project a reality.”

But phase one is just half of the project. The agreement requires KNIC only build five rinks, a parking facility with 400 spots and the 50,000 square feet of community space by August 2018. The final plans called for nine rinks to be built and a 5,000-seat arena at the center of the complex.

The revelations shed light into some behind-the-scenes dealings from KNIC, which for months has insisted the project is in good stand-

ing. The New York City Economic Development Corporation, under the Bloomberg Administration, cleared KNIC to lease the building for 99 years, pegged as a global game changer for the Bronx. A Community Benefits Agreement worked out between KNIC and community groups promised the community a total of \$1 billion in benefits, living wage jobs and 50,000 square feet of community space.

The news also comes amid KNIC’s consideration of funds from EB5, a program that seeks out foreign investors to provide monies for a project in exchange for fast-tracked legal entry into the U.S. Investment monies by foreign investors are mandated to produce American jobs, according to terms laid out by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Building Permits

With a project in escrow, KNIC is currently barred from repurposing the project, which does require construction permits. As it stands, KNIC has no approved city building permit, which it had initially applied for in

July 2013 during the lengthy public review process.

KNIC’s first application for an alteration permit through the New York City Department of Buildings was completed by SCI Architects, P.C., which designed blueprints for Madison Square Garden. The plans were subsequently rejected by DOB, which some developers say is often standard operating procedure, pointing to the inherent bureaucracy within New York City government. A developer is normally rejected, and asked to go before the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) to apply for a variance. The BSA eventually changed the zoning status of the Armory from an R6 to a C4, which allows for a “physical and cultural establishment” such as an ice rink.

But DOB objections remain in limbo. Those include an approval by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), which was required to review KNIC’s alterations to the exterior of the building given the Armory’s landmark status.

“Since being disapproved in 2013, [KNIC] has not remedied objections

to their application that must be made to receive construction permits,” said DOB spokesman Alex Schnell in an email. “Applications for permits that are submitted to the Department must be in compliance with all applicable regulations in the building code and zoning resolution to receive approval during a plan exam.”

The permits are critical to KNIC’s alterations of the Armory, which include the installation of a 50’ by 10’ illuminated sign and eight banner signs onto the Armory’s exterior. In 2013, LPC approved KNIC to alter the outside so long as it has an approved permit from DOB. The agency has yet to receive one, according to an LPC spokeswoman.

KNIC was prevented from working on the project for most of last year following several lawsuits between lead developer Kevin Parker and a trio of principals once linked to the project. In lawsuits filed against Parker, plaintiffs had mentioned Parker’s inexperience in getting a project of this size off the ground.

The news adds to the string of delays for the Armory.

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