



NORWOOD NEWS

Vol 28, No 23 • PUBLISHED BY MOSHOLU PRESERVATION CORPORATION • Nov. 26-Dec. 9, 2015



**INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER:
FAVORITE BRONX EATERY | PG. 4**



**NEW KINGSBRIDGE RESIDENCE
TO BE BUILT NEAR ARMORY | PG. 5**

HOUSING NY PLAN REJECTED BY BRONX

Community Board 7 rejects proposal; heads to City Planning Commission



Photo by Adi Talwar

ADALINE WALKER-SANTIAGO (2nd from right), chair of Community Board 7, voted down amendments related to Mayor Bill de Blasio's Housing New York plan.

By DAVID CRUZ

The City Planning Commission will meet in December to vote on whether to approve zoning amendments for Mayor Bill de Blasio's lofty plan to build or preserve 200,000 units of affordable housing by 2025. The move is part of a public review assessing de

Blasio's \$41.4 billion Housing New York proposal that, despite a citywide low-rent housing crisis, was unanimously rejected by Bronx officials.

With a vote of 0 to 19, the Bronx Borough Board, a 22-member panel comprised of heads of all 12 community boards, the

borough president, and nine New York City Council members, rejected two zoning law proposals tied to the plan Nov. 19, dealing a major blow to de Blasio's signature plan to fix the housing shortage. Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, a de Blasio ally, abstained.

The vote, purely advisory, came two days after Community Board 7, covering Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge, Fordham and University Heights, also voted against the amendments 0 to 20, with seven abstentions.

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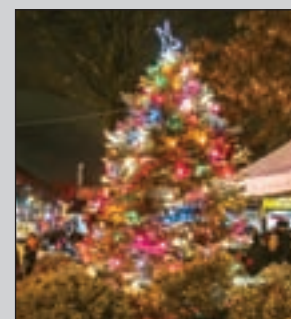
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Vol. 28, No. 23

Norwood News is published
bi-weekly on Thursdays by

Mosholu Preservation Corporation (MPC)

3400 Reservoir Oval East

Bronx, New York 10467

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IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

New Petition To Improve Voter Experience Under Way

By DAVID CRUZ

In the 2013 election, turnout on Election Day was historically low, despite a mayoral election and a swell of New York City Council races that year. That sentiment was viewed in the numbers during the mayoral election-- roughly 19 percent of the Bronx voting age population came to the polls. More stunning, 8,000 ballots casted by Bronxites were tossed out since their ballot cards were filled out incorrectly, relinquishing the vote.

Invalid ballots are one of a litany of election problems that have long troubled good government groups such as the League of Women Voters (LWV). But now, the New York City Campaign Finance Board (NYCCFB), an agency that normally tracks public monies awarded for city races, is adding its voice towards remedying the voter experience.

"Our election system is sorely out of date," said Matthew Sollars, NYCCFB spokesman, declaring New York's voter turnout record a "crisis."

To fix that, the agency kicked off Vote Better NY. Launching a year before Election Day 2016, the campaign has introduced a petition drive that pushes three election reform initiatives. Its strength in signatures, the campaign hopes, will be used to lobby for legislative reform in Albany.

NYCCFB looks to use its petitions to convince Albany legislators to enact the Voter Empowerment Act, contributing to lobbying efforts long pushed by LWV and New York University's Brennan Center for Justice, which helped draft the bill's language. The legislation would create an online voter registry similar to one found on the Department of Motor Vehicles website, though inclusive to even non-drivers over the



File Photo

A YEAR LONG petition drive by the New York City Campaign Finance Board intends to change the voter experience in the Bronx. On its agenda: improved election machines.

age of 18.

With Election Day happening solely on a Tuesday, the campaign is lobbying the state to adopt the early voting method, which could give voters upwards of two weeks to cast a ballot. "Thirty-three other states in the country have some version of early voting," said Sollars. "It's very difficult for people to make it to the polls on one day, in the middle of the week that's not a holiday, and cast a ballot."

But even if voters make it to the polls, the act of voting has its flaws.

The fault happens when paper ballots are improperly filled out and, through a variety of reasons, are missed by poll workers trained to walk voters through the process. A ballot incorrectly filled out can render it, and subsequently the vote, invalid.

Ballots were changed after the U.S. Congress passed the 2010 Help America Vote Act (HAVA), mandating states to replace old-fashioned lever machines with paper ballot scanners (U.S. Senator Charles Schumer and former U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton, both representing New York, voted against the bill). New York State purchased new machines through federal grants, but failed to update its own state voter law to conform with the reforms. A bill to resolve that called the Voter Friendly Ballot Act, which would establish a more improved design ballot, has been floating around the state Assembly, though it's gone nowhere. NYCCFB hopes its petition can bring that bill to a vote.

In spite of perfunctory support for higher voter engagement, Bronx elected officials, save for one, have not supported the bills to simplify the voting process. "They're never going to say that they believe in suppressing voter turnout, but what they would say, what they believe is, they want their own voters to show up," said Katherine Doran, an election specialist with the League of Women Voters. "They're not going to help the voters of their opponent show up."

For their part, (LWV) will launch its own get-out-the-vote campaign in 2016, in partnership with the City University of New York.

Editor's Note: To learn how you can volunteer for the petition drive, email nycvotes@nyccfb.info.

Public and Community Meetings

COMMUNITY BOARD 7 committee meetings are held on the following dates at the board office, 229A E. 204th St. at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Public Safety & Quality of Life: Dec. 3; Education/Libraries & Youth Services: Dec. 3 at 7:30 p.m.; Executive Committee: Dec. 8; Health & Hospitals: Dec. 8 at 7:30 p.m. For more information, call the Board office at (718) 933-5650.

BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION meets Dec. 2 at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy. So., Apt. B1, at 8 p.m.



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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE

This week we asked readers to name their favorite Bronx eatery.

(Editor's Note: Thanks to Norwood resident Helene Hartman-Kutnowsky, member of Community Board #7, for suggesting this question.)



It's really hard to pick one out because I have so many. I can't remember which is the best one, but Nicky's Pizzeria is good. They have pasta and they've got meatballs. The meatballs, definitely the meatballs, are my favorite. I think Subway is good, I always get my sandwiches there.

Alen Peisel
Norwood



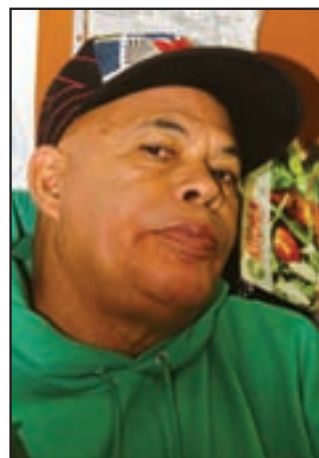
My favorite restaurant is the Star Restaurant on Webster Avenue. The chicken is good and they have a nice soup over there and they have good bread too. The A & E Deli on East 204th Street--they make the best sandwiches over there: the bacon, egg and cheese, a hamburger or turkey sandwich or steak sandwich, they're all good.

Raheb Al-Zokai
Norwood



It's called The Pine now, but it used to be called Frankie and Johnny's. It's on Bronxdale Avenue. They have this nice big plate of parmesan, either veal or shrimp, and it's big enough to share. The prices are very reasonable and the service is very nice. You can get a good burger at the Wendy's way over near Einstein Hospital, it's delicious. The burgers are superb, but it takes two buses to get there.

Alice McGlynn
Bedford Park



My favorite is the Bedford Park Pizza, I enjoy the chicken rolls. I always eat there.

Pedro Antonio Rosario
Bedford Park



I was just thinking where to have a meal today and this is the spot to come to: Johnny's on City Island. And especially after they remodeled it, it's definitely a nicer place to come to for seafood. There're a lot of chicken spots, but there's one in particular in Castle Hill--I go there for my burgers and my Philly cheese steaks. I think it's called Kansas Fried Chicken. The best pizza is also in Castle Hill called Top Banana, that's the spot.

Walter Andrade
Soundview

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



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Kingsbridge Residence To Be Built Across From Armory

By DAVID CRUZ

A 13-story, mixed-use residential high-rise with a twist is slated to go up near the mouth of the Kingsbridge Armory, the *Norwood News* has learned.

Alan Bell of Bell Urban LLC and B&B Supportive LLC, is expected to build the site at 2700 Jerome Ave., which until recently was a defunct car wash and nightclub. In all, 137 units for low- to mid-income housing will be built, along with a mandated indoor garage at the barren block.

Bell's project is a rare one. With 15 percent of the units set aside for middle-income earners, Bell plans to have another 55 percent of the units going to low-income earners below the Area Median Income threshold of 60 percent, and 30 percent of the units allocated to formerly homeless income families, bringing three socioeconomic classes under one roof. Bell has developed 5,000 units of affordable housing across the city for more than 25 years, according to a biography of him by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The project lies just outside the Kingsbridge Armory, slated to be-



Image courtesy Bell Urban LLC

A RENDERING OF a new residential high-rise near the Kingsbridge Armory.

come the Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC). Bell told the *Norwood News* that the project, slated to become the world's largest ice rink, had little to do with his decision to build there.

"There's a lot of plusses even without the Kingsbridge Armory," said Bell. "You can't beat the public transportation there, it's fantastic. And our site is literally at the bottom of the stairs to

the 4 train."

Other amenities around the building include a commercial strip, schools, and St. James Park, all within walking distance.

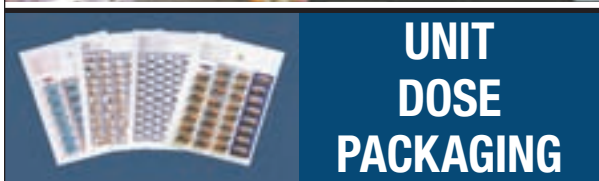
Bell told the *Norwood News* he will proceed with his "as of right" status to build a high-rise even as Mayor Bill de Blasio's controversial Housing New York proposal, which aims to change

the landscape of most New York City neighborhoods, churns through the public review process. Communities around the city have expressed frustration over the plan.

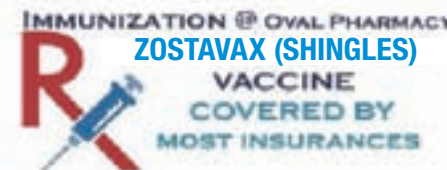
But Bell, a developer with several projects around the city, is a proponent of the plan, seeing how it can free him up in developing parking near a train station. "If I have to comply with current zoning, then I have to put a 27-space parking lot on the ground floor, and I'm going to have just 1200 feet of retail," said Bell. "If the zoning change passed, I will have a beautiful backyard, I would have 5,600 square feet of retail space. That could be a daycare center or pre-K, because this neighborhood is officially underserved for pre-K or early childhood."

The news comes two weeks after the Social Security Administration office at 2720 Jerome Ave. closed its one-story office, relocating to nearby Grand Concourse. More broadly, the project adds to a growing list of developments happening across the Bronx.

Bell is expected to meet with Community Board 7 in the near future.

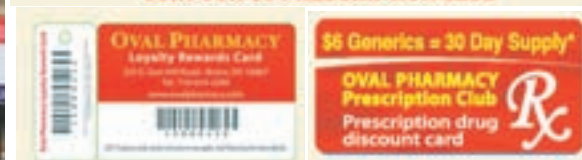


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Con Edison's Oil-to-Gas Conversion Project Sweeps Norwood

By ADEDAMOLA AGBOOLA

Noise pollution and road closures are just some tiny inconveniences residents will have to endure as a mandatory, ongoing oil-to-gas renovation project by Con Edison continues around Norwood.

For the past few months, Con Ed crews have dotted parts of Norwood and Bedford Park, installing gas mains and introducing natural gas. On Reservoir Oval East, crews closed off the one-way street which, during daytime hours, limited parking spaces while causing some traffic backups. On Perry Avenue, where crews have dug holes abutting the perimeter of residential buildings, the oil-to-gas changeover will be completed in the first week of December with permanent restoration of power to follow suit.

The public utility company has gone on a clean energy sweep over the past couple of years to fulfill its own green energy initiative, but also conforming to environmental law set forth by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Since 2012 Con Edison has been converting



Photo by Jasmine Gomez

A FAMILIAR SIGHT. Con Edison crews work on installing new gas mains along Reservoir Oval, part of a massive oil-to-gas conversion project.

many oil pipelines around the borough's buildings to accommodate natural gas deemed cleaner and cheaper.

"Natural gas is a cleaner burning fuel than oil. As a result of burning natural gas instead of oil, air quality in the Bronx will improve," said Robert McGee, a Con Edison spokesman.

The DEP's regulation requires numbers 4 and 6 heavy heating oils,

considered medium- to low-quality, be swapped out for cleaner natural gas or ultra-low sulfur 2 oil, biodiesel, or steam. The regulations require the grade 6 oil to have been phased out by this past June, and grade 4 changed by January 2030.

So far, the amount of Con Edison-served buildings switched to natural gas this year has exceeded the New

York Public Service Commission target. Natural gas is deemed an efficient, safe and reliable fuel source. It's also cheaper than heating oil, and is one of the cleanest-burning fuels available. "Building owners are switching out of number 2 fuel oil to natural gas because of the price advantage and because natural gas burns cleaner," said McGee.

Statistics cited by the Mayor's Office of Sustainability shows "one percent of all buildings in the city produces 86 percent of the total soot pollution from buildings—more than all the cars and trucks in New York City combined." This is achieved by burning the numbers 4 and 6 oils deemed the dirtiest of oil fuels. On any given day, smoke from oil-powered buildings billows to the air, creating a less-than-comfortable environment. On some days, some blocks in the Fordham area are blanketed with thick clouds of smoke emanating from buildings.

The conversion aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve the overall air quality around the city.

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Photo by Michael Brown Jr.

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS at the Urban Institute of Mathematics show off their historical map with members of the Bronx Historical Society.

Mapping Out Bronx History

By **MICHAEL BROWN JR.**

Students at the Urban Institute of Mathematics (UIM), a middle school serving grades six to eight in Throggs Neck, visited the Bronx Historical Society (BHS) in Norwood on Nov. 19, to unveil its map of the 18th century, capping a six-course assignment with borough historians.

The program, dubbed Map It! Exploring Your School's Neighborhood, has been around for two years. The BHS project was funded by the New York Community Trust. BHS partnered with the New York City Department of Education (DOE) to fuse the borough's archaic back story into social studies lessons at participating schools. Students from Throggs Neck, for instance, would learn about key points of the Revolutionary War that happened in that neighborhood.

"We're concentrating on their school's neighborhood, and highlighting their history," said Angel Hernandez, an educational coordinator at the Bronx Historical Society. Part of this entails learning about Bronx veterans of the Revolutionary War, Bronx memorials, and local history.

All of this was accomplished through walking tours from Throggs Neck to Norwood, which included a stop at Fort Schuyler, a defunct military stronghold in Throggs Neck that's named after Philip Schuyler, a general during the Revolutionary War.

Hernandez organized the event along with Joe Delea and Nora Flynn, who teach seventh and eighth grade social studies at the UIM respectively. The project consisted of these teachers delegating different jobs to the students since "kids learn by doing, by experiencing," said Delea.

Students were each given a part of the map project to work on, such as researching material for the map's contents, drawing/tracing the actual maps, and writing information about the landmarks. "[Our goal is to make] Bronx history more useful for the classroom," Hernandez said.

One student, Domenic Ariciuolo, a seventh grader whose job was to help draw the map said, "I enjoyed it a lot because this is where I live."

Op-Ed: Let's Support More Anti-Smoking Programs

By **SHELISA VILLANUEVA**

As a high school student from DeWitt Clinton High School, I've participated in programs that support the arts and student engagement. A state-wide program available to students across New York City called Reality Check has recently caught my attention.

Tobacco companies spend millions of dollars per day to market and target teenagers to buy and use their products. Reality Check is a great program that is student-led and supports student advocacy, leadership, and teaches us how to use our voices against the deceptive tactics of the tobacco industry.

A few weeks ago, I attended NYC Smoke-Free's Reality Check launch event, where students learned about smoking rates in the Bronx and how tobacco companies use schemes such as colorful packaging and the placement of their products in our local bodegas to attract new smokers at a very young age. I was alarmed to learn that 3,000 Bronx high school students smoke. I often see my peers

smoking after school. I'm concerned for their health and long term effects especially knowing that 90 percent of current students started before the age of 18.

Students also learned great ways to strategize to gain support such as meeting with elected officials, planning events to create awareness, and using social media to attract an audience who can support our goals.

I feel that Reality Check is working to make an impact in our communities, and deserves much credit and support so that I and other teens don't fall prey to Big Tobacco. I walk by local stores and think to myself, "We don't need more tobacco in our neighborhood." What we need instead are more programs that promote student engagement. We need community support to empower teenagers to change their own future and to decrease the number of deaths caused by tobacco use and second-hand smoke exposure.

Shelisa Villanueva is a Norwood resident attending DeWitt Clinton High School.

CB7 Staffers Honored



Photo courtesy Community Board 7

COMMUNITY BOARD 7 staffers Londy Ramirez (l) and Maria Graziano (c) were honored for their daily contributions to the board covering Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge, Fordham and University Heights. Their work on helping to organize the third annual Miss Abbie's Halloween Extravaganza Health Fair was recognized by Shanequa Charles (r), Community Board 7 member and one of the event's lead organizers.

Women's Rights Pioneer Remembered at Woodlawn Cemetery

By VIVIAN CARTER

An American milestone was celebrated at Woodlawn Cemetery, with women around the area celebrating the 200th birthday of an activist for the women's suffrage movement.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who inspired millions of women to make their voices heard in the battle for the right to vote, was remembered Nov. 12, who was born on that day 200 years ago. The event was marked by a ride along around the cemetery and an appearance by New York's Lieutenant Governor, Kathleen C. Hochul, one of the few female lieutenant governors in the state's history.

First stop for the group was the Stanton family burial plot, found in a scenic center of the sprawling grounds. The fall leaves still clung to many trees, adding splashes of red, gold and orange to the scene. Two actors arrived at the gravesite, colorfully dressed in period costumes to depict Cady Stanton and her fellow civil rights pioneer, Susan B. Anthony.

Hochul praised Stanton as "an iconic New Yorker" and "a trailblazer whose tireless advocacy helped spearhead the success of the women's rights movement." Coline Jenkins, great-great granddaughter of the activist, spoke with reverence about the inscription on the family monument, which states that Cady Stanton "Demanded Votes for Women." Jenkins said her mother

and grandmother are also buried at Woodlawn, and declared she would join them, someday. Woodlawn Cemetery, recognized as a National Historic Landmark site, is the resting place of other prominent American women, including Carrie Chapman Catt, Alva Vanderbilt Belmont, Celia Cruz, Nellie Bly, and Madam C.J. Walker.

The group then headed to the Woolworth Chapel, where a proclamation honoring Stanton for her role in making New York the birthplace of women's rights was read by a staff member of U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. New York State Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz humorously praised Stanton's foresight in choosing to be buried in his district. There was a reading of the Declaration of Sentiments, a version of the Declaration of Independence drafted by Stanton to articulate the philosophy of the suffrage movement at the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention.

Jenkins proudly informed the group that a long-time slight to women would soon be corrected, as the only female statues now in Central Park depict fictional characters like Alice in Wonderland and Mother Goose. She announced, to great applause, that New York City Parks Commissioner, Mitchell Silver, recently granted a plot of land in Central Park for the eventual construction of a statue honoring Cady Stanton, Anthony, and other female suffragettes.



Photo by Vivian Carter

COLINE JENKINS (CENTER) huddles around a birthday cake for her great-great grandmother, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, alongside guests from Lehman High School for American Studies and an actress (right) depicting Stanton in period dress.

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Bronx Borough Board Rejects Housing Plan: How

(continued from page 1)

The news offers little resolution for the housing crisis, particularly for Norwood, Bedford Park and Kingsbridge, where 63 percent of its population is rent burdened, according to recent city health statistics.

BP Votes Against the Plan

The vote was part of the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), a near 120-day process that allows communities to comment on zoning changes. Borough Board meetings allow officials to formally offer suggestions to given proposals.

At the Borough Board meeting, Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., voted down the two measures: Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH), requiring developers to permanently earmark 25 percent of affordable units in market-rate buildings, and Zoning for Quality & Affordability (ZQA), which would increase building height and size of apartments.

Uttering the buzz phrase, “one size does not fit all,” referencing the plan’s uniform approach towards rezoning, Diaz argued the measures fail to address the unique sets of problems and preferences per neighborhood. His comments contrast with his initial praise of Housing New York, calling it “huge” when de Blasio announced it in May 2014. These days, Diaz used phrases like “broad strokes” to describe the city’s proposed implementation of the plan.

Indeed, the Bronx’s characteristics range from high-rise towers to spacious single-family homes, creating needs that vary from neighborhood to neighborhood.

“Some community boards want moderate income [housing], others want very low income [housing],” said Diaz, speaking to reporters after the vote. “Should these amendments pass, you sort of take that leverage away from the local community boards, the local City Council members and there’s no telling what we’d wind up getting.”



THE BRONX BOROUGH BOARD meets to hear comments from Department of City Planning officials over the housing plan.

Housing Crunch

The vote capped months of wrangling by community boards, which first vetted the proposal. Pegged as critical to fixing the affordable housing and homeless crisis, the plan would create 80,000 new affordable apartments citywide while repairing another 120,000 over the next decade. The proposal was largely motivated by a shortage in the affordable housing stock. From 1994 to 2012, the city lost 152,751 units. Gradually higher rents in the last decade, a desire to live in New York City, and a sharp increase in the number of homeless New Yorkers also contributed to the implementation.

“It is without a doubt that the senior population in the Bronx is projected to grow by almost 62

percent in 2040, and 70 percent of the current senior population would qualify for senior housing,” said Carol Samol, director for the Bronx office of the Department of City Planning (DCP).

The Bronx, considered a much cheaper borough to live in, remains rent burdened. Figures by the Furman Center, an urban policy think tank group, reported 80 percent of low-income renters were rent burdened, meaning more than 30 percent of their take-home pay went to rent. Overall, 30 percent of New Yorkers from various socioeconomic backgrounds are rent burdened.

To execute the Housing Plan, DCP looks to change zoning laws, a common practice in an ever-changing New York City. DCP introduced the MIH and ZQA mea-

sures to execute the plan.

How Zoning Affects You

Concerns over the plan depended on what part of the borough each community board represented.

For CB7, worries over ZQA largely stemmed from its provision to eliminate mandated on-site parking for affordable and senior housing in so-called Transit Zones—neighborhoods with an abundance of public transportation. CB7 would fall in that zone.

Street parking poses a cumbersome quality of life concern in Norwood and Bedford Park, which house two major hospitals and also commercial strips. Drivers often resort to scouring for parking, which can take upwards of a half hour. DCP and developers

Does This Impact You?



Photo by Adi Talwar

deemed low-income.

Housing advocates were initially intrigued by the plan, though slowly began labeling it a latent form of gentrification given what's perceived as a high AMI. Under the plan, 25 percent of affordable housing apartments per building would go to residents with incomes averaging 60 percent AMI, translating to \$46,620 per year for a family of three. Housing advocates consider that too high, especially for the senior population. For individuals, that figure stands at \$36,300.

"We need to address affordable housing for the people who are making anywhere from \$8,000 to \$25,000 a year for a family of four," said Joseph Cepeda, an organizer for Community Action for Safe Apartments, a housing advocacy group, testifying at Nov. 12 public hearing.

"You need a 20 percent AMI," said Adaline Walker-Santiago, chair of Community Board 7. "And if you're having more seniors, how are they going to qualify?"

Many critics have also pointed out some of the proposals' impractical demands on existing city services, namely the subway system and schools, which are over-capacity. District 10, covering Norwood, is the borough's most cramped school district, with close to 5,000 seats needed, according to the Independent Budget Office.

For now, the housing vote goes to the City Planning Commission, a de Blasio-friendly board (its chair, Carl Weisbrod, was appointed by de Blasio), which will likely vote in favor of the measure sometime in December.

Regardless, the most impactful voice will come from the City Council, which formally votes on the measure in early 2016.

But getting any Bronx Council member to vote "yes" is unlikely, given how many are beholden to community boards that struck down the plan. Councilman Andrew Cohen, representing Norwood, plans to vote "no" for the zoning amendments, following a pattern that began at the Borough Board meeting.

argue that onsite parking spots can cost up to \$60,000, monies that could go towards building more units.

"That [parking] space can go to providing our tenants with nice, outdoor areas," said Matthew Kelly, vice president of real estate development at Phipps House, who testified at a public hearing organized by the borough president Nov. 12, but was booed off.

MIH, for instance, would force developers to permanently make 25 percent of its market-rate housing affordable. Rents would be guided by Area Median Income (AMI), a figure determining how much rent an individual or family would pay. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determines AMI. Anyone at or below an AMI of 80 percent is

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At MMCC, Preparing a Culinary Team Leader

By DAVID CRUZ and
ADEDAMOLA AGBOOLA

As senior citizens awaited a pre-Thanksgiving sit-down meal at Mo-sholu Montefiore Community Center's (MMCC) Senior Center, inside the center's sweltering kitchen an assembly line formed with Aaron Domeny topping spoonfuls of greens on an endless stream of plates.

For anyone who knows Domeny, who hails from nearby Williamsbridge, they will likely describe him as a timid and shy 18-year-old. But Domeny, whose strait-laced demeanor is broken by the quips delivered by his boss and chef, Michael Tompkins, is also a young man with dreams of working at a five-star restaurant and has a humorous side. MMCC's kitchen, cheerful and light-hearted as it can be, doubles as a virtual classroom with a dash of teamwork, a smidge of humor and a pound of culinary discipline, ingredients Domeny uses to work his way around a kitchen.

Within the span of two months, Domeny has gone from intern at MMCC to full-time cook, a stepping stone that's offered Domeny the chance to impart what he's learned to another intern,



Photo by David Cruz

LEARNING THE CULINARY ropes is Aaron Domeny (right), serving up greens at MMCC's annual pre-Thanksgiving luncheon.

Juan Mendoza.

"He was a little shy at first, but now he's laughing, he's more comfortable.

He's become part of the group," said Lisa Nicotra, senior director for the MMCC Senior Center, describing him as someone who "wanted to come in and be successful."

Domeny is a product of the Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP), a program overseen by the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). The program places Bronx residents between the ages of 16 and 24 into an internship in the health-care, retail, construction and hospitality vocations. On-site employers offer job training and possible job placement, creating a work that can morph into careers. MMCC, a center with services for toddlers to senior citizens, has been a host site, employing ambitious young people like Domeny for years.

"I kind of consider cooking to be an art," said Domeny, a student at Borough of Manhattan Community College. He was hired for full-time as a food package server, but transitioned to a kitchen cook, learning how to prepare food, package it to another MMCC center, work in a team and "pretty much everything." That also involves building confidence, according to Tompkins. "That's why I have [Aaron] train Juan--to help him with his communications and train him how to talk to people," said Tompkins.

Domeny was part of a team that successfully helped MMCC's pre-Thanks-

giving luncheon go off without a hitch. The ambiance in the room was set with some classic, bilingual hits from Hector Havoe's "El Cantante," which played in the background as an estimated 30 seniors packed the room to celebrate their luncheon. As attendees sat eating their Thanksgiving-themed lunches, MMCC staffers and volunteers helped latecomers find seats.

MMCC maintains two senior centers in the Bronx with a membership close to 2,000, offering various classes in arts and crafts, current events, book discussion, and field trips, all while having the ability to socialize with each other. Among some of the services being offered to seniors at the center is a lunch program funded by Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz and Councilman Andrew Cohen. "It's great to see a packed house today," said Dinowitz who was accompanied at the event by Cohen, spreading some Thanksgiving cheer. "I love coming here because the [MMCC] Senior Center is a great place to be not just on Thanksgiving, but all year round."

Plenty of seniors danced off some of the heavy Thanksgiving fare with one lady dragging another to the makeshift dance floor, which later spurred three more couples to show off some moves.

Additional reporting by Jasmine Gomez.

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A Rare Opening: Access to Jerome Park Reservoir

By **DAVID CRUZ** and
DAVID GREENE

In a rare moment, dozens of Bronx-ites came out the second week of November to take part in pilot access of the Jerome Park Reservoir, a first in 20 years. Families, couples, friends, walkers, and runners got a first-hand look of the water supply, enjoying some scenic views of an underutilized pathway of the Bronx.

Locals wore their walking shoes and warm clothing to take a walk around the park's perimeter Nov. 14 and 15, the event's alternate dates. The original days to experience the reservoir, Oct. 3 and 4, were put on hold because of impending rainstorms.

A grossly overzealous security effort by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) included K9 dogs and armed personnel, with park goers required to sign a liability waiver and leaving their cell phones at the security fence. The DEP has long maintained that security of the reservoir is warranted since the water, eventually consumed by millions of homeowners, can be tainted



THIS COUPLE TAKES PART in pilot access to the Jerome Park Reservoir, long cordoned off from the public, on Nov. 14.

in a bioterrorism attack. Closing off the reservoir to the public was toughened even more after the 9/11 terror attacks.

Still, comments heard included, "It's about time," "I want to see more of this," and "This is just lovely." The DEP's extra security personnel stemmed from the recent terror attacks in Paris on Nov. 13, according to sources familiar with the security

detail.

Ira Merritt, a resident of the Amalgamated Houses who took part in the stroll, said the fence surrounding the reservoir "doesn't really provide any protection," calling the overall closure of the reservoir "a little bit silly."

Father Richard Gorman, a member of the Croton Filtration Monitoring Committee, which monitors progress of the Croton Water Filtration Plant,

which takes water from the reservoir and cleans it, said access is slow but happening. "I can tell you that they [DEP] have been doing outreach to schools and come spring there will be many school trips that will be going to Jerome Park," said Gorman. "The reservoir is opening up, not as fast as we like, not as much as we like, but it's opening up."

The Jerome Park Reservoir Access Task Force, a volunteer panel that worked out the details of the opening, is interested in obtaining feedback on the experience. The group is primarily interested in knowing what kinds of JPR access programs participants would like to see in the future.

Meanwhile, the monitoring committee meets in December and the NYPD's Anti Terror Task Force has apparently been asked to evaluate Jerome Park and the feasibility of opening it up to the public.

Editor's Note: Send comments on your experience to jeromeparkreservoiraccess@gmail.com.

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Four-Way Kidney Transplant Swap Brings Joy to Bronx Families



Photo courtesy Montefiore Health System

TRANSPLANT DONORS AND RECIPIENTS include (seated l-r) Rebecca Cherry, Lawrence Cherry, Sagracio Garcia, (standing l-r) Rasheed Vitales, Christopher Forthman. (Not pictured: Emily Cokey, Juan Garcia and Dorothy Vitales.)

A four-way kidney transplant was performed at Montefiore Medical Center on Nov. 11, Veterans Day, thanks to the generosity of 80-year-old Army veteran Christopher Forthman, who decided to be an altruistic kidney donor. He donated one of his organs to Juan Garcia, sparking a rare pay-it-forward style chain that would lead to three other Bronx patients in need of a donated kidney. Garcia was initially supposed to receive a kidney from his daughter Sagracio, but she was not a match for

him. Instead, Sagracio donated her kidney to Dorothy Vitales, whose son, Rasheed, also had a blood type incompatible with his mother. Rasheed donated a kidney to Rebecca Cherry, whose husband, Lawrence, was incompatible with her. Lawrence completed the chain by donating one of his kidneys to Emily Cokey, who didn't have a family member who could donate. The team at the Montefiore Einstein Center for Transplan-

tation in Norwood, which consists of surgeons, nephrologists, nurses, transplant coordinators, social workers and nutritionists, evaluated patients in need of kidneys. After a number of calculations, the team realized that each of these families had matching blood types and similar antibodies to those in the other families.

"We are so proud of our team that helped make this swap a reality because we know how much it means for our patients and their families," said Juan Rocca, M.D., surgical director, Kidney/Pancreas Transplant Program, Montefiore Einstein Center for Transplantation.

Human beings possess two kidneys, though they can function well with one healthy kidney, making it one of the more accessible replacement organs. Resting near the backside waist and aligning near the spine, kidneys regulate fluids in a body, recycling good fluids such as blood while flushing out harmful ones such as urea and ammonium via the urinary tract system. Kidneys can get damaged or fail

if they're overloaded with harmful fluids, infected, suffer a tumor or react negatively to medication pills. Fatigue, loss of appetite, high blood pressure, nausea, difficulty sleeping and skin irritation are common symptoms linked to failing kidneys. If kidneys no longer function, dialysis is utilized daily or weekly to artificially perform a kidney's filtration process. Blood tests often determine whether a patient has kidney disease. A healthy diet is one way to prevent kidney disease.

In the case of the four kidney recipients, all suffered severe kidney disease with some undergoing dialysis treatment. If they were unable to participate in this swap, they would have had to wait five to seven years for a kidney.

These Bronx families were unknown to each other, and with various ethnic backgrounds, but they have one thing in common: they all have a new lease on life, thanks to their families and one selfless veteran who served his country for five years in Iraq and Afghanistan, and wants to do more.



Photo courtesy Montefiore Health System
PAT MCDONOUGH, RN, live donor transplant coordinator at Montefiore Health System (c), is flanked by Rebecca and Lawrence Cherry.

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Neighborhood Grants

Citizens Committee will award micro-grants of up to \$3,000 to resident-led groups to work on community and school improvement projects throughout the city. Neighborhood groups will be prioritized

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Photo courtesy Bainbridge Nursing Home

STAFFERS AT THE Bainbridge Nursing Home await the needs of the Bronx's senior population.

Bainbridge Nursing and Rehabilitation Center uses an integrative approach to wellness, involving caregivers working together as a team for the best possible outcome. Residents and family members join together with an excellent staff made up of nurses, licensed therapists, social workers and psychologists to ensure residents are on the proper path to healing.

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prove clinical outcomes and quality of life.

Enriching the lives of its residents in mind, body and spirit continues to be one of the primary goals of Bainbridge Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. Bainbridge is the facility to consider for the individual recovering from an illness, accident, injury or surgery. With the finest in rehabilitation services to help residents recover their fullest potential; individualized treatment programs are crafted and delivered six days a week by a team of the finest physical, occupational and speech therapists just waiting to help residents achieve their highest level of independence.

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Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

EDITOR'S PICK

Christmas Tree Lightings

The public is invited to tree lighting ceremonies by the Jerome-Gun Hill BID on Dec. 8 at 5 p.m. at East Mosholu Parkway North and Jerome Avenue; and by Community Board #7 on Dec. 9 at 6 p.m. on the center island at Mosholu Parkway and Bainbridge Avenue.

Onstage

Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture, 450 Grand Concourse, presents **Henry's Law** performed by the Hostos Repertory Company, through Dec. 4 (call for times), in the Repertory Theatre (tickets: \$10; free/students and under 18), a friendship develops when popular female student is tutored by male socially awkward student leading to cyberbullying. Also featured is free event (tickets are required): **Annual Kwanzaa Celebration**, featuring Harambee Dance Company performing traditional and contemporary African

dance, Dec. 10 at 7 p.m. in the Repertory Theatre. Shows are subject to change. For more information and to reserve, call (718) 518-4455 or visit www.hostoscenter.org.

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents **Pistolera**, presented by the Carnegie Hall Neighborhood Concert Series, featuring accordion-driven dance songs and Latin music, Dec. 5 at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.



File Photo courtesy Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District

A ONE-ON-ONE with Santa Claus awaits the little ones at the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District's annual holiday tree lighting ceremony Dec. 8.



Photo courtesy Joshua Bright

PEEKING INTO THE Season at Wave Hill promises to flex children's arts and crafts skills.

Events

The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation presents free: **Seasonal Crafts**, Nov. 27 and each Friday through Jan. 29, 2016, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at Poe Park's Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse (at Kingsbridge Road; call (718) 365-5516); and **Bird Walks**, Nov. 28 from 8 to 9:30 a.m. at Van Cortlandt Park's Nature Center, West 246th Street and Broadway (call (212) 691-7483).

The Williamsbridge Oval offers **Hip-Hop Aerobics Classes**, Thursdays from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. For more information and to become a member, call (718) 543-8672.

The public is invited to ride the free **Bronx Culture Trolley**, which transports visitors on the first Wednesday of every month (except January and September), to free Bronx hot spots. Trolley night starts with a 5 p.m. reception at the Longwood Art Gallery at Hostos Community College, 450 Grand Concourse (at 149th St.). From there, the trolley departs at 5:30, 6:30 and 7:30 p.m. Next ride is on Dec. 2. Riders can get on and off at any scheduled stop and spend as much time as they wish at any or all of the featured venues. For more information and a detailed schedule, call (718) 931-9500 ext. 33 or log on to www.bronxarts.org.

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: Harvest Time Hangings, to weave gathered leaves and cones together with other materials to create a decorative wall hanging, Nov. 28 and 29; and Peeking Into the Season, to create paper dioramas, holiday cards or calendars, then join the making of a group mural, Dec. 5 and 6; both in WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also offered is **Swingtime Big Band**, featuring music from the 1930s to the '50s, including Sinatra tunes in honor of his 100th birthday (tickets: \$28/adults; \$22/members; \$15/ages 8 to 18; \$12/

members (info: call ext. 251), Dec. 6 at 2 p.m. in the WH House. 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.

Holiday Events

The Riverdale YM-YWHA, 5625 Arlington Ave., presents the following holiday events: **Chanukah Gym-Bo**, Dec. 6 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., featuring physical activity, creativity, and playtime for kids, including lunch, with a special Chanukah celebration and Israeli arts and crafts (each child will create and decorate his own menorah); **Chanukah Community Party**, Dec. 12 from 6:30 to 8 p.m., featuring for kids: arts and crafts, dancing, food craft, and more, all in an Israeli style (light kosher dinner and treats will be provided after candle lighting; \$10/pp; \$35/family); and **Chanukah Luncheon**, Dec. 9 at 11:45 a.m., at the Y's Senior Center, including an international concert sponsored by Concerts in Motion (\$6/advance; \$8/at door). For more information, call (718) 548-8200 or (347) 479-8274.

The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation presents **Holiday Train Show**, daily through Jan. 18, 2016 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the New York Botanical Garden's Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, featuring model trains that zip through a display of 150 NYC landmarks, each recreated with bark, leaves and other natural materials. Advance reservations are recommended. For more information and tickets prices, call (718) 817-8716

Library Events

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents the following events for children: **Hands-on Projects**



Photo courtesy New York Public Library

THE MOSHOLU PUBLIC LIBRARY will be in the holiday spirit thanks to an ornamental arts and craft session Dec. 4.

at 4 p.m. (ages 7 to 12; preregistration required): Tree Ornament Making, Dec. 3; and Paper Snowman Making, Dec. 10. Adults can attend **Why Sinatra Matters**, an homage to the singer by author Pete Hamill, Nov. 28 at 2:30 p.m. Teens/young adults can join **Design Your Own Leather Bag**: to make a leather backpack, tote or messenger bag, and add pockets and accessories, Dec. 10 at 4 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

The Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for teens/young adults: **Make Your Own Holiday Ornament**: to make beads, baubles, and more (materials are provided), Dec. 4 at 3:30 p.m. Adults can attend: **Free Computer Classes**: to learn email and basic computer information, Wednesdays, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. For

more information, call (718) 882-8239. The Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Place (near Kingsbridge Road), offers for kids: **Kids Get Active Fridays**: (ages 5 to 12), dance and zumba, Nov. 27 at 3:30 p.m. Teens/young adults can enjoy: **Art Club**: art for all levels (materials are provided), Dec. 8 at 4:30 p.m. Adults can join: **Computer Basics at noon**: to learn computer parts, email and more, Dec. 3 and 10. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

A HAPPY AND HEALTHY THANKSGIVING TO ALL OUR READERS!

NOTE: Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org, and should be received by Nov. 30 for the next publication date of Dec. 10.

Turkey Giveaway Draws Hundreds



Photo by Miriam Quinones

A VOLUNTEER HANDS a bag full of free Thanksgiving items, including a turkey, to this needy Bronxite (left), one of 600 Bronxites on hand for a giveaway event organized by The Gardiner Foundation. Representatives from Lawyer-time.com sponsored the Nov. 21 charity event at St. James Park with help from high school students from Long Island. The Gardiner Foundation was formed by Dexter Gardiner, in memory of six family members whose lives were lost in a car crash on the Bronx River Parkway in 2006. Organizers received a citation from Councilman Fernando Cabrera.

Free WiFi Available at More Bronx Subways

Browsing Facebook to pass the time at the 2, 4, 5, and B/D lines subway stations is possible, thanks to the installation of free WiFi services in the Bronx.

The installation is part of a seven-phase project by the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) and Transit Wireless, the wireless service provider that hooked up the train lines. The project is currently at phase 4, now adding 21 stations with WiFi capabilities to its list.

Train stops receiving free WiFi service include the Norwood/205th Street

station on the D line, and on the B/D line: the stations of Bedford Park Boulevard, Kingsbridge Road, and Fordham Road.

The project is privately funded by Transit Wireless, which contributed \$200 million for the upgrades. State officials, who largely fund the MTA, hailed the progress. Governor Andrew Cuomo welcomed the project as a way to "improving rider experience, but also making public transportation a more viable option for those who work in and around our city."

--David Cruz and Jasmine Gomez

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