By DEBORAH CRUZ

Paula Caplan sat in the Sister Annunciata Bethell Senior Center in Bedford Park, surrounded by a group of concerned community members as they listed gripes for overdevelopment. She listened and watched as her colleague jotted down a vision residents have carved for their neighborhood.

As CEO of the Collective for Community, Culture, and Environment (CCCE) and hired by Community Board 7 at a rate of $25,000 to make a compelling argument for neighborhood preservation, Caplan is tasked to argue for what the residents want. She’s expected to take her findings to the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) and residents are relying on her.

Caplan heard these suggestions at this forum organized by CB 7. The Nov. 16 discussion represented the larger goal of warding off any overdevelopment and gentrification within pockets of Bedford Park and Kingsbridge Heights. It’s a vision that clashes with New York City, now in building mode, thanks to the de Blasio administration’s plan to build or preserve 200,000 units of affordable housing. Maps of the targeted zones and lists were posted on the center’s walls to begin the review of the neighborhoods.

In the last several years, developers have eyed sections of Bedford Park, zoned as R8, and certain sections of Kingsbridge Heights, zoned as R6, for construction.

RESIDENTS TAKE PART in roundtable discussions on the future of Bedford Park and Kingsbridge Heights, in a highly-publicized meeting serving as a jumping off point towards downzoning the two neighborhoods.

(continued on page 19)
With Undocumented Immigrants Fearful of Trump Presidency, Experts Weigh In On Rights

By DAVID CRUZ

With fears a Trump presidency can erode protections for undocumented immigrants in the Bronx, home to some 250,000 undocumented immigrants, city officials and legal experts are utilizing every stipulation to stave off any removal of rights. They’ve also underscored that the process of deportation is easier said than done.

The panel of experts, convening at the CUNY School of Journalism, told reporters of the ethnic and community press that immigrants with undocumented status should begin preparing for the worst case scenario: deportation. President-elect Donald Trump has vowed to deport 3 million undocumented immigrants, stirring anxieties and apprehension toward a presidency that could see immigrant communities torn.

Whether pandering or real, Mr. Trump’s avowals prompted experts to undocumented immigrants to consider a “safety plan” that could steer undocumented immigrants away from deportation.

“People should turn their fear into action,” Alina Das, an immigration attorney sitting on the dais, said.

Some helpful tips include:
- Collect all your original documents related to your immigration status, any interactions with law enforcement, and a contingency plan should you get arrested. “Often you will be asked by a lawyer... about your history, about family members, this includes birth certificates of your children making a plan with your children if God forbid you are arrested by immigration officials,” Das said.
- Always keep original documents on hand. Do not give them to anyone else unless it’s someone you trust.
- For those who can’t afford an attorney, the Cuomo administration has recently started a legal defense fund for undocumented immigrants who may face deportation. A cadre of colleges, universities, law firms, legal associations and advocacy groups have joined the new fund, overseen by the Office for New Americans.
- ActionNYC, a city service which offers legal advice to undocumented immigrants, is also available by calling (800) 554-0365.
- Do not sign any legal documents pertaining to immigration status without the presence of an attorney or if you’re unclear of what you’re signing, Das said.
- Avoid unlicensed attorneys who swear to solve all your immigration issues, including those who speak one’s native language, according to Jojo Annobil, an immigration attorney and panelist. Camille Mackler, an immigration attorney with the New York Immigration Coalition, said that attorneys will exploit the fears of undocumented immigrants by charging for fake services.

In one instance, one blinked an immigrant out of $9,000 after falsely convincing the victim they can clear up their immigration status. “We know that it’s happening. People are preying on these fears right now,” Mackler said. “And we also are concerned that individuals who aren’t properly trained, who aren’t licensed to practice law, are going to be trying to fill a gap in what they perceive is a gap in their communities.”

Among the major questions that went unanswered was whether President-elect Donald Trump will nix the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), an executive order President Barack Obama instituted in 2012, which offers protections to undocumented children who illegally arrived to the United States before 1997 and have since carved a productive life in the states.

“It is possible that when the president-elect comes into office, he could easily do an executive office to renege on DACA,” Alizabeth Newman, an immigration attorney and panelist, said. “The least that could happen is that nothing happens; that people have work authorization and it expires and that’s it—there’s no renewals. Another thing that could happen is it could be invalidated as of the day the order is renege. Or what people are most fearful of is that the information that has already been collected on DACA recipients will then be passed on to the enforcement branch and proceedings can begin.”

Whether that happens, New York City is prepared to defend the undocumented. Among the leader supporters for undocumented immigrant rights is Mayor Bill de Blasio. At a news conference, Mr. de Blasio said, “If the federal government tries to deport law-abiding New Yorkers who have no representation, we will step in. We will work and build on the work of the City Council to provide these New Yorkers with the lawyers they need to protect them and their families.”

Public and Community Meetings

COMMUNITY BOARD 7 committee meetings are held on the following dates at the board office, 229 E. 204th St., at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Economic Development Committee on Nov. 29; Community Relations/LTP Committee on Nov. 29 at 7:30 p.m.; and Website/Acknowledgement & Media Committee on Nov. 30. For more information, call (718) 933-5650.

BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION meets Wednesday, Dec. 7, at 8 p.m. at 400 E. Moshulu Pkwy. So. (Apt. B1). For more information, email the group at bedfordsmoshulaverizon.net.
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Certain restrictions may apply.
How the heck did they allow him and the Russians steal the (expletive) presidency? It was stolen…And Hillary [Clinton] stole it from Bernie Sanders, and Donald Trump stole it from her. So Hillary shouldn’t have even been in the race and Bernie Sanders should be president.

Johnny Gibbs
Parkchester

Actually, the outcome was pretty good. I’m glad for something new, I can say that. I was definitely not for Hillary. It was a crazy campaign. To me, at the end of the day the president is just the manager and the manager has a boss too, so there’s only so much that they really can do. He has a certain amount of power, but they have to answer to somebody too. I think, business-wise, Trump can help the country. He’s going to create more jobs, but he’s not saying how much those jobs will pay.

Clifford Waight
Downtown Brooklyn

I think it’s a joke because this man is so rich, he had nothing else to conquer and nothing else to achieve and nothing else to gain but the highest chair in the land. It’s all about him and not about the country. I think he’s selfish for even running. His ideas and ideals, his whole demeanor is something I have never seen before.

Tony Jamerson
Harlem

Yes, I did vote for [Trump]. I think it’s great and I believe he might do a good job if they give him a chance. The election this year was ridiculous, really pathetic, but he won. The protesters should go home because the outcome of the race is not going to change. It’s time we change the country already and we need someone who’s going to put their foot down and say, “If you don’t deliver for the country, then get out.”

Elizabeth Ferraro
Norwood

My feelings are Donald Trump is going to be a great president for the United States. He’s a cutthroat businessman. On dealing with the rest of the world, he may need to learn how to calm down and talk, but when it comes to business, nobody tells him anything. I hope Donald Trump does good. I understand when he says we’re going to bring America back to the way it was, because in the ‘80s and ‘90s, the white Americans got lazy; they did their drugs and partied and then asked, “Where did our good jobs go?”

Albert Mango
Bedford Park

This week we asked readers their thoughts on the outcome of the 2016 presidential race won by Donald Trump.
Mosholu Parkway Trees to Be Removed Only to Be Replanted

By DAVID CRUZ

It seems money grows on trees for the Parks Department.

The city agency looks to spend several hundred thousand dollars to inexplicably dig up close to 200 trees along Mosholu Parkway and replant them, leaving those who want the young arborists exactly where they are scratching their heads.

Parks explained in a letter to Elizabeth Quaranta, president of Friends of Moshulu Parkland, a volunteer advocacy group, that the agency “is currently reviewing its plans for the transplanting of these trees,” adding “no work will be done until the plans are reviewed by and confirmed with the community.”

Still, the mere decision for re-configuring the plants angered Quaranta who’s harangued the Parks Department to reconsider the plan.

“The magnitude scale of this project and its cost was overseen under the previous administration and therefore many community members are questioning the integrity of Parks’ decisions moving forward,” wrote Quaranta to Parks. “In other words, why should we trust you now with this decision?”

Two years ago crews planted the dogwood trees, also known as a Hound’s Tree, on the parkway’s malls as a way to stave off erosion of the parkway. An unintended consequence was stopping the malls from becoming vulnerable play areas, which drew mixed reaction. Much of the fear stems from organized games where a ball may bounce onto the busy roadway. The cost of the project was $300,000, paid through the Parks Department’s capital budget, along with a donation from the New York Tree Trust via state allocation. It’s unclear how much the impending transplant project will cost.

Jimmy Cee, walking his dog named Frisk on one of Mosholu Parkway’s malls, finds it more pragmatic to build a barrier fence on the sides of the mall. “It would be sensible to do that than to place life and uproot it,” Cee said.

Not too far away, Jet Ismailgeci, playing with his dog Squishy, asked, “What’s wrong with just the way they are?” He suggested the project’s budget should go towards trash bins that are few and far between in Norwood.

Julio Roldan, leisurely sitting alongside Mosholu Parkway’s benches, called the upcoming project “a waste of money.” “They should just leave it alone,” he said.

Parks ensured Quaranta in its letter that it will “follow best practices and will site the trees in a location appropriate for their health and planting requirements.”

THESE TREES ON Mosholu Parkway are slated to be replanted, stoking anger among park advocates.
Anna Rogovin, a Familiar Face in Norwood, Passes Away at 100

Anna Rogovin, 100, died on Oct. 27, 2016, after a brief illness. Anna was born on Sept. 25, 1916, in New York City to Russian immigrants. After starting Hunter College in New York at age 15, she graduated with honors and began her career with a civil service job in the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, DC.

When WW II broke out, she enlisted in the WAVES in the United States Navy, where she worked on developing synthetic rubber. She served on active duty for the duration of the war, and continued her service for 20 years in the US Naval Reserves, where she rose to the rank of Lieutenant. In addition to the pride she felt serving her country, she very much enjoyed her travels in the Reserves.

After the war, she continued her education under the GI Bill of Rights and received her Master’s Degree in organic chemistry from the University of Illinois, where she studied with Carl Shipp Marvel. She was very patriotic and grateful to her Uncle Sam for the many opportunities her country afforded her.

Fittingly, she died on Navy Day. Over the course of her career, Anna worked as a research chemist for several companies, including Colgate Palmolive, Rohm & Haas, and retired from the American Petroleum Institute. At 91, Anna survived a horrific accident on East Gun Hill Road and DeKalb Avenue involving a semi-truck, which left her confined to a wheelchair. She was on her way to Mosholu Montefiore Community Center, where she was an active participant.

She moved to Tucson, living at Handmaker Assisted Living Center, for the last nine years. Anna had varied interests, such as her love for Judaism, politics, travel, arts, and animals. She started a book club, a Torah study program, and made sure flags were displayed at Handmaker for every appropriate holiday. Above all else, Anna valued family.

She celebrated her 100th birthday in October surrounded by her cousin, nieces, great-nieces and nephews, and great-great nieces and nephews. Anna was predeceased by her parents, sister, Rose (Albert) Duben of Tucson, and brother, Abraham (Jean) of New York. She is survived by her niece, Leah Richter; great-nephew, Michael (Allison) Rich- ter; great-niece, Suzanne (Chad) Stadheim, all of Tucson; niece, Lorraine (Arthur) Weitman of Las Vegas, NV; great-nephew, Allen (Helen) Weitman of Manhasset, NY; great-niece, Michele (Ron) Hitchcock of Norristown, PA.; nephew, Steven Rogovin and great-niece, Georjean of Rivervale, NJ.; great-nephew, Jason Rogovin of Long Island City, NY.; and her great-great nieces and nephews, Rachel and Noah Rich- ter, Abigail and Andrew Stadheim, and Jenna, Matthew, and Andrew Weitman.

Services were held at Parkside Memorial Chapel in Queens, NY, and burial was at the Beth David Cemetery in Elmont, NY. Donations may be made in Anna’s memory to the Handmaker Foundation, 2221 N. Rosemont Blvd., Tucson, AZ 85712, or the Veterans Administration, 3601 S. 6th Ave, Tucson, AZ 85723. Arrangements by Evergreen Mortuary.

Editor’s Note: This obituary was written by the Rogovin family and originally appeared in the Arizona Daily Star on Nov. 6, 2016.
Last Round: Closing Time
For McDwyer’s Pub

By DAVID GREENE

Old friends are returning to their favorite watering hole in Norwood to reunite with pals from yesteryear to say goodbye to a neighborhood icon, McDwyer’s Pub, slated to close after 50 years in business.

Eamonn “Eddie” McDwyer, 79, opened his pub at the corner of East 204th Street and Hull Avenue on St. Patrick’s Day 1966. Despite having more than 20 competing bars along East 204th Street and up Bainbridge Avenue in the mid-1980s, McDwyer’s continued to thrive.

Like his customers, McDwyer, whose Irish accent lends the bar that level of Irish authenticity, has aged some, the pep in his step faded some. These days he gets around using a cane to maneuver behind the bar. The saloon is emptier these days, with the regular crowd that once packed the bar nightly having moved away from the old neighborhood. McDwyer, meantime, has stayed, regaling customers with some behind-the-bar tales. Among them is when he was pistol-whipped and shot during a daring daytime robbery that forced him to use the case.

Just six months after celebrating the bar’s 50th anniversary, McDwyer revealed a dispute between himself and his landlord that jeopardized whether the bar would remain open. At the time, the question of whether he would stay or go was up in the air. McDwyer, speaking to the Norwood News amid his conflict with the landlord, was too upset to say whether he was staying or going.

But towards the middle of November, word began to spread that McDwyer’s legal battle with his landlord had come to an end, with the end result being closure.

New and old faces stopped by McDwyer’s on a mild Nov. 19. “I love him. It’s sad that he’s got to go,” Elizabeth Ferraro, a new customer, said while hanging at the local dive. “Why do I love him? Because he’s a sweetheart. Everyone at the bar is great, they’re great guys. I love Irish men.”

Another customer, who declined to give his name, recalled, “I moved out of here 23 years ago from Decatur Avenue. I came back today because I thought it was his last day because the bar was closing. I came down from Yorktown Heights and God bless him. He’s the last man bartender standing.”

McDwyer’s is expected to remain open until Saturday, Nov. 26, when he’ll shut his doors for the last time.
52nd Pct.: Beware Of Donation Scams

By JALEESA BAULKMAN

Con artists are coming up with different ways to trick residents living within the 52nd Precinct out of their money.

People looking for apartments using Craigslist or apartment hunting apps as opposed to a reputable real estate broker are at an increased risk of being a victim of fraud, according to police. In one scam reported in the Five-Two, an apartment hunter paid a scammer upfront fees in hopes that they will help them search for an apartment. The fees are bogus, and the victim never hears from the fake realtor again.

“We’ve been seeing this a lot,” Deputy Inspector Peter Fiorillo told residents at the 52nd Community Council meeting on Nov. 17. “I don’t know why people would give anybody any kind of money to have someone go find an apartment for them up front. From my experience that’s usually something that, if you find the apartment, you [pay] on the back end.”

Although rental scams are nothing new under the sun, officers are receiving more complaints about this type of scam which suggest that it may be becoming more prominent within the 52nd Precinct, which covers Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge Heights, parts of Fordham, and University Heights.

Another scam that’s gaining traction in the area is via telemarketing that solicits money, especially those that claim to be collecting money on behalf of the New York City Police Department. In fact, officers made an arrest on Nov. 17 of a woman who was using these tactics and making approximately $8,000 a week. The arrest happened as part of a sting operation inside the Keeper’s House, home to the Norwood News.

“I’m going to say this, we do not solicit money over the phone,” Fiorillo said. “We will never call your house.”

Sergeant Joseph McKenna said residents should call the precinct at (718) 220-5811 or 911 if they think someone soliciting money or donations over the phone “might be legitimate,” but aren’t really sure.

CRIME FILE

Parking Lot Attendant Robbed

Police are looking for two suspects wanted for robbing a parking lot attendant at gunpoint in Fordham.

Police say the robbery happened on just after 4 a.m. on Nov. 11 at BK Parking Group Inc. at 265 W. Fordham Rd., where the suspects flashed a gun and demanded cash from the 36-year-old employee. The thieves ran off with money and a cell phone.

Photos released describe the suspects as follow:

Individual 1: Male, Hispanic, mid-20s, 5’8”, dark complexion, brown eyes, last seen wearing a black hooded jacket, and black sneakers.

Individual 2: Male, Black, mid 20s, brown eyes, dark complexion, last seen wearing a gray hooded jacket, dark blue jeans, and white sneakers.

Police Car Thief Charged

Police have arrested a suspected police car thief who took a marked police car on a joy ride before sideswiping four parked cars.

Police say the suspect, identified as 31-year-old Rubin Fernandez (top right) was on the run since Sunday, Oct. 23, when he allegedly stole a police car from the precinct’s parking lot, driving it near the vicinity of Fordham Road and Sedgwick Avenue.

It’s in front of 2300 Sedgwick Ave. where the thief slammed the police car into the vehicles before taking off in a Black Lincoln Town car. An investigation led police to his house in Manhattan’s Upper West Side. He was arrested and faces numerous charges including grand larceny, reckless endangerment and criminal mischief.

Bronx Rough Riders

The NYPD has seized this trove of dirt bikes in the last few days, and are warning riders if they see them on Bronx streets, they will be confiscated.

This latest crop of bikes was brought to the 52nd Precinct in Norwood, where over the weekend, a parade of cyclists took over the Grand Concourse and Mosholu Parkway. Cops grabbed some of the bikes, though some took off. The Police Department instituted a policy several years ago barring officers from pursuing high speed cyclists, seeing it could have a greater danger on bystanders. The NYPD can make arrests.

Flash mob of riders (pictured below) is uncommon in Norwood, though when it does happen, riders usually dominate the streets. In some cases, many blow through lights or intentionally rev up their motorcycles to draw attention. The 52nd Precinct is keeping an ear out for cyclists who rev along Norwood’s spurs.
Hydroponic Lab to Be Built at DeWitt Clinton H.S.

By DANIELA BEASLEY

A hydroponic lab used to cultivate plants in water rather than soil is expected to be one of the newest learning tools at DeWitt Clinton High School. The news came amid the school’s Seventh Annual Harvest Celebration on Nov. 10, where plans to expand the school’s garden were announced.

The lab will be found at the school’s 1200-square-foot chemistry lab on the third floor where more than a thousand pounds of food is expected to be grown and harvested. The food produced from the lab will be used in the school’s cafeteria and also sold at farmers markets by students to continually fund the project. The lab’s implementation to the school curriculum opens a new frontier of learning for students at the school, while also underscoring Clinton’s mission as a neighborhood school.

“The key thing for me is that we are a community school,” said Raymond Pultinas, an English teacher at the school. “What better way than to feed and provide for the community, in order to be recognized in that capacity?”

Pultinas organized and oversaw the garden when it first opened in 2009 and has now helped to create a blueprint to triple the size of the garden, while also being heavily involved in the hydroponics lab that’s expected to be completed fairly soon.

The school plans to increase the size of the Clinton Garden from its single space into the James Baldwin Memorial Outdoor Learning Center by creating a nature trail around the entire school. Through the trail, the school will create the experience that people currently get in the garden, available to everyone.

“There are so many steps around the campus, [Clinton Garden is not accessible],” said Linda Pollak, an architect and principal of her firm Marpilero Pollak Architects, who will help draft a layout of the outdoor trail. “There’s a lot of barriers, but it could be amazing for it to be more open. It could really enable things to happen here that couldn’t happen anywhere else in the city.”

Pollak and her team have had two community visioning sessions over the past year and a half to understand the needs and wants of the new trail and garden expansion. The Harvest Celebration doubled as another visioning session as people were encouraged to create their ideal nature trail through a “Make Your Walk” game that was brought to the event by Pollak’s team. Game pieces were used to represent different nature elements that are being considered in making the nature trail.

The “Make Your Walk” game was only one of four exhibits at the event, standing alongside a student-created kiosk showing where food deserts are located in local neighborhoods and the effects that come from having limited access to healthy foods. The last two stations chronicled Clinton’s history of the garden and the life and times of James Baldwin, a famous African-American writer, where students’ accounts of police violence complemented the exhibit.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS, STUDENTS, and teachers take part in the “Make Your Walk” game that will help determine what goes into the nature trail around the school.
BCC Opens Food Pantry at Univ. Hts. Campus

Bronx Community College is stepping up for the city’s needy with the opening of a food pantry for students at its campus in University Heights.

School officials cut the ribbon on the brand new BCC Food Pantry, with its partners, the Food Bank of New York City, joining them at the Nov. 15 ceremony. DeDra Polite, director of BCC’s Single Stop student social services office, cites 70 percent of its student clientele is in extreme need of food. Polite said the idea is to lessen worries students struggling to find a meal face and “help them persist to graduation.”

BCC, falling under the City University of New York network, is one of several CUNY schools around the city to open a pantry with the Food Bank of New York City. The group, along with BCC, set aside funding to open the pantry. For further information, please contact the Single Stop Office at (718) 289-5327.

--David Cruz

MMCC Talks Turkey

A STAFFER WITH Mosholu Montefiore Community Center (left) hands off a turkey to this winner of a raffle at the annual MMCC Thanksgiving Family Dinner on Nov. 18. Dozens of parents and children from MMCC's Child Care Center broke bread at MMCC's headquarters on DeKalb Avenue off East Gun Hill Road. Stop & Shop heavily donated some of the fixings, along with parents who also helped. A photo slideshow featuring the evening’s event can be found on www.norwoodnews.org.

--David Cruz

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Photos by Adi Talwar
Behind the JGHBID, New Executive Director Goes on Listening Tour

By DAVID CRUZ

A roar mixed with a hum dominates the corner of Jerome Avenue and East Gun Hill Road. On Jerome Avenue between Mosholu Parkway and East Gun Hill Road, a candelabra of regular customers frequent the parade of restaurants, clothes, and banks that make up the strip.

On East Gun Hill Road between Jerome and Webster avenues, the tone is more low-key during the day, with residents grabbing a slice of pizza on the go, flowers for an anniversary, or a prescription at their neighborhood drugstore.

It may surprise some storeowners in that vicinity to know they’re operating within the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District, a commercial corridor where convenience shopping rules. And Jennifer Tausig, the BID’s newest executive director, is on a mission to let merchants know there’s been a service set up since 1997 that intends to boost their business.

At the Keeper’s House, a stone house at a quiet section of Norwood, Tausig visualizes the next big project for JGHBID. Economic development is her mantra, and when revving that engine she’s not thinking how it looks tomorrow, but what it could look like beyond.

“While it’s definitely a journey, the destination feels big,” Tausig said. “Thinking about how it looks tomorrow, but not thinking how it looks tomorrow, but what it could look like beyond.”

“While it’s definitely a journey, the destination feels big,” Tausig said. “Thinking about how it looks tomorrow, but what it could look like beyond.”

New Hire

Tausig was hired this year after spending several years at Phipps Neighborhood, a social services and affordable housing provider based in the South Bronx. She developed an Out-of-School-Out-of-Work program called “Career Network: Healthcare” focusing on healthcare careers for young people that attracted Montefiore Health System’s Moses Campus, where some 10,000 employees of Montefiore Health System’s Moses Campus, where median incomes hover around $55,000, walk near or along the BID. There’s also the roughly 3,000 residents who live in nearby Tracey Towers, one of the tallest Mitchell-Lama complexes that’s home to middle class earners.

The potential for an increased customer base exists as indicated by a retail analysis report by Larisa Ortiz & Associates, a business development think tank. The report found that $142 million in profits are missed in products and services absent at JGHBID. The data is seen as a framework “for retail market attraction,” and one that hopefully lands in the hands of retail brokers. It’s one reason why Tausig is planning a so-called brokers breakfast.

“We can use that with the brokers and say, ‘Look, here’s data that says people in this neighborhood are spending millions of dollars outside the neighborhood for shoes,” Tausig said. “So go find us some shoe retailers.”

Along with garnering interest from the outside, Tausig has begun gauging merchants from the inside by enticing many to take an active role at BID board meetings, where concerns are aired and future plans brainstormed. The 15-member board, where BID executive directors serve at the board’s pleasure, is comprised of property owners, merchants, elected officials and one community member.

Boosting the BID’s visibility remains her priority. It’s helped by signature events such as its annual Fall Festival, which draws several thousand people to the all-day event. Holiday lights and sidewalk sales also contribute to the BID’s visibility, along with commercials that run on local cable stations.

Above all, Tausig looks to flesh out the BID’s identity. Identity is critical, Tausig notes, and one that she hopes can keep its current shopping base within JGHBID. To find that identity, Tausig poses the question: “[W]hat can we do to keep the people who are in the community and are spending their money and shopping elsewhere to do their shopping here?”

JENNIFER TAUSIG (LEFT), the Jerome-Gun Hill BID’s newest executive director, walks the Jerome Avenue side of the BID with Ann Saingchin, owner of Ted’s Shoe Repair.

Behind the JGHBID, New Executive Director Goes on Listening Tour

By DAVID CRUZ

A roar mixed with a hum dominates the corner of Jerome Avenue and East Gun Hill Road. On Jerome Avenue between Mosholu Parkway and East Gun Hill Road, a candelabra of regular customers frequent the parade of restaurants, clothes, and banks that make up the strip.

On East Gun Hill Road between Jerome and Webster avenues, the tone is more low-key during the day, with residents grabbing a slice of pizza on the go, flowers for an anniversary, or a prescription at their neighborhood drugstore.

It may surprise some storeowners in that vicinity to know they’re operating within the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District, a commercial corridor where convenience shopping rules. And Jennifer Tausig, the BID’s newest executive director, is on a mission to let merchants know there’s been a service set up since 1997 that intends to boost their business.

At the Keeper’s House, a stone house at a quiet section of Norwood, Tausig visualizes the next big project for JGHBID. Economic development is her mantra, and when revving that engine she’s not thinking how it looks tomorrow, but what it could look like beyond.

“While it’s definitely a journey, the destination feels big,” Tausig said. “Thinking about how it looks tomorrow, but not thinking how it looks tomorrow, but what it could look like beyond.”

New Hire

Tausig was hired this year after spending several years at Phipps Neighborhood, a social services and affordable housing provider based in the South Bronx. She developed an Out-of-School-Out-of-Work program called “Career Network: Healthcare” focusing on healthcare careers for young people that attracted Montefiore Health System’s Moses Campus, where some 10,000 employees of Montefiore Health System’s Moses Campus, where median incomes hover around $55,000, walk near or along the BID. There’s also the roughly 3,000 residents who live in nearby Tracey Towers, one of the tallest Mitchell-Lama complexes that’s home to middle class earners.

The potential for an increased customer base exists as indicated by a retail analysis report by Larisa Ortiz & Associates, a business development think tank. The report found that $142 million in profits are missed in products and services absent at JGHBID. The data is seen as a framework “for retail market attraction,” and one that hopefully lands in the hands of retail brokers. It’s one reason why Tausig is planning a so-called brokers breakfast.

“We can use that with the brokers and say, ‘Look, here’s data that says people in this neighborhood are spending millions of dollars outside the neighborhood for shoes,” Tausig said. “So go find us some shoe retailers.”

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JENNIFER TAUSIG (LEFT), the Jerome-Gun Hill BID’s newest executive director, walks the Jerome Avenue side of the BID with Ann Saingchin, owner of Ted’s Shoe Repair.
The Board of Directors of the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District cordially invite merchants, property owners, and community residents who have a business or live within the BID’s borders (Jerome Avenue between East Mosholu Parkway South and East Gun Hill Road and East Gun Hill Road between Jerome and Webster avenues) to attend its:

20th Annual Meeting
Monday, December 5th 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

Please join us to learn more about the services and benefits to all the Merchants!!

- **Hear** from your local Elected Officials and the 52nd Precinct
- **Meet** the new Director of the Jerome Gun Hill BID
- **Learn** about resources available to grow your business
  - **Hear** about new Recycling Regulations
  - **Share** your ideas about plans for 2017
- **VOTE** for the new 2017 Board of Directors

Dinner and Refreshments will be served at Tequilaz Restaurant and Lounge
3489 Jerome Avenue, Bronx, NY 10467

Please RSVP to Dawn McEvoy
Phone: (718) 324-4946 or
Email: DMcEvoy@montefiore.org
By November 30, 2016

*All merchants who attend the meeting and vote will be eligible to enter a raffle to win a free 10-second commercial spot on Cablevision.*
A BID of Eateries

By DANIELA BEASLEY

There are more than 200 businesses along both East Gun Hill Road and Jerome Avenue that make up the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District (BID). The Norwood News is highlighting five different restaurants that offer a glimpse at what can be expected when traveling to Norwood’s BID.

Anthony’s Famous Gourmet Deli: Located at 169 E. Gun Hill Rd., the eatery has been around since 1997 and is set apart from other bodegas and delis even before walking in given the all-glass exterior showcasing the open space and cleanliness. The deli’s busiest time starts around noon, when the lunch crowd ushers shouts of multiple orders and lines of regulars queue up. “People come here for everything, salads, juice. There’s a lot of stuff, but mostly sandwiches. We know about sandwiches over here,” said owner Tony Ghazali, while his son Mohammad dealt with the aftermath of the lunch rush.

Caribe: A Dominican restaurant located at East Gun Hill Road and Jerome Avenue. Along with ample seating inside, Caribe has two pick-up windows— one facing East Gun Hill Road and the other facing Jerome Avenue. Carmen Nuñez, an employee of Caribe for 11 of the 13 years the restaurant has been open, says the busiest time starts at 12 to 2 p.m. every day. “People are always coming in and out, ordering outside. Business is good,” said Nuñez. “They like the rice, the beans, the mofongo, the chicken. People come in for a lot of different stuff.”

Marconi’s Pizza: Unlike other pizza places in the area, Marconi’s sets itself apart given the expansive seating that’s made available in their space at 181 E. Gun Hill Rd. “We get a lot of orders for here; it’s always very busy inside,” said five-year employee Anan Krasniqi. In the time that he’s been there, Krasniqi says business has always been good, thanks to the fandom the pizza’s achieved over the years. “I guess the favorite would be the chicken tomato pizza, but people love everything we have here,” he noted.

Tequilaz: A new business in the area that opened three month ago, Tequilaz is a Mexican restaurant with Latin fusion that also serves sushi. Different from other restaurants in the area, their hours are 5 p.m. to 4 a.m., which extends their clientele to more than just the dinner crowd. Located at 3489 Jerome Ave., this restaurant turns into a lounge where DJs, live entertainment, and karaoke can be expected on the busier nights. “We wanted to bring something upscale to the neighborhood,” said Harold Richardson, owner. “We carry food that no one else carries around here, and we have Sunday brunch, which nobody in the neighborhood has. It gets packed.” Starting the first week in December Tequilaz will be offering lunch.

Le Juice Bar & Café: Specializing in empanadas and a variety of smoothies, the unique Le Juice & Café opened in June of 2015. According to Shary Rodriguez, the owner, the place is always busy. “We have our regular customers and on a daily basis people who happen to notice our store drop in,” she said. The store has 43 different types of empanadas and is always adding to the menu whenever Rodriguez thinks of a new creation. Rodriguez chose the location, 254 E. Gun Hill Rd., because she grew up in the area. With her knowledge of the neighborhood, Rodriguez hopes that business will continue to go as well as it has in the past year.

Editor’s Note: A full listing of restaurants at JGHBID can be found on www.jeromegunhillbid.org.

INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER
BID EDITION

By DANIELA BEASLEY

For the BID Special Section, we asked readers what they consider their favorite place along the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement corridor.

I would say Tequilaz down on Jerome [Avenue]. I mean it’s aesthetically nice and pretty. The music is good, the food is good, the drinks are okay. I mean, I wouldn’t go there very early, but at night it’s fun.

Ayana Landsmark
Bedford Park

I know exactly which one; that Chinese restaurant right over there [New Ming Liang Restaurant] takes out Chinese food eatery on East Gun Hill Road. I like how they prepare the food, their meals. I’ve been here for two years and always order from there the whole time since I got here.

Orville Tucker
Norwood

That’s a hard decision. Well, it would have to be the juice bar right across the street [Lé Juice Bar & Café]. I’ve been going there since they opened last year. I like them because they actually have healthy food options.

Paula Murray
Norwood

You know, I never really thought about that question on this street [Jerome Avenue]. Probably Rite Aid is the one I frequent the most. They usually have good deals as far as pharmacies around here. When they run deals on this street [Jerome Avenue]. Probably Rite Aid is the one I frequent the most. They usually have good deals as far as pharmacies around here. When they run deals.

Brian Lavelle
Works in Norwood

My favorite place? I have like two or three probably I like to really go to. Rainbow [the children’s clothing store]. I don’t know what the pharmacy is called over there. Drug Rite? And another one would be Rite Aid. But mostly Rainbow because of the clothes. There are a lot of other stores around here that have clothes but I only like that one because of the type of clothes and the price.

Liz Mejias
Norwood

By DANIELA BEASLEY

INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER
BID EDITION

For the BID Special Section, we asked readers what they consider their favorite place along the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement corridor.
By WENDY JOAN BIDDLECOMBE

Maintaining the streets in the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District is no easy task.

Just ask longtime street cleaner Mohamed Cisse, who has spent the last eight years sweeping sidewalks, emptying garbage cans, and picking up trash in the district.

Cisse, a Senegalese native, works for Street Plus, the company previously known as Atlantic Maintenance Corporation. The company is responsible for keeping streets clean in the Jerome-Gun Hill BID, which covers Jerome Avenue between Mosholu Parkway and East Gun Hill Road; East Gun Hill Road between Jerome and Webster avenues; and shorter stretches of East 208th Street, Mosholu Parkway, DeKalb Avenue and Webster Avenue. Private cleaning services are a hallmark to a BID.

Street Plus provides sanitation services for numerous other BIDs, including the Union Square and Flatiron 23rd Street Partnerships, and has been the company in charge of keeping the Jerome-Gun Hill BID clean from day one. Street Plus’s four workers man the streets seven days a week, 361 days a year.

Street Plus Co-CEO David Goldberg said when the BID first started and his company first came to the neighborhood 20 years ago, the area “felt a lot dirtier, and less safe and thriving than it does today.”

“We’re still a mom-and-pop kind of neighborhood, but the rate of vacancies has decreased, and that has been some of the driving force,” Goldberg said.

When asked what he wished more people in the neighborhood knew about trash cleanup in the BID, Goldberg said it’s important to note that Street Plus “supplements” the services provided by the city and the responsibility of property owners.

“The longer people live in the neighborhood, the more connected they become, and they have more pride to make sure their neighborhood looks clean and feels safe,” Goldberg said. “This connectivity to the neighborhood is so important.”

As for Cisse, he starts his days at 8 a.m. and cleans until 4 p.m. with a mid-day break. The crews start by clearing the sidewalks, bagging up garbage for the Department of Sanitation to pick up and changing garbage can liners.

“Working outside isn’t easy. But I like this job because I have family in Africa and everything I do is for my family,” said Cisse, who also works part-time at a grocery store in Bronxville in the evenings after his shift ends.

But most days, Cisse said the frustrations are more bureaucratic—the endless loop of residents and supers leaving their building’s trash for him to pick up, and Cisse reprimanding, and being strung along with calls to 311 and the Department of Sanitation.

Still, given the ups and downs, it’s clear Cisse knows more business owners and neighbors than he does not know.

“The neighborhood has changed [in the years that I’ve worked here], but it’s no problem for me and my guys,” Cisse said.

Looking Back: A BID is Born

Back in the 1990s, a move to beautify and improve the look of stores on Jerome Avenue and East Gun Hill Road in the Norwood section of the Bronx began to take shape. After major advocating from business and property owners, the city was convinced to form the Mosholu-Jerome-East Gun Hill Road Business Improvement District (BID), also known as the Jerome-Gun Hill BID. Formation of the BID was signed by former Mayor Rudy Giuliani on May 6, 1996.

One of 69 BIDs throughout New York City and one of nine BIDs in the Bronx, the Jerome-Gun Hill BID is located in Norwood, and serves one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the city, and continues to be a vibrant retail commercial district.

Its catchment area includes; Jerome Avenue between Mosholu Parkway and East Gun Hill Road and East Gun Hill Road between Jerome and Webster avenues; with smaller portions of East 208th Street, Mosholu Parkway, DeKalb Avenue, and property with storefronts on Webster Avenue.

Since January 1997, the BID has been serving more than 200 businesses that range in size from small retail shops to local, regional, and national retailers such as LaSorsa Auto Group, GameStop, Drug Rite, Keyfood Supermarket, Petland Discount, CVS Pharmacy, Chase Bank, Porta Bella Men’s Fashions, Pretty Girl Inc. Women’s Clothing, Payless Shoes, and GNC. The BID is managed by the Mosholu Preservation Corporation (MPC), a support corporation of Montefiore Medical Center.
BIG SAVINGS
THROUGHOUT THE JEROME-GUN HILL AREA!
COME SHOP & SAVE BIG ALL YEAR AROUND

Over 200 Stores on Jerome Avenue from Mosholu to Gun Hill Road and on Gun Hill Road to Webster Avenue

Discover the Stores, Quality Service and Savings at the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District. Where Good Neighbors Deserve Great Shopping! All in a Safe, Clean & Friendly Environment

Call the BID Hotline at 718-324-4946 for more information or visit us at www.jeromegunhillbid.org

Epiphany Lutheran Church
A place of grace in Norwood. 3127 Decatur Ave., Bronx, NY Phone: (718) 652-6839 Website: www.epiphanybx.org WORSHIP Sundays at noon; BIBLE STUDY Wednesday nights at 7 p.m.; THRIFT SHOP Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America - God’s work - our hands

Your Classified Ad Here!
Reach 40,000 potential customers by taking out a classified in the award-winning Norwood News.

To place an ad, call 718-324-4998
NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

Citizenship Applications
Councilmember Andrew Cohen invites immigrants seeking citizenship to get free assistance in filling out their applications at Tracey Towers, 40 W. Moshulu Pkwy So. (Community Room A; entrance at Building 40), Dec. 3 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information including list of required documents, and to request a mandatory appointment, call (646) 664-9400.

Bias Reporting Hotline
Residents who have experienced bias-motivated threats, harassment or discrimination are encouraged to call Division of Human Rights’ toll-free hotline at (888) 392-3644 weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. To report a crime or fear for your safety, call 911 immediately.

Heating Assistance Available
Funding assistance for heating bills is available via NYS government for elderly and low- and moderate-income New Yorkers. Eligible households can receive a one-time benefit of up to $626, depending on income, household size and heating source. A family of four can have a household income of up to $53,076 annually, or $4,423 a month, and still qualify for help. For more information and to apply, log on to http://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/.

Housing Help and Finance Workshop
University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP) offers two programs at Concourse House, 2751 Grand Concourse (entrance on East 196th Street): Tenant Housing Resource Fair will be held on Nov. 30 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. where apartment seekers and current tenants will have access to on-the-spot assistance and resources on eviction prevention, rent freeze, tenant legal assistance, housing lottery applications, making sure your credit is not a barrier, and more. A free five-week “Getting Ahead Workshop” began on Nov. 22 from 6 to 8 p.m. and will cover financial worries about debt, credit, garnishment, banking products, savings, and more. Participants receive a free copy of their credit report. For more information or to RSVP, call (718) 933-2539.

Coat Drive
New York Cares is running its annual coat drive for individuals to donate gently used, freshly laundered coats through Dec. 31. Coats may be dropped off at your nearest police station. For more information and locations, visit newyorkcares.org/coats.

Bird Watching at VC Park
Van Cortlandt Park features free bird walks Saturdays from 8 to 9:30 a.m. through November. Meet at the Nature Center, 246th Street and Broadway. For more information, contact Joseph McManus at McManus638@aol.com.

State Gov’t. Internships Available
Some 400 spring internships with New York State government offices are available for NYS residents who are undergraduate and graduate students at colleges and universities in NYS and elsewhere. To apply, log on to nysinternships.cs.ny.gov to view job descriptions, create profiles, upload resumes, writing samples, and letters of recommendation. Deadline is Dec. 23.

Free ESL & GED Classes at MMCC
The Mosholu Montefiore Community Center offers free ESL classes at its main building, 3450 DeKalb Avenue for ages 18+ (info: (718) 882-4000); and free GED/TASC classes at its annex, 3512 DeKalb Ave. for young adults ages 17 to 24 (info: (718) 652-0282).

C.O.V.E. Seeks Interns
Community Organized with a Vision of Excellence at 3418 Gates Pl. (basement) is seeking paid interns ages 14 to 18 to work at the after school program. For more information, call (718) 405-1312.
EDITOR’S PICK

Bronx Tree Lightings

The public is invited to attend local tree lighting events: Dec. 7 at 5:30 p.m. at the plaza on Jerome Avenue and Moshulu Parkway North, sponsored by the Jerome-Gun Hill BID, and includes Christmas carols with Santa, hot chocolate, cookies, and gifts (718) 324-4946; on Dec. 8 at 6 p.m., at the Moshulu Parkway Lawn at the intersection of Moshulu Parkway and Bainbridge Avenue, sponsored by Bronx Community Board #7 (718) 933-5650; and on Dec. 2 from 5 to 8 p.m. at Bryan Park (East Fordham Road and Kingsbridge Road), featuring Santa Claus, free presents for the first 100 kids, music, raffles and prizes (718) 562-1269.

Onstage

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents Kinobe & Jaja, concert with two African musicians, Dec. 3 at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

African musicians, Dec. 3 at 2:30 p.m. For more information call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

Bronx Academy of Arts & Dance (BAAD), 2474 Westchester Ave., presents Monster, dance performance, Dec. 7 at 8 p.m. ($20). For more information, call (718) 918-2110.

The Bronx Arts Ensemble presents The Emperor’s New Clothes, Dec. 4 at 1 and 2:30 p.m. in the Whitehall Ballroom, 3333 Henry Hudson Pkwy. Tickets are $10; $12 at the door. For more information call (718) 601-7399 or visit bronxartsensemble.org.

Events

Co-op crafters are invited to a Holiday Crafts Show, Dec. 3 from noon to 6 p.m. at Vladeck Hall, 74 Van Cortland Park South at Hillman Avenue. Work will be available for sale and must be hand crafted, not imported. ($30/fee; tables are limited: $5/6; $8/8; free/bring your own table). For more information or to RSVP, call (718) 796-9300.

The New York Botanical Garden presents the Holiday Train Show exhibition in the End A. Haupt Conservatory featuring numerous NYC landmarks made from plant parts and large-scale model trains, Thanksgiving weekend, Nov. 25 and 26, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Nov. 27, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. New this year is the Coney Island roller coaster. Also scheduled is Bar Car Night, for adults 21+ which includes street performers, ice sculpting demonstrations, still walking and a dance theatre. The Pine Tree Cafe hosts musicians ($25/members; $35/non members; advance tickets recommended). For children, there is Evergreen Express, Nov. 26, 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and Nov. 27, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., in the Everett Children’s Adventure Garden, to explore plant parts, make crafts, create a train puppet, join a musical marching parade, and more. Also offered are films in Ross Hall: “Miracle on 34th Street,” Nov. 25, and “Polar Express,” Nov. 26; both at 2:30 p.m.; and “Ice Age: A Mammoth Christmas,” Nov. 27 at 2:30, 3 and 3:30 p.m. In addition, there are afternoon tours on the holiday weekend (meet at the Reflecting Pool at the Leon Levy Visitor Center). For more information or a detailed schedule, call (718) 817-8700.

The Bronx Country Historical Society presents Old Tales and Historic Facts of the Bronx River, Dec. 3 at 11 a.m., a walking tour along the river from West Farms Square to Hunts Point Riverside Park. Meet at West Farms Square (northeast corner). Wear comfortable shoes and bring water ($10/members; $20/non members). For more information and to RSVP, call (718) 881-8900.

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers Family Art Projects: Harvest Time Hangings, to weave garden materials together to create a decorative wall hanging, Nov. 26 and 27; and Seasons Greetings, to draft flip-open frames and pop-up winter nature images, Dec. 3 and 4; all in the WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also scheduled is Swingtime Big Band, concert featuring 20-piece band ($45/$35/WH member; info: ext. 251), Dec. 4 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.

Niño de la Caridad Foundation, 557 E. Fordham Rd., presents Tricky Tray Fundraiser, Dec. 3 at 11 a.m. Calling begins at 12:30 p.m. Events include 50/50 raffles, refreshments for sale, and fun for the entire family. A tricky tray fundraiser is one that relies on raffles. Prizes are placed with a container next to it. People buy tickets and place as many as they want into the containers assigned to the prizes they want most. A basket raffle is $5 for a sheet of 20. For more information, call (917) 688-1098.

Library Events

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents the following for children: Hands-On Projects: (ages 7 to 12; preregistration required), Door Hanger Making, Nov. 27 at 3:30 p.m.; and Christmas Tree Making, Dec. 1 at 4 p.m.; and Design & Test a Parachute: (ages 7 to 12; preregistration required), Dec. 6 at 4 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

The Moshulu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for teens/young adults: films at 1:30 p.m.: “The Huntsman Winter’s War,” Nov. 26; and “Finding Dory,” Dec. 3. Adults can enjoy: Free Computer Classes: to learn email and basic computer information, Wednesdays, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.; 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 children: Kids Get Active Fridays: (ages 5 to 12), dance moves on the Wii game console, Nov. 25 at 3 p.m. Adults can attend Computer Basics at noon: Dec. 1 and 8. 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. 28 for the next publication date of Dec. 8.
Envisioning Bedford Park

(continued from page 1)

tion, exploiting the community’s current zoning designations. Residents at the forum proposed downzoning the neighborhood, citing narrow streets already burdened by the current residential landscape. The neighborhood, along with sections of Kingsbridge Heights, is a mixture of co-ops, private homes, and rented apartments. Some sections in the Bronx have already been able to successfully downzone, the most recent happening in one section of Woodlawn early this year.

For Bedford Park, the promise of reexamining the neighborhood for downzoning has been in the works for nearly a decade when talk of rezoning a large portion of Webster Avenue, a street running along Bedford Park and Norwood, was in the works. While Webster Avenue was later rezoned in 2011, Bedford Park was never reassessed for zoning, leaving many residents to think the city had broken its promise.

“This is the city’s attempt to finish what they started five years ago,” said Anthony Rivieccio, former Community Board member, referring to the 2011 rezoning of Webster Avenue. Only 10 percent of Mosholu Parkway was included, according to Rivieccio. “I am very happy they are considering the rezoning of Kingsbridge Heights, but I would like it if they also considered the rest of Mosholu Parkway that is not zoned as R5,” he said.

A prevalent argument against high-rise apartments in Bedford Park was the replacement of single-family private home with an apartment complex that would subsequently bring in an abundance of people. Meaning, a house that would hold one family would be replaced with an apartment complex that could hold 100 families, further congesting nearby subways and schools.

It’ll also congest streets. New zoning laws exempt affordable housing developers from building indoor parking spaces should they build within a so-called Transit Zone, areas where public transportation is in abundance. With Community Board 7 falling in a Transit Zone, finding a public parking spot will be even more problematic.

“The city is in desperate need for affordable housing and we aren’t against it, but they have to pick the right place,” said Sally Dunford, executive director of West Bronx Housing, a tenant advocacy group, referring to the overcrowding issue.

Fears of displacement similar to what has happened to many residents in different parts of New York have trickled their way up to the borough in recent years, stoking anxiety among Bronx residents. According to a 2013 census review on Governing.com, a data analyzing website, gentrification has increased 29.8 percent in New York City since 2000. Currently, there are plans to rezone southern sections of Jerome Avenue, leaving many residents anxious over possible displacement.

For Bedford Park and Kingsbridge Heights residents, the meeting proved somewhat useful.

“This was a good start,” said Fernando Tirado, a former district manager of CB 7 who attended the meeting. “Not sure it will make a difference with the current [de Blasio] administration.” Like him, many share the same thought that it is inevitable for change to happen.

If Bedford Park will actually stay downzoned, it is up to DCP to execute that change. The agency is unlikely to honor the community’s request given their previous statement that downzoning Bedford Park was not an option.

“It was a really helpful meeting. It clarified what we were all thinking, that we are all on the same page,” said Dunford. “I even learned something from it.”

Many considered the forum as progressive and helpful. However, there is a long way to go to prevent any change. CCCE will formally present its findings and community input to DCP to take into consideration when making its decision. When asked if the plans were just delaying the inevitable Dunford said, “When people come together they have power, they are hard to ignore.”

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By DEBORAH CRUZ

Things got heated at a Community Engagement Forum where the results of a two-month study on Norwood were unveiled. The findings were surprising, but its presentation irked community stakeholders already aware of its problems.

The study by the Public Agenda, a civic engagement think tank commissioned by the de Blasio administration, sparked much debate between the study’s investigator, Nicole Hewitt, and guests who found the study pointless. “We don’t need people to come and tell us what the problems are. We know what they are. We need solutions,” said Sheila Sanchez, president of Friends of Williamsbridge Oval.

Hewitt reviewed the neighborhood’s qualities and conflicts, but underscored a lack of communication among residents. “It took some time to set up these interviews. We even offered incentives, but on the day of the interviews, around 20 people only showed up,” Hewitt said in her presentation.

She emphasized the lack of communication between Community Board 7, the civic body that represents Norwood, and residents, angering guests. “There is a communication with the board and the people of the community, but even if an event is thrown, not many people come,” yelled an audience member.

Many of the people believed that the information Hewitt presented was a rehash of what they already knew. “It just seemed condescending. She should have done her research properly,” said Sally Dunford, a longtime resident and executive director of West Bronx Housing, on Hewitt’s lack of knowledge to what the community already knew. “It just seemed condescending. You don’t come to a meeting without having done your research well.” Dunford didn’t stick around for the whole meeting.

Fed up, she stormed out.

Some of the people stated that one of the biggest contributors to stability and prominence in Norwood is Montefiore Hospital and it was an insult not to have mentioned that at all in the 40-minute presentation. Hewitt explained in her presentation that because it was such a polarized subject with all the interviewees, she thought it best to leave it out of the presentation. “It was a very sensitive topic, and yes it is a huge factor for this neighborhood but people had strong opinions for it and against it,” Hewitt stated, defending herself against the audience’s backlash.

“This presentation was a wasted opportunity because it was poorly done,” Dunford said. Hewitt stated that Public Agenda had worked in many different states to help citizens navigate complex issues to help find solutions. “I was looking for an outline to a solution and it was not presented,” Anthony Rivieccio, founder of North-West Bronx Democrats and community activist, told the Norwood News.

“It was just two people getting paid to do nothing.”
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