



NORWOOD NEWS

Vol 30, No 15 • PUBLISHED BY MOSHOLU PRESERVATION CORPORATION • JULY 20-AUGUST 16, 2017



INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER:
WAR ON RATS | PG. 4



SEE PHOTOS: MUSIC AT
BAINBRIDGE GARDEN | PG. 8

BBQ FREE-FOR-ALL ON MOSHOLU PKWY.

Activists fume over illegal and excessive July 4th partying on parkway



Photo by Adi Talwar

ELIZABETH QUARANTA, PRESIDENT of Friends of Mosholu Parkland, spends countless hours keeping Mosholu Parkway beautiful. She called the illegal partying on the parkway on July 4 “chaos.”

By DAVID CRUZ

Activists are demanding answers on how the local 52nd Precinct could allow illegal barbecues to go on for hours along Mosholu Parkway over the July 4 weekend, despite the presence of “No Barbecuing” signs throughout parkway. They’ve now reached out to local elected officials and are in the stages of planning a meeting

to ensure this doesn’t happen next year.

Many residents vented frustration on Facebook, posting photos of other residents setting up tents, lounge chairs and speakers across Mosholu Parkway. The day after July 4, mounds of trash can be spotted around the leafy mall.

Leftover trash and coal ashes the day after July 4

remain a recurring sight on Mosholu Parkway. For years, residents have battled outsiders crashing the parkway and pitching their tents for the day. Loud music, accompanied by heavy drinking is the norm, according to many residents there. Barbecuing is illegal on the parkway as there are no barbecue pits to safely cook food.

By nightfall on Independence Day, the inhabitants of Mosholu Parkway continued partying, with at least one fistfight reported. Sandra Pabon, a Bedford Park resident and NYPD chaplain, took to Facebook Live to record two pit fires. “They’re lighting up garbage cans, look at this,” Pabon, narrating, said. “That’s Mosholu

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NORWOOD NEWS

Vol. 30, No. 15

Norwood News is published bi-weekly on Thursdays by Mosholu Preservation Corporation (MPC)
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IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

CB7 DM Resigns a Month After Returning To Work From Medical Leave

By DAVID CRUZ

Community Board 7 District Manager (DM) Andrew Sandler handed in his resignation to the board less than a month after returning from a half year medical leave. In what's become a recurring theme, this action once again leaves the board without a district manager.

Sandler officially resigned on July 9, less than one month from the time Adaline Walker-Santiago, the board chair, announced his return. Sandler told the *Norwood News* that he wants to focus on recuperating from his undisclosed medical condition. Walker-Santiago, board members and director of community boards for the Bronx Borough President's Office, Thomas Lucania, were alerted to his resignation.

The news also ends the tumultuous relationship between Sandler and Walker-Santiago. Sandler was placed on probation in September 2016 for what board members said was overextending his powers as district manager. Sources had told the *Norwood News* at the time that the probation was really payback against Sandler for alerting the Bronx Borough President's Office of inappropriate actions by Walker-Santiago. A spokesman for the Bronx Borough President's Office said at the time that Walker-Santiago was counseled.

Still, Walker-Santiago said she is "going to miss [Sandler]." "I'm going to be praying for him," she said.

Lucania will assume the duties of CB7 DM, a role he's undertaken four times at the board in recent years. Sandler is indeed the fourth district manager the board has em-



File Photo

ANDREW SANDLER

ployed since 2013. He was hired after Dustin Engelken, the previous district manager, resigned in October 2015. Engelken's predecessor was Socrates Caba, who held the post from June 2013 until his resignation in December of that year. Before Caba's tenure, Fernando Tirado served as district manager until he resigned in 2013. The resignations were unlike what CB7 had seen before. For decades, Rita Kessler served as CB7's district manager before retiring in 2007.

CB7 covers Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge Heights, Fordham and University Heights. When the board convenes in September, 18 new members will be added to the fold.

The DM vacancy will likely slow response time on constituent matters for those living within CB7's borders. District managers serve as a liaison between the board and

city agencies. They also hear and attempt to resolve resident complaints as per the duties outlined in a district manager's job description. Sandler had experience on these fronts, serving as the director for constituent services for Councilman Andrew Cohen before landing the role of district manager.

As in each instance before, the board will organize a so-called Personnel Committee to begin the search for a new district manager. With the board in recess until September, the process could begin later that month and run until the end of the year. Typical searches last four to six months. Community boards normally place a help wanted ad, then conduct two interviews with candidates before choosing a district manager.

The full board votes on the district manager. "It's going to take time," Walker-Santiago said.

Norwood News Takes Break, Returns Aug. 17

As has been the case for years, the *Norwood News* will be taking a summer break from its print edition. The current issue runs through Aug. 16, with a brand new edition slated to come out on Aug. 17.

It doesn't mean the paper is completely shut

down. We will be producing original content on our website, www.norwoodnews.org. As usual, please send tips and story ideas to editor-in-chief, David Cruz, at dcruz@norwoodnews.org or norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org.

At Town Hall Forum, de Blasio Hears Bronx Matters

By DEVIN DAE TUCKER

Mayor Bill de Blasio's latest town hall in the Bronx once again saw him bring an impromptu, though somewhat scripted, approach, batting around his ambitions while tackling issues of rats, public housing, and crime.

The issues were on the minds for those living within the 14th Council District, where the town hall was held. Councilman Fernando Cabrera hosted the forum with de Blasio, with commissioners from key city agencies on tap.

The two began the evening offering support for the Bronx community and NYPD following the death of Dr. Tracy Tam in the Bronx-Lebanon Hospital shooting rampage on June 30 and the fatal shooting of Police Officer Miosotis Familia on July 5.

"We go through these tragedies and we get so angry, so pained. We also see a lot of what's so good about this community, and about this city that shine through," de Blasio told the crowd inside Creston Academy on July 12.

During the town hall, de Blasio announced "a war against rats," which he claims can unite New Yorkers. "Thank you, Lord," one lady shouted.

"If you're a real New Yorker, you



Photo by Devin Dae Tucker

MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO speaks for nearly three hours at the town hall forum in the Bronx.

don't like rats," de Blasio quipped.

After outlining plans for the city, guests raised questions on crime, homelessness, and the New York City Housing Authority. The Housing Authority stood as the most talked about topic from a weary public.

"What are you going to do to stop the privatization of NYCHA, and why are you allowing it?" a guest and board member of Bailey Houses in the Kingsbridge area, asked.

De Blasio quickly responded, declaring, "There is no privatization of NYCHA."

"I'll get even closer to you," de Blasio joked, now face to face with the guest. "People like to say there is privatization but cannot back it up with the facts. Every NYCHA building is publicly owned on public land, and it will remain that way."

Despite the open forum setting, one group attending the town hall criti-

cized Cabrera's handling of it.

"Cabrera called on everyone that he funded and knew by first name, not anyone from the community," said Fordham Heights resident Darney "K. Born" Rivers. "It was a 'friends hall,' not town hall."

Rivers and others had stormed out of the town hall without asking questions.

In a statement, Cabrera defended the style of the forum, arguing that "98 percent of people who raised their hands were covered."

Cabrera added, "Cards were given to all who came and their issues will be followed up by the mayor's office whether they raised their hands or not, because we are looking to be solution-focused."

Still, residents were grateful de Blasio holding the discussion in their community.

"I appreciate it was even in the Bronx. I feel that the Bronx has been ignored for some time," said Vivian Ortiz of Fordham Manor. "[The mayor] is very attentive to our needs and wants, and having this town hall meant a lot to the Fordham section and Kingsbridge. It was about time; it was overdue."

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



Following the city's announcement to combat rats through a \$32 million initiative, this week we asked readers how bad the rat population is across the Bronx.



I just saw one run into Van Cortlandt Park and run down a hole. I see them sometimes; they come out of an alley and run onto Gun Hill Road. I do think it's an epidemic. They say they don't have enough inspectors, so they should hire some more. It's ridiculous. There are kids in this park and people enjoying cookouts. It's a beautiful park, but people see that and they're afraid to come out.

Michael Elliott
Norwood



There are a lot of rats around here, they cross the street right there. It is an epidemic. I see them along the Grand Concourse when I take the bus. They have to put out more poison.

Eleanor Berلمان
Norwood



The rat problem is definitely an epidemic. I see them in the subways, on the streets. It's pretty bad. The D train is horrible over here on Kingsbridge; they'll run right over your feet on the platform. I'd rather see cats than rats. As long as the cats aren't being mistreated, I don't see a problem with it. I've noticed where there are a lot of cats and urine...it's a deterrent to the rats.

Ogoby Gonzalez
Crotona Park



When I take the trains I do see rats, but I don't see them on the street, so I don't know. Definitely [I see them] on the D train and along the Grand Concourse. I've never seen them on the number 4 train or out here. It's a big shock to me that it is a big epidemic out here.

Ronald Rojas
Foxhurst



It's possibly an epidemic, but it's a species of animal that's going to be hard to eliminate. I don't see them every day, but we see them, mostly on the trains.

Joey P
Mt. Hope

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

Resolve Warrants

The Bronx District Attorney's office holds a workshop on resolving outstanding summons warrants to clear one's criminal record at Eastchester Presbyterian Church, 3154 Fish Ave. (corner of East Gun Hill Road) on Aug. 5 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Defense attorneys will be available to help resolve summons warrants that include loitering, noise violation, littering, and/or disorderly conduct. For more information, call (718) 590-2272.

Norwood Writers Club

The Norwood Bronx Writers Group meets on July 25 at 7 p.m. at Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center. Writers can share and critique one

another's work. Participants are asked to bring paper and pen/pencil as there will be a writing prompt. For more information, email Anne Leighton at Anne@AnneLeighton.com.

Bx. _BP Constituent Services

The Bronx Borough President's Office offers constituent services to address housing, immigration, sanitation, neighborhood safety complaints, and other quality of life issues. Schedule is weekdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Thursdays to 6 p.m. For more information and to make an appointment, call (718) 590-3554.

Free Summer Meals

Free summer meals

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

Free Sports Activities

Kids ages 5 to 17 can register to learn the basics of sports, from hurdles and relay races, to long jump, shot put and the javelin throw, at Williamsbridge Oval Park.

Track and field sports activities are held Tuesdays and Thursdays through Aug. 9, for children ages 5 to 8 from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., and for ages 9 to 17 from 10:30 a.m. to noon. For more information and to register, call (718) 760-6999.

Bird Walks

Free bird walk tours, sponsored by Councilman Andrew Cohen with guides provided by the New York City Audubon Society and Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy, are scheduled for July 22 and 29 from 8 to 9:30 a.m. at the Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy. Meet at the VC Nature Center. For more information, contact Joseph McManus at mcmanus638@aol.com.

Housing Assistance

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

Farmers Market

NYC Health + Hospitals holds a farmers market near NYC Health + Hospitals/North Central Bronx the corner of Mosholu Parkway and Jerome Avenue every Wednesday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. through Nov. 22. For more information, call 311.

Thousands Mourn Slain Officer Miosotis Familia

By DAVID GREENE

More than 10,000 police officers from across the country joined community and family members to say goodbye to slain NYPD Officer Miosotis Familia in a moving ceremony held at World Changers Church on the Grand Concourse, blocks from where she was killed.

Familia, a 12-year veteran of the force, was shot in the head as she sat inside a mobile command center at the corner of Morris Avenue and East 183rd Street in the early morning hours of July 5. The killer, Alexander Bonds, 34, quickly fled the scene but was shot dead by police minutes later. The shooting touched an emotional nerve among police officers processing just why Familia, 48, was killed randomly. Mayor Bill de Blasio, speaking at the ceremony, said Familia was killed “because she wore a uniform.” “She was murdered while acting as an agent of peace,” de Blasio said. “And we’ve watched with horror these attacks on our police, here in this city and all around our country. But in fact, brothers and sisters, hermanos y hermanas, we must end it.”

Outside the church, Michelle Valdez, a retired member of the NYPD and former midnight officer at the 46th Precinct, said Familia “was an engaging person because she would literally look at you and ask how you were doing.”

Carmen Figueroa, a longtime Fordham Heights resident and member of the 46th Precinct Community Council, cried as she recalled Familia. “She was a great woman who came into our community and talked to the children who



Photo by Miriam Quinones

SEA OF BLUE. Officers from across the country line up on the Grand Concourse in the Fordham Heights section to pay respects to fallen NYPD Officer Miosotis Familia.

played in the street,” Figueroa said. “I had to come here today for her.”

Figueroa, tears streaming down her face, added, “[Cops are] just doing their jobs in the community and they took her away from us.”

Chaplin Kim Graves of the New York State Chaplin Task Force, which works closely with the NYPD, was frustrated when she said, “I believe they need to bring back stop and frisk. That was the biggest mistake when they stopped it.”

“[I]t’s gotten worse since they stopped it and if they don’t bring it back, it’s going to get worse,” Graves added. The stop and frisk method continues, though it’s not as aggressively utilized under the current administra-

tion.

Inside the service, Police Commissioner James O’Neill spoke directly to Familia’s surviving children, telling them, “Nothing I could say could bring your mom back. But I can make you a promise: Your mom didn’t die in vain. Your mom’s legacy will never fade from the importance of memory.”

O’Neill posthumously promoted Familia to detective first-grade.

A caravan of officers led the limo carrying Familia to Woodlawn Cemetery, where she was buried.

Familia leaves behind daughter Genesis, 20, and 12-year-old twins Delilah and Peter.

Editor’s Note: More photos of the funeral can be found on the [Norwood News Facebook page](#).



Photo by Miriam Quinones

A PORTRAIT OF fallen NYPD Officer Miosotis Familia stands on an easel outside World Changers Church in Fordham Heights.

Vigil for Bx.-Lebanon Victims



Photo by Devin Dae Tucker

AN ARRAY OF well wishes for victims of the shooting rampage at Bronx-Lebanon Hospital were on display at a vigil held July 6 on the Grand Concourse at East 173rd Street. Read a full-length article by Reggie Francois at www.norwoodnews.org.

As Shelter-Housing Rises, Fordham Hill Shareholders Mobilize

By DAVID CRUZ

Mayor Bill de Blasio might lose hundreds of votes from shareholders of a Fordham cooperative after telling its representatives at a town hall that an impending homeless shelter/affordable housing development just blocks from their home will be there to stay.

In an exchange with Chad Royer, secretary for the Fordham Hill Owners Cooperative board of shareholders, de Blasio backed the shelter project by the Bowery Residents Committee (BRC). The setup is unique: a 200-bed men's only homeless shelter would double as a 135-unit affordable housing complex for low-income residents. The site is a block and a half from the 72-year cooperative that's home to several hundred residents. In his 2013 election, de Blasio had won 189 votes in the precinct overlapping with Fordham Hill, aligning with his overall win of the Bronx.

"[W]e have an obligation in every community to take care of folks who've come upon hard times, who want to get back on their feet," de Blasio, a staunch Democrat grappling



Photo by Miriam Quinones

FORDHAM HILL COOPERATIVE Board of directors, including (l-r) Board secretary Chad Royer, Board President Myrna Calderon and Board Vice President Rachel Miller-Bradshaw

with a significant homeless population, said. "And we're gonna do that in every part of this city, and it's ultimately going to be in proportion to the population."

Royer tried to counter de Blasio's answers but was immediately shot down.

"It's not a back and forth. I've answered your question," de Blasio said.

Royer, who attended the town hall with Board President Myrna Calderon and Board Vice President Rachel Miller-Bradshaw characterized the mayor's stance as dismissive.

"It was very disrespectful for Mr. de Blasio at the very least not to answer the question," said Royer, who asked de Blasio whether his administration considers the potential drop of property values when placing shelters in neighborhoods. Ironically, Councilman Fernando Cabrera, who recently moved into the complex, hosted the town hall. Though he remained publicly silent on the issue, Cabrera has been praised by shareholders for facilitating meetings between the 52nd Precinct and BRC. Calderon and others toured the site and were not impressed, labeling it an eyesore that's "built like a prison." In a statement, Cabrera didn't completely address where he stood on the shelter.

A petition has now circulated across the Fordham complex and the surrounding neighborhood demanding BRC reconsider the men's only shelter for one that will accommodate homeless seniors, Vietnam veterans, or domestic abuse survivors. The BRC development, partially financed by the New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS), is at the tail end of construction. It's settled on a residential lot at 233 Landing Rd. that's near a nightclub, Dallas BBQ, and storage facility.

Board members have found support from other shareholders, who have also forwarded letters and emails outraged over the development, Miller-Bradshaw said. "They are frightened and concerned and scared," said

Miller-Bradshaw, emphasizing that she and the board are not anti-homeless. "It's just the adult male aspect is really concerning to people. It's concerning to me as a woman."

Though shareholders felt blindsided, the project has long been in the public eye. Community Board 7's Land Use/Zoning & Housing Committee presided over a presentation from Muzzy Rosenblatt, executive director of BRC, at a November 2014 meeting. CB7 ultimately voted against the proposal. As in every case, CB7's vote is simply advisory. It cannot blunt a project based on its recommendation.

Still, Calderon wished more community input could have been given.

"Fordham Hill has been a stabilizing force in this community," Calderon said. "If people start moving out, I don't know what's going to happen in this community."

In a statement, Rosenblatt said, "Much of what we all read and hear about homelessness and homeless shelters is indeed concerning. That is precisely why we at BRC are building this facility. We know that shelters can be better, that how a program is run matters more than what it is, and that there is a need for improvement in how these services are provided in our City; indeed, this is at the core of Mayor de Blasio's plan to change and improve the shelter system." A spokesperson for DHS, the agency that will refer homeless clients to the Fordham Landing site, said it looks "forward to welcoming neighbors to this innovative mixed-use site that will provide New Yorkers with both affordable and temporary housing opportunities, including giving Bronxites experiencing homelessness the opportunity to be sheltered closer to their support networks and community they call home as they work to stabilize their lives."

The spokesperson added, "[W]e're confident that our clients will be warmly welcomed to the neighborhood—and that, together, with support and compassion, we will make this the best experience it can be for these individuals as they get back on their feet."

De Blasio said the development is expected to open in October.

Editor's Note: More news on the town hall forum can be found on page 3.

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NEWS BRIEFS

by DEVIN DAE TUCKER

Bank Fraud

Police are asking the public's help in identifying a man wanted (pictured below) for suspicious activity on an elderly man's bank account. On May 8, the perpetrator, who is described as a black man, 25 to 30 years old, deposited a duplicate check of an undisclosed amount to be withdrawn from the victim's account. Anyone with information is asked to call Crime Stoppers at (800) 577-8477. All calls are kept confidential.



Bronx Children's Museum

Ten years in the making, the Bronx Children's Museum is finally coming to Mill Pond Park. The nearly \$16 million project officially broke ground on July 12, and is to be located at 1 E. 150th St. (also known as 725 Exterior St.) in Concourse. The Bronx is currently the only borough without a children's museum and is expected to target roughly 250,000 children. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2018.

Cell Phone Thief Wanted

Police are looking for a man (pictured right) who allegedly stole a Samsung Galaxy phone valued at \$250. The victim was placing an order at the window of Liberato Restaurant on June 21, when the man snatched his phone and quickly fled. The suspected thief is described as a 6'1" Hispanic male

last seen wearing a baseball cap, gray T-shirt and white sneakers at the time of the incident. Anyone with information is asked to call Crime Stoppers at (800) 577-8477. All calls are kept confidential.



Justice for Slain Shelter Director

West Spruill, 41, has been sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole in the first-degree murder of a homeless shelter director. Spruill fatally shot Ana Charle, 36, after sexually assaulting the victim. Charle tried to escape but was killed. Charle was the director of the Bronx Boulevard Men's Shelter, where Spruill had resided until January 2015. Spruill was also charged with two counts of second-degree Criminal Possession of a Weapon.

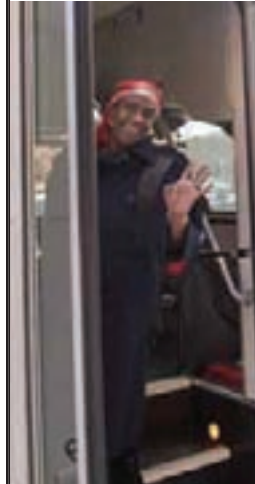
Street Renaming

Mario Borgatti, a Bronx pasta-making legend, officially has a street renamed after him at the corner of East 187th Street and Hughes Avenue in Belmont. Borgatti, who died in 2014 at the age of 97, spent nearly eight decades operating Borgatti's Ravioli and Egg Noodles in the Bronx's Little Italy. Known for his service and generosity, Borgatti fought in WWII in the U.S. Navy and regularly used his shop to help feed the hungry. His son, Chris, now operates

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Music at Bainbridge Garden

Photos by Wendy Joan Biddlecombe.

THE BAINBRIDGE AVENUE Garden, at 2974 Bainbridge Ave. between 201st Street and Bedford Park Boulevard, opened its gates on July 15 to a free event, Bronx Music Garden, that included live music, a barbecue and prizes. This was Bronx Music Garden's third occurrence, and is sponsored by Bronx Council on the Arts, Green Arts Brigade, Friends of Mosholu Parkland and Bronx Green-Up.



(L-R) DJs MARC “DJ Slick” Sanchez, Omar “Morsy” Morsy, and Rob “DJ Nique” German. Morsy looks to “break the stereotype of what people think” of the Bronx through the Bronx Music Garden.



(L-R) COMMUNITY RESIDENTS MADELINE Brito, Daisy Delarosa, and Amber Arias strike a pose at the Bainbridge Avenue Garden.



DAISY DELAROSA (R) and Amber Arias explore the Bainbridge Avenue Garden.



SCIENTISTS SAY MUSIC can help vegetables grow. These tomatoes certainly got plenty of it during the event.



ATTENDEES STROLL ABOUT the Bainbridge Avenue Garden.



DJ SLICK WORKS the turntable at the Bainbridge Avenue Garden.

Quarter of Stores in Key Norwood Strips Vacant. Why?

By REGGIE FRANCOIS

Mickey Burke catered to the once booming Irish population in Norwood with Keltic Connections for 20 years. His business was at 282 E. 204th St. With rent increases and a decline of customers interested in Celtic culture, Burke did not see the point of keeping his brick-and-mortar store open. He became a street vendor.

“The neighborhood population has changed,” said Burke. “And businesses can’t beat the higher rent. A new store opens up and, two years later, they’re out.”

In the space of three years, store closures have been something of a norm along East 204th Street and its adjoining street, Bainbridge Avenue. Most recently, V.I.M., a clothing and shoe store at 3083 Bainbridge Ave., closed in June. Outside, a vendor sells clothes and accessories out of boxes. A block and a half down, the popular Beso Lounge nightclub closed in May. Last September, McDwyer’s Pub at 331 E. 204th St. closed after five decades of operation, etched in neighborhood history alongside Burke’s business.

In the same vein, chains and banks are replacing locally-owned stores like pharmacies and diners, while creating a quick turnover in the area.

Millie Clavell, a resident of Norwood up until last year, has noticed this trend. A longtime manager of the now closed Freilich Jewelers at 312 E. 204th St., Clavell has seen what she calls an apparent change in the last 15 years. “How many barber shops and nail salons do you need?” said Clavell. “It’s one after the other. It’s going downhill from here.”

The former jewelry shop’s owner, Allan Freilich, closed the business after he could not reach a renewal lease agreement with his landlord. The store closed after 80 years in business.

Among the turning points on Bainbridge Avenue’s commercial landscape, Clavell recalled, was the five-alarm fire at the intersection of Bainbridge Avenue and East 204th Street that destroyed a bakery, fish store, butcher shop,



Photo by Reggie Francois

MCDWYER'S PUB AT 331 E. 204th St. closed in September. It was a staple in Norwood for 50 years.

dental clinic and several other stores in October 2009. It was one of three fires that happened on the strip that year, which took several years to rebuild. Longtime residents worried that chains would soon replace the neighborhood stores. It did: the V.I.M. store, which just closed.

Empty Storefronts

According to city data, there are a total of 127 legally operating businesses on East 204th and Bainbridge Avenue, and along the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District. The large commercial strip runs on Jerome Avenue between Mosholu Parkway and East Gun Hill Road and along East Gun Hill Road between Jerome and Webster avenues. Thirty-three of those storefronts, or roughly 26 percent, are empty, with “For Rent” signs on display.

The empty storefronts at the BID have stood on the mind of Jennifer Tausig, executive director of the BID, who intends to reverse the trend there. “We’re going to be doing a community-needs assessment within [Montefiore Hospital] and also in the residential buildings within the BID,” said Tausig. “And then we’re going to use that data to work with brokers to make sure

that we’re bringing in retailers that we know that people want to shop at so we can hopefully avoid the high turnover.”

Rising Rents

Some business owners and managers along East 204th Street and Bainbridge Avenue, who did not want to disclose their names, put the blame of empty storefronts on high rents. And with increased retail rents on currently open stores, a rolling-snowball effect begins, causing a jump in retail prices, and loyal customers looking for something cheaper elsewhere.

“Even when I go to the store, I ask how much a two-liter bottle of soda is, and they say \$3.99,” said Michael Martinez of Fordham Heights, who comes to Norwood to visit Williamsbridge Oval Park. “It’s too expensive.”

“[L]andlords understand that [with] the retail [space] they have, they could be getting a good rent and are looking for higher rents,” said Jason Gold, director of investment sales at Ariel Properties, “maybe a three percent bump for the tenants to be paying their proportionate share of expenses.”

Gold said these expenses can include water or electric bills and repairs. He believes most commercial tenants and landlords come to

an impasse when tenants are unwilling to take on new terms and the two parties cannot move forward with lease negotiations.

In addition to these standstills between tenants and landlords, online shopping sites, such as Amazon, drive shoppers’ decision to use the Internet for buying merchandise, given the comparatively cheaper prices.

“You’re seeing a lot of these Internet-based, e-commerce companies taking over a lot of retail assets and taking them out of the real estate business,” said Gold.

Fighting Back

Outside entities like Take Back NYC, a non-profit that looks to preserve the small business landscape across the city, have enlisted help from lawmakers to forge a stronger small business community. For years the group has unsuccessfully lobbied the New York City Council in passing the Small Business Jobs Survival Act, designed to guarantee a minimum 10-year lease to commercial tenants. Yet the bill has always been buried in committee.

“Nothing is being done,” said Kirsten Theodos, a spokesperson for Take Back NYC. “Mom and pop [business] survival is the issue. This is a morality issue, too.”

MEDIA TRIFECTA

Norwood News, WFUV, BronxNet Combine Resources to Bring Series on Development

Three Bronx media outlets have forged an alliance to cover a singular topic impacting the borough.

The *Norwood News*, WFUV radio, and BronxNet Television will present a four-part series on development and current rezoning efforts, and how they affect Bronx residents.

"We're thrilled to work with these media institutions," David Cruz, editor-in-chief of the *Norwood News*, said. "Putting Bronx issues to the forefront stands as a quintessential driver in what our local media institutions do so well. We hope that increasing the exposure threefold can influence the thinking of our local lawmakers."

WFUV student reporters Andrew Seger, Diana Nelson, Jake Shore, and Julia Rist, will produce news articles, radio wraps, and video packages for each of their topics. They will debut on Aug. 17, running in each outlet.

"WFUV is super excited to be collaborating with the *Norwood News* and BronxNet to delve into development issues in the Bronx," George Bodarky, program director for WFUV, said. "The borough is undergoing rapid change and this project will allow us to dig deep into what that means for the future of Bronxites. The project will help to hold decision-makers accountable, while making sure local residents have their voices heard and are well-informed about what's happening in their communities."

WFUV, the noncommercial, listener-supported public media service of Fordham University, champions music discovery and fosters appreciation of our diverse musical heritage. WFUV showcases a curated, eclectic blend of rock, roots and world music, from emerging, indie, and established artists. It offers a rich mixture of live performances, interviews, and jour-

nalism; trains the university's next generation of multimedia professionals through educational programs and practical experience; and contributes to New York City, its hometown, through community engagement and public service.

The *Norwood News* was founded in 1988 by Mosholu Preservation Corporation. It began as a bi-monthly newspaper that eventually settled as a bi-weekly covering Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge Heights, Fordham, and University Heights. Over the last few years the paper has been recognized for numerous honors, most recently by the New York Press Club for Community Coverage.

BronxNet television is the not-for-profit 501(c)3 media network of the people of the Bronx, providing public services including award winning local television programming, access to technology, studios, and channels, with workforce development opportunities for middle, high school and college students. The BronxNet studios are located on the beautiful campus of Lehman College and in the East Bronx at Mercy College in the Huch Metro Center. Michael Max Knobbe serves as executive director of BronxNet.

"This collaboration will help students develop the skills they will need to enter a multimedia digital world that is ever changing," Marisa M. White, director of creative services for BronxNet, said. "We at BronxNet are committed to training, educating and preparing our young people to enter professions in mass media. This collaboration will only strengthen our efforts as we continue to build and develop our media partnerships and serve our community."



Photo by Reggie Francois

MEET THE TEAM behind the four-part series on development in the Bronx standing in front of the Keeper's House, offices of the *Norwood News*.

HEALTH CHECK

Breastfeeding: Simpler Than You Think

By **TIANA TURNER**

Have you noticed more women breastfeeding their babies over the last few years? Yes, we have too, and we're really happy about it. Since 2011, breastfeeding rates have been on the rise in the U.S., reflecting a growing recognition of the value of mother's milk.

Why breastfeed? Breast milk is best for your baby. Some of the benefits include:

- Breastfed babies are often healthier.
- Breast milk is filled with vitamins and nutrients your baby needs to boost his/her immune system. It also improves your baby's brain development.
- Breastfed babies are less likely to get infections and to develop asthma, some cancers, diabetes and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Breastfeeding helps with your own weight loss and helps your body recover faster from pregnancy and labor. Breastfeeding can burn 300 to 500 calories a day!
- Breastfeeding saves time and money. Unlike formula, breast milk is always the right temperature, no bottle is needed, and it's FREE!
- Breastfeeding helps you bond with your baby.

Getting Started

Breastfeeding is a skill; it may take some practice and determination.

Breastfeeding can start as soon as the baby is born. Placing the baby's skin with your skin within

the first hour of delivery is a great way to kick off breastfeeding.

Always wash your hands before breastfeeding. Don't get discouraged about how little milk you are producing in the first few days. A newborn baby's stomach is only the size of a marble!

Using a breast pump can help stimulate even more milk, which you can then store and give to the baby at a later time. Breast milk can be kept frozen for four to six months. Thaw it at room temperature or in the fridge, but never in a microwave.

Breastfeed when your baby is hungry; don't try to stick to a schedule. Your baby knows when he or she is hungry.

Keeping track of the number of wet diapers can reassure you that your baby is getting enough milk.

Nursing should not hurt. Pain is a sign that your baby has not latched on properly. If the pain continues after one minute into feeding, break the suction by placing your pinky finger gently in the corner of the baby's mouth and relatch baby.

Always bring the baby to the breast, never the breast to the baby.

When in doubt ask for help! Speak to a nurse or lactation consultant. You are not alone!

For more information on breastfeeding, contact Tiana Turner healtheducation@montefiore.org.

Source: *Montefiore Health System's Office of Community and Population Health*

Have you or someone you know recently been the victim of mail fishing? If so, the *Norwood News* wants to hear from you. Email David Cruz at dcruz@norwoodnews.org or call (718) 324-4998.

Norwood Football Club Scores on Youth Development

By DEVIN DAE TUCKER

For the Bronx Buccaneers, a Norwood-based youth football program, the mission means more than the game.

In the last 11 years, the club has found itself functioning more as a vehicle for cultivating the lives of young athletes, and espousing life lessons intended to enhance critical thinking and athletic abilities.

The program throws a veil on the students, general manager Tasha Andrews admits proudly, saying the sport is used to “develop responsibility and focus” for the program’s boys and girls.

Andrews calls the program a bridge that brings players “together and to focus on creating young men who are going to be active and positive members in society; to have love for their community; to have pride in where they come from and to have unity.”

And even in the face of seasonal hurdles (the team occasionally practices without adequate lights in the fall), the Buccaneers, or “Bucs” for short, seem to get by.

Bucs head coach and owner Dennis O’Neal, a Norwood resident for more than 20 years, says the players’ coming-of-age path starts the moment they hit the field. “Team discipline comes first and individual discipline comes second,” O’Neal said.

O’Neal once coached the Harlem Giants of the Pioneer League in the Concourse section of the Bronx, but the team dissolved after construction of the new Yankee Stadium on the Giants’ home field at Macombs Dam Park. “The location was great because of the subway and buses,” O’Neal said of the Concourse park. “There aren’t a lot of [football] fields in New York, so we ended up moving to the north Bronx.”

Forced to relocate, O’Neal left the Bucs in Norwood in 2006, sticking with the Pioneer League. The Bucs practice at Williamsbridge Oval Park, doubling as the home field. Players can be seen running drills Wednesdays and Saturdays.

The Bucs originally began as an 18 and under team called the Bronx Rebels. The team has a roster of 101 players and cheerleaders in four age divisions: 10 and under, 11- and 12-year olds, 13- and 14-year-olds, and 15- and 16-year-olds. Since then it has gone on to win several recognitions, includ-



Photo by Devin Dae Tucker

ELIJAH GIBBONS IS about to catch pass from quarterback Darius Ramos.

ing Program of the Year by league organizers in 2015.

Throughout the program’s inception, friendships have formed. “They always hang out at the park, practice or not, and are always there for each other,” O’Neal said. The mantra seems embedded in the team’s motto: “Once a Buc, always a Buc.”

The organization uses Facebook to promote itself and has recently partnered with St. Joseph’s School in Tremont and MS 80 in Norwood to directly recruit.

Recruitment is up, allowing staffers to watch their players grow and play a major role in their adolescence, which has been described as “amazing” and having a “serious” impact. Mentoring goes beyond the field.

O’Neal frequently asks his players to bring their report cards, and periodically checks with players’ teachers to

determine how well students are doing.

Life coaching is a common practice for Leslie Alvira, assistant general manager and Norwood resident. “The kids are staying off the street and can be productive and have a place to go,” she noted. “The best part is being so close [to Norwood] and seeing them outside of football. I go hard on them about being involved, doing positive stuff and staying out of trouble.”

Indeed, staffers have firsthand knowledge of what could happen if players go down the wrong path. One former player become involved with gang activities after leaving the Bucs and was arrested for his connection to a murder. “Up until that point [when he left], there were no issues with him,” Andrews said. “It was one of our biggest heartaches.”

An ongoing issue the Bucs face at the Oval is practicing with subpar lighting, forcing the team to move to DeWitt Clinton High School and to Evander Childs Educational Complex in the Olinville section of the Bronx.

“In the summertime it’s easy to practice, but in the fall we can’t go past a certain time,” O’Neal said. “We don’t want the kids playing [football] in the dark because it’s dangerous, and we also don’t want them in the park after dark.”


The cost of new lights at Oval Park is estimated at \$1.5 million, according to a figure the New York City Department of Parks provided to the *Norwood News* in November 2015.

“Not having lights is discouraging and disheartening because we consider Williamsbridge Oval our home,” Andrews said. “It might actually add a little more security with lights because of such a big abode of darkness in the middle of the community.”



Photo by Devin Dae Tucker

WAYNE GIBBONS, FATHER of Bronx Buc Elijah Gibbons, takes handoff from Darius Ramos during Father’s Day practice.



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Making the Grade

Norwood and Bedford Park Behind in City Average of “A” Restaurant Grades

By WENDY JOAN BIDDLECOMBE

More restaurants in New York City are earning more “A” grades than they have since the city Department of Health started issuing restaurants letter grades in 2010, according to numbers released by the city in late May.

But while “A” grades dominate in key commercial corridors of Norwood and Bedford Park, they still score a percentage point lower than the rest of the city, as of press time.

“Citywide levels are slightly higher [in “A” grades],” Health Department spokesperson Christopher Miller told *Norwood News* in an email, adding that the agency continues to help Bronx restaurants achieve or maintain an “A” through education.

Since the letter grading practice began in 2010, 154 restaurants in the zip codes covering Fordham, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge Heights and Norwood were closed because of unsanitary conditions, Health Department figures show. Last year, 17 eateries were shut down, (by comparison, 42 were shut down in 2010). In late May, Montezuma Restaurant on West Kingsbridge Road, which had previously scored a “B”, was shut down for a week after inspectors found evidence of mice and roaches, food items stored at improper temperatures, and other issues.

Justin Mashia, who lives in Kingsbridge Heights, says he usually eats out in the Bronx and Manhattan about three times per week.

“I used to pay attention to the grades, but lately it’s been seeming as if all of them have good grades,” Mashia said. “When I eat out, I’m generally just trusting that the restaurant is clean and my food has been prepared very sanitarly. However, I refuse to eat at a restaurant if it has less than a ‘B’ grade.”

How Scoring Works

Restaurants are graded on a point system. The number of points earned is calculated to a letter grade: A, B or C. There is nothing lower than a “C”. If a restaurant scores in that range, the Health Department may conduct monthly visits until the restaurant scores better. If things haven’t improved, the agency can shut down the restaurant.

Restaurants are evaluated by a number of other factors that include the presence of mice, roaches, “filth flies” and other critters, as well as improper refrigeration, food handling techniques, cross



Photo by Wendy Joan Biddlecombe

POPEYES LOUISIANA KITCHEN at 3411 Jerome Ave. is among the 93 percent of restaurants in New York City that have received an A grade from the city Department of Health.

contamination and personal hygiene. But, said Carmen Bermudez, the manager at Tequilaz Restaurant and Lounge on Jerome Avenue near East Gun Hill Road, what a lot of people don’t understand is that the Health Department considers things other than food in their score.

“The problem with the grading system is that people think it’s just based on food. The grade is based on other things. Say if you had a broken door handle, or a lightbulb went out [when the Health Department was inspecting],” Bermudez said.

“When people see an ‘A’, they understand that this is a place where they can be assured is kept clean, and they’re following Health Department procedures,” said Bermudez, who said she’s been in the food service industry since 2002. (Bermudez said while the restaurant has an A grade, it is not listed in the Health Department’s public database due to a recent name change)

When asked if the uptick in “A’s” means that restaurants are cleaner and safer to eat at, or if they are just better at following the Health Department rules, health inspection consultant Leon

Lubarsky said it would have to be both.

“There is no way to cheat the system,” said Lubarsky, whose company, Letter Grade Consulting, works with restaurants to comply with Health Department regulations. “If an inspector comes in, there’s no way to really pretend that someone is wearing a hat when they’re not, or wearing gloves when they’re not. It’s a true combination of restaurants understanding and following the rules better.”

Still, restaurants that receive a “C” score on a follow-up inspection must wait roughly three to six months for another inspection, prolonging the chance of a higher grade.

“We expect restaurants to do better,” Lubarsky said. “Restaurants have to fix the violations, but fixing the violations will not fix the grade for that inspection cycle.”

What Isn’t Graded

Although delis and food carts are still tested and inspected by health inspectors and abide by the same rules and requirements, they don’t receive a letter grade that the consumer can see.

That’s changing, at least for food carts. In May, the City Council passed a

bill that will require food carts to receive a letter grade (the regulation is set to go into effect 270 days from the day the bill is signed).

Those who want to order a chicken and rice meal or sandwich at a neighborhood deli will have to do their own research. Though delis are inspected by the city, they receive a pass/fail grade and are not required to post letter grades in the window because they are regulated by the state Department of Agriculture, not the city Health Department.

“I don’t think the letter grade would help us,” said Fouad Ahmed, who owns 169 Gourmet Deli on East 205th Street in Norwood. “There are a lot of delis all over the place. When it comes to restaurants, the letter grade helps them a lot because if you like the food, and you think the place is clean and that place is graded an ‘A’, you will walk a distance to go to the restaurant. But delis are all over.”

Editor’s Note: To find out how restaurants score, and to see a list of inspections and violations, visit <http://on.nyc.gov/1f43UOp>. This article was written as part of the Health Reporting Fellowship of the Center for Community and Ethnic Media and funded by a grant from News Corp.

Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

EDITOR'S PICK

Night Out at the Oval

The 52nd Precinct invites the public to a free National Night Out at Williamsbridge Oval, on Aug. 1 from 3 to 6 p.m. Meet and greet the precinct's officers and executive staff and enjoy snacks and drinks. Events include pony rides, face painting, music, bingo, and raffles. For more information, call (718) 220-5824.

Onstage

Bronx Council on the Arts presents free **concert**, Aug. 2 from 7 to 9 p.m., featuring John Benitez and his Salsa Band, at the Amalgamated Train Park, Orloff Avenue and Gale Place. For more information, call (718) 931-9500.

Bronx Arts Ensemble presents free concerts: July 23 - **Tango Dances**, in Van Cortlandt Park, Rockwood Drive Circle at Mosholu Avenue and Broadway, at 2 p.m.; and at Fordham University (Keating Hall, 1st floor), at 4 p.m.; and July 30 - **New Orleans Jazz**, at Fordham University (Keating Hall, 1st floor), at 4 p.m. For more information, call (718) 601-7399.

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. presents **Bronx Summer Concert Series**, at Orchard Beach's Main Stage at Section 9, July 23 through Sept. 3, from 1 to 5 p.m. Included are salsa, freestyle, bachata, merengue, R&B, and pop. Zumba will also be provided. For more information, call (718) 590-3500.

Events

Williamsbridge Oval presents **film**, "Newsies," July 24 preceded by Newsies Broadway performers at 6:30 p.m. (rain date: July 31). For more information, call (718) 543-8672.

Councilmember Fernando Cabrera presents **Summer in the Park**, at St. James Park, 2550 Jerome Ave., July 29, Aug. 5, 12, 19, and 26 from 4 to 9 p.m. Included are free refreshments, movies and giveaways. For more information, call (347) 590-2874.

Williamsbridge Oval presents free special events: July 21 - **Hula Hoop Workout** at 6:30 p.m.; July 22 - **Learn to Ride** from noon to 2 p.m. (bring bike and helmet); and July 26 - **Community Art Project** at 6:30 p.m. (create sculpture using recycled materials and paint). For more information, call (718) 543-8672.

Fordham Business Improvement District presents **film**, "Dirty Dancing," July 22 at sundown at Fordham Plaza (3rd Avenue and 189th Street), preceded by music and games at 5 p.m. Bring chair or blanket. Popcorn is provided. For more information, call (718) 562-2104.

Van Cortlandt Park, West 242nd Street and Broadway, offers a variety of summer activities including: **Rowboating on VC Lake**: Fridays through Sept. 1 from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. (free; enter the park at VC Park South and Bailey Avenue; meet near the lake); **Barefoot Dancing**: featuring demonstrations and teaching, on the VC House Lawn from 6:30 to 8 p.m.: July 27 - Sufi music; and Aug. 3 - Salsa (info: (718) 430-1890); **Horseback Riding Instruction**: Daily lessons by the Riverdale Stables (for more information, visit riverdalestables.com); **Fishing**: Join the Rangers on Aug. 13 at noon for free fishing program catch and release only (NYS fishing license is required); **Swimming**: Free outdoor pool open daily through Sept. 10 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. (closed from 3 to 4 p.m.; also offered are learn to swim programs (info: (718) 760-6969 ext. 0) or 311); **Learn to Play Tennis**: For beginners, through Aug. 11, from 9 a.m. to noon at Indian Field Courts (info/register: (718) 760-6999); and **Art Classes**: Tuesdays from 2 to 3:30 p.m. from July 19 to Aug. 9 at Woodlawn Playground for Painting Nature; and on Fridays through Aug. 25 at 6:30 p.m., for Twilight Hike & Draw (meet at Nature Center). For more information and a detailed schedule, call (718) 601-1553.

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: July 22 and 23; July 29 and 30; Aug. 5 and 6; and Aug. 12 and 13; all in the WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (call for details). Also scheduled is **Libby Richman & Co.**, musical group performing classical, Latin and current music, July 26; **Salsa Bruja** featuring singer and dancers, Aug. 2; and **Orquesta**



File Photo

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT Against Crime will likely see the return of Wilma Alonso (l) and Daniel Bernstein, co-executive directors of the Fordham Road BID, sponsors of the Aug. 1 event (see Editor's Pick for more details).

SSC Salsa Band, featuring male 11-member group, Aug. 9; all on the grounds at 7 p.m. (\$10/ticket; \$6/ students/seniors 65+; \$4/ages 6 to 18). 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.

offers for children: **Harry Potter Party**: (ages 5 to 12), enjoy games, crafts and stories, July 27 at 3:30 p.m. (registration required); and **film**: "The Lego Batman Movie," July 22 at 1:30 p.m. Adults can attend: **Knitting Circle**: Thursdays at 3 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

The Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Place (near Kingsbridge Road), offers for children: **Kids Get Active Fridays at 2:45 p.m.**: (ages 5 to 12), dance moves on the Wii game console, July 21, 28, Aug. 4 and 11; and **films at 2:30 p.m.**: July 29 and Aug. 12 ("The Labyrinth" and "The Never Ending Story"). Teens/young adults can enjoy: **A Day With Clay**: to create objects out of clay, Aug. 16 at 4 p.m. Adults can attend: **Computer Basics at noon**: July 20, 27, Aug. 3, 10 and 17. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

NOTE: Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org, and should be received by Aug. 7 for the next publication date of Aug. 17.

Library Events

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents for children: **T-Shirt Making** (ages 5 to 12), July 20 at 2 p.m. (all supplies provided; in-person preregistration required); **Hands-on Projects** (ages 7 to 12): Popsicle People Making, July 23 at 3:30 p.m.; Picture Frame Making, July 27 at 2 p.m.; and Box Making, July 30 at 3:30 p.m.; and **film**: 90-minute feature film, July 25 at 2 p.m. Adults can enjoy: **film**: "The Great Gatsby," July 22 at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

The Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St.,

BBQ Free-for-All on Mosholu Parkway

(continued from page 1)
Parkway on fire.”

The partying wasn't just isolated to Mosholu Parkway. At Williamsbridge Oval Park, just a quarter mile from Mosholu Parkway, there were several barbecues reported at the park. Remnants of fireworks were also spotted a day after the big celebration.

Fernando Tirado, the former district manager of Community Board 7 and a local resident, immediately sent an email to the 52nd Precinct, Community Board 7 and Councilman Andrew Cohen, whose district covers the parkway, chronicling what he saw throughout July 4.

“It has been a disaster along both sides of the parkway, including a block away from the precinct,” Tirado wrote. “Bedford Park and Norwood are under siege by the declining quality of life, which the Five-Two routinely failed to address properly.”

Michael Medina, another resident, responded to Tirado's email he sent out saying the lower quality of life has caused Norwood and Bedford Park to revert “back to the mid-’70s and ’80s when New York was at its worst.”

Elizabeth Quaranta, president of Friends of Mosholu Parkland,

described the scene as chaos with firecrackers going off and loud music that could be heard at least one terrain over. Though she sympathized with partygoers, Quaranta said rules should be enforced. But one month alerting partygoers isn't enough, Quaranta said. She hoped the “No Barbecue” signs that are sporadically posted across the parkland should read what the fine should be.

PEP Officers

The New York City Parks Department has 40 Parks Enforcement Patrol officers assigned to Bronx parks, ensuring visitors abide by the rules. PEP officers can ticket parkgoers for disobeying park rules and even make arrests.

But with 30,000 acres of parks and local CB7's formal request for more PEP officers at its parks, the number is substantially low, critics argue.

CB7, which covers Mosholu Parkway, has put the expansion of “additional PEP officers” aimed at addressing “various quality of life issues including vandalism, illegal barbecuing, etc.” as its fourth priority in its Expense Budget and Priorities and Requests report it submits to the city during budget season.

Though 40 PEP officers are on the payroll, many of them may not work at once, according to Geoffrey Croft of A Walk in the Park, a park advocacy group. “Those 40 officers do not exist,” Croft said. “Imagine you have a set of officers and the beach and pool season opens, so now those very, very few officers that are already available are no longer as available to handle the most basic quality of life issues.”

Croft has spent years pushing the city to include more PEP officers to the fold, having secured a victory when the Parks Department began hiring full-time PEP officers. One wish is outstanding for Croft: increasing the number of PEP officers from some 200 to 500. “It's a lot of parkland and you only have a handful of officers to begin with,” Croft said.

Planning Ahead

Anthony Riveccio, a community activist on Bedford Park, is now planning a quality of life meeting slated for next month. Jason Laidley, chief of staff for state Senator Jamaal Bailey, who represents Norwood/Bedford Park, said the office is willing to attend the meeting to hear from residents. Christina Polizzi, a spokesperson for Council-

man Andrew Cohen, who also represents the neighborhoods, said his office is also willing to attend.

Polizzi said the office has worked the phones to ask the 52nd Precinct to enforce the no barbecue mandate, while also calling on the Parks Department to clean up the parkway. Last year, Cohen had earmarked monies for a so-called “gator” smart car to help the police get around the parkway faster. Cohen also funded monies for cleanup crews from the Fedcap program. They were called in on July 5 to help clean up the parkway, Polizzi said.

It took hours before police would arrive to clear the parkway. The commanding officer of the 52nd Precinct, Deputy Inspector Peter Fiorillo, has given discretion to his officers on whether to issue a ticket, adhering to NYPD Commissioner's policy of leniency over enforcement. Still, three people were fined on the parkway that day, Fiorillo said.

Quaranta, meantime, looks to permanently fix the problem. “I think we have to go big here. We can't put a Band-Aid on this,” Quaranta said. “This is more than that. We have to get the different agencies at the table, not just the 52nd Precinct.”

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