



NORWOOD NEWS

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NEW LEADERSHIP AT COMMUNITY BOARD 7

CB7 sees mix of new and veteran members to executive dais



Photo by Sile Moloney

EMMANUEL MARTINEZ SPEAKS during the last Bronx Community Board 7 general board meeting held at the New York Botanical Garden before the summer break on June 25. Shortly afterwards, he is elected as chair.

By **DAVID CRUZ and
SILE MOLONEY**

Community Board 7 saw a shift in civic power, as Jean Hill, who presided as chair of the northwest Bronx board for a year, was voted out in favor of 31-year-

old Norwood resident Emmanuel Martinez, a relative newcomer to the board. Several familiar faces have stayed on the executive dais, likely adding a mix of fresh ideas and institutional knowledge of neigh-

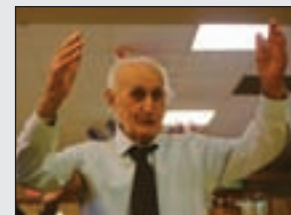
borhoods undergoing dramatic changes.

Martinez currently serves as chair of CB7's Veterans Committee, having recently hosted the annual Veterans Day Brunch, now in its third year. Members

voted Martinez in 19 to 14.

Speaking to the *Norwood News* a day after the vote at the general board meeting on June 25, Martinez said there'll be a shift in the tonal focus for the board.

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**IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST**

Why the CFB's New Program Could Upend Purported 11th CD Race

By DAVID CRUZ

Next year will likely be an election season for the ages. And the New York City Campaign Finance Board (CFB) is preparing so.

With 35 New York City Council seats up for grabs, five of which are in the Bronx, more candidates will be on hand (CFB expects 500 candidates), especially those new to politics. Meantime, all five borough presidents, including Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., will have vacancies.

Running campaigns is not cheap, leaving many candidates who believe they can make a difference to not even consider the thought. But CFB is looking to undo that by reminding would-be candidates of its 8-to-1 matching campaign funds program, where donations can grow eight times the original amount. This can be a boon to candidates who are new to running for office, where donations from deep-pocketed corporations or special interest groups are virtually absent.

Rather than let newbie candidates figure out the unwieldy process of qualifying for the program, the CFB is setting out to hold information sessions ahead of the 2021 elections, where prospective candidates are currently building their apparatuses.

In the Bronx, CFB staffers plan to hold a workshop at the Bronx Library Center on July 20, breaking down the essentials of the program aimed at curbing big money influence in elections.

"The CFB's matching funds program helps more candidates run for city office. We want to make sure the program is available to as many potential candidates as possible by making our training sessions more accessible," said Amy Loprest, executive director of the CFB, through a written statement.

Running a campaign often involves doing one's own fundraising first: cobbling \$5,000 first from a minimum of 75 individuals who live in the Council district a candidate is running in. The 8-to-1 matching funds program is the newest program following changes to the New York City Charter that was passed through a referendum vote in last November's election. The old program, which favors established candidates, still exists.

The new program appears to favor small-dollar donors, where \$10 transforms into \$90 (\$10 + the \$80 provided by CFB). Big donors have been limited in what they can give, a maximum of \$1,000. NYCCFB will only match \$175



File photos

THERE'S STILL AN unofficial race between Eric Dinowitz (l) and Daniel Padernacht (r) in the race for the 11th Council District. More candidates can enter the fray following a workshop by the New York City Campaign Finance Board.

at eight times the amount, putting the donation to \$2400 (\$175 x 8 = \$1400 + the original \$1000). The older program puts maximum contributions per donor at \$2,850.

11th Council District Showdown

The strength of this new program may be tested in the race for the 11th Council District, where speculation has swirled that Councilman Andrew Cohen, representing Norwood, will step down from his post towards the end of the year following a nomination to judge after the Judicial Convention scheduled somewhere between Aug. 8 and Aug. 14. The move is similar to an original plan orchestrated last year by the Bronx Democratic Party, where Cohen would receive a judgeship. But those plans were scrapped following the loss of state Sen. Jeff Klein, forcing the party to maintain stability.

Election rules allow Cohen's name to be placed on the ballot for the November general election, should a judge originally set to run, step aside. Should Cohen win (the borough is heavily Democratic, making the possibility of a Republican challenger winning a judgeship in the Bronx remote), he can remain Council Member up until Dec. 31, the day before he is sworn in as judge.

With Charter rules mandating that the New York City Mayor set a special election date 90 days after a Council Member has vacated their post, Bronx residents can expect to see a 2020 show-

down among candidates as early as February 2020.

So far, Daniel Padernacht, an attorney and member of Riverdale-based Community Board 8, has declared for office and plans to participate in the new program. "This new program keeps the big money out of campaigns and helps level the playing field -- which is what it should all be about, fair and honest elections," Padernacht said in a statement to the *Norwood News*.

Padernacht isn't taking any chances over the party's political machinations, given its original plan from last year. "The campaign is fully prepared and expecting something to happen in August. If it doesn't happen then, we're still ahead of the game anyway," said a campaign spokesperson.

Eric Dinowitz, a teacher who serves as District Leader for the 81st Assembly District and the scion of Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, has also declared and is a participant of the new program. He has already received \$2,675 donations from his father, bringing the younger Dinowitz's campaign war chest at \$55,247.

The younger Dinowitz is also being carefully groomed by his father, raising his profile ahead of the Council race, and ushering him around local events whenever possible. Eric's pictures have also appeared in an official state taxpayer-funded newsletter, though he's listed as a community advocate. The presence of father and son appear-

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NEWS BRIEFS

By **CHRISTY RAE AMMONS**

Lehman Gets Lemons

Lehman College has a new interim president. Daniel Lemons took the helm of the Bedford Park institution on July 1, replacing José Luis Cruz, after Cruz was promoted to executive vice chancellor and provost for the City University of New York. A lifelong academic, Lemons is a professor emeritus of City College's Biology Department, and did stints at Columbia University and the CUNY Graduate Center. "In the coming year we will work together to advance the goals President Cruz set for Lehman to the next level," Lemons said in a statement.

Rent Going Up

The Rent Guidelines Board voted 5 to 4 to increase apartment rents to 1.5 percent on one-year leases and 2.5 percent on two-year leases. This drew anger from housing advocates at the meeting at Cooper Union on June 25, who wanted rents to remain as they are. Landlords were also upset, wanting rents to go up even higher. The changes came just days after the state legislators voted to approve new rent laws that appear to favor tenants over landlords. The changes are set to take effect in October.

Throat Slashing Indict

Carlos Camilo is charged with attempted murder for allegedly slashing the necks of his preteen son and teen stepdaughter in their Kingsbridge home. After the May 28 incident, Camilo allegedly assaulted two officers while trying to escape from custody. Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark, who announced the indictment, said, called the incident a "chilling act of violence." Camilo is due back in court in November.

Man Hit on

Major Deegan Expwy.

A man was hit while attempting to cross the Major Deegan Expressway during the late hours of June 27. Police say the accident happened on the southbound side of the expressway within the confines of the 50th Precinct. Police say the man was struck once by

Long Lives Celebrated at St. Patrick's Home

By **CHRISTY RAE AMMONS**

When Dan O'Sullivan, a 100-year-old resident of St. Patrick's Home, first saw his niece who came from Ireland to surprise him at the Home's Centennial Celebration on June 18, he cried out, "Oh, thank you, Lord," and rose to greet her. Both of their eyes were filled with tears as they embraced.

His niece, Mairead Stringer, is a kind of surrogate daughter, since O'Sullivan has no children of his own. Originally from Cork, the second largest city in Ireland, O'Sullivan came to the United States when he was 47, and worked as a taxi and limousine driver.

"He was looking forward to being 100. It kept him alive," Stringer told the Norwood News of her uncle. "He's living. He's brilliant."

For these residents, who bore witness to the Great Depression, Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam War, 9/11, and the Great Recession of 2008, it was a moment to pause and look back. The same can be said for St. Patrick's Home, the 78-year residence that since 2002 has held a joint birthday party for its residents who have reached the age



Photo by Sile Moloney

DAN O'SULLIVAN, A CENTENARIAN and former taxi and limo driver, originally from Cork, Ireland is paid a surprise visit by his niece, and her husband, from Dublin, Ireland on Tuesday, June 18 at St. Patrick's Home, in Norwood in the company of residents and staff as part of the home's centennial celebrations.

a vehicle that simply kept going, and then hit again by a 2010 Mazda sedan, which stayed at the scene. The victim was declared dead at the scene. The Major Deegan was the scene of another incident at around 10 p.m. on June 29, when a multi-car crash claimed the life of an 11-year-old.

Parks Without Borders Breaks Ground

Parks Without Borders, which aims to improve entrances, edges, and spaces adjacent to parks, is set to start improvements at Van Cortlandt Park. The improvements will include recon-



Photo by Sile Moloney

WILLIE MAE TRIMBLE, centenarian, from Georgia, is presented with a Certificate of Recognition from the Office of the County Executive, Westchester County, New York on June 18, during a centennial celebration at St. Patrick's Home in Norwood, in the company of staff, residents and family members, for approaching, surpassing, or reaching 100 years of age.

of 100 or older.

"It's a wonderful celebration of life," Sister Diane Mack told the Norwood News. "Just because they live in residency doesn't mean they're not part of the community."

With cake, wine, and beer, St. Patrick's Home honored 11 seniors, the eldest of them being 106. The gathering occurred in St. Joseph Hall, and the party was vibrant and full of life. One resident was seen pushing her wheelchair with her feet, her hands occupied with two cups of wine. The hall was decorated with cheery green and yellow balloons and red, white, and blue butterflies hung from the ceiling.

In unison, the crowd proudly sang 'How Great Thou Art' and 'God Bless America,' and joy could be seen on the faces of everyone in the room.

Another centenarian of St. Patrick's Home, Willie Mae Trimble, turned 100 on March 10. Originally from Jackson, Georgia, Trimble migrated to the Bronx with her husband 72 years ago. During her youth, Trimble worked as a nurse's aide for 24 years and spent much of her time sewing. She has been attending Walker Memorial Baptist Church at 120 E. 169th Street for over 60 years, and says that the secret to a long life is to "trust in the Lord."

A lot has changed since Trimble, who grew up at a time when racial segregation was the norm, was a young girl. "We have better opportunities to speak and not get punished," she said of today's society. "Recognizing the fact that she's her age and she's originally from the south," said Pat Rogers, Trimble's daughter. "I guess in her mind she's happy to have been able to live to a point where people are getting along. Black white red yellow. A lot of African Americans, her age and younger, were happy to see a black president."

structed access pathways, new stairs to and from the Broadway entrance of the park, a new plaza with spray shower features, game tables, and LED lights. New York City Parks Commissioner Mitchell Silver said, "A space as magnificent as this should be inviting and seamlessly engrained into the community." The project is set to be complete the summer of 2020.

Rikers Island Hearing

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. held a public hearing on June 25 to discuss the closing of Rikers Island and a proposal for a new,

smaller borough-based jail in the South Bronx. The proposed detention center would be built in 2026, costing the city \$8.7 million. Several Bronx residents submitted testimony, including a former inmate of Rikers who spoke of conditions in the prison, including rat infested cells and invasive searches of visitors. Another former inmate said that he saw a correction officer give an inmate a box of razors, which the inmate used to attack someone. "I saw his face open up like a zipper," the speaker said. Diaz will issue a formal recommendation next month.

INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week we asked readers their thoughts on the Democratic candidates for the 2020 presidential election including New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio.



De Blasio is good to be mayor, but I don't think he can compete for the U.S. presidential election. He's not good, I don't think so. I think Joe Biden has the most experience and he has a plan. All of the Democrats look good.

MD Ali
Washington Heights



So far no one stands out. No, I don't like [former Vice President Joe] Biden. I don't know, I think we need new faces and new ideas and this year there are a lot of new faces. I don't think Bill De Blasio has what it takes. Has he been a good mayor? No. Honestly no, I don't like him. I think it's going to be a long race and we have a lot of issues as well. We don't want to see Trump win again.

"Big" Jimmy Torres
Norwood



Well I think Mayor de Blasio is really running for vice-president and someone from the west coast like [Senator Kamala] Harris will get the nomination. I think she could be the nominee, and he could be her vice-president.

Robert Press
Riverdale



I watched both debates and I feel like the ones that stood out to me were Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders. In terms of the messaging, I'm actually torn between Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders because they're both progressive. But in terms of the topics that were covered and the subjects that were being pressed, it was really Bernie Sanders' agenda that was driving the whole conversation.

Samelys Lopez
Bedford Park



I didn't get a chance to watch any of the debates, but I do follow politics and I did see that they were kind of going at [Joe] Biden, for whatever reason. I really didn't get a chance to look at it more in-depth, but I did see that he had a tough time in the debate. Right now the person I feel that has proved himself to me in the past, is the gentleman from Newark, New Jersey. Corey Booker has done a really good job over there, and even though New Jersey is going through some tough times, I think he's passionate about people and I think that's important. Biden has experience, which is important and understanding of the office. De Blasio? I don't really have an opinion on him running. He's a decent man.

Damon Birch
White Plains

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Bronx President Ruben Diaz Jr.



Councilman Richie Torres



Councilman Fernando Cabrera

Our neighborhood is facing a **growing crisis** and our lawmakers are doing little or nothing to stop it! Our small businesses are the backbone of our local economy, the largest creators of jobs (especially for immigrant families), a major pathway for social mobility for many low income families, and the only source for affordable goods and services for seniors and working families. Yet, these hard working mostly immigrant family owned businesses are being destroyed and forced to close in record numbers while lawmakers remain silent and **deny them economic justice!**

The cause of this crisis forcing businesses to lay off workers, raise prices, or even close is the unfair **commercial lease renewal process**. In NYC the business owners have **no rights** when their leases expire and cannot compete with the rents paid by big banks or chain stores. In NYC the landlord has all the rights to decide all the terms of the new lease. This unfair one-sided process has lead to landlord abuses like: **shorter term leases** of sometimes month to month or one year, **sky high rent increases**, illegal **extortion of cash** to stay in business demanded by unscrupulous landlords, and the tenant forced to **pay the landlords' property taxes**. These landlord abuses have lead to empty stores on every main street where once thriving businesses were. Also, these abuses have lead to the destruction of the American Dream for countless immigrant families.

The only hope for small businesses to survive and have a future in NYC is if lawmakers **Act Now** to quickly pass the **Small Business Jobs Survival Act**. The **Jobs Act** gives business owners ● **RIGHTS** when their leases expire. ● **RIGHTS** to renewal **10 YEAR** leases. ● **RIGHTS** to equally negotiate fair lease terms. ● **RIGHTS** to a fair arbitration process to assure fair rents.

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A Parking Lot in Place of Greenspace, All for Mosholu Golf Course

By SÍLE MOLONEY

What's happening in the southeast corner of Van Cortlandt Park?

That's what local residents and activists were asking since barricades were spotted in recent weeks along Jerome Avenue by East 212th Street in an area adjacent to the now infamous Croton Water Filtration Plant (CWFP), the most expensive public works project ever built by the city, one which went years behind schedule, cost taxpayers roughly \$4 billion when it was finally completed in 2015, and now supplies the city with between 10 and 30 percent of its water.

After some back and forth with various city agencies, it turns out the barricades in Van Cortlandt Park were set up for the construction of a parking lot intended for users of the nearby Mosholu Golf Course, according to the city Department of Design and Construction (DDC). The lot is part of an \$84 million project to build a clubhouse and revitalize the landscape.

In a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) dated June 9, 2004, the city Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the city Department of



Photo by Síle Moloney

FENCING SURROUNDS A section of parkland in the southeast corner of Van Cortlandt Park, which according to the Department of Design and Construction has been blocked off in preparation for the construction of a parking lot for users of the nearby Mosholu Golf Course.

Parks & Recreation (DPR) agreed on a golf course renewal plan atop the original CWFP site, on the basis that this site would ultimately be selected as the preferred location for the water plant project.

The terms of the MOU were that, if selected and upon completion of the 10-story, 400,000 square-foot underground facility, DEP would fund the construction of a new permanent golf driving range in the vicinity of the existing Mosholu Golf Course, as well as a new, permanent clubhouse to replace the demolished one.

When Norwood residents saw fencing erected adjacent to the CWFP site, they became suspicious that the perimeter of the 43-acre alienated lands agreed under the CWFP's golf renewal plan was being breached.

Driving the community's suspicion is the accumulated knowledge of environmentalists like Karen Argenti who know that city parkland is cheap and easy to build on, and that it's precisely for this reason that the city alienates parkland for development rather than acquiring new land for projects.

"Once they start taking land, it gets us all worried," said Argenti. "We just don't want to lose any parkland."

But Ian Michaels from the DDC, the agency which is now managing the construction, provided an explanation to the *Norwood News* on July 1, stating in an email, "The fence that went up two weeks ago is a temporary construction fence to protect the public during work, and does not represent the final boundary of the project being built behind it."

While activists have concerns the

project will knock out parkland, the DDC views the planned parking lot as an extension of parkland since it will ultimately be used by Mosholu Golf Course members and therefore does not violate the boundary of the 43-acre alienated lands allocated under law for the original CWFP.

"No construction that is controlled by park alienation rules is taking place beyond the park alienation boundaries," said Michaels in his email.

This is not the first time questions have been raised by residents during the project's lifecycle, which is overseen by the Croton Facilities Monitoring Committee (CFMC) which, itself, falls under the scope of the DEP.

Referring to the DEP, local activist, Gary Axelbank told the *Norwood News*, "It is outrageous that after all these years and after numerous discussions with the community, there are still questions about what is this for? What is that for? It's just an example that what we all had said at the beginning, that this was an out-of-control agency, that has a hard time responding to community concerns."

Michaels acknowledged that the barricades went up without due notice to residents. "In the future, advisories will be issued before work that affects the public is initiated," he said. "DDC will also issue quarterly newsletters on progress and will continue to report regularly to the Monitoring Committee."



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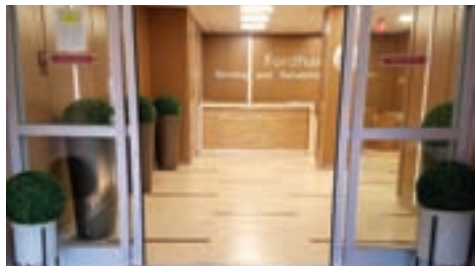
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A Slow Revival Brews at Norwood Home

By **MICHAEL TURAY**

Empty Amstel Light beer cans and used cigar wrappers still lie scattered across the front porch of a multi-family home at 306 E. 206th St. between Bainbridge and Perry avenues, despite the home ordered to be vacant. But there are tiny signs of improvement for a house that has been an eyesore in the Norwood neighborhood.

The front door is barricaded by a large piece of wood as three garbage bags filled with trash sits on the porch. Empty buckets for plaster are assembled, mismatched pieces of wood rest against the house, and a disconnected pipe lies on the lawn. An orange construction cone stands to the left of the entrance stairs. Brand new windows have been installed on each floor of the home, a glance through reveals plenty of interior repairs are occurring.

This slow restoration comes a year after Norwood resident Martin Brennan was found dead in the home last March by police. The house was then purchased for \$580,403 in December with Raston LLC listed as the new homeowner. Records show the home is undergoing significant interior renovation including a new gas line for boilers, new light fixtures, and new finishes to the ceiling and floor. The installation of three wall-mounted boilers and two half-bathrooms along with the relocation of existing sinks, bathrooms, and gas range are also taking place.

The project is a fixer upper, costing \$128,500 in total. The timetable for completion remains unknown.

Dwane Jolly, a resident who resides across the street from the home

noticed the slight progressions. “It used to be a spot for squatters, but over the past few months I’ve seen construction guys cleaning it up. At one point there was a dumpster set up, and I saw them taking out old sheetrock,” said Jolly.

Another resident sitting in his parked car said, “There are three workers [who come in and out] during the day, [most of] the work they do is in [inside] the house.”

Three complaints relating to the home prior to the renovation period --two in 2018 and one in 2017--were filed with the City Buildings Department. One complaint in September 2018 was filed for having no window guards. Another complaint last year was filed after a large presence of squatters was found. A visit in early November showed that repairs for drywall, laminated door moldings, and baseboard replacement were in progress. However, a summons by the DOB was issued on the house for excessive debris.

“The smell of all those cats produced a crazy odor. I’m glad that it has gone away. The house actually looks on track to be livable,” said an unnamed resident. Improvements to the electricity and plumbing will also be on the way. Several work permits were issued for the house by the DOB in April. The permits include one for general electric wiring for all three floors of the house and the second for installation of partition, plumbing fixtures.

The property passed an Asbestos Assessment in March and has been certified in other fire-resistant inspection categories. The new owner and contractor did not respond to numerous requests for comment.



Photo by Michael Turay

RENOVATIONS APPEAR TO be on the way for 306 E. 206th St. (pictured), albeit at a snail's pace.



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The Buzz Over a New Mural, Courtesy of UNHP

By **MICHAEL TURAY**

Alfredo Bennett, commonly known as the Royal KingBee, led the ceremonial ribbon cutting that unveiled his eye-catching mural on a brick wall at 45-57 W. Tremont Ave., a 51-unit apartment complex near Kingsland Plaza in Tremont, on June 19. A round of applause and loud cheers followed as the Bronx native grinned proudly.

The mural—a kaleidoscopic honeycomb that includes KingBee’s signature metallic-style bee—included with phrases such as “Reclaim” and “Save our Swarm” spray painted. In a way the mural captures the story of the apartment building, which, in the 1990s, had been completely rundown. This new display is a far cry from a wall that was once a target of excessive graffiti, becoming an eyesore to the community.

Building tenants and staffers from the University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP)—a social services nonprofit that builds affordable housing for Bronx residents—gathered for the unveiling. Though the mural was completed in January, colder weather kept UNHP from presenting the mural until recently. It’s already drawn attention from passersby. UNHP reached out to KingBee and he was able to transform the wall in a month’s time. He has also promoted it to his more than 6,000 followers on Instagram.



Photo courtesy UNHP

ROYAL KINGBEE (C), surrounded by staffers of the University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP) and Dougert Management Corporation, cuts the paper-sized banner to unveil the recently crafted honeycomb mural, commissioned by the UNHP at 45-57 W. Tremont Ave.

“I was involved back when the buildings were vacant. It’s very exciting to see people doing a great job to maintain it and to beautify it this way is very special. We’ve seen posts on social media of people taking photos in front of it and it is very rewarding,” said Jim Buckley, UNHP executive director.

Fifteen years after the first renovation, the development now includes energy-efficient improvements such as new roofs, windows and boilers.

“Working in the Bronx for over 30 years, to see and be a part of this transformation, has been amazing. I would have never thought that one day we would be talking about a mural on one of our buildings, but it is a great feeling,” said Catherine Clarke, deputy director of Development/Administration for UNHP.

This is one of two murals that KingBee has crafted for UNHP’s affordable housing developments, with another

bee-themed mural at 1982 University Ave. “I love to craft, I love graffiti. I started like any other typical person trying to get my name out there,” said Bennett. “I started doing murals for small storefronts and mechanic shops. Then eventually my popularity got bigger; started working on bigger walls throughout the Bronx.”

The ceremony served as a kickoff for UNHP’s Community Resource Fair, which offered residents free housing, legal, and financial services. Several partners were in attendance including Legal Aid, The city Department of Finance, POTS, Chase, Capital One, Amalgamated Bank, Ariva, Ready to Rent, and the city Human Rights Commission.

“It’s impressive how much respect he has. He does this and nobody touches it,” said Doug Sachs, president of Dougert Management Corporation.

For a long time, KingBee hid his talents from most people, including his parents.

“They weren’t interested in the beginning, so I never bothered bringing that to the table. Good thing I never got busted, or else that would’ve been a topic,” said Bennett. His advice for any upcoming artist that likes to tag, “If your heart is into it, go for it. You have to love this game,” he said.



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NORWOOD NEWS

SNAPSHOTS



Photo by Síle Moloney

THE EMCEE OF the “Bangla Bazaar Street Fair” prepares to release a bunch of balloons to mark the fair’s opening on June 23 on Bainbridge Avenue in Norwood. The fair drew merchants, food vendors, and plenty of families.



Photo by Miriam Quinones

FIREWORKS LIGHT UP the night sky over Orchard Beach on June 27 for the annual fireworks show co-hosted by Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and Councilman Mark Gjonaj in celebration of the Fourth of July.

Photo courtesy Children’s Hospital at Montefiore
11-YEAR-OLD MIGUEL CREATES sand art at the Children’s Hospital at Montefiore’s Western BBQ and Carnival, which was sponsored by Bloomberg Philanthropies on June 26.



Photo by José A. Giralt

(L-R) PATRICIA, 7, and sister Itzayana, 9, spend time with coloring books at the Summer Garden Festival organized by Friends of Mosholu Parkland inside the Mosholu Playground in Bedford Park on June 22.



Photo by Miriam Quinones

FAMILIES STROLL ALONG the Williamsbridge Oval Park track on June 22 for Family Fitness Fun. The event included games, yoga, Zumba, fun activities, health workshops, arts & crafts, and healthy food.



Photo by Síle Moloney

(L-R) JEROME GUN HILL Business Improvement (BID) program manager Ariana Cipriani, BID executive director Jennifer Tausig, BID board member representing Montefiore Health System Craig Recla, Councilman Andrew Cohen, and BID board chair Dr. Arnold Wilson share a moment at the Small Business Recognition BBQ on June 21. The event honored longtime and current members of the BID.

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Battle Cry for Justice for Junior Continues Year After Vicious Murder

By SILE MOLONEY

Within moments of Leandra Feliz emerging from a vigil held at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Belmont, on the evening of June 20, ahead of a planned procession to mark the first anniversary of the murder of her 15-year-old son, Lesandro “Junior” Guzman-Feliz, the heavens suddenly burst open.

Feliz’s face broke into a broad smile, amid applause from onlookers, as she raised her eyes and arms skyward in an apparent spiritual moment of connection with her deceased son. Dressed in jeans, boots and a T-shirt depicting an image of Junior, she faced off against the media scrum with a resolute sense of purpose and strength, and as the rain streamed down her face, her family and supporters gradually gathered around her.

Asked if she felt the weather was some sort of sign from above, she smiled and responded gently, “I wish.” Indeed, the heavy rain appeared to serve as both a motivating factor and one further obstacle to be overcome by the family and wider Bronx community, shocked and saddened at the brutal murder, exactly one year earlier, of the Bronx teenager outside a nearby bodega on the corner of East 183rd Street and Bathgate Avenue.

An hour earlier, on the steps of the church, and in the presence of the victim’s family and supporters, local Sicilian pizzeria-owner, Salvatore Natale, played *Ave Maria* on the saxophone in tribute to the slain teenager. “It’s a song that comes from a tragedy so I thought it was appropriate to share some love and make the parents feel that they’re not alone,” he later said. Feliz then announced that the family would be reentering the church to pray some more for Junior and would return later for the procession.

Feliz used the occasion to call for less gang violence and to highlight recently implemented after-school programs supported by local Council Member, Ritchie Torres, who was also present. Asked what she would like people to remember about her son, Feliz replied, “I would like people to love each other a little bit more and that we can make a better world.”

Flash-lit police vehicles and a guard of honor of about 30 NYPD Explorers, a youth program for aspiring NYPD officers of which Lesandro had



Photo by Sile Moloney

MEMBERS OF THE NYPD Explorers program provide a guard of honor at a Bronx vigil marking the first anniversary of the violent murder of Lesandro “Junior” Guzman-Feliz, also a member of the program, when he was killed at the age of 15.

been a member, accompanied the family on the short candle-lit procession from the church to the bodega location where the teenager was savagely attacked by the Dominican-American Trinitarios gang with knives and a machete.

Thirteen people were charged with various offenses in connection with the killing. To date, five defendants have been found guilty of murder and eight more await trial.

Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. attended the vigil. “It’s amazing how much courage and resolve the parents have,” he said. “And in many ways, instead of the community coming here and being supportive to them, they’ve created a support system for the community. This is a horrific image of a good boy who did everything that was asked of him by society - good student, good son, good neighbor, wanted to go into law enforcement.”

Modesto Cruz, the bodega-owner at the time of the murder, is seen in video surveillance footage briefly blocking the teenager from entering behind the counter as he flees his attackers but seconds later is seen attempting to hide the youngster under



Photo by Sile Moloney

FOLLOWING A CHURCH SERVICE and procession, Leandra Feliz, mother of Lesandro “Junior” Guzman-Feliz, who was slain at age 15, places a candle at the bodega site on East 183rd Street and Bathgate Avenue, in Belmont, where her son was murdered one year ago.

the counter, once he realizes what is happening.

Cruz has since sold the store to new management. He has been criticized by some in the community for not doing more to try to protect Lesandro, despite having called 911 twice to raise the alarm and despite feeling overwhelmed by what he described as fear and panic during the

moments when the youngster was being dragged by his attackers out of the store.

The corner where Lesandro was killed was renamed “Lesandro Junior Guzman-Feliz Way” in February and his face is depicted on a giant mural overlooking the spot. The *Norwood News* asked Diaz about suggestions put forward by some local community members about converting the bodega where the teenager had sought refuge minutes before his attack into a community center in his name where programs could be provided to local youths with the aim of reducing gang violence.

“I think that, overall, we should have conversations as to what business owners need to do. In this case, there’s much conversation as to what’s to happen to the location and, once again, I would defer to Ms. Feliz, Junior’s mother,” said Diaz.

Among the crowd was a mother who had travelled from Florida to attend the anniversary together with her two sons, Sean and Antonio. “I didn’t know them [the victim’s family] personally,” she said. “I’ve been following the story since day one and I just seen it on the news.” She said she was a member of the *Justice for Junior* Facebook group which, she said, was started by a woman named Claudia Morales, and which has about 17,000 members worldwide.

“We’re all together as moms, you know, so it has affected us a lot. There’s people from Ireland in the group, Brazil, all kinds of people,” she said. “We’re able to vent and say how we’re feeling, you know, so I’m glad to be a part of this group.”

Yvette Rodriguez grew up in Little Italy and lamented the gang violence which has scourged the area in recent times. “Hey, I remember the times when we were young, when I was growing up, we would sit down on the sidewalks. We would play hopscotch, we would play jump rope, we would play double-dutch, we would play cards and games,” she said.

“My mom used to say, ‘Do me a favor, get me a quart of milk,’ and now today, you can’t even send a child to the corner store,” Rodriguez said. “They can’t get anything for you because, you know, he’s leaving your home but you don’t know if he will return because these people are waiting for whoever, like they did to Junior.”

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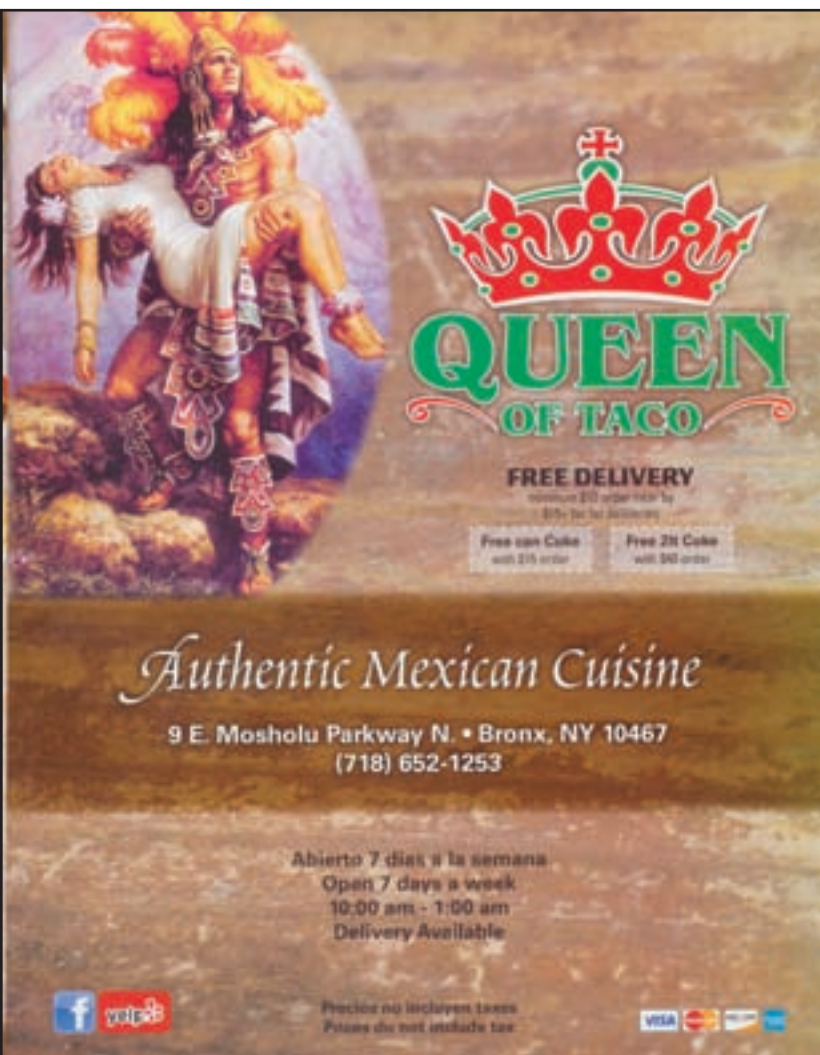
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Why the CFB's New Program Could Upend Purported 11th CD Race

(continued from page 2)

ing on taxpayer-funded literature may cause some to wonder whether this violates state rules that bar legislators to use their official position to “secure unwarranted privileges or exemptions” for others, but the elder Dinowitz states he’s done nothing wrong.

“I follow the rules to the letter. Always,” the Assemblyman told the *Norwood News*.

An attorney with the New York State Legislative Ethics Commission pointed to the Assembly’s ethics rules and Public Officers Law that indicate Dinowitz has abided by the statutes. Padernacht hasn’t filed a formal complaint on this nor sought an advisory opinion on it.

Still, notwithstanding the two political rivals, the CFB’s program, and

its own campaign for greater involvement, could attract another candidate out of obscurity, throwing a wrench at Dinowitz and Padernacht’s binary matchup.

“We hope this will further increase the diversity of candidates running for office and provide better representation for all communities in New York City’s elections,” said Loprest in her statement.

Even so, any race could be upended by political machinations. Special elections take place 45 days after an incumbent has vacated their seat. Should Cohen decide to leave his position upon nomination to a judgeship, it would give a candidate just 45 days to prepare for a race, a short amount of time to build a campaign apparatus.



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Camp Junior Opens in Memory of Murdered Teen



Photo courtesy Bronx Borough President's Office

(L-R FOREGROUND) Lisandro Guzman, father of Lesandro “Junior” Guzman-Feliz walks with Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and Leandra Feliz, mother of Lesandro, for the June 28 opening of Camp Junior, a campground renamed after Lesandro who was murdered last year in Belmont. The 15-year-old’s murder drew national attention, inspiring the hashtag “Justice for Junior.” Funds for the free two-week sleepaway camp were provided by the state.

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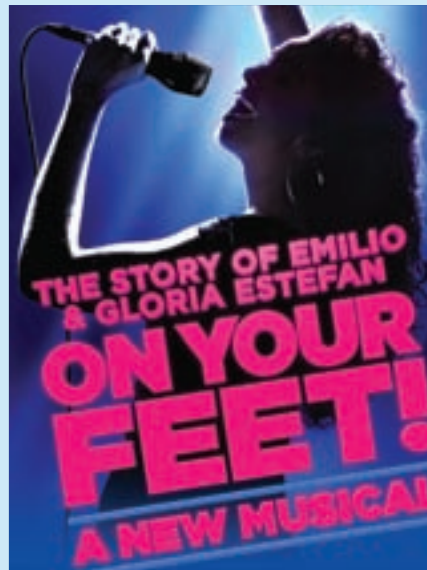
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Bronx Tenants to New NYCHA Chair: Deliver

By **CHRISTY RAE AMMONS and
SHA-NIA ALSTON**

New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) recently hired Gregory Russ as the new chairman with a salary of over \$400,000. Tenants in public housing and city officials are concerned.

Russ has managed housing before, but never anything the size of NYCHA. In Minneapolis, he managed 6,300 units, and in Cambridge, Massachusetts, he managed 2,700. NYCHA has 400,000 New Yorkers living in 170,000 apartments, which is a difference of 163,700 units from where Russ started.

“He managed a quarter of what NYCHA has,” said Linda Bailey, a tenant in Gun Hill Houses. “How are you going to manage this? What can you bring to us? What are you going to do for NYCHA besides pocket all the money?”

When asked what Russ could do to deserve a salary so large, Bailey said “Bring these developments up to par, quick, fast, and in a hurry”

Many residents find the salary ex-

cessive, considering building conditions are not up to par. Residents are also concerned about how Russ can efficiently manage NYCHA with the allowance of frequent trips to Minnesota, where his family lives.

“To be the chair of NYCHA is to be the mayor of a large city in the United States, and that’s not something you can do half-heartedly. You have to be on the ground, on call, 24/7. It is one of the most demanding positions in the country,” Councilman Ritchie Torres told the *Norwood News*.

Torres would’ve wanted to look elsewhere for a NYCHA chair, pointing out that a successful individual would be “someone who has experienced managing real estate on a large level, who knows how to cultivate relationships with tenants, [and] elected leaders.”

The conditions of Gun Hill Houses are inadequate, according to tenants. There have been complaints of no hot water, no water, no cooking gas for over a month, problems with elevators, paint jobs needing doing, an abundance of lingering cats, and



Photo courtesy Minneapolis Public Housing Authority

GREGORY RUSS (PICTURED) will officially take over the New York City Housing Authority in August.

more.

“There’s a lot of things that we need done here. When was the last time they really painted hallways? 1999. Our hallways and stuff need painting. Our elevators need to be up-

dated. Every weekend there’s something wrong with the elevators,” said Erma Grey, a resident of Gun Hill Houses since 1972. “We have a lot of people with walkers, wheelchairs. How are they supposed to get out of their apartment? Are they supposed to be locked in their apartment the whole summer because there’s only one elevator?”

Not only are these problems present in the buildings, but general maintenance issues are also put off for extended periods of time.

“If you have a stoppage or something, they tell you they can’t come today, but you have to have an appointment for tomorrow. In the meantime, what do you do?” said resident Charlotte Trafton, who has lived in Gun Hill Houses since 1975.

Expectations are high for Russ. Not only residents, but even city officials are anxious to see if his work will match his salary.

“We’re paying Mr. Russ more money than previous chairs to do less work than previous chairs,” said Torres.



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State Sen. Alessandra Biaggi provides constituent services at Community Board 7, 229-A E. 204th St., every second Thursday of the month from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call Community Board 7 at (718) 933-5650 or Biaggi's office at (718) 822-2049.

Robo-Calls

The NYPD is warning the elderly about Robo-Call scams, where scammers place calls pretending to be a government entity or a relative in trouble and demanding money be sent to them in the form of a gift card. The NYPD recommends callers simply hang up and call their local precinct to report it.

Accompanying The Elderly

Volunteers are wanted to visit the elderly once a week through the city Department of Aging's

Friendly Visiting Program of Neighborhood SHOPP. Volunteers donate their time to accompany the elderly once a week for an hour as a means of improving their mental health. Volunteers will need to undergo a background check and commit six months to the program. For more information, call 311.

Public Engagement Unit

The Mayor's Public Engagement Unit will host several events promoting its initiatives at the following dates, times, and locations: representatives for Get Covered NYC, offering affordable healthcare to New Yorkers, will be at 959 E. 233rd St. from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on July 20, and at the corner of East 215th Street and Olinville Avenue (as part of the Old Times Day event) on July 13 from 10 a.m. to

6 p.m. The Tenant Support Unit, offering tenant support for renters, will be at the Office of Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner at 910 Grand Concourse from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, call 311.

Norwood Youth Market

Affordably priced fruits and vegetables will be up for sale at the Norwood Youth Market, East Gun Hill Road and DeKalb Avenue, each Thursday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. beginning July 11 through Nov. 21. Vendors accept cash, SNAP/EBT, debit/credit, WIC and senior FMNP coupons. For more information, go to grownyc.org/norwoodyouthmarket.

The Green Neighborhoods Program

The New York City Parks Department's Stewardship Program

is looking for volunteers to revitalize street trees and local natural areas every second Saturday of the month through February 2020. To join, call (718) 392-5232.

Right to Counsel

Right to Counsel (RTC)—which assigns a free attorney to those sued for eviction in housing court and in NYCHA termination of tenancy hearings and who are income eligible—is available to tenants who live in Bronx zip codes 10457, 10467, and 10468. If a tenant is not income-eligible, they have the right to a one-off legal consultation or advice session. Tenants facing eviction or harassment from management can call Nova Lucero at the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition for support at (917) 952-5494.

Free Bird Walks

Free bird walks are of-

fered every Saturday beginning at 9 a.m. through July 20 at the Van Cortlandt Nature Center. Bird watchers can look for various species of residents and migrants and discuss a wide range of avian topics. For more information, email Joseph McManus at mcmanus638@aol.com. No registration necessary. No limit. Free, thanks to grant by Councilman Andrew Cohen.

Crime Victims Support

Crime Victims Support Services, a 501(c)(3) group at 1138 Neill Ave., offers victims help in navigating the criminal justice system. Free confidential services include claim assistance, case follow-up, crisis counseling, and victim advocacy. The group accepts donations. For more information, call (718) 823-4925.

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This rating is based on how well the facility meets Medicare's minimum quality requirements. Each facility is reviewed annually. The results of the last three years' worth of inspections comprise the score. The most recent inspection carries the greatest weight.

STAFFING

This rating looks at the number of hours of care provided to each resident each day. This information is "acuity based", meaning it considered the care needs of the resident when looking at the number of staff available. This measure looks at both RN staff and total nursing staff.

QUALITY MEASURES

Medicare assigns the star rating based on data from a select set of clinical data measures and compares the facility performance to national norms. The measure looks at how well the facility is caring for the residents' physical and clinical needs. More stars means better quality of care.

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Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

EDITOR'S PICK

Free Activities at the Oval

Williamsbridge Oval offers a variety of free summer programs including sports, exercise, and dance. For more information and a detailed schedule, call (718) 543-8672.

Onstage

The New York Botanical Garden offers a variety of **Brazilian musical performances** weekends in July. For detailed information, fees, and a schedule, call (718) 817-8700.

Events

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers the following concerts: **Niall Connolly**, performing with his four-piece band, July 10; and **Sweet Meg & the Wayfarers**, band performing a variety of music, July 17; both on the Great Lawn at 7 p.m. (\$12; \$8/students/seniors; \$6/age 6+; free/WH members and under age 6; bring picnic and folding chair). Grounds admission is free until noon Tuesdays and Saturdays all year. For more information and a schedule of events including tours and walks, call (718) 549-3200.

Exhibits

NY Botanical Garden presents its largest exhibition ever, **Brazilian Modern: The Living Art of Roberto Burle Marx**, through Sept. 29, featuring lush gardens with a curated gallery of his vibrant paintings, drawings and textiles. In addition, the sights and sounds of Brazil and its lively contributions to music and dance are included. For more information, call (718) 817-8700.

The Museum of Bronx History,

3266 Bainbridge Ave., presents exhibition, **The Bronx Goes to the Movies**, through Oct. 6. For more information, call (718) 881-8900.

The Museum of Bronx History, 3266 Bainbridge Ave. (208th Street), presents **A History of the Bronx Latino**, ongoing. Hours: Saturdays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sundays 1 to 5 p.m. For more information, call (718) 881-8900.

Library Events

Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents for children ages 5 to 12: **Open Greenhouse**: Kids with a green thumb can work on indoor greenhouse garden, July 8 at 2:30 p.m.; and **Birds of Prey**: to learn about hawks, owl, and falcons, July 12 at 3 p.m. Adults can attend: **film screenings at 2:30 p.m.**: "Geostorm," July 6; and "Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald," July 13; and **Computer Basics**: July 10 at 1 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for children: **Toddler Storytime at 11 a.m.**: (ages 18 months to 3 years), interactive stories, action songs, fingerplays, and crafts, July 8, 11, 15, 18 and 22; and for ages 5 to 12: **Crafty Fridays at 3 p.m.**: crafts, July 5, 12 and 19; and **STEM: Kids Science at 3 p.m.**: Gardening, July 9 and 16. Teens/young adults can attend: **film**: "Ralph Breaks the Internet,"



Photo by Miriam Quinones

FUN WILL LIKELY be the theme this summer at Oval Park—as shown by these young people having a good time at Family Fitness Fun on June 22—which will be very busy this summer given a host of events happening there (see Editor's Pick for more information).

July 13 at 1:30 p.m. Adults can enjoy: **Knitting Circle**: Thursdays at 3 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Pl. (near Kingsbridge Road, offers for children ages 5 to 12: **Science Friday**: Science experiment to learn about STEM subjects, July 5 at 2 p.m.; and **films at 2 p.m.**: July 6 and 20; and **Abracadabra**: (ages 3 to 12): Watch magic show and learn

some tricks, July 8 at 2 p.m. Teens/young adults can enjoy: **film**: "The Warriors," July 5 at 3 p.m. Adults can attend: **Computer Basics at noon**: July 11 and 18. 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 July 8 for the next publication date of July 18.

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Photo courtesy New York Botanical Garden

THE WORKS OF the late, great famed artist Roberto Burle Marx of Brazil will be on display at the New York Botanical Garden (see Exhibits section for more information).

New Leadership at Community Board 7

(continued from page 1)

"My tone is energetic energy, really progressiveness, and action," said Martinez in a phone interview. "My view is I want to be out in the community and speaking directly to people. And when they come to community board meetings it's not 'oh, it's going to be a couple of hours of just talking over very mundane information,' but it's more inclusive. Let's not be afraid to make a mistake, or let's not be afraid of not knowing the rules directly. We'll learn as we go."

His other mantra is inclusivity, inviting residents to discuss matters of health and physical fitness, nutrition, and awareness of quality of life, citing the high rates of obesity in the Bronx as a concern along with a lack of access to natural food stores.

Born and raised in the U.S., Martinez's parents are from the Dominican Republic. He attended the now former John F. Kennedy High School in Kingsbridge, graduating in 2006, and later SUNY Cortlandt, where he majored in Finance and Economics and minored in Political Science. He currently works as a premier banker for Wells Fargo bank, and believes his experience and skills in the financial services sector, such as time management, focus, and building long-lasting relationships, will serve him well as chair, and in interacting with the community.

As has been the case for boards across the city, involvement at CB7 is spotty, with at least 13 member slots still vacant. The board's district manager, Ischia Bravo, has attempted to amplify the board's message by creating social media pages and e-mail blasting vital information daily. But with 13 vacancies, casting a formal vote is a challenge since attendance determines whether there is quorum, parliamentary procedure to ensure the majority of members are present for a vote to formally count.

The election effectively ends the one-year run for Hill, a seven-year member of the board who had served on the ever-busy Housing, Land Use & Zoning Committee, presiding over a multitude of projects impacting the neighborhoods of CB7.

"I have worked really, really hard to bring this board back together," Hill said in her address before the vote was cast. "This was a very fractured board when I came into it and we also had [a lot of] not too good a reputation with a lot of the agencies that the chair has to work with. I have learned to, and worked very hard with our elected officials, to get things done, to push forward the agenda of the board."

Among the more shocking moments came when Nora Feury, a lifelong Bronx resident who serves as CB7's current secretary, and who once served as chair, decided to recant her run, leaving her opponent, Gloribel Vega, the default winner.

"I am dropping my name from the nomination and I'm going to step aside for Gloribel to take over," said Feury, drawing warm applause

from both the board and the crowd.

Other winners of the board included Kevin Davis, a city employee working for the 311 call system. Davis beat longtime board member Lowell Green for second vice chair. Davis promised he'd ensure site meetings are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and that more meetings would be held in the southern part of the community district, which currently hosts very few general board meetings.

Meantime, Andrew Laiouis and Edgar Ramos will remain on the executive board, as third vice chair and treasurer respectively, since they ran unopposed.

Barbara Stronczer will continue as first vice chair, after a further runoff vote was needed as a result of a tie with William Francis, her opponent.

Before votes were cast, candidates had the chance to present their platforms before the voting board members. In her address, Stronczer cited her resume as a former teacher, president of the Bedford Moshulu Community Association, serving on the board of the West Bronx Housing & Community Resource Center, on the board of the Sister Annunciata Senior Center as well as serving on her tenant association on Bedford Park and Moshulu Parkway on Webster Avenue. As a board member, she said, "I certainly can say that the last five years has brought tremendous changes to the neighborhood with all these buildings coming to be. However, I feel that we often throw the term 'infrastructure improvements' around, but do very little to see them take place."

With a mix of old and new blood, members can now leverage institutional knowledge of the district with a fresher look at ongoing issues. The board, representing Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge Heights, Fordham, and University Heights, has seen dramatic changes in the way of development over the last few years, much of which arrived "as of right," a term that allows builders to construct buildings without board approval, giving the board little recourse. Boards are traditionally advisory, issuing recommendations that can either be rejected or given deference by city agencies, and even the sitting New York City Council members whose districts overlap with the board.

Each board has a district manager, who, unlike the volunteer board members, is a paid administrator for the city that carries out the board's wishes, generally acting as a go-between for members and city agencies.

For all members, this election stands as the first since voters changed the New York City Charter last year to include term limits for community board members. Previously, members could run an unlimited number of times. The change now mandates members to serve a maximum of four two-year terms before resigning. Term-limited members will have to spend a minimum of a year off the board before they can rejoin.



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