



NORWOOD NEWS

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FUNERAL HOME DISPUTE CAUSES CHAOS

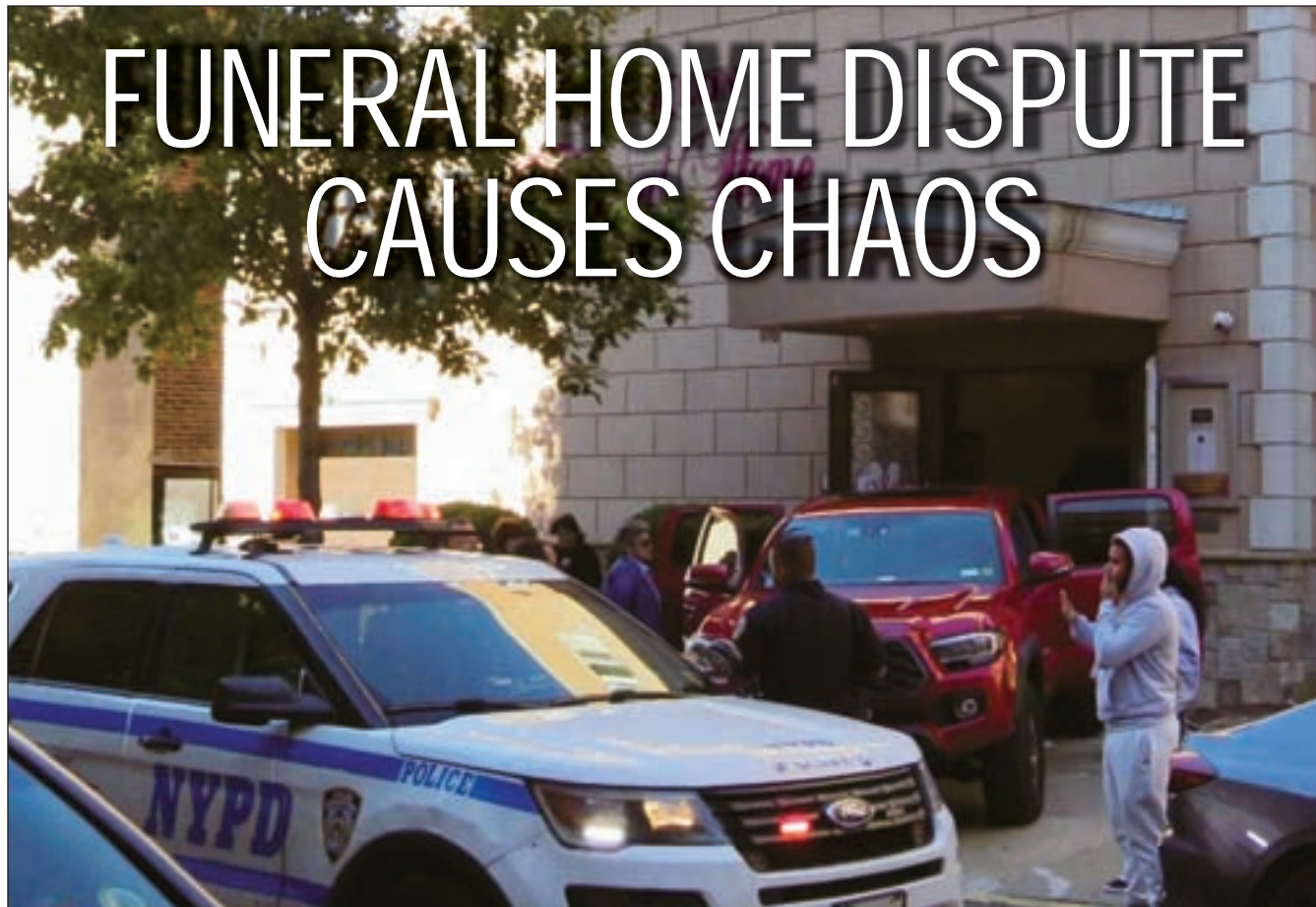


Photo by David Greene

BOTH PARTIES TO an ownership disagreement at the McKeon Funeral Home, located on Perry Avenue in Norwood, spoke with police officers for nearly an hour before officers gave them both access to the business on Friday, Sept. 23, 2022.

By **DAVID GREENE & SÍLE MOLONEY**

A business dispute among former business associates of a longtime, Norwood funeral home has left an unfathomable situation for clients of the business, according to one of the parties, with fami-

lies of the deceased reportedly left in a type of legal limbo as regards their family members' "prearrangement" documents.

The dispute came to a head last September between William Curran, the former, [subject to the outcome of

court proceedings] owner of McKeon Funeral Home, located at 3129 Perry Avenue in Norwood, who is also a notary, and his former associates, Kathleen Conley and Ronald Schnepf.

The NYPD was called to the funeral home on Friday, Sept.

23, 2022, when Curran backed his truck up against the front doorway of the home. Both parties reportedly called the police, and at around 10 a.m. that day, a police dispatcher was heard on police radio transmission saying, "Some-
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Adams Pushes for Carbon Neutral City with “City of Yes” Plan

By JOSÉ A. GIRALT

New York City Mayor Eric Adams sees the City's future as carbon neutral. That means a goal and objective to emit fewer excess toxic gases into the atmosphere and reduce global warming. For decades, scientists have warned that industrialized countries have overwhelmed the environment with pollution levels that threaten the balance of nature and humanity's existence on the planet.

At the Bronx Community Board 7 monthly, virtual meeting of the Housing, Land Use & Economic Development (HLU&ED) committee held on Tuesday, May 16, Cesar Delgado from NYC Department of City Planning (NYC Planning) gave a presentation on what the Adams administration is doing to tackle the issue. He described how proposed changes to New York City's regulations for business owners and residential buildings could make the City's energy grid 100 percent renewable by 2040.

The expansiveness of the initiative is reflected in its official project name, “The City of Yes for Carbon Neutrality.” Delgado explained, “[Carbon neutrality] is a city in which we are focused on reducing operational carbon emissions in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement.” He was referring to the legally binding international treaty on climate change adopted by 196 parties at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, France, on Dec. 12, 2015.

The accord seeks to limit global warming to well below 2°C and pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5°C, while ensuring greenhouse gas emissions peak before 2025, at the latest, and decline 43 percent by 2030. It entered into force on Nov. 4, 2016. While the climate crisis is, of course, global in scope, this is not dissuading the Adams administration from having New York City play its part by implementing local measures like carbon neutrality.

On June 1, 2017, former U.S. President Donald Trump announced the withdrawal of the U.S. from the climate accord, saying in part, “The Paris accord is very unfair at the highest level to the United States.” He alleged, if implemented, it would cost the U.S. \$3 trillion in lost GDP and 6.5 million jobs. He also alleged it would “undermine our economy, hamstring our workers,” and “effectively decapitate our coal industry.” Trump said he was open to renegotiating the accord, but European and UN leaders said it “cannot be renegotiated at the request of a single party.”

Trump also criticized the Green Climate Fund, established within a UN framework to assist developing countries to counter climate change, calling



Photo by Sile Moloney

A SLIDE FROM a presentation to Bronx Community Board 7's Housing, Land Use & Economic Development committee on Tuesday, May 16, 2023, by Cesar Delgado from NYC Department of City Planning.

it a scheme to redistribute wealth from rich to poor countries. On Jan. 20, 2021, on his first day in office, U.S. President Joe Biden brought the U.S. back into the Paris Agreement.

In New York City, some of the changes included in the Adams administration's carbon neutral plan include removing restrictions that limit the installation of solar panels on rooftops, and exploring how to implement more wind-based energy sources. The process is described as “decarbonizing our energy grid.”

The proposals form part of a multi-agency effort by the City with NYC Department of City Planning working with the City's fire department (FDNY) and the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice (MOCEJ) to increase green investments in City buildings. “The City of Yes [for] Carbon Neutrality is the first of three projects that the Department of City Planning is developing as part of Mayor Adams' proposal,” Delgado said.

He continued, “[Adams] is charging agencies to take a hard look at outdated regulations holding New Yorkers back from investing in their homes, businesses, and our city, overall. A carbon neutral city is a city where we have reduced overall energy needs, and to do this, we will need to retrofit almost every building in the city to become highly efficient to reduce waste and energy.”

Delgado said two more initiatives, the Economic Opportunity initiative and the Housing Opportunity initiative, are set to roll out later in the summer. The former aims to address how carbon neutrality can be attained by working closely with small businesses on potential changes to the zoning regulations, while it is understood the latter aims to ensure neighborhoods meet their housing needs [in a sustainable

way].

In the short term, Delgado said cities like New York are responding to what has been described by many scientists as a climate emergency. The Reuters Hot List lists many such climate scientists, including U.S. scientist James Edward Hansen.

The principal cause of the emergency, according to such scientists, is excess greenhouse gas emissions like carbon dioxide (CO2). According to climate.gov, by adding more carbon dioxide to the atmosphere, people are supercharging the earth's natural greenhouse effect, causing global temperature to rise.

CO2 is produced largely through the burning of fossil fuels like diesel, gasoline, natural gas, and home heating oil. Carbon neutrality seeks to reduce reliance on energy sources that release more CO2 into the atmosphere and instead use alternate energy sources that do not overwhelm the environment with pollutants.

As a group, the proposals are understood to be “ambitious,” even as described on the NYC Planning website. If the plans are implemented, New Yorkers can expect to see the city significantly transformed in the next few decades. Transportation modes will change with more e-bikes, bike paths, and electric cars. There will be less gas and oil heating buildings, with more of these being retrofitted with solar panels. Efforts will be made to decarbonize waste infrastructure by promoting food growth, composting, and the collection of rainwater. It is also envisaged to transform the City's electric grid from fossil fuel burning plants to solar and wind energy systems and energy storage.

Not all CB7 members were convinced about the need for so much change.

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By **DAVID GREENE**



With the recent announcements by Democrat, Robert Kennedy Jr., and Republican, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, of their respective candidacies for U.S. president, this week, we asked readers their thoughts on the current shape of the 2024 presidential election.



"I'm looking at the non-traditional candidates. [President] Joe Biden has not been good, and [former President Donald] Trump is not such a good leader. No, Biden has not done a good job. I think Trump's going to win, but he doesn't know how to bring together the American people. He's popular, but as a leader he's not so great. He didn't work for the people."

Manoje Sarkar,
Parkchester
Photo by David Greene



"During Donald Trump's time, when it came down, economic-wise, he did do a good job and all, but it was all the other areas that I'm not going to go into detail [about], but there were many areas he was lacking in. Honestly, a lot of people didn't like him, plus on the news.....all the problems he'd be getting himself into with the law here and there. He doesn't seem to be a feeling president in my opinion. You must feel right about the person in that position, and Sleepy Joe? You know, Joe Biden, I don't really have much of an opinion about him. The last two years, I haven't really heard much about him."

Juan Encarnacion,
Morris Park
Photo by David Greene



"My feelings are that I'm not sure whether Democrat or Republican, if either one of these parties are going to be on our side with the way the world is now. I'm a social worker so it's like I see that there's so many things that's failing. The way our mental health [system] is, the way our political system is, just in our inner borough, I can't even imagine what's going to happen on the national level watching these guys go head-to-head, and then still not deliver on their promises to help any of the states. Of course, our public officials sold us out."

Kayce Williams,
Kingsbridge
Photo by David Greene



"I think... I don't know...maybe Trump. Yeah, I think Trump. I don't know if he'll be in jail...ha ha! I don't know. I love Biden but right now, you know, let me see. It's too early, but maybe it's our situation. I don't think things would be any better if Trump was president. I don't think so because the economy, the coronavirus broke everything."

Victor Charles,
Kingsbridge
Photo by David Greene



"I think it's important to note that many Republican presidential candidates that are running in 2024 are coming from dynamic backgrounds. With candidates like Nikki Haley and Larry Elder, it's interesting to note that minority Republicans are on the scene, and taking a very strong political stance against typical, Democratic political objectives. Absolutely I hope the lesser-known candidates receive the same volume of support as the 'squeaky wheels' of the Republican Party like [Florida Gov. Ron] DeSantis and [former President Donald] Trump."

Sabrina Rocchio,
Throggs Neck
Photo courtesy of Sabrina Rocchio

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Adams Pushes for Carbon Neutral City with "City of Yes" Plan

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Myrna Calderon chairs the bylaws and nominating committees for CB7 and has a different view on the proposals. "Unlike a lot of people in City Planning, at the community boards, and on city council, I actually have a degree in science," she said. Calderon continued, "I know a lot of this stuff that they're doing, supposedly to try to help the environment, is actually hurting the environment. Most of this is based on junk science; there's a lot of scientists that are against all of these mandates."

In an article entitled, "Scientists Who Deny Climate Change," dated Oct. 23, 2015, Business Insider provides an overview of some such scientists. Meanwhile, the Guardian newspaper reported in October 2021 that British scientist, Professor Philip Jones was head of the Climatic Research Unit at East Anglia University in Norwich, UK, in 2009 when hackers stole thousands of documents and emails from its computers.

According to The Guardian, and a subsequent film, "The Trick," which documents the event, their contents were then carefully selected and used

by climate change deniers to promote the idea that scientists were falsely alleging fossil fuel emissions were warming the planet. "Subsequent inquiries rejected all these allegations," The Guardian reported.

Calderon is also concerned about the financial burden such proposals will force homeowners to shoulder. "You're throwing these mandates at us without any assistance," she continued. "We're going to have to take out more loans to catch up with all these mandates.... You keep throwing stuff at homeowners and it's just making people leave New York City." Calderon did not appear hopeful NYC Planning would be responsive to her concerns. "They're just going to jam this down our throats whether we like it or not," she said.

For his part, Delgado assured attendees he would be sharing his notes, including Calderon's concerns, with his NYC Planning colleagues and seniors for inclusion in further discussions. He also reminded everyone that "nothing as of now will be mandated. No one will be obligated to adopt anything."

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story*

Crazy Fruits Smoothies & Juice Bar, a Healthy and Refreshing Option

By **ARIEL PACHECO**

Crazy Fruits Smoothies & Juice Bar is a family business with over 100 items available on its wide-ranging menu. From smoothies to traditional Mexican foods, to sandwiches and salads, there's something for every customer.

Located at 3120 Bainbridge Avenue in Norwood, Crazy Fruits combines high-quality food with a price that can't be beaten. Crazy Fruits opened in 2017 and has been a staple in the community ever since, serving healthy foods and drinks tailor-made to the desires of its customers.

"We wanted to open up something that people would prefer, that's healthy, and something that's different," said Matthew, a manager at Crazy Fruits. "So that's why we're called Crazy Fruits."

Crazy Fruits prides itself on giving the best customer service and meeting the needs of each and every customer. Customers can build any smoothie they want, and team members can assist anyone who has any specific food allergy. Matthew says working at Crazy Fruits gives him a sense of giving back to the community.

"We always make sure that the customer comes in and that they leave with what they like, and if we don't have what they like, we at least recommend something that we think they would," he said. "I feel like we're [providing] something the community can't get without us."



Photo by Ariel Pacheco

TEAM MEMBERS OF Crazy Fruits, located at 3120 Bainbridge Avenue in Norwood work behind the scenes on May 23, 2023.

Crazy Fruits also has plenty of healthy drinks on its menu, using high-quality fruits and vegetables to create new drinks that have fun names. Some of the drinks on the menu include "Sexy

Green," "Flat Abs," "Citrus Lust," and "Supa Dupa."

The menu also includes remedy juices that can help customers dealing with a multitude of issues. The remedy juices

are specifically made to help provide relief for anyone dealing with headaches, indigestion, or a cough, among numerous other ailments.

"We always try to find the best drinks for different occasions, so if, for example, you have a headache, we have different juices for that," said Matthew. "We try to find drinks that can help you but that are also refreshing."

Crazy Fruits is constantly creating new drinks to meet the needs of the community. Matthew says the most popular items on the menu are the Tropical Breeze Smoothie, which contains pineapple, mango, and coconut cream, and the Soursop Passion Smoothie, which contains lemon, soursop, passion fruit, coconut cream, and pineapple.

"We always try to get good fruits, good vegetables, good everything," said Matthew. "We always try to make our prices correct and at a price that is manageable for everybody to be able to enjoy through a hot summer." Their menu also includes acai bowls, pastelitos and empanadas. Crazy Fruits is open 7 days a week and can be found on several food delivery apps.

Come into Crazy Fruits today to try one of the many items on the menu, or get a personalized drink tailored to all your favorite ingredients. Whether you're looking for a healthy and refreshing drink, or just a quick snack, Crazy Fruits has something you'll be sure to love!



Photo by Ariel Pacheco

Bronx CB7 Holds “Flagging” Event at Woodlawn Cemetery

By DAVID GREENE

Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) members joined residents for the annual “flagging of the graves” event on Wednesday, May 24, ahead of Memorial Day weekend. Volunteers at Woodlawn Cemetery on Webster Avenue on the Norwood-Woodlawn border also participated by locating the gravesites of U.S. veterans and placing an American flag at each grave.

As CB7 members arrived, with invited guests, Bonnie Morales, army veteran and support coordinator at NY Outreach Services, and Ronald Downs, suicide prevention community engagement & partnerships coordinator for the local VA hospital in Fordham Manor, they were greeted by Meg Ventrudo, executive director of Woodlawn Conservancy. The visitors were then split up into groups and given maps and plenty of flags.

According to Barbara Selesky, media coordinator at Woodlawn, the flagging tradition began after the September 11th attacks of 2001. Selesky recalled, “It was after 9/11, when there was a surge in patriotism that Woodlawn’s volunteers took on the responsibility of placing flags on the graves of those who served our country.” She added, “We began with a list of 200 names, and with the assistance of the local American Legion post, we added to the list. Then we sent our eager researchers out with clipboards to

write down the names of those memorialized with a military marker.”

Selesky said that to date Woodlawn has identified 8,600 U.S. service men and women buried among the 300,000+ individual graves and 1,000+ private mausoleums. Woodlawn was designated a national historic landmark in 2011. According to Woodlawn officials, military leaders buried at the cemetery include Navy Admiral David Glasgow Farragut, newspaper publisher, Joseph Pulitzer, and Lucy Bainbridge, who served as a nurse during the Civil War, to name a few.

Intensely studying his map, Elderfield Luke of East 168th Street was observed as he stopped, double-checked, and then placed a new flag at the resting place of four members of the Trippedo family. As the elderly man stepped around the headstone, he placed his hand on the top of the headstone as if touching someone

Participating in Woodlawn’s flagging event for the first time, Luke explained, “My niece called me about this. Her son, who is a Gold Star, her son died in Iraq. So, I came out today to place flags at the graves.” Luke said he was taking part in the event as a way of “remembering” his great-nephew and “the other fallen service members.”

Longtime Norwood resident and retired Army National Guard member, Chris Perkins, was with the 145th Maintenance Company based in the Kings-



Photo by David Greene

RETIRED ARMY NATIONAL Guard veteran and Norwood resident, Christopher Perkins, leaves an American flag at the final resting place of one of 8,600 U.S. military service members buried at Woodlawn Cemetery during the annual “Flagging of the Graves” event on Wednesday, May 24, 2023.

bridge Armory on September 11, 2001. His members responded to the World Trade Center in the days after the attack and were deployed to Iraq on more than one occasion.

Perkins is now a member of Am-Vets, described as the nation’s most inclusive, congressionally chartered veterans service organization, representing the interests of 20 million veterans

After spending the day scouring a small portion of the 400-acre cemetery, searching for buried veterans, including the estimated 100 U.S. military service members who Woodlawn officials estimate were buried there between 2021 and 2022, Perkins told *Norwood News*, “It was my honor to place flags upon the monuments of our veterans this year. I hope to see more people, especially more young people, doing this in the future.”

Having led the CB7 group at the Woodlawn flagging event the past two years, Chad Royer, the board’s veterans affairs committee chair, said after the event, “I can tell you that folks who attended the event found it very rewarding.” He continued, “I’ve come to find that some of our own community partners have either passed by Woodlawn Cemetery on occasion or have never stepped foot in the cemetery at all until they attended this event. For that reason, I’m grateful that we had a decent attendance.”

Royer pointed out, “Although I’ve never served in the military, my contribution to our veterans is advocacy,

acknowledgement, and support. Some of my friends and colleagues have relatives who used to serve, and it made me realize how much our civilians really do not know and understand the things that our veterans go through, long after they transition from the military.”

Recently appointed CB7 district manager, Karla Cabrera Carrera, joined Royer at the Woodlawn flagging event. The board had also held their own flagging event on May 13 at the Bronx Victory Memorial on Moshulu Parkway in Bedford Park for a second consecutive year. Cabrera Carrera told *Norwood News*, “Moving forward, CB7 will host two yearly, flagging events at Bronx Victory Memorial to commemorate Memorial Day and Veterans Day.”

She added, “The events, which are spearheaded by our Veterans Affairs committee, will provide a platform for all community [members] who wish to honor our veterans, past and present.”

According to Selesky, other groups who participated in this year’s flagging event included the Boy Scouts of America, NYC Department of Veterans Affairs, including Commissioner James Hendon, and students from St. Barnabas High School. The number of volunteers this year was over 150.

Woodlawn Cemetery is located at 4199 Webster Avenue and is open 7 days a week between 8.30 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. For information on upcoming events, tours and other special events, as well as its history, visit www.woodlawn.org.

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NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Search for Missing People

The NYPD is seeking the public's help locating a 29-year-old man reported missing from Norwood. Police said Joshua Colon from 19 West Mosholu Parkway North was last seen on Saturday, May 27, at around 3.30 p.m., leaving his home. Police said Colon is described as male, is 6 feet, 3 inches tall, weighs 270 pounds, has a heavy build, brown eyes, brown hair, a beard and was last seen wearing black slippers, a grey shirt, and blue sweat shorts. He is known to frequent Manhattan, south of 38th Street, they said.

Police are also seeking the public's help locating a 72-year-old woman who is reported missing from Fordham Manor. Police said Lucille Maese, 72, of 7 Fordham Hill Oval, was last seen on Monday, May 29, at around 8.30 a.m., leaving her home. She is described as around 5 feet, 1 inch tall, weighs 130 pounds, has brown eyes, gray hair, and was last seen wearing a black shirt, black leggings, black shoes, a burgundy sweater around her waist and was carrying a beige bag. Norwood News was informed by Harold Harris that Maese also goes by the name "Francesca." We're corroborating this information with the NYPD.

Anyone with information regarding these missing people is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA (74782). The public can also submit their tips by logging onto the Crime Stoppers website at <https://crimestoppers.nypdonline.org/>, on Twitter @NYPD-Tips. All calls are strictly confidential.



Photo courtesy of the NYPD

JOSHUA COLON, 29, from Norwood is reported missing.

Photo courtesy of the NYPD

LUCILLE MAESE, 72, from Fordham Hill Oval in Fordham Manor is reported missing.



Jerome Gun Hill BID Holds Annual Board Meeting

The Jerome Gun Hill Business Improvement District (BID) held its annual board meeting on Thursday, May 25, at the Keeper's House, located at 3400 Reservoir Oval East in Norwood. The event gave small business owners and active residents the opportunity to voice their concerns and opinions on specific neighborhood problems they feel need to be addressed as part of BID's work during its next fiscal year which commences July 1. The new budget was approved, the board of directors was voted in, and a recap was provided on some of the work carried out by the BID over the last few months. Daniela Beasley, executive director of the BID, said of the event, "Overall, it was a success, and we're looking forward to another year of improvement for the BID."



BOARD MEMBERS AND staff of the Jerome Gun Hill BID join residents at the BID's annual board meeting at the Keeper's House, located at 3400 Reservoir Oval East in Norwood on Thursday, May 25, 2023.

Feliz Holds Seniors Brunch at NYBG

District 15 City Council Member Oswald Feliz held a seniors' brunch at the New York Botanical Gardens on Wednesday, May 24, in recognition of Older Americans Month in May.

Meanwhile, following the passage of previously passed fire safety and preventative laws he had sponsored, on May 26, the councilman met with FDNY Commissioner Laura Kavanaugh, Rep. Adriano Espailat (NY-13) and others to discuss additional fire safety measures needed to curb ongoing fires caused by lithium-ion batteries. So far this year, these have caused nearly 85 fires across the City, the FDNY said.



COUNCIL MEMBER OSWALD Feliz joins honorary 52nd Precinct Community Council member, Sallie Caldwell, Precinct Council VP, Jerry Landron, and Precinct Council sergeant-at-arms, Diane Walters, at a seniors' brunch held at the New York Botanical Garden on Wednesday, May 24, 2023.

Nora Feury, Former Bronx Community Board 7 Chair, Dies

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Norwood News was informed on May 31 that Nora Feury, a lifelong Bronx resident who once served as chair of Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7), and more recently served as CB7 secretary, has died. We will share any funeral details we receive.

Though she remained as a member of the board, in June 2019, then-secretary Feury stepped aside to allow Gloribel Vega to take up the position. "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.

Feury was honored in January 2020 when the Nora Feury Child Development Center was opened in Crotona Park North, the 5th such center in the borough, and part of the Mosholu Montefiore Community Center network. "Nora is a pioneer in Head Start and early childhood education, and we were thrilled to open the center today on her birthday!" officials said at the time. "Happy Birthday Nora... and thank you!"

Tributes were being shared on social media on Wednesday night among those who knew Feury following her passing. Marvin Villanueva wrote, "Under your supervision has been an amazing experience. Thank you for your mentorship specially to your guidance and support! Farewell Ms. Nora Feury. You will be missed!"



Photo by Síle Moloney

NORA FEURY (L) was still all smiles after dropping her name for consideration for the position of secretary of Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) in June 2019. Feury died in May 2023.

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Williamsbridge: Four Burned in Construction Accident

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Four people were injured following a burn-related incident at 737 East Gun Hill Road, the site of a new building under construction, on Monday morning, May 15, FDNY officials said.

All hands were asked to respond to the location at 8.38 a.m. on Monday. An FDNY spokesperson told *Norwood News*, “It was not a fire. It was a work-place related incident.” He explained that the department initially received a call regarding a fire at the location, but it later transpired that it was a work-place related incident, saying there was some type of “ignition” that caused burns but that it was not a fire.

When asked, he said neither was it a collapse. “It did result in four patients, all civilians, three of whom were transferred to Jacobi... the last one they treated on scene,” the spokesperson said. “Whatever caused [it] was a result of whatever materials they were using. I know they’re still doing an investigation over there,” he added.

A section of East Gun Hill Road was cordoned off to vehicle traffic between Holland Avenue and White Plains Road while several fire trucks and some police vehicles were seen



Photo by Síle Moloney

EMERGENCY SERVICES RESPOND to reports that four people were injured following a burn-related incident at a construction of a new building at 737 East Gun Hill in Williamsbridge on Monday morning, May 15, 2023.

in the area responding to the incident.

We spoke to some construction workers who, speaking in Spanish, confirmed they were asked to evacuate the building but did not know what had happened. Others said they had not yet arrived on site when the accident occurred or said they worked for different companies at different sites.

Some UPS workers we spoke to at the rear of the building did not know what happened either. Indeed, most people we spoke to did not see or hear any fire or noise.

Norwood News reached out

to NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) for comment. David Maggiotto, DOB deputy press secretary, advised that DOB inspectors arrived at the 8-story building on Monday morning and inspectors reported that three workers were performing waterproofing work inside the building’s retention tank on the 1st floor when the waterproofing material caught fire, burning the workers.

He said that first responders transported the injured workers by ambulance to a local hospital and that inspectors reported they were conscious at the time. Maggiotto said DOB issued a partial stop work order at the property, putting a halt to all hot work and waterproofing work at the site, as well as all work associated with the storm-water detention tank.

We mentioned that FDNY initially said that there were four injured people and that one had been treated at the scene and asked DOB if they wished to comment further on the number of injured. Andrew Rudansky, DOB press secretary, said the department had been informed by first responders that three injured workers were transported from the scene to a local area hospital.

We asked Rudansky what “hot work” meant, and he said it was riveting, welding, flame-cutting or any other fire or

spark-producing operation. We also asked if a supervisor had been on site at the time of the incident. Rudansky responded, saying DOB did not issue a violation for failing to provide required site safety supervision. Asked if the site was being run by Stagg Group, DOB confirmed that it was.

A person wearing a Stagg Group shirt was seen interacting with City officials at the site. *Norwood News* has reached out to Stagg Group for comment and will update this story upon receipt of a response.

In addition, Maggiotte said

what he knew of the incident, he said, “When I just pulled up, there were a lot of fire trucks blocking the place. They said there was like a confined fire down in the basement. I guess it could have been disastrous, but they got on top of it before it got out of hand.”

A funeral home located next to the building was not evacuated. The owner, Francine Ross-Roden, told us the accident happened even before they opened up before 9 a.m., or before they got to work. “I am not sure what took place next door, but I did understand that some people got hurt,” Ross-



Photo by Síle Moloney

EMERGENCY SERVICES RESPOND to reports that four people were injured following a burn-related incident at a construction of a new building at 737 East Gun Hill in Williamsbridge on Monday morning, May 15, 2023.



Photo by Síle Moloney

EMERGENCY SERVICES RESPOND to reports that four people were injured following a burn-related incident at a construction of a new building at 737 East Gun Hill in Williamsbridge on Monday morning, May 15, 2023.

that DOB issued a total of five violations: failure to safeguard all persons and property affected by construction operations; the permit holder failed to provide proof that injured workers had training for working in confined spaces; a failure to provide manufacturer’s specification for using highly flammable material; an inadequate pre-shift safety meeting that did not adequately address the safety issues and related danger and precautions; and failure to provide FDNY with a permit for using a propane torch at the site.

We spoke to one passerby, Lewis Thomas, who works in the area, and who said the building under construction was a new building, as opposed to a renovation. Asked

Roden said. “My concern is with those that got hurt, that it wasn’t serious or life threatening, that they’re ok, they will be healed and taken care of, and they can continue what they set off to do next door in building it.”

She said there were no previous accidents at the location to her knowledge. “They’ve been very gracious in allowing us to continue our services here, and working here, and working with our families that we serve, as far as making sure that they don’t block the front or anything. They’ve been very good. In any event, regardless, we pray that those that were injured are not injured seriously.”

FDNY officials said the incident was “closed” at 9.47 a.m.



Letters To The Editor

Editor's Note: We reserve the right to edit letters for space, clarity, civility and accuracy.

Fare Evasion

After taking one year to complete, the MTA finally released the latest 120-page Blue Ribbon Panel report on fare evasion. The report findings were worse than the \$500 million previously reported in fare evasion in 2022. The report revealed that the losses were greater than initially thought. In 2022, the MTA lost \$315 million in bus fare evasion, \$285 million in subway fare evasion, \$44 million in commuter rail fare evasion and \$46 million in bridge and tunnel crossings revenue fare evasion, making a total of \$690 million.

If your business lost \$690 million per year to shoplifters, stockholders or, in this case, commuters, those footing the bill might want to fire those in charge and hire a new management team. Commuters and taxpayers have to wonder why each new generation of MTA management, year after year, never seem to be able to deal with controlling fare evasion. Successful leadership could resolve these challenges and deliver over \$1 billion worth of savings yearly. Honest rid-

ers, who face fare increases later this year and have always paid when boarding, should expect nothing less.

Larry Penner
Great Neck

Our "Justice" System

Manhattan DA Alvin Bragg announced in May that Messiah Nantwi was arrested in the case of two murders in Harlem (*Freed for Mayhem, April 12, 2023, NY Daily News*). It was reported that Nantwi had been out on bail having shot at cops less than two years earlier. Meanwhile, career criminal Phillip Meyers was identified as the suspect in a \$1,000 sucker-punch robbery in which the victim was killed (*Killer Puncher Identified, April 7, NY Daily News*). Meyers had reportedly been convicted of murder in 1999 for shooting, wounding, and attempting to kill a cop. In another case involving the shooting of a cop, Kevin Stichel pleaded guilty and got only 16 years. (*Career Crook Gets 16 years for Shooting & Wounding Cop in 2018*). Those are just a few examples of how dangerous criminals are allowed back out to prey on the public. Meanwhile, much effort is made to punish the innocent. In

March 2020, Nurse Tracy McCarter fought off an attack from her estranged husband and in the struggle, she killed him (see Dr. Uche Blackstock's editorial page column in the March 14, 2022, *NY Daily News*). Then-Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. decided he would prosecute her. She was still in jail when current Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, during his campaign, promised he would release her. It took him almost a year to keep that promise. He finally dismissed charges against her on Dec. 2, 2022.

Now, Bragg is prosecuting Daniel Penny for restraining and accidentally killing, on May 1, Jordan Neely, after witnesses said Neely had been acting erratically on a subway car. Meanwhile, American Indian movement leader Leonard Peltier has been in prison since the mid-1970s following the shooting of two FBI agents in 1975. At Peltier's trial, the FBI reportedly changed their previous statements that they had been in search of a red pick-up truck, and instead said that they were looking for an orange and white van, similar to the one Peltier drove. This contradictory statement by the FBI was reportedly a highly contentious matter of evidence in the trial. Presidents from Gerald Ford on up have refused to pardon Peltier, but I don't know of any al-

legedly progressive protestors who have taken to the streets to demand his release.

Richard Warren,
Van Cortlandt Village

Editor's Note: CNN reported that a witness told them Jordan Neely, who was experiencing homelessness according to a source familiar with his case, did not harm anyone nor did they see him armed with any weapon. Some reported feeling uncomfortable. When contacted by Norwood News for an overview of the May 1 subway incident, the NYPD did not report that Neely had threatened anyone.

A person arrested and charged with a crime is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

To ensure sufficient time for review of all letters to the editor, please send them to norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org or by mail to Norwood News, 3400 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, NY 10467, by the Friday before each publication day. If sent by email, please mark them as "Letter to the Editor" in the subject line. Letter writers should aim to write no more than 300 words and in response to published articles. Thank you.

Dr. Stevie, the Wonder

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Music legend Stevie Wonder received an honorary doctorate of humane letters at Fordham University's 178th Commencement on May 20 at the college's Rose Hill campus in Fordham Manor. Despite the dismal, intermittent rainfall, Wonder offered the Class of 2023 some words of heartfelt gratitude to be counted among its members.

"It is an honor and a thrill to welcome Stevie Wonder to Fordham," said Fordham president Tania Tetlow. "His music has charmed us, consoled us, elevated us, and entertained us for more than six decades. He is a shining example of an artist's ability to stir the soul."

Ahead of his conferral, and amid huge cheers from the crowd, a Fordham dignitary introduced Wonder, saying, "For more than six decades, Stevie Wonder has used his gifts as a musician and songwriter to entertain and inspire millions. His music and lyrics bear witness to communities in conversation about social injustice, the harsh truths of heartbreak and desolation, and above all, the power of love to lift us to a higher ground."

According to Fordham, a child prodigy, Wonder, born Stevland Morris, was signed by Motown Records at age 11, and in 1963, as 12-year-old Little Stevie Wonder, he became the youngest recording artist to achieve a No. 1 single, with "Fingertips, Part 2." Fordham officials said Wonder is regarded as a musical genius and a pioneer, a master of many instruments and groundbreaking in his use of synthesizers. They said his songs have topped the charts for decades, bridging the genres of pop, R&B, funk, soul, gospel, and jazz.

After the official portion of the ceremony was complete, a keyboard and canopy were carried out onto the hallowed steps of the famous university, and Wonder treated the crowd to a medley of songs, including "You Are the Sunshine of My Life," released in 1972, decades before most of his fellow graduates were born. Commanding the attention of the crowd with his quiet, purposeful words, he said, "I am truly honored, and I can't say enough."

He praised God and talked about using his musical gifts for good, before later appealing to the youth to be activ-



Photo by Síle Moloney

MUSIC LEGEND, STEVIE Wonder receives an honorary doctorate of humane letters at Fordham University's 178th Commencement on May 20, 2023, at the college's Rose Hill campus in Fordham Manor.

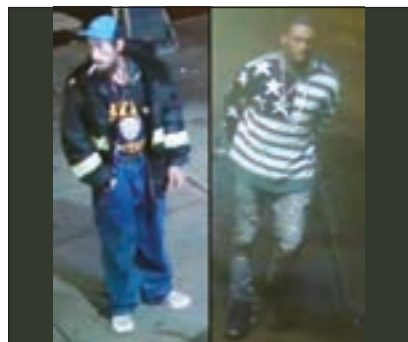
ists for the greater good. "You have to vote," he said. "You have to serve your communities, and you must enlighten the unenlightened. You really do have to be woke!" He lamented that "some people, some leaders, some governors" didn't understand what being woke was. "Let me tell you what it is; it's being awake, being aware," he said. "It's not saying that the truth dies."

He said it was about making people conscious of what was going on in the

world. He gave the examples of global warming, healthcare, educational opportunities. Then, alluding to the Jordan Neely tragedy, he went on to say that some people felt it was their "unappointed duty" to do things like chokeholds "for 15 minutes on a man that may have a mental condition." He added, "That's unacceptable. That's not the America that I believe in, so stand up and be counted as one against oppression, hatred, and let's keep the truth alive."

CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY



Norwood: Two Sought for Beating & Slashing Man

The NYPD is asking for the public's help locating two people seen in the accompanying photo above who police say are sought in connection with an assault in Norwood by Woodlawn subway station, which serves the 4 line. Police said that on Sunday, May 21, at around 3 a.m., a male victim, 29, was standing outside a business located at 3700 Jerome Avenue. While outside, they said a man, unknown to the victim, approached him and began arguing with him.

Police said as the dispute escalated, a second man, who they said it is believed was unknown to either of the first two, joined the dispute and began punching the victim multiple times. Police said the first person then displayed an unidentified cutting instrument and slashed the victim numerous times about the face and head, resulting in multiple lacerations.

They said this first person then fled the location southbound on Jerome Avenue on foot and the second person fled the location northbound on Jerome Avenue also on foot. They said EMS responded and transported the aided male victim to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition. Police said the first individual is described as male, and has a light complexion. They said the second individual is also described as male and has a dark complexion.

Kingsbridge: Man Robbed, Assaulted with Machete & Hit with Car

A man, 36, was robbed and assaulted by a machete-wielding male suspect in Kingsbridge, police said. The NYPD said that on Thursday, May 18, at around 2.15 p.m., police responded to a 911 call regarding a robbery in front of 3189 Irwin Avenue in Kingsbridge. They said upon arrival, officers were informed by the victim that another man broke into the rear passenger window of a vehicle at the location and removed construction tools/supplies.

They said when the victim approached the suspect, the suspect swung a machete at him, striking him in the left arm and causing pain. They said the suspect fled in a vehicle driven by a woman. Police said the victim was then struck by the side of the vehicle, causing him to fall to the ground. They said the suspects fled and remain unknown and unapprehended.

Kingsbridge Heights:

27-Year-Man Fatally Shot

The NYPD launched a murder investigation after a man, 27, was found in Kingsbridge Heights, apparently fatally shot. Police said that on Wednesday, May 17, at around 6.30 a.m., they responded to a 911 call regarding a man who had been shot in front of 3470 Fort Independence Street. They said, upon arrival, officers observed the victim, unconscious and unresponsive, with gunshot wounds to the chest.

They said EMS responded to the location and transported the victim to Montefiore Medical Center, where he was pronounced deceased. Police said there are no arrests, and the investigation remains ongoing. The deceased was identified as Jeremy Valencia of Irwin Avenue in Kingsbridge.



Kingsbridge Heights: Woman Robbed on Train While Sleeping

The NYPD is asking for the public's help locating the people seen in the accompanying photo above who police say are sought in connection to a robbery that occurred in Kingsbridge Heights. Police said that on Saturday, May 6, at around 4 a.m., a female victim, 27, was onboard a northbound 4 subway approaching the East Kingsbridge Road station when two people stole her handbag from her lap while she was sleeping.

Police said the two people sought exited the train at the East 170th Street station, where Individual 2 attempted to use one of the victim's stolen credit cards to make a purchase at a bodega at 287 East 170th Street but was unsuccessful. Police said Individual 1 is described as male, is estimated to be in his '20s, has a dark complexion, a slim build, and black hair. They said he was last seen wearing a multi-colored jacket with a black hood and black pants.

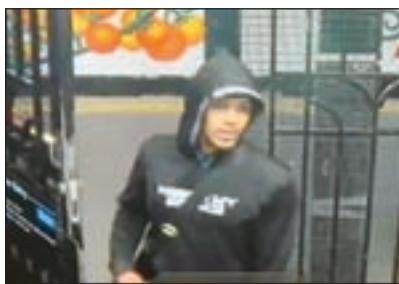
Individual 2 is described by police as female, is also estimated to be in her '20s, has a dark complexion, a medium build, and black hair in braids with dyed ends. They said she was last seen wearing a black, hooded, winter jacket with a brown scarf, black sweatpants, and blue sneakers. They said the accompanying photo is of both suspects exiting the East 170th Street station.

Bedford Park: Girl, 15, Robbed on Subway Platform

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying and locating the person seen in the accompanying photo below who police say is sought in connection

to a robbery that occurred in Bedford Park. Police said that on Thursday, May 18, at around 2.56 p.m. the female victim, 15, was standing on the southbound platform of the Bedford Park Boulevard subway station serving Lehman College when she was approached by the assailant. They said the suspect allegedly snatched the victim's phone from her hands and fled the station to parts unknown. They said the victim was not physically injured.

Police said the suspect is described as male, is estimated to be between 18 and 20, has a light complexion, is around 5 feet, 8 inches tall, and has a slim build. They said he was last seen wearing a black, hooded sweatshirt, black sweatpants, and black and white sneakers and that he was last seen carrying a black fanny pack.



Bedford Park: Three Sought in Robbery of Woman, 65

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the people seen in the accompanying photo above who police said are sought in connection to a robbery that occurred in Bedford Park. Police said that on Sunday, May 14, at around 10.45 a.m., the victim, a woman, 65, was walking in front of 2955 Decatur Avenue when she was approached by a group. Police said the group snatched the victim's purse causing her to fall to the ground. They said the purse contained \$101 and credit cards.

Police said the group fled northbound on Decatur Avenue, and that the victim's credit cards were later used at various outlets. They said the victim suffered minor injuries and received medical attention at the scene. Police said the first suspect is described as a male teen, is around 5 feet, 3 inches tall, has a medium complexion, and a slim build and was last seen wearing a tan cap, a blue surgical mask, a black jacket, black sweatpants, and white and gray sneakers.

They said the second suspect is described as a male teen, is around 5 feet, 9 inches tall, has a medium complexion,

and a slim build. They said he was last seen wearing a blue surgical mask, a black, hooded sweatshirt, black sweatpants, and gray sneakers. Police said the third suspect is also described as a male teen, is also around 5 feet, 9 inches tall, has a medium complexion, and a slim build. They said he was last seen wearing a black surgical mask, a black and red, hooded sweatshirt, gray sweatpants, and gray sneakers.



Bedford Park: Employees Assaulted in Apparent Misunderstanding

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the people seen in the accompanying photos above who police say are sought in connection with a robbery that occurred in Bedford Park. Employees at the store later said the incident arose due to a misunderstanding. Police said that on Thursday, May 18, at around 11.17 a.m., four men entered the store located at 3276 Jerome Avenue and attempted to leave with some merchandise without paying. The address is the site of a BP gas station, a convenience store, and a Dunkin' Donuts.

They said that when a male employee, 33, attempted to confront one of them, a man threw a bottle at the employee. Police said the group then pushed the employee and another male employee, 49. They said the 33-year-old employee was punched several times and placed in a chokehold, while one of the group brandished a knife at the 49-year-old victim.

Police said the group then damaged shelves and store merchandise before fleeing the location in a white BMW toward Van Cortland Avenue East. They said the 33-year-old victim was transported to Montefiore Medical Center and treated for a broken thumb and bruises to his head and body and the 49-year-old victim sustained bruises to his body and head.

Norwood News asked the NYPD if the affected employees were working at the gas station, the store or the Dunkin' Donuts but they were unable to confirm. The photos appear to be taken inside the store area. The store manager told *Norwood News* on Monday, May 22, that there was a misunderstanding and that one of the employees thought one of the customers hadn't paid for goods, questioned him about it, and that that was what started the melee.

He said one coworker went outside and asked the group if they had paid and they didn't say anything. He said they opened a juice bottle and poured it over his coworker and started punching him. He said two other co-workers then went outside to help their colleague, and said



BY SÍLE MOLONEY

CRIME FILE

to the customers, “No fight, no fight, no fight, no fight.” He said some of the workers got injured in the face, in the ribs and the finger and had a baseball bat thrown at him.

The manager said the group then broke some equipment including a TV and a freezer, that it was caught on camera, and he shared it with us. He said he had never seen the group before and that after being discharged from hospital, his colleagues were resting at home.

We checked this account of the incident with the NYPD and they said that while the investigation is ongoing regarding the sequence of events, “propaganda was removed” from the store.

Fordham Heights: Man Arrested following Assault

Police said they have arrested a man for an assault on a male victim, 62, in Fordham Heights earlier this month. The NYPD had been asking for the public's help identifying the person seen in the accompanying photo who police said was sought in connection with the attack.

They said that on Sunday, May 21, at around 8.50 p.m., in front of 2200 Grand Concourse, the victim was approached by an unknown individual and a verbal dispute ensued. They said the dispute escalated, at which point the assailant grabbed the victim and threw him to the ground, and the victim's head hit the pavement.

Police said the assailant then fled the location to parts unknown and the victim sustained a severe injury to his head and was transported by EMS to Bronx-Care Health System, where he was admitted in stable condition.

They said the suspect sought was described by police as male, was estimated to be in his late 50s, has a dark complexion, a medium build, gray hair, and a gray beard. Police said he had last been

seen wearing a black, Yankee baseball hat, a black jacket, a red shirt, gray pants and black sneakers. The NYPD said the attached photo shows the suspect prior to the incident and was obtained near the incident location.

On Saturday, May 27, pursuant to an ongoing investigation, police said Arkym Davis, 49, of the Grand Concourse in Fordham Heights was arrested in connection with the incident. They said he was charged with two counts of assault, aggravated harassment, and harassment. A person arrested and charged with a crime is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.



Group Sought in Bronx & Manhattan Armed Robbery Pattern

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the vehicle seen in the accompanying photo above in the context of a robbery pattern traced across The Bronx and Manhattan during April and May 2023. Police said the first incident occurred in Kingsbridge Heights on Friday, April 14, at around 3 a.m. They said the male victim, 27, was in front of 3472 Bailey Avenue when he was approached by three people.

Police said they pulled out a gun, stole the victim's glasses, along with \$600, and were last seen fleeing northbound on Bailey Avenue in a blue Honda

Accord. They said the victim was not injured and refused medical attention. Other similar incidents took place in Van Nest, Morris Heights, Pelham Gardens, Highbridge, Mt. Eden, and in Manhattan.



Group Sought in Bronx & Queens Armed Robbery Pattern

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the person seen in the accompanying photo who police said is sought in connection with a Bronx & Queens robbery pattern. They said the first Bronx incident was reported in Marble Hill on Tuesday, May 16, at around 1.20 p.m. They said a group approached a female victim, 63, who was walking past 5210 Broadway, pushed her to the ground and stole her purse. The victim refused medical attention.

Police said the second Bronx incident took place on Thursday, May 18, in Fordham Manor at around 5.40 p.m. They said a group approached a male victim, 34, who was in a car in front of 2567 Decatur Avenue. They said they displayed guns and stole the victim's belongings, and vehicle. The victim complied and the group fled in an unknown direction in the vehicle. There were no injuries reported.

Police said the third Bronx incident occurred in Kingsbridge Heights on Thursday, May 18, at around 10.45 p.m.

They said a group approached a male victim, 34, in the vicinity of 2675 Morris Avenue, displaying guns. They said they stole the victim's belongings, the victim complied, and they fled in an unknown direction. There were no injuries reported.

Police said the fourth Bronx incident occurred in Norwood on Friday, May 19, at around 1.20 p.m. when a group approached a male victim, 45, in the vicinity of Jerome Avenue and West Moshulu Parkway North. Police said they pushed the victim to the ground and stole his belongings, the victim complied, and the group fled in an unknown direction. Police said the victim sustained lacerations and bruising and was taken by EMS to Montefiore Medical Center.

Police said the fifth Bronx incident took place in Fordham Manor on Sunday, May 21, at around 1.55 p.m. when a person approached a female victim, 60, in the vicinity of Grand Concourse and East Fordham Road. They said the assailant pushed the victim to the ground and stole her purse, the assailant fled in an unknown direction, and the victim sustained lacerations and bruising. They said she was taken by EMS to St. Barnabas Hospital.

Police said the sixth Bronx incident took place in Wakefield also on Sunday, May 21, at around 2.50 p.m. when a person approached a female victim, 79, in front of 4459 Barnes Avenue. They said the person stole the victim's purse and fled in an unknown direction and the victim refused medical attention.

Anyone with information regarding these incidents is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA (74782). The public can also submit their tips by logging onto the CrimeStoppers website at <https://crimestoppers.nypdonline.org/>, or on Twitter @NYPDtips. All calls are strictly confidential.

New Law Allows Raffles for Charity at Sporting Venues as Bronx CB Youth Leaders Honored

By SÍLE MOLONEY

New York City Mayor Eric Adams signed Intro. 891 into law on Thursday, May 25, which will allow sporting venues to hold games of chance, such as raffles, for charitable purposes.

“Today, we are hitting a home run for New York City nonprofits,” said Adams. “New York City is home to some of the greatest sporting teams in the nation, and we love supporting them, especially when they give back to the community. Today, with the signing of this bill into law, we are stepping up to the plate, and making it easier for the Yankees, the Mets, and others to partner with charitable organizations to raise money for

New Yorkers. We thank our partners in the Council for this legislation.”

The law allows sports venues throughout the City to conduct raffles for charitable purposes during professional or collegiate sporting competitions, provided certain conditions are met. City officials said raffles may be conducted from two hours before the beginning of play until the end of play.

Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson also welcomed the decision, saying, “By allowing raffles at sporting events, teams will be able to raise money for hunger relief, veterans, and other worthy causes for our borough and city.” She added in part, “With this bill, iconic

venues throughout our city will now be able to increase their philanthropic work to support our communities that need it the most.”

District 17 City Council Member Rafael Salamanca, Jr. said his bill brought New York City into alignment with what was already allowed at sports venues across New York State and in virtually every other state in the country, and paved the way for sports teams to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for charities each season. “I look forward to seeing the positive impact that this new initiative will bring to our city,” he said.

Representing the New York Yankees, Brian Smith said they were thankful for

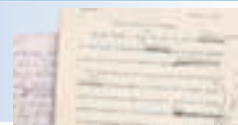
the new law which he said would provide millions of dollars of additional funding to positively impact the lives of people throughout the five boroughs. “The money raised will allow our community partners to provide increased programming and depth of service, strengthening some of the city's most vital organizations,” he said in part.

As reported, each year The New York Yankees Community Council provides a \$750 stipend to five deserving students nominated by each Bronx community board to receive a Youth Leadership Award. Applicants must have performed 50 hours of leadership/volun-

(continued on page 16)

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY



Bronx CB7 Veterans' Resource Fair

Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) is hosting a Veterans' Resource Fair on Saturday, June 3, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Kingsbridge Library Center, 310 East Kingsbridge Road. For more information, contact CB7 District Manager Karla Cabrera Carrera, on kcabrera@cb.nyc.gov or call (929) 496 0748.

Mobile Office Hours for District 11 City Councilman Eric Dinowitz

The councilman said his constituency district office, located at 277 West 231st Street, is under construction and is set to be completed soon. While this happens, his team is hosting mobile office hours at public libraries across the district, and he said residents can stop by anytime between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. during these designated mobile office hours.

The team will be available at Mosholu Library, 285 East 205th Street on the first Monday of the month, at Van Cortlandt Library, 3882 Canon Place, on the second Tuesday of the month, at Riverdale Library, 5540 Mosholu Avenue, on the third Wednesday of the month, and at Kingsbridge Library, 291 West 231st Street, on the last Thursday of the month. Call (718) 549-7300 to reach the team.

Bedford Park Road Closure

SKF General Contractors LLC will be fully closing Creston Avenue between East 197th Street and East 196th Street, with use of a crane to erect a new building at 2736 Creston Avenue from May 23 to June 23, 2023, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday to Friday, one to two times per week.

Friendly Voices Program for Seniors

If you are an older New Yorker feeling lonely or isolated, NYC Ageing can connect you with a friendly volunteer to talk with over the phone or video chat. Call (212)-Ageing-NYC (212) 244-6469 and ask about the Friendly Voices Program.

Reprieve for Parking/Camera Tickets

District 11 City Councilman Eric Dinowitz said NYC Department of Finance has introduced an online payment plan enrollment for people with parking and camera tickets that have not been paid and who are in default – known as “judgment debt.” Customers with \$350 or more in parking and camera ticket judgment debt can now enter into an online payment plan with the department to make payments over time instead of paying all at once, which can prevent enforcement actions such as having a vehicle booted or towed. Visit www.nyc.gov/parkingticketpaymentplans to learn more.

Swimming & Safety

NYC City Beaches reopened on Saturday, May 27. Parks continues its free sunscreen program with 56 dispensers located at all eight City beaches. Through the program, funded by the IMPACT Melanoma Foundation in the Bronx, New Yorkers can protect themselves from long hours in the sun by easily applying the provided SPF 30 sunscreen. The foundation will also be providing sun safety information throughout the summer at select locations.

The Health Department is responsible for beach health and safety surveillance and routine water quality monitoring for all beaches in NYC. The agency

regularly tests the water quality and monitors wet weather conditions near the City's beaches to make sure it is safe for swimming. When water is polluted from excessive rain runoff, sewage, or other pollution, it can pose health risks to swimmers and beachgoers. If necessary, easy-to-read water quality advisory and closure signs will be posted at beaches to ensure that all beachgoers are aware of any health or safety risks.

For more information on Health Department sampling results, water quality information, and to find out if there are any advisories or closures before heading to the beach, the public can visit nyc.gov/health/beach or call 311. Beachgoers can also sign up for “Know Before You Go,” a free text service in English and Spanish that informs New Yorkers if public beaches are open, or closed due to water quality issues. New Yorkers can text “BEACH” or “PLAYA” to 55676 to get the status of any of the City's eight public beaches.

New York State Primary Elections June 27 Key Dates

Request your absentee ballot online or by mail by Monday, June 12. Register to vote via <https://nycvotes.turbobvote.org/?r=votingnyc> by Saturday, June 17. Update your address if you have moved in order to vote on Primary Day by Saturday, June 17. Early voting takes place from Saturday, June 17, to Sunday, June 25. Visit <https://findmypollsite.vote.nyc/> to find your *early voting site* and hours. Request an absentee ballot in person by Monday, June 26. To find your borough Board of Elections office, visit <https://vote.nyc/page/contact-us>.

Polls are open on Primary Election

Day, Tuesday, June 27, from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Visit <https://findmypollsite.vote.nyc/> to find your *Election Day poll site*. Return your absentee ballot by mail (postmark required) or drop it off at a poll site by Tuesday, June 27.

Affordable Housing Lotteries

NYC Department of Housing, Preservation and Development (HPD) launched an affordable housing lottery for units at 2441 Crotona Avenue, a 7-story residential building in Belmont with a deadline of **June 20**. Visit www.norwoodnews.org, and search for “affordable housing” for more information.

An affordable housing lottery helpline is available on (212) 863-7990 or via email at nychousingconnect@hpd.nyc.gov. For information on applying for affordable housing for people with disabilities, please call (212) 863-6486 or email accessibility@hpd.nyc.gov. Housing ambassadors can be reached at ambassadors@hpd.nyc.gov.

Switch Replacement Work on D Line

The MTA announced that switch replacement work will begin on Monday, May 15, at 5 a.m. through Monday, July 3, at 5 a.m. on the B, D, F and M Sixth Avenue subway lines. These switches near West 4th Street in Manhattan will allow the B, D, F, and M trains to move between the uptown local and express tracks. As a result, there will be several service changes on the A, B, C, D, F and M lines effective May 15. Visit www.norwoodnews.org and search for “Replacement Work on B, D, F, M” for more information.

Out & About

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

EVENTS

The Bangladeshi Academy of Fine Arts (BAFA) will celebrate and honor Bangladeshi culture through Bengali folk dance and music on Saturday, June 3, at 2 p.m. in the Williamsbridge Oval park at 3225 Reservoir Oval in Norwood. (Rain Date: June 4) Don't miss out on a thrilling showcase. This in-person event is free and open to all, and no RSVP is required.

Kingsbridge Heights Community Center, 3101 Kingsbridge Terrace, Bronx, NY 10463, presents the **10th Annual Neighborhood Festival** on Friday, June 16, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is free. For more information, call (718) 884 0700.

The Office of the Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson will host a **Juneteenth flag-raising ceremony** at Bronx Borough Hall, 851 Grand Concourse, on Friday, June 16, at noon. All are welcome.

MUSIC

A memorial jazz concert, “**To Ibrahim with Love**” will be held on Sunday, June 11, at 3 p.m. at Woodlawn Conservancy. Ibrahim Gonzalez, a multi-talented artist, percussionist, pianist, composer was the host of two programs on New York's WBAI radio, “Radio Libre!” and “In the Moment.” He led his own quintet and was known as the Mambo Dervish for his amazing percussion skills. Ibrahim passed away at the age of 57 in 2013 and is interred at Woodlawn Cemetery. This is a free event. Visit <https://www.woodlawn.org/conservancy/tours-events/> to register.

The Orchestra of The Bronx under conductor, Michael Spierman, will perform Tchaikowsky and Mendelssohn, with guest violinist, Patrick Doane on Sunday, June 11 at 3 p.m. at Lehman College/Lovinger Theatre, 250 Bedford Park Blvd West Bronx. Free Admission - no reservations necessary. For questions, call (929) 222.3973.

DANCE

The Office of the Bronx Borough President & partners will host **A Pride in the Boogie Down Celebration** on Wednesday, June 14, at 6 p.m. at Rosa's at Park, 2568 Park Avenue in The Bronx. All are welcome for an '80s-themed evening.

New York Public Library is hosting its annual **Anti-Prom** in The Bronx on Friday, June 9, from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Grand Concourse Library at 155 East 173rd Street. The theme of the evening is Royalty: Dripped in Gold, so get ready to sparkle and glitter on a fabulous night at the Library! Special outfits are optional... but always encouraged. This is a free event for those aged 12-18 only. Proof of age required. All bags must be checked.

KIDS

A Bring It Talent Show will be held on Friday, June 9, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, 3225 Reservoir Oval East in Norwood. Showcase your singing, dancing, acting and beyond. All are welcome. For more information, call (718) 543 8672 or visit nyc.gov/parks.

MOVEMENT

New York City's public beaches opened on Saturday, May 27, and remain open through Sunday, September 10. NYC Parks reminds all beachgoers to be safe in and around the water this summer, and only swim when lifeguards are on duty, daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; swimming is unsafe and strictly prohibited at all other times. NYC Parks outdoor pools will open on Wednesday, June 29.

La Casa de Frida, A Taste of Mexico

By ARIEL PACHECO

La Casa de Frida, located at 307 East 204th Street in Norwood, is a Mexican restaurant that serves everything from fajitas to burritos and has become a mainstay in the neighborhood.

Opened in January 2018, La Casa de Frida is a family business in every sense of the word. From the workers to the customers, La Casa de Frida forges a family environment where all are both welcomed and appreciated.

"We decided to open a restaurant because almost our entire family has worked in different areas of a restaurant," said Sandra, president of La Casa de Frida and a longtime resident of the community. "So, we put everything together to make something new, and something different in the community that wasn't available before."

The restaurant is named in honor

of Frida Kahlo, a Mexican painter renowned for her groundbreaking work who used her art to empower women. La Casa de Frida translates in English to "Frida's House." Every June 6th, La Casa de Frida also holds a party to celebrate and empower all of the women in the community.

"She was one of the most empowering women in Mexico, even though she faced so many challenges," said Sandra. "This is my way of honoring her. We're inspired by her."

In addition to Mexican food, La Casa de Frida serves Dominican food as well. While there is currently a limited menu, there are still a bunch of delicious options available to anyone who decides to swing by. Sandra says that tacos are easily the most popular item on the menu.

"We have *queserías* like nachos and



Photo by Ariel Pacheco

WORKERS AND CUSTOMERS inside La Casa de Frida on May 25, 2023

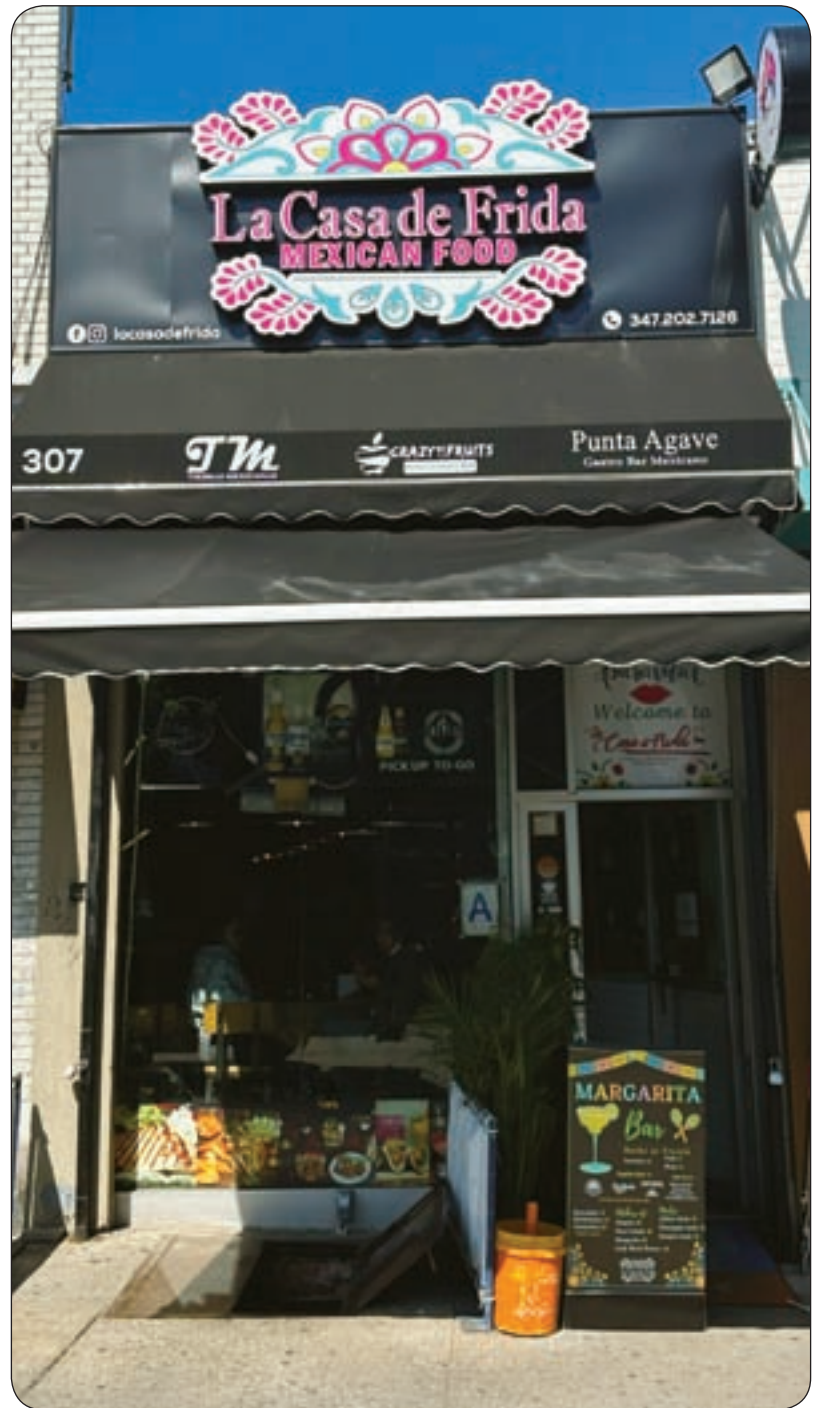


Photo by Ariel Pacheco

LA CASA DE Frida store front, as seen on May 25, 2023

burritos, and we also have seafoods, salads, and pastas," said Sandra. La Casa de Frida has been a rewarding experience for Sandra, who says she loves the support she consistently receives from customers, and says she is filled with gratitude when people leave the restaurant happy.

Indeed, La Casa de Frida prides itself on its exceptional customer service and on creating a fun-loving atmosphere for its customers. "When customers give positive feedback on the job that we've done, I feel very happy with that," said Sandra. "We want to

give the best experience to people."

La Casa de Frida embodies Mexican culture from its food to the decorations all over the wall. The restaurant also plays background music, has multiple TVs, and a bar which serves margaritas, mojitos, and sangria, among other options. An eventual goal of the restaurant is to add outdoor seating as an option for customers.

Whether it's just for happy hour or for brunch, come in today to enjoy all that La Casa de Frida has to offer! La Casa de Frida is open seven days a week.

Catholic Center to Open at St. Philip Neri School

By **SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE**

Three months after the announcement of the closing of 12 more Catholic Schools, six in The Bronx, and following six earlier Bronx closures in 2020, the Archdiocese of New York has announced a new pilot initiative to serve the needs of Catholics in the borough. The Catholic Education and Family Center is set to open in the fall at the site of St. Philip Neri School, located on the 3031 Grand Concourse in Bedford Park.

In reference to the Bedford Park Catholic school, a 100-year-old institution that serves children from kindergarten to 8th-grade, T.J. McCormack, director of communications for Catholic schools at the

Archdiocese of New York told *Norwood News* that the Archdiocese's department of education was the brainchild of the new Catholic teaching model.

McCormick said the plan will create a larger school that combines existing Catholic school communities and parishes, identifies the elements that will make the school both academically excellent and distinctive, and will serve as an impactful addition for the families it seeks to serve.

McCormick added that the DOE is also partnering with other Archdiocesan ministries in efforts to also provide health and wellness education, vocational training, as well as offering parent and family support.

He said a recent engineering study

discovered the school windows and the gym's roof needed to be replaced and work was also needed to the building's facade. He said funding for the work, which is already underway, comes from generous donors. McCormick said with the planned renovations, the school is seeking increased enrollment, extending laboratory and recreational space, as well as office space for community and social services.

Norwood News asked McCormick additional questions about the scope of the new center. We did not receive an immediate response. *Norwood News* was informed the NY Cardinal is coming to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the school on Saturday, June 3.



Photo Miriam Quiñones

THE LEFT SIDE of St. Philip Neri Catholic School is seen on May 31, 2023, at 3031 Grand Concourse, in Bedford Park, where a new Catholic education and family center is being built.

Bronxites Honored on Walk of Fame

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

The pouring rain couldn't dampen the atmosphere nor the spirits of the five new honorees who were inducted onto the Bronx Walk of Fame on Saturday, May 20, in front of Bronx Borough Hall on the Grand Concourse.

This year's inductees were Sunny

Hostin, three-time Emmy Award-winning legal journalist, New York Times bestselling author, and co-host of ABC's "The View," Juliet Papa, award-winning reporter for 1010 WINS, author, media consultant, and event host, God-Is Rivera, vice-president of inclusive marketing at Disney Media & Entertainment Distribu-



Photo by Síle Moloney

SUNNY HOSTIN, TV co-host of ABC's "The View," is honored at the Bronx Walk of Fame on the Grand Concourse outside Bronx Borough Hall on Saturday, May 20, 2023.

tion, SWV, and three-time platinum R&B group and recording artists.

In addition, for the first time ever, Luis Torres, principal of Community School 55, also known as the Benjamin Franklin School, located at 450 St. Paul's in the Claremont Village section of The Bronx, was announced as the winner of the "People's Choice Award in Education" and will also be added to the Bronx Walk of Fame. This new category allows the public to select their favorite Bronx educator for inclusion on the Bronx Walk of Fame, each year.

Hostin told *Norwood News* she is currently working on the third installment of her trilogy of novels, called "Summer in Highland Beach," set in Maryland, and the summer home of Frederick Douglass. The legal journalist, who is known for her candor and who the MC introduced as being from "St. Mary's Houses" in the South Bronx, referenced the Walk of Fame

honor on "The View" show the following Monday.

At the unveiling itself on the day, under the downpour, shielded by an umbrella, she said, "This is great! This is great! I'm in awe actually. Thank you Madame Borough President, thank you Madame Deputy. I'm just in awe of being honored in my hometown, and I call it my hometown because it still feels like a town to me."

She added, "I'm so connected with this borough. It made me everything that I am. It made me resilient. It made me outspoken. You see that every single day on the show and I think that Juliet Papa said it the best way, 'You can take the girl out of The Bronx, but never, ever The Bronx out of the girl!' So, I will always remember this day and I hope that this day tells little kids from The Bronx that they have character, they have value, and that any dream can come true so thank you!"

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Opinion

By LIANA SMALE

Next time you walk through one of New York City's 1,700 public parks, take a closer look at the names on the signs advertising park events, or at the shirts worn by people picking up trash. Do they say "NYC Parks" or the name of a private group? While NYC Department of Parks & Recreation (NYC Parks) performs many general park maintenance tasks, oftentimes private groups ensure that parks are clean, safe, and fun spaces.

According to New Yorkers for Parks, the City already spends less on its parks than other major U.S. cities, and this June, according to New Yorkers for Parks, based on the preliminary budget, the City plans to cut the Parks' budget by \$46 million. This would cut hundreds of jobs and resources for maintaining parks, especially those outside Manhattan. *[Editor's Note: NYC Parks disputes this assertion regarding the budget. Norwood News asked what cuts, if any are planned for Parks. We did not receive an immediate response as of press date.]*

Over the last two years, I have researched what makes the City's parks incredible resources to residents. When we think of City parks, some may think of the tourist attractions of Central Park or the High Line, but what we may not realize is that their success hinges upon the strength of public-private partnerships between NYC Parks and private stewardship groups that clean and manage them.

Several stewardship groups are well-funded enough through donations to have an official conservancy relationship with NYC Parks. The Central Park Conservancy has a \$200 million endowment according to its website. Groups with this relationship have the capacity to take over the maintenance of their parks and are primarily located in Manhattan.

Parks without a conservancy relationship are maintained by smaller stewardship groups or have no stewardship group at all. These lesser-known and under-resourced parks will bear the brunt of this \$46 million budget cut. In an increasingly expensive city, public parks are critical infrastructure that provide space to connect with friends, family, and neighbors for free. For families without yards, they function as community backyards. Many contain water features as respite from hot summer days, and green space it-

Manhattan May Not Notice Parks' Budget Cut, Other Boroughs Will



Bronx River Alliance and partners.

FREE FOOD AND a cooking demonstration are available at an event in Concrete Plant Park in the vicinity of Longwood, hosted by the

self-cools dense cities like New York City, according to an Aug 9, 2019 article by The New York Times entitled, "Summer in the City is Hot, but Some Neighborhoods Suffer More."

We need to remember that funding public parks is a social justice issue. People of color have less access to parks in U.S. cities, according to the Trust for Public Land, and are more likely to live in the hottest areas, according to the website, AGU Advancing Earth & Space Science. In The Bronx, local activists have formed park stewardship groups in response to the City's historic disinvestment in public parks. For example, in a South Bronx park, the Bronx River Parkway flourishes at the site of an old concrete plant, according to the Bronx River Alliance.

The Foodway is maintained by the nonprofit, The Bronx River Alliance, and the community group, Concrete Friends, along with Intervine, a workforce development program that places its trainees in environmental, field-based jobs. It is the only public park in New York City where foraging is allowed, providing visitors with herbs, fruits, and vegetables.

In 2022, the Alliance's events at the Foodway also included free COVID-19 tests and food giveaways. But many other stewardship groups are stuck at the stage where the Bronx River Alliance began. With the majority of donations going to Manhattan park groups, smaller groups are left to compete for grants. If parks had more support from NYC Parks, stewardship groups could focus more on community-building activities without the burden of consistent maintenance. The government has

the responsibility to fund public spaces; low-income communities should not be forced to rely on donations and grants for basic park upkeep.

NYC's public parks and the groups that steward them are a critical infrastructure that the City sees as amenities when making its budget. New York City Mayor Eric Adams campaigned on the platform to raise NYC Parks' budget to 1 percent of the City's budget, saying, "Dedicating just 1% of the city budget to parks would bring us closer to the more generous and forward-thinking funding levels of decades past." I couldn't agree more, which is why I've proudly committed to a "percent for parks" plan!

But in 2020, the City instead cut \$84 million from Parks, according to a March 13, 2023 article by The New York Times article entitled, "One Percent of the Budget for Parks? A Bargain Says a Nonprofit." Over the next year, Manhattan only saw a 1 percent decrease in cleanliness ratings, according to an NYC Parks Inspection Program, while The Bronx saw an 8 percent decrease. Cutting NYC Parks' budget by another \$46 million in June will further widen the gap between who has access to safe

and clean parks.

The debate about public park funding is timely, but it is also a deep, systemic issue where race and income have historically been strong indicators of urban park accessibility. I recognize that New York City needs to balance multiple budget priorities, but access to public, open space is inherently tied to physical and mental health, which benefit all.

If you are a council member, I encourage you to pressure the City's administration to at least maintain the Parks budget, which still only accounts for 0.6 percent of the City's overall budget. If you are a City resident, I urge you to tell your local council member that you care about public park funding and demand that the City does too. As Mayor Adams, himself, said in an April 20, 2022, press release, "Parks are not a luxury, it's a necessity."

Editor's Note: As above, NYC Parks disputes that the Parks' budget is being cut by \$46 million. Norwood News asked the department what figure, if any, its budget was being cut by. We did not receive an immediate response. New Yorkers for Parks who provided the figure have been contacted for clarification.

Liana Smale is from New Haven, Connecticut, and is a Master of Environmental Science candidate at the Yale School of the Environment at Yale University. For the past two years, she's been researching the New York City parks system to understand its network of private stewardship groups and the environmental justice challenges and successes they have experienced.

She is in the process of preparing a submission to an academic journal about park stewardship in The Bronx and said she wrote this op-ed after conversations with the Bronx River Alliance and several other Bronx groups. When asked, she said she is unaffiliated with any particular group.

City	Parks Operating Budget as a Share of the City's Operating Budget	Park Area (Acres)	Parks Operating Budget per Capita
Minneapolis, MN	5.7%	9,000	\$271
Chicago, IL	4.3%	9,000	\$155
Los Angeles, CA	3.9%	16,000	\$78
San Francisco, CA	1.8%	6,800	\$248
Washington, DC	1.1%	1,600	\$151
New York, NY	0.6%	32,000	\$17

New York City spent less on parks in 2021 than other major U.S. cities. Source: New Yorkers for Parks

By CLAIRE GARON

In recognition of June being Men's Health Month, Montefiore's Claire Caron spoke with Dr. Earle C. Chambers, professor and director of research at Montefiore's Department of Family and Social Medicine, and professor of epidemiology & population health, and of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Montefiore Einstein.

Chambers' research focuses on men's health, primary care, and public health, with a particular emphasis on social determinants of health i.e. how physical and social environments influence health behaviors and health outcomes. Dr. Chambers is known for his research assessing how housing impacts chronic diseases like diabetes, prediabetes, asthma, HIV, and the health of men.

Can you tell us a little bit about why men's health matters?

My recent work involves the diabetes-related health concerns of men and particularly men of color. Men with diabetes often have diabetes-related complications. One important program we run is called the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP). It's a group class for men and women over 18 who have prediabetes. Unfortunately, men are usually underrepresented in these DPP classes. Over the past few years, I've worked with Drs. Jeffrey Gonzalez and Elizabeth Walker to create a group specifically for men, called Power Up, and it's run by male instructors.



Men's Health & the Impact of Non-Medical Factors

This is important for male participants because their needs, concerns, and questions (which they may not feel comfortable bringing up in a mixed class) can be specifically talked about and addressed. The curriculum and class material has been adapted and personalized for men too. Many participants say they want to be healthy for their families, not just for their personal wellbeing. We need to think about what motivates men to make and sustain healthy habits when we design programs.

Regarding the social determinants of health or nonmedical factors that influence health, can you tell us more about what you found from patients' completed questionnaires regarding their lives and needs?

There are many studies that look

at health benefits of intervention programs for individuals, like DPP. Unfortunately, the success of those can be quite variable and it can be very difficult to maintain some of the changes that the programs recommend. I'm interested in research that shows how people's environments make those changes possible or more difficult. My research on social determinants of health looks at the social barriers, like limited access to transportation or access to healthy food, that shape how well we can practice the healthy behaviors that are recommended to our patients.

For example, what are the social or economic barriers that make it difficult to prioritize things like healthy eating, fitness, and sleep? At Montefiore outpatient clinics, we have an effort underway, led by Dr. Kevin Fiori and Mrs. Renee Whisky-LaLanne, where we use

screening questionnaires to ask our patients about their social needs. Many patients respond that they have inadequate or unstable housing, food insecurity, and unmet transportation needs. One way that Montefiore addresses these social needs is by connecting patients with clinic-based, community health workers who link patients to resources like food programs, rental assistance, and more.

What advice do you have for men about their health?

Prioritizing your health and wellness is important and separating your physical health from your mental health is not a complete way to think about your overall wellness. We understand that there are times a person needs to address an immediate need, like housing, before they can prioritize certain health concerns. Montefiore sees this, and we are gathering data about our patients' medical and non-medical needs so we can support them better.

Claire Garon, MPH, CHES is a health educator at Montefiore's Office of Community & Population Health.

If you need help with some of the social needs mentioned (housing, food, transportation), please speak with a doctor at Montefiore. If you have prediabetes and would like to join our current Diabetes Prevention Program class, please call (646) 494 8397.

New Law Allows Raffles for Charity at Sporting Venues as Bronx CB Youth Leaders Honored

(continued from page 11)

teen work as a tutor, mentor, community unity developer, and/or as an advocate against violence or substance abuse in their community to be eligible.

Before the Yankees took on the Baltimore Orioles at home on Tuesday evening, May 23, some of the Bronx Community Board Youth Leadership Award recipients took to the field and were seen on the big screen amid huge applause from the crowd for a formal presentation. [We understand the group included the Bronx Community Board 8 recipients.] The Bronx Bombers ultimately lost that game [9-6].

On Saturday, May 27, it was the turn of the Bronx Community Board 7 Youth Leadership Award recipients to attend a game at the stadium and to be presented on the field with their respective awards. They were accompanied by some family members and some members of Bronx Commu-

nity Board 7 (CB7) and were also met with plenty of support and applause. The Bronx CB7 recipients are Mhya Tejada, Amy Pichardo, Analisa Brown-Beebe, Annette Navarro, and Patricia Asiamah.

The board later wrote in a social media post after the game, "Big round of applause to our 2023 NY Yankee Award Recipients! These students are amazing leaders in our community!"

Photo courtesy of Bronx Community Board 7
THE BRONX COMMUNITY Board 7 2023 New York Yankee Youth Leadership Award recipients join others as they take to the field inside Yankee Stadium in the South Bronx ahead of an award ceremony on Saturday, May 27, 2023. The recipients are Mhya Tejada, Amy Pichardo, Analisa Brown-Beebe, Annette Navarro, and Patricia Asiamah.



Final Kingsbridge Armory Workshop Held

By DAVID GREENE

Several hundred union members from across the City stood vigil down the block from Walton High School in Norwood on Wednesday, May 24, as city officials joined local residents for the final community input meeting to determine the future of the massive, vacant Kingsbridge Armory, located at Jerome Avenue and West Kingsbridge Road in Kingsbridge Heights. It has remained all but dormant for the better part of the last 20 years.

The Kingsbridge Armory Residents Meeting kicked off at 5 p.m. at the Norwood-based high school, located on Reservoir Avenue. With less than 100 residents in attendance, Fernando Ortiz from the City's Economic Development Corporation (EDC), District 14 City Councilwoman Pierina Sanchez, and Sandra Lobo, executive director of the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition gave a presentation on all the work done to date and the suggestions previously submitted in order to decide on the future of the armory.

When Edward Poueriet, a 30-year resident of University Avenue in Kingsbridge, was asked what he would like to see at the armory, he replied, "A community center for the youth, and something that provides vocational training because a lot of people who live in this neighborhood aren't really high-income earners and one of the biggest things we need is a place to train, so people can find jobs and work."

Poueriet continued, "We don't need apartment buildings right now and we don't need other things that are going to gentrify the neighborhood and reduce the space that the community has." Asked what he thought had caused the delay in the development of the armory, Poueriet pointed to "business deals," and giving the example of a recent development project in Manhattan which had promised to bring low-income housing but instead brought a hotel to the area.

Poueriet continued, "We need something for the youth. A lot of the youth here always need something to do. They need programs, they need parks, they need stuff and always have to travel out of the borough to look for spaces for themselves." Poueriet said he believes the previously proposed, but since abandoned, ice-skating center at the armory was a great idea.

As reported, developers behind the proposed Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC LLC and KNIC Properties) entered into a legal dispute with the City in December 2021 around the time New York City Mayor Eric Adams was taking office. The developers disputed the City's assertion that they had not raised sufficient capital for the ice center project in line with the project timeline. In April 2022, court records show the case was dropped without prejudice, meaning the



Photo by David Greene

LESS THAN 100 residents turned out for the final residents meeting and workshop held at Walton High School in Norwood to determine the future of the Kingsbridge Armory on Wednesday, May 24, 2023.

case could be reopened in the future.

Poueriet added that basketball courts, "with one of those big fields where it's inclusive to everybody," was also needed. Asked if he thought a deal would finally be done, Poueriet was less optimistic, replying, "Probably not... I'll be honest with you. They won't; it's not going to happen."

Lobo was more hopeful, later telling *Norwood News*, "Today is the last community engagement workshop hosted by the EDC and the council member and myself in the hopes that we get community input for how to frame the vision document that the EDC is going to put out, that will be attached to the request for proposals, so we're very excited that the community gets a chance to be a part [of the plan]."

Asked what comes next in the process, Lobo replied, "After this workshop, surveys will continue until the end of the month, a vision document will come out in July, and an RFP, we believe, will come out in the fall and the vision document will be part of the RFP." Lobo was unsure how many would attend the 5 p.m. meeting, but noted the capacity was 200 and the "many" workshops held over the last six months or so.

She continued, "Our priorities have been ensuring there's living-wage jobs and community ownership, and shared wealth-building. For us, having organized around the Kingsbridge Armory for over 20 years, we believe that the community is owed this investment."

Executive director of NWBCCC for the last eight years, and a member for over 20, Lobo was asked if she was optimistic something would finally be done

with the iconic armory. "I'm very hopeful that there's a charm and that the role the Northwest Bronx is playing today is even more powerful [than] it has in the past, and we believe that we can see this through."

Before the presentation, Vivian Young, a 30-year resident of Bedford Park, offered, "I'm here because I'm certainly concerned about the armory and what it's going to be used for. In my opinion, it should be used as a training center, perhaps to train people for jobs that will help improve the infrastructure of New York City. Something that gets people involved in the actual building of our city. Someone suggested a museum, perhaps. Yes, some sort of museum that's related to the military; that's actually a pretty good idea too." Young added that she believed the development of the armory "would definitely happen."

Before the presentation, Sanchez told the crowd, "The attention of today is for you all who live next to and near the armory to be able to provide feedback directly to the Economic Development Corporation." She said, to date, through the workshops, over 3,000 individuals had offered their input on the armory. Of the City-owned armory, Sanchez added, "No one can unilaterally decide what goes here. There has to be a public process that has to be voted by the City Council and what you want to do is get all of the input early to determine what the future will be."

Colonel Richard Goldenberg of New York Army National Guard previously told *Norwood News*, "The NY National Guard armory is owned by the state (NY).

Only the Kingsbridge Armory vacant facility was transferred to the City of New York." The annex building, located at the 195th Street side of the same grounds as the main Kingsbridge Armory building is located, was at one point made subject to a construction bid.

On Dec. 3, 2021, the NYS Office of General Services Commissioner announced that following that construction bid, contracts were expected to be awarded to the following apparent low bidders, after review and approval by the State Comptroller's Office.

Fratello Construction Corp. of Farmingdale, NY was awarded a construction contract to rehabilitate "the armory & storage building" [annex]. The low bid amount was cited as \$6,872,408. Global Electrical Contracting of Westchester, Inc. of Yonkers, NY was awarded an electrical work contract for the same annex, with the low bid amount cited as \$1,029,800.

ACS System Associates, Inc. of Hicksville, NY was awarded a heating and ventilation work contract to rehabilitate the annex. The low bid amount was cited as \$780,900. Eastern Plumbing & Mechanical Contracting, Inc. of Staten Island, NY was awarded a plumbing work contract to rehabilitate the annex, and the low bid amount was cited as \$350,000.

Meanwhile, as part of the vote on the latest agreed \$229 billion State budget, State Sen. Gustavo Rivera (S.D. 33) who represents Kingsbridge Heights where the armory is based, confirmed a reappropriation of \$100.5 million exclusively for the development of the vacant Kingsbridge Armory.

On Sunday, May 27, Kayce Williams was strolling across East Kingsbridge Road, and we asked the 19-year resident of the area if a deal for the armory would finally be reached in her opinion. She replied, "Ahh, no. They've been fighting over that armory for decades. I mean at one point it was supposed to be a skating rink and that fell through, and now I don't know what it's supposed to be, and they're pushing all the mom-and-pop stores out of the area."

Williams was aware of the final meeting date but was unable to attend, explaining, "It happened at a time period where they knew that people were coming home from work. How are we supposed to get there if it's at 5 o'clock?"

Asked for her input on the future of the historic landmark, she said, "I think it should be a recreational center; the reason being there are so many kids in the neighborhood. There's nothing for them to do and then they want to arrest them and want to chase them around when they see that they have nothing else to do... not just a skating rink but maybe putting some sort of gym or a boxing ring or something."

•Sile Moloney contributed to this story



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Public and Community Meetings

The **52nd PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meetings usually take place on the third Thursday of the month at 7 p.m., sometimes in person and sometimes online. Call the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office at (718) 220-5824 to be added to the email distribution list.

The next **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7** general board meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 28, at 6.30 p.m. on Zoom. The Meeting ID is 859 4776 2187, or to join by phone, dial (646) 558-8656. Contact KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov to be added to the distribution list. All meetings are being held virtually, via Zoom, until further notice.

Details of the next **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8** full board meeting are to be confirmed. Contact BX08@cb.nyc.gov to be added to the distribution list.

The **BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meetings are usually held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m., sometimes in person and sometimes online. For details of future meetings, please contact bedfordmosholu@verizon.net.



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THE CITY OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DIVISION OF BRIDGES CONSULTANT PROGRAMS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The City of New York has Request for Proposals available for qualified Consulting Engineering Firms interested in the following Proposed Contract.

Project or Contract Title:

Request for Proposal – Resident Engineering Inspection Services in Connection with Protective Coating of Riverside Drive West 125th Street Bridge, Borough of Manhattan
Contract No. HB1070RD
PIN: 84123MNR576

Expected Contract Term: 775 Consecutive Calendar Days starting from the date of the Notice to Proceed

Description of Services Required:

The services to be procured is the Resident Engineering Inspection Services in Connection with Protective Coating of Riverside Drive West 125th Street Bridge, Borough of Manhattan.

A Pre-Proposal Conference (Optional) has been scheduled for June 13, 2023, Time: 10:00 AM through Zoom. Proposers who wish to connect to the Zoom Conference will need a Zoom ID and Password or the link. Therefore, proposers who wish to connect will need to contact the authorized agency contact person via email at least three (3) days prior to the Pre-Proposal Conference for the information to connect. Proposers will need to provide the first name, last name of everyone who wishes to connect, name of the organization, phone number and email address.

This Procurement is subject to participation goals for Minority-Owned Business Enterprises (MBEs), as required by Section 6-129 of the New York Administrative Code. The M/WBE goal for this project is 30%.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is released through PASSPort, New York City's online procurement portal. Responses to this RFP must be submitted via PASSPort. To access the RFP, vendors should visit the PASSPort public Portal at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/mocs/systems/about-go-to-passport.page> and click on the "Search Funding Opportunities in PASSPort" blue box. Doing so will take one to the public portal of all procurements in the PASSPort system. To quickly locate the RFP, insert the EPIN 84123P0011, into the Keyword search field. To respond to the RFP, vendors must create an account within the PASSPort system if they have not already done so.

Release Date: June 5, 2023

Pre-Proposal Conference: June 13, 2023 at 10 AM

Submission of Request for Proposals are due on or before 2:00 PM on July 3, 2023

Funeral Home Dispute Causes Chaos

(continued from page 1)

one wouldn't return keys."

Norwood News arrived at the location prior to the police and watched the incident unfold. Curran appeared to be dismantling locks at the location, though when we later contacted police for more details of the incident, this was not confirmed, and police said they had no report on file for the day in question at the funeral home address.

Police later told *Norwood News*, "There is a complaint report on file for the listed address for petit larceny on Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2022, at 1700 hours (no arrests made). Here, the employer of the funeral home states various items were taken by an unknown individual by unknown means - a laser printer, a Lenovo laptop computer, [an] NYS notary stamp, and various other office items."

On Friday, Sept. 23, both parties were observed appearing to make their case to the police and at 10.40 a.m., Curran appeared to call someone [possibly his attorney] and gave the phone to one of the officers. After several minutes, the officer gave the phone back to him and made a call on his own phone.

Curran was then heard saying, "Then, they [appearing to refer to Conley and Schnepf] can have the building for free." He added something about them having the apartment upstairs and giving him back the business. Meanwhile, Conley was heard saying, "He doesn't understand what the problem is."

Referring to Conley, an officer was heard saying to Curran, "Yeah, she's saying you can't be here." Curran was then heard saying, "We're fighting over the business. I don't know what to do." Officers then requested a supervisor to the scene.

Curran alleged a desk had been cleared out and that Conley and Schnepf were allegedly removing things that shouldn't be removed. At around 10.56 a.m., an officer was heard talking to a sergeant and at 11.03 a.m. a second and then a third patrol vehicle pulled up. Curran gave the sergeant a document as the discussion continued, and at 11.18 a.m., the first officers on scene left the location.

At 11.18 a.m., Curran pulled the truck out from the front of the funeral home and the remaining officers left at 11.20 a.m. *Norwood News* followed up with Conley on the day and asked if police were giving both parties access to the business for now. She replied, "For now. I'm taking all my stuff until he proves it. It's not his no more. Maybe we can fight this."

Curran then asked Conley, "Are you putting the van in the driveway?" and she responded, "Yes." Curran then said, "So, I'm gonna go in the garage then." Conley replied, "Well, ya

gotta wait... I don't trust anybody." Curran replied, "That's fine." Conley then said, "The cops said we gotta work together so you wait for me. Move your truck." Curran answered, "You haven't been waiting for me."

Curran then parked his truck in the garage, and Conley parked her vehicle in a side driveway. Curran later told *Norwood News*, "The agreement was we were supposed to move into a possible ownership transfer, but unfortunately there was some fraud involved. There was some theft involved, and that's why now we've served them and we're going to court, and we're asking for them to be removed."

Asked what type of alleged fraud and theft was involved, Curran said, "They [allegedly] stole two cars and \$46,000 from the checking account. Obviously, that's 'allegedly' until the court says, so we can't say that, but that's the reason why we're back, and that's the reason why I'm trying to secure the business, because they have both resigned from the business by letter of their attorney."

He added, "Their attorney said they both resigned so therefore they're now trespassing on the business." Asked about the police decision to let them stay, Curran said, "And the police let them stay, as well as they let me stay." Asked if Conley and Schnepf had access to the apartment upstairs, he replied, "They also have access to upstairs, which we were never trying to stop them from."

He continued, "We just wanted to remove them from the business because I'm not really understanding, even right now, why they have access to my business when they've resigned. Apparently in New York City, I guess you resign from your position you can stay and live in your employer's home or employer's business."

We told Curran that Conley alleged she had made all required payments as regards the business, and that it was Curran who had done something with the State health department that had caused the business to be shut down. He replied, "Yeah, once the fraud was discovered, I shut the accounts down, and stopped allowing them to have access, obviously."

Asked if he was allowed to start the business back up, Curran said, "Oh, well the business has never really stopped. They stopped running it, which is why I'm here trying to save it before, you know, they destroy it, but the business never stopped. It's still registered. It's still licensed with the Department of Health."

Conley and Schnepf later disputed this claim and referred us to an extract from the State health department's website which showed otherwise. We put Curran's allegations of fraud to Conley who later told us McKeon Funeral Home was closed, so the resignation was tendered to open

up as "Perry Avenue Funeral Home."

She added that a company van and the title of Schnepf's personal car, which she said was always registered in his name, was signed over on July 1, 2021, when the parties entered transfer of ownership. She said she had also prepaid on a legal agreement in relation to the business until May 1, 2023, so could not be trespassing on grounds that she owns. "We stole NO files," she said. "Every one [is] accountable under the roof of 3129 Perry Avenue EXCEPT for all prearrangement files that William Curran, along with his henchmen, stole," she said.

Conley also alleges Curran [allegedly] stole an embalming machine, stretchers and destroyed over \$25,000 worth of cameras purchased after July 2021, and that he allegedly took out over \$100,000 in personal loans through the company after the transfer, that she was paying off and without her knowledge.

We asked Curran for comment on the various allegations. He said, "Yes, I have the prearrangement documents. Anyone looking for information can contact me via the main funeral home number which is (718) 655-6464. I removed these files in order to protect the individuals' information, as well as monies deposited from being at risk. I have alerted the New York State pre-plan system, as well as consolidated funeral fund so that an extra level of security is taken before any funeral money is dispersed."

He continued, "Any other telephone number is a bogus number they have created and is not filed or approved with the Department

of Health Bureau of Funeral Directing. There are several of these numbers they have put out there in order to intercept funerals away from the legitimate business and telephone number that we have used for decades and decades."

He added, "They have done this on Google and other social media sites. However, the only official number is the one listed with the State." Conley said Curran had no evidence of any wrongdoing on her part. *Norwood News* contacted the New York State Department of Health for comment on the situation. A representative responded, saying, "The management of the McKeon Funeral Home made the decision to suspend operations due to the resignation of the manager. Pending the appointment of a new manager, McKeon is not registered with the Department of Health as a funeral firm in New York State."

The representative continued, "To protect consumers and to ensure funeral directors adhere to all applicable state regulations related to the practice of funeral directing, New Yorkers who have concerns or complaints about a funeral home are encouraged to file a complaint by using the complaint form found here: [<https://www.health.ny.gov/forms/doh-5002.pdf>] Complaints will be reviewed by the Bureau of Funeral Directing so appropriate action can be taken, if necessary."

Norwood News has also contacted several other parties in connection with this story and will continue to share further updates.

CORRECTIONS

In the *Norwood News* edition dated May 18-May 31, 2023, on page 9, in the editor's note following the letter to the editor by Richard Marias, we incorrectly referenced Yajaira Arias as the Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) district manager. In fact, Arias is the Bronx CB7 chair. Karla Cabrera Carrera is the Bronx CB7 district manager. We apologize for this error.

Cabrera Carrera did *not* say her first priority following her appointment was to "get Pride Flags displayed on Mosholu Parkway," as stated in Marias' letter. Following previous requests/suggestions by resident AJ Ramos to fly a Pride flag at two different, proposed sites within Bronx Community District 7 (CD7), the board members subsequently voted and passed a motion to fly a Pride flag *somewhere* in Bronx CD7 during Pride Month

(June). Arias later told *Norwood News* she wants to make this happen and is working towards that goal. The exact location is still to be decided by the board and a permit will need to be requested.

In the *Norwood News* edition dated May 4-17, 2023, in the two-page story entitled, "Karla Cabrera [Carrera] Elected as District Manager for Bronx Community Board 7," on page 7, the story included a reference to previous "motions" by Ramos in relation to the same Pride flag topic. In fact, residents [non-board members] cannot propose "motions" for a vote but they can raise matters for consideration by the board/committees during the public sessions. Such matters may or may not be considered for a vote by the board members. We apologize for not being more specific with our wording in this regard.

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