

Seafood brawl leaves locals, leaders crabby

BY ARTHUR CUSANO

A late night brawl at a City Island eatery has become a political football as civic leaders and candidates vying for the local city council seat presented their takes on the fracas.

Approximately 40 patrons were involved in a scuffle at Seafood City the night of Thursday, February 23, fighting amongst themselves and throwing chairs and other objects.

Video of the incident quickly went viral on social media sites like Facebook and Youtube, and was shown on multiple news outlets both here and abroad.

The ruffians left the seafood establishment at 451 City Island Avenue before police arrived, and an investigation is now underway to find them, said 45th Precinct Deputy Inspector Danielle Raia.

"We have opened up a case, and are going to see if we can identify people and put a little pressure on them (the restaurant)," Raia said. "They're going to make some changes there because it's unacceptable and we can't have that happen anywhere, not just City Island."

Many of the suspects came from areas outside the 45th Precinct, and the department is working with other precincts to identify them, she added.

Raia said other than occasional quality of life complaints, crime on the island had remained low in recent years.

A City Island Civic Association meeting held on Tuesday, March 1 was like a lobster pot boiling over with frustration from dozens of residents who said they were worried about not only their safety, but the reputation of their island.

"These people that engage in that (behavior) and find fun in throwing chairs and creating controversy... I think we can all agree

Continued on Page 4

TN LANDLORD KILLS TENANT

Bangladeshi feud ends in deadly stabbing

BY ROBERT WIRSING

A feud between a tenant and his landlord led to bloodshed last week in Throggs Neck.

According to a NYPD spokesman, on Wednesday, February 22 at 6:30 p.m. 45th Precinct police officers discovered an unconscious and unresponsive Zakir Khan, 44, with multiple stab wounds to his chest, in front of 1001 Logan Avenue.

Khan was rushed to Jacobi Medical Center where he was pronounced deceased.

His landlord, Taha Mahran, 51, allegedly murdered him over a

rent dispute.

Police confirmed Khan's 12-year-old son witnessed the murder but was unharmed.

A NYPD source said Mahran entered the 45th Precinct station house covered in blood stating he stabbed someone with a knife which he had tossed down a sewer.

The murder weapon, a kitchen knife, was recovered by investigators from the sewer in front of the corner home.

Law enforcement stated Khan had three prior arrests while Mahran had no criminal history.

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Mini Horse Whisperer

Claire, a mini horse, paid a surprise visit to Bronx Center for Rehabilitation and Healthcare patients on Wednesday, February 22 to help brighten their spirits. Marie Dominguez was absolutely delighted to meet Claire..

Photo by Silvio Pacifico

BP Diaz delivers annual 'State of the Boro' address

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

On Thursday, February 23, Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. delivered the annual State of the Borough address at John F. Kennedy High School, his eighth since taking office in 2009. Diaz discussed the borough's successes involving economic development, housing, mental health and education.

He also highlighted the instances where his office provided lawyers for tenants in housing court, supported the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, helped stop

the regressive plastic bag tax and obtained funding to rebuild Orchard Beach, among other victories for the Bronx during his tenure.

The borough president also spoke about the recent allocation of \$108 million in state funding by Governor Andrew Cuomo to transform the long-vacant Kingsbridge Armory into the Kingsbridge National Ice Center, along with the planning of the four Metro North stations in the Bronx and the ferry service connecting Soundview to

Continued on Page 15

ArtCondo apartments offers a creative touch

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Rising rents frequently force artists out of communities, but a new co-op is looking to buck that trend with an alternative: ownership.

Artists cooperative, ArtCondo, purchased a 6,400 square foot vacant lot in Melrose in January with plans of developing an artist's residence and workspace. They are looking for fellow collaborators.

One of the art hub's founders, Michele Gambetta, who formed it with Matthew Fletcher, said it took years to find the right property, which turned out to be a parcel at 368 E. 152nd Street.

The cooperative plans to develop a 20,000-square foot building for 15 to 16 owner artists.

The concept is to have artists pool their money and purchase real estate collectively, she said.

"When people pool their energy and resources, they can access things that they couldn't otherwise own on their own," said Gambetta, describing the idea as something that would anchor participants into a live/work spaces in the community.

Gambetta, who is also a li-

censed real estate agent, believes that if artists are owners instead of renters, rising rents will be less of an issue.

Plans call for roughly 1,500 square feet of community non-profit space, with very simple live/work spaces that the artists themselves retrofit for their specific needs.

"Artists don't need luxury, they just need space to work," said Gambetta, who feels the overall project has potential for Social Practice Art, where creators work with communities to develop art.

The building will be environmentally friendly, and Gambetta said she hopes to have it certified as being energy efficient.

Currently, with at least seven artists on board, the project is nearing the halfway point in terms of financing the new construction.

The absolute minimal investment for interested artists is at least \$70,000, said Gambetta.

All creative crafters are welcome to apply.

She extolled the benefits of living in a community with fellow artists, saying it could enhance the overall work of individual



A realtor has purchased land for an artists condo development at 368 E. 152nd Street.

Community News Group / Patrick Rocchio

members.

"I think this is the essence of democracy," said Gambetta. "In our own way, we are trying to talk to people and build something from the bottom up."

Painter and public artist Amy Cheng, one of the participants, answered questions via email for the Bronx Times regarding ArtCondo.

Cheng stated that she wanted to retire from teaching in the Hudson Valley, and dreamed of moving back to the city.

"The collective idea made sense to me practically and financially," stated Cheng. "Real estate investors pool their monies together to purchase property, why shouldn't artists?"

Cheng stated she believes that

"buildings full of artists, like retailers congregating in the same area, have an advantage" and that an entire building holding an open exhibition is more likely to draw an audience than a single artist working alone.

For more information contact Gambetta at mgambetta@artcondo.com or artcondo2013@gmail.com.

VNNA to discuss Muslim Center's relocation

BY ROBERT CHRISTIE

The Van Nest Neighborhood Alliance is planning a town hall for Monday, March 6 to discuss the re-location of the Bronx Muslim Center.

Representatives from the center have been meeting with both the VNNA and Community Board 11 over the past several months to discuss how the center - which is currently located on Rhinelander Avenue - will fit into its new location at 1912-1920 Amethyst Street.

As the Bronx Times previously reported, parking is a hot button issue at the new location.

"It's a one-way street, and not a very wide," said Bernadette Ferrara, president of the VNNA. "The number one issue of course is how are you going to control your parking, which (is a problem) with any place of worship."

"On Rhinelander it was a major issue because people were double and triple parked and cars couldn't get by," said Ferrara.

"It creates animosity when common areas are not respected," she also said. "It's like a roommate situation."

According to the center's attorney, Michael Nacmias of the Eric Plotnick law firm, the current location can serve only 150 worshippers.

This limited capacity leads to worshippers praying outside on the street.

The Bronx Times reached out to Nacmias for further comment but he said his clients no longer want him speaking to the media.

Representatives of the mosque met with the VNNA on Thursday, February 23 to discuss the new site ahead of the Monday meeting.

The Bronx Times obtained a letter from the VNNA to the Bronx Muslim Center recapping the meeting.

According to the letter, local business owners in the community who also attend the mosque agreed to secure additional parking spaces in front of their business to help relieve the parking problem.

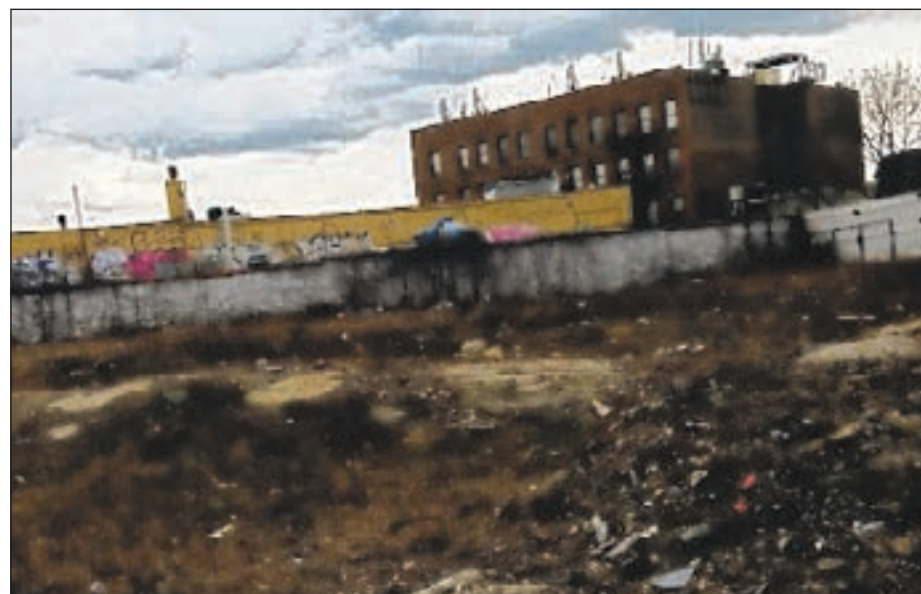
However, Ferrara said the members of the mosque are still going to have to make sure the parking situation is manageable.

The mosque can hold up to 525 people and it's busiest hours are on Friday from noon to 2 p.m.

Ferrara suggested one way parking issues may be alleviated is having someone from the mosque available to let members know when they are blocking someone on the street.

The VNNA president said the town hall will serve as a way for neighbors to be informed since everyone may not be completely knowledgeable on the mosque's moving plans.

"A town hall really is just a place for



The Bronx Muslim Center purchased this property on Amethyst Street to build a new mosque that will be able to hold more of its members.

Photo Courtesy of Arthur Cusano

people to listen and ask questions," said Ferrara. "And we make sure nothing gets out of hand and we stop things as soon as somebody decides to get on a soapbox."

Ferrara also hopes that any residents that chose not to attend the meeting and learn about the issue, won't come back later and complain about the relocation.

"If [this topic] means something to you then you should show up and make your voice heard," she said. "Show up or shut up."

The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. in the first floor community room at the Monsignor Fiorentino Apartments at 1830 Amethyst Street.



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Landlord kills tenant; Bangladeshi feud ends in deadly stabbing

from Page 1

Khan had been arrested for criminal contempt, aggravated phone harassment and stalking.

A Bangladesh-born U.S. citizen, Khan moved to Parkchester in 1992 and rose to prominence among its large Bangladeshi community.

Khan, a married father of three, owned Parkchester Real Estate New York formerly located at 16 Westchester Square, Suite 3. The property now houses a McDonald's.

Mahran, also Bangladeshi, has been charged with murder, manslaughter and criminal possession of a weapon.

The married father of three was arraigned at Bronx Criminal Court on Thursday, February 23 following a psychological evaluation at Jacobi.

Khan allegedly promised to rent Mahran's \$1,500 a month apartment with the intent to buy it, but instead

moved his family in without a lease.

The 3-bedroom, 1-bath rental is listed on his Parkchester Real Estate website for \$1,575 per month.

Khan was reportedly nine months behind in his rent after shutting down his real estate business.

Assemblyman Luis Sepulveda said Mahran contacted him and Senator Ruben Diaz, Sr. to speed up Khan's eviction, but only a housing court judge could grant his request.

A warrant of eviction had been secured, however Mahran became infuriated after Khan received an extension.

Sepulveda said Khan worked hard to empower the Bangladeshi community and would be remembered for his advocacy and dedication.

He added Mahran was generally a peaceful man whose violent act was totally out of character.

Sepulveda called the in-

cident a tragedy for both families.

A neighbor said Mahran lived there for 13 years and spent a lot of time maintaining the 1-family frame house.

He was always respectful until Khan moved in a year ago, the neighbor added.

The source confirmed Khan participated in a series of actions to taunt Mahran, such as spreading trash all over the property.

"Taha Mahran never raised his voice once until Zakir Khan moved in," the neighbor said. "Taha was a very calm man so whatever happened between them must have really set him off."

"Zakir Khan was a very good friend of mine," said Mohammed Mujumder, Community Board 9 Land and Zoning chairman. "He was a nice, caring husband and father and regardless of what he allegedly did, he didn't deserve to die in such a barbaric manner."



A rent dispute between 1001 Logan Avenue's tenant and landlord turned deadly last Wednesday.

Community News Group/Robert Wirsing



Dennis Fitzpatrick, head of security for Seafood City, discusses efforts to control crowds with a large group of residents at a City Island Civic Association meeting held less than a week after a brawl was recorded at Seafood City.

Arthur Cusano

Seafood City brawl leaves locals and City Island leaders crabby

from Page 1

that's not how we want to be represented," association president Bill Stanton told the crowd.

"I think the business involved and business owners in general do not want to be seen as promoting that," he added.

Stanton introduced the man who oversees the evening security for Seafood City, island resident and former NYPD officer Dennis Fitzpatrick, who said his establishment was being unfairly singled out, and that there was no way to entirely stop large groups of patrons from places like Co-op City and Mount Vernon from starting an altercation if they run into someone they have a dispute with.

"You never know if people have a problem with someone in another neighborhood," he said.

"I don't think there is any restaurant that has more control over a restaurant with the volume of business that we do on a daily basis with the clientele we have."

Fitzpatrick said he regularly closes the restaurant's bar if he sees potential for trouble, and that the bar had

been closed from 8. to 10 p.m. that night due to the restaurant's high volume.

"You can't tell me that all those people got drunk in those 20 minutes they were there, it's impossible," he said.

The civic association has called for a paid detail of off-duty NYPD officers on the island in years past, Stanton said, and Seafood City management attended a meeting on the issue last year.

But new city rules that require establishments to cover additional insurance costs for those officers in the event of injury has put the program on hold.

Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj, a candidate for the 13th Council District and former City Island resident, spoke out about the incident.

Gjonaj paid a visit to Seafood City and stated in a subsequent release there would be a hiring of additional in-house security at the restaurant.

"While it is fortunate that no one was seriously injured in this incident, the owner, as well as City Island residents and the NYPD, are frustrated in the

acts of the individuals involved," Gjonaj stated. "It is important that immediate actions are being taken by the establishment and the community to prevent any future occurrences."

The civic association corresponding secretary, John Doyle, another council candidate, criticized the restaurant for not taking enough action even though its clientele has been infiltrated by rival gang members.

Marjorie Velazquez, another candidate, called for the NY State Liquor Authority to rescind the liquor licenses of Seafood City and Johnny's Reef, another City Island establishment at the island's southern tip, where police claim the disturbance originated.

Both establishments had their licenses renewed in 2016 and are up for approval again in 2018.

City Island Chamber of Commerce vice president Paul Klein said the business organization was not commenting on the Seafood City debacle, other than it appeared to be handled.

"I think they have the situation pretty well under control," he said.



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St. Patrick's Parade Sunday, March 12th

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

One of Throggs Neck and the borough's most anticipated events is scheduled for Sunday, March 12.

The 19th Annual Throggs Neck St. Patrick's Day Parade steps off at noon from East Tremont and Lafayette avenues.

A sea of green marchers will make their way down the thoroughfare and past a reviewing stand at Harding Avenue.

Honored this year as grand marshal Derek Woods, acclaimed videographer and a founder of Riverdale Children's Theater founder.

There are three honored religious, members of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill: Sr. Joan Marie O'Leary, Sr. Peggy Gannon and Sr. Betty McLaughlin.

Woods said that he hopes for great weather the day of the parade enabling people to celebrate the special bonds that are evident in the community and its businesses on parade day.

"We hope that people from all over the Bronx and the tri-state area come and enjoy Throggs Neck for the day," said Woods, adding "with traditional Irish fare and music all over, it is truly very special: not only an Irish-American day, but a great Bronx day."

The grand marshal, who grew up on Bainbridge Avenue and hails from Riverdale today, said that he believes that the parade affords people from all over the borough a chance to visit the Throggs Neck community.

The videographer, who has spent his whole career filming the borough, including the parade for nearly its entire existence, added that visitors from elsewhere get to see a beautiful and vibrant community.

Marching along with Woods and the honored religious will be family members of 17 posthumously recognized honorary grand marshals.

Extended family and friends are coming away from far away places like Florida, according to interviews honorary grand marshals' families, to march in the parade and remember everyday people who made up the fabric of the community.

The 17 are Margaret Albin, Patrick Boyle, Veronica Christensen, Mary Fitzsimons, Teresa Fitzsimons, Eleanor Kelly, Arleen Knapp, Mary McNery, Jack Mullane, Jack O'Connor, Kathy O'Sullivan, John Quinn, Sal Randazzo, Dennis Raftery, Jr., Daniel Smith, John Steel and Barbara Wynne.

The committee, comprised of Throggs



Derek Woods is the grand marshal of the 19th Annual Throggs Neck St. Patrick's Day Parade. Photo courtesy of Derek Woods

Neck Benevolent Association members and community leaders, select the honorees based on recommendations and their own interactions, said Karin O'Connor, committee member.

O'Connor said that the parade is a much looked-forward-to event in the community, with many people telling parade organizers that it is the highlight of their year.

"We always strive to bring great parades to the streets of Throggs Neck," said O'Connor, adding "There is a lot of fun and revelry that goes on and we are proud to be doing this for the 19th time."

The parade committee member said that as of press time some 20 marching bands and 45 to 50 groups have confirmed that they will be taking part this year.



Players, coaches and parents from the Warriors Football Club enjoy their 65th Annual Award Ceremony on Thursday, February 23.

Photo by Laura Stone

Warrior Football Club closes out 65th season

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

The Warriors Football Club celebrated the close of another season and looking forward to continuing its tradition of helping youth build their bodies and minds next season.

The football league for youth held its 65th Annual Awards Ceremony at Scavello's on the Island on Thursday, February 23.

League officials honored four sponsors who have supported the Warriors for the past three decades - since they switched from being a travel team to being a community-based intramural sporting league.

Since 1985, sponsors Ralph Giordano Funeral Home, O'Connor Carpets, McNulty Funeral Home and Schuyler Hill Funeral Home have been steadfast sponsors and were honored, along with the players and coaches, said Joe DeSimone, Warriors president.

"In 1985, because there was such demand in the local area because other organizations were closing down, Jay Demers started the Warriors football organization and they were our original sponsors," said DeSimone.

The owner of one of the honored businesses, James McQuade of Schuyler Hill Funeral Home,

said that he supports and partners with the league because he supports anything that is for the benefit of the community youth.

"I see it as a good way for the kids to grow up and learn organized sports and I think it is an asset to the community," said McQuade, adding "Anything that helps get these kids off the street, and get organized, I support 100 percent."

I see it as a good way for the kids to grow up and learn organized sports and I think it is an asset to the community.

James McQuade

Demers originally founded the Warriors travel team in Manhattan in 1952, and later moved it to the Bronx, but for the first few decades it was a travel team, said DeSimone.

Today there is an age 14 and under travel team that continues that tradition, he said.

The league is already gearing up for next season, with a free speed and agility clinic slated to run in Pelham Bay Park every Tuesday and Thursday from Tuesday, April 4

through the end of Thursday, June 29, said the league president.

The strength and conditioning clinic is designed to get youth who may be interested in playing football in shape for the fall.

Focuses of the clinic include obstacle courses, racing in track events including the 40-yard-dash and agility drills, said the league president.

Every two weeks, the youth receive results from their races to see if they are improving or not, said DeSimone.

"It gets them in shape... we see incredible improvements," he said, adding "Parents rave about it."

The football season for the league, which serves children ranging from five to 14-years-old, begins in August.

The league hosts a flag football league for five to seven-year-olds and several tackle leagues: a junior pee wee league for seven to nine-year-olds, a pee wee league for ten to 13-year-olds, said the league president, in addition to the travel league.

All of the leagues have a weight limit to ensure safety, added the league president.

To learn more about Warriors programs or to register visit: www.bronx-warriorsfootball.com.

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NYBG Serves Culinary Kids Workshops

Children and their families celebrated the relationships among plants and their favorite foods from Saturday, February 18 to Monday, February 20 at the New York Botanical Garden's Culinary Kids Weekend. Staff from the Children's Education Department guided visitors through a variety of delicious activities including activity stations, culinary workshops and cooking demonstrations.



Mia Grade (r) made a maraca using culinary tools with the help of Craig Miller and Nancy Lopez of NYBG's Children's Education at the Vegetable Orchestra stand. Photo by Laura Stone



Layah Dean stretched some dough she kneaded at the No Rise Pizza Dough stand. Photo by Laura Stone



Michael Feltman chopped fruits and veggies with Susanne Costa's assistance at Chop Shop. Photo by Laura Stone



Chef Michelle Warner (l) presented herbs to Jada Concepcion (c) for the Lemony Chicken Soup and Dilly Vegetable dumplings the kids helped create. Photo by Laura Stone



Sisters Josie (l) and Brooke showed off the veggie and fruit kabobs they made at Chop Shop. Photo by Laura Stone



Layah Dean (l) worked with Veniece Pinnock of NYBG Children's Education to create some No Rise Pizza Dough made with natural ingredients including honey. Photo by Laura Stone



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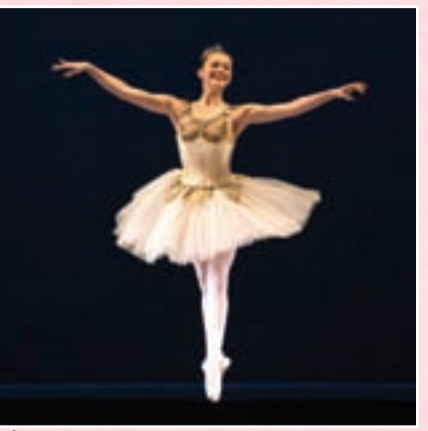

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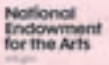
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Photos by Rosalie O'Connor; Stars and Stripes choreography by George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust

Supportive housing for Claremont in 2018

BY ROBERT CHRISTIE

Government officials in partnership with Community Access broke ground on Wednesday, February 22, for a new affordable 14-story, 126-unit complex that will cater to residents struggling with mental health issues.

Community Access, a company that specializes in supportive housing for people dealing with mental health concerns, will have onsite support services to help each of its tenants fighting through those issues.

The \$52.3 million project received help from Governor Cuomo's five-year Affordable Homeless and Housing plan which is geared towards fighting homelessness and creating more affordable housing opportunities in the state.

"This development will offer residents the help they need to find their footing, focus on their recovery and reach their future goals," said Ann Sullivan, commissioner of the NYS Office of Mental Health.

According to Cal Hedigan, deputy CEO at Community Access, the 111 East 172nd Street site will be different from other supportive housing they have throughout the city.



Steve Coe (front, 4th from r), Community Access CEO; funders and developers broke ground for a new \$52.2 million affordable and supportive housing complex at 111 E. 172nd Street.

Photo by Ray Maldonado

"Because of the nature of the site we were able to create a urban agriculture component," said Hedigan.

The site will feature an urban farm with six raised growing beds that will be used to grow vegetables year-round.

In addition, it will have a commercial kitchen in which tenants will learn how to improve their nutrition and prepare healthy meals.

Hedigan added the farm will not

only help the tenants nutritionally but also socially.

"One of the things people living with mental health concerns tend to struggle with is isolation, loneliness and difficulty creating new meaningful relationships," Hedigan continued. "[The farm] is not just about the food - it's a way to draw people out."

Community Access first filed applications for the project in 2015.

Hedigan said the company was very pleased with the site's size and possibilities, adding that usually sites are hard to come by for Community Access.

Also, she said the host communities are not always thrilled about having people with mental health issues moving into their neighborhood.

She added that for people living in supportive housing, "Developing

relationships in the community and not being exposed to discrimination or high levels of stigma are very important in people's recovery."

Hedigan said usually in the beginning of the development process, community members are concerned about this type of housing coming into their neighborhood.

However, she added, "Once it's built and they see the quality of the building and they see it's contributions to the community, we're generally welcomed."

The complex will have 60 of its units - which are all studio apartments - set aside for people struggling with mental health.

According to Hedigan, some of those people will be Medicaid users identified by the state while others will come from state mental health facilities.

Fifty-seven of the units will be for low income families - chosen through a lottery - that are making 57 percent of the area's median income while eight units will be low-income studio apartments.

Hedigan said the facility is expected to open by mid 2018.

Mayor instructs SCA to acquire school sites

BY ROBERT CHRISTIE

Mayor de Blasio instructed the NYC School Construction Authority during a Tuesday, February 21 Bronx Town Hall to look into purchasing two properties in School District 10 to help with the district's overcrowding.

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, who was present for the meeting, said the city should try to purchase the property at 3120 Corlear Avenue - which is currently the Tech International Charter School - and 171 West 239th Street - which is currently the Visitation School.

Both schools have been in the news due to reports they would be closing down soon.

The archdiocese announced in February that the Visitation School would be one of six schools closing in the city.

The Church of the Visitation occupied the site until it closed in 2015.

Tech International's Charter School's board voted earlier this year not to renew its charter at the end of the 2016-2017 school year.

Neither the Tech International Charter School nor the New York Archdiocese responded to a request

for comment.

"There are some sites right in our neighborhood where we can take seats," Dinowitz told the mayor during the town hall.

"We had mentioned a few months ago the site of the former Church of the Visitation and now unfortunately the school is closing. It is a huge site which I hope the Department of Education can secure from the Archdiocese," he added.

De Blasio told those in attendance that he had heard of both sites.

"We like to get our hands on school buildings," said the mayor. "So the president of the School Construction Authority Lorraine Grillo is going to make it her business to go out and get her hands on those buildings."

During the meeting multiple community members joined Dinowitz in telling the mayor about the school's overcrowding and lack of resources.

Dinowitz pointed specifically to P.S. 7 - which sits near the Tech International Charter School - and Kingsbridge Heights Neighborhood Improvement Association president Elizabeth Thompson pointed

to P.S. 307, P.S. 86, P.S. 340 and the Walton High School Campus.

Grillo said at the meeting the city has in its budget funding for 456 additional seats in city schools.

However, they need to find places to put those seats.

"What we hope you do is give us help," said Grillo. "You guys are on the ground and we'd love for you to identify sites and we'd love to explore and investigate anything you give us."

Dinowitz told the Bronx Times on Tuesday, February 28, "The department of education told us they needed some seats and I've given them two sites both of which would be very helpful."

Dinowitz reiterated that it is unfortunate that the church and school closed but the city can turn the closing into something beneficial.

"Given the fact they did close we would like to see that property used for purposes that are in the best interest of the entire community and building a public school there is in the best interest of the community," he said.



With the Tech International School Charter School closing at the end of this school year, the Department of Education could find a home for a new public school at 3120 Corlear Avenue.

Photo Courtesy of Robert Christie

Samuel Young Post 620 Remembers WWI



The Samuel H. Young American Legion Post 620 hosted a World War I Doughboy meeting on Saturday, February 25 in which reenactors and collectors from five states came to swap and sell Great War uniforms and ephemera. The free, public event was to prepare for the centennial of the U.S. entry into the First World War on Thursday, April 6 and get more reenactors to represent WWI in their communities. The celebration also honored the post's namesake, private Young, who was the first and youngest neighborhood soldier to be killed in WWI. (Above, l-r) Collectors Bill Baldwin, Peter Tragn and Bob Jacobs displayed some WWI-era memorabilia. (Insert) Bronxites viewed many WWI-era items including posters, badges, clothing and photographs among many other historical pieces. Photo by Aracelis Batista



Daniel Rodriguez wore a historic Doughboy U.S. Army uniform from 'The Great War'.



Nina Mako and Dan Conna wore historically accurate military attire from the time period.



(Above) Jim McGaughan and son, Matthew, viewed many of the WWI artifacts on display. Photo by Aracelis Batista

(l-r) Javier Rodriguez; his son, Daniel (Left) and Todd Rambow gave a one-of-a-kind history lesson.

Morris Park, Wallace avenues get traffic light

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

A street crossing that neighbors say a traffic light is badly needed for pedestrians will be getting one soon.

The intersection of Morris Park and Wallace avenues, called "extremely dangerous" by a local activist, will soon have a new traffic light installed in a bid to increase pedestrian safety.

Community activist Katherine Torres said that she did not feel comfortable crossing the intersection with a stroller, or having her elderly parents cross the street to attend church services or go shopping.

"We've never had a crosswalk there," said Torres, adding "It is just extremely dangerous."

She said she has seen a number of close

calls with pedestrians at the intersection.

In one incident she said she saw two cars swerve into oncoming lanes of traffic to avoid hitting an elderly woman who was carrying shopping bags across the street, barely missing her, said Torres.

Torres also got involved because she anticipates that a new charter school and some new businesses nearby may generate more pedestrian traffic at the intersection.

"They roll the dice," said Torres of pedestrians, adding that the new light will also make for safer travelling for motorists who want to continue on Wallace Avenue past Morris Park Avenue.

Councilman James Vacca followed the case for Torres after she contacted him, providing necessary advocacy and information to make the new light a reality.

Torres also reached out to DOT directly, she said.

The councilman said that speeding along Morris Park Avenue has been an issue for as long as he can remember, and he's advocated for a number of changes, including an earlier effort to get a light at Barnes and Morris Park avenues.

"Katherine Torres reached out to me and I really give her a lot of credit: she lobbied very hard," said the councilman, adding that wherever he goes in district he hears about the need to slow down thoroughfare traffic.

The councilman said that there are a va-



A new traffic light has been approved for Rhinelander Avenue and Tomlinson Avenue. Community News Group / Patrick Rocchio



City DOT has approved a traffic light for the corner of Morris Park Avenue and Wallace Avenue.

Community News Group / Patrick Rocchio

riety of solutions that can help in individual cases, including speed humps where appropriate.

A DOT spokeswoman stated that the light at Morris Park and Wallace avenues was approved in February and is slated for installation by Friday, June 30.

Another traffic light was approved for Rhinelander and Tomlinson avenues in January and should be installed by May, stated the spokeswoman.

Tony Signorile, Morris Park Community Association president, said that in addition to these two locations, Bronxdale Avenue is also in need of speed humps or other traffic calming measures.

The MPCA president cited frequent speeding around a curve on Bronxdale and Rhinelander avenues and a fatal accident in August 2016 at Bronxdale and Wallace avenues as proof that greater traffic calming was needed on the roadway.

Butler Houses receives full security upgrade

BY ROBERT CHRISTIE

The Butler Houses in Claremont Village are the first NYCHA property to receive the full security upgrades associated with the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety.

NYCHA completed work on CCTV cameras, Layered Access security doors and new lighting on the grounds in late January which are the first step to creating a safer environment around public housing.

According to NYCHA, the six 21-story buildings - which include a total of 1,476 units - each received two new entrance doors and one new exit door.

In addition, the six buildings received 30 new cameras in addition to upgrades to the 58 existing cameras.

Finally, 245 new exterior lighting fixtures were installed on the grounds.

Cornell Nolton, president of the Resident Association at the Butler Houses, said the new lights have been a plus for Butler Houses' older residents.

"The seniors feel more at ease



New security doors at the Butler Houses are just one part of the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety.

Photo Courtesy of NYCHA

with the lighting," said Nolton. "They feel comfortable that they won't be robbed."

He added that residents used to come in early because they were afraid to be outside in the dark.

Nolton, a 20-year resident of the houses, said before the up-

grades the Butler Houses experienced its share of shootings, robberies, domestic violence and drug use.

He adds, "Crime is down a little bit now" since the new security features were installed.

In addition, to those features,

Nolton said he has been holding meetings twice a month for residents to voice their concerns and better their living experience.

According to Nolton, during those times representatives from government officials and officers from the local PSA 7 have attended the meetings to help in making the buildings better places to live.

The resident association president said he is already seeing improvements thanks to the meetings as residents are putting their garbage in the incinerator instead of throwing it out their window.

According to Renita Francois, deputy director of MAP, hearing from residents is one of the ways the action plan hopes to improve quality of life in a program called Neighborhood STAT.

Francois said the next step for Butler Houses is to install the Neighborhood STAT program, which will include a "very integral and coordinated" response to the problems facing public housing.

She said agencies such as the

NYPD, NYCHA, the NYC Department of Homeless Services and the NYC Department of Sanitation will be able to hear from residents and make sure their needs are met.

"For example if the homeless shelter across the street is not open, that population will trickle over into this development and then we'll have people sleeping in the hallways or camping out in front of buildings," said Francois.

She explained in that type of situation the NYPD's neighborhood coordination officer, a representative from NYC Department of Homeless Services and the property manager will be available to come up with a solution to that problem.

In addition to the security features, said a NYCHA representative, MAP also includes investments in the community such as mentoring and job training for young adults, improved access to public benefits, conflict mediation, grandparent support groups and extended hours at local community centers.

Klein, Gjonaj & Benedetto

Celebrate Black History Month



Senator Jeff Klein, in partnership with assembly members Mark Gjonaj and Michael Benedetto, celebrated the 22nd annual Black History Month Breakfast on Saturday, February 25 at Villa Barone Manor. The event featured a lively performance by the Trinity Baptist Choir, a keynote address by district attorney Darcel Clark and an awards ceremony for special honorees. This year honored 43rd Precinct sergeant William Jean Baptiste, Clason Point Gardens community activist Dolores Biggs, Mount Vernon Parent Teacher Association Council president Lorna Kirwan, former Community Board 8 district manager Patricia Manning and Community Board 10 chairman Martin Prince.

NY1 News anchor Cheryl Wills (c) graciously accepted a proclamation from (l-r) Benedetto, Klein, Clark and Gjonaj.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico



Klein (l) presented district attorney Clark a proclamation recognizing her hardwork and dedication.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico



Lieutenant Quathisha Epps (front, c) was honored by her fellow 47th Precinct officers.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico



(l-r) Thomas Messina, representing Congressman Joseph Crowley; Assemblyman Gjonaj; keynote speaker district attorney Darcel Clark; Senator Klein and Assemblyman Benedetto.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico



Assembly members Gjonaj (l) and Benedetto thanked district attorney Clark for her service.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico



(Below) (back, l-r) Honoree sergeant Baptiste; Gjonaj; Rev. Dr. Rabbi Keith Elijah Thompson; Clark; Klein; honoree Martin Prince; Benedetto; (front, l-r) honorees Lorna Kirwan, Patricia Manning, Dolores Biggs and lieutenant Epps. Photo by Silvio Pacifico

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Bronx Plastic Surgery preps patients for summer

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

A local medical practice lifts the confidence of Bronxites.

The practice, Bronx Plastic Surgery, which has provided the Bronx with advance services in cosmetic, plastic and reconstructive surgery for more than 25 years, is offering residents an opportunity to further enhance their outer appearance at a reasonable price, just in time for the summer.

Bronx Plastic Surgery, located at 2425 Eastchester Road, headed by Robert D. Goldstein M.D., F.A.C.S. and Heather A. Erhard M.D., F.A.C.S., both of whom are board-certified plastic surgeons, is devoted to their practice of plastic and reconstructive surgery.

For the next two

months, Bronx Plastic Surgery is offering breast augmentation (implants) for only \$5,800 and tummy tucks for approximately \$6,000. Pricing includes anesthesia as well as a facility fee.

BPS is also providing patients with Botox treatments for \$10 per unit, along with Dermal Fillers.

The timing is perfect for those who are looking to enhance and restore their natural beauty, as patients who undergo these procedures will be fully recovered and ready for the summer by the time beach season comes around.

Other body, face and breast procedures are also available to patients who are interested in enhancing their appearance. The

practice also offers treatment for patients suffering with skin cancer.

"Our practice is all about making our patients feel good about their appearance and comfortable in their own skin - with the correct treatment," said Erhard, who specializes in breast reconstructive surgery. "It's a great feeling to serve the borough where I have lived for so long."

"Each patient we provide service to will need a different treatment - and it is up to us to decide what treatment is most appropriate for them," said Goodstein, who has been in practice for over 30 years. "Looking back on our history, it has been an honor to have so many people from the Bronx instilling their trust in our practice as long as they have."

According to Erhard and Goodstein, the business has always put emphasis on providing customers with a positive experience through personalized care, making sure each customer's procedure is as comfortable and pleasant as possible.

Additionally, both doctors stay current regarding the latest standards and surgical techniques to provide the best possible service to their patients.

Before any procedure is agreed upon, Bronx Plastic Surgery reviews each patient's medical history, current health, as well as the patient's expectations and motivation for the procedure.

To schedule an appointment at Bronx Plastic Surgery, call (718) 405-7500 or visit www.bronxplasticsurgery.com.



Goldstein (l) and Erhard have each headed Bronx Plastic Surgery for more than two decades. Photo courtesy of Bronx Plastic Surgery

BP Diaz delivers annual 'State of the Borough' address

from Page 1

Manhattan.

He added that he would continue to stay focused on funding for NYCHA communities as well as the Sheridan Expressway.

Despite progress in these areas, Diaz expressed concern with homelessness, public housing, the criminal justice system, mental health care and overcrowded schools/classrooms, all categories that need considerable improvements.

One alarming statistic shows that only 63 percent of Bronx students graduate from high school, and even less of a percentage are prepared for a CUNY college.

Diaz also discussed the future of the Jerome Avenue corridor, which is in the middle of a major rezoning process and will affect local residents and businesses, as well as the need to build more affordable and permanent supportive housing to prevent homelessness.

Diaz's transportation expansion goals included creating a 'Triboro Line' subway proposal with the Regional Plan Association, which would connect Brooklyn and Queens to the Bronx, as well as expanding CitiBike to all five boroughs.

"I was particularly pleased to hear that Diaz will continue to focus on capital investments in our borough," said Councilman Rafael Salamanca, one of many elected officials in attendance. "His continued commitment to healthcare, homelessness and schools are three issues I know we are both passionate about and will continue to work together on."

"Last week's State of the Borough reflected his steadfast leadership for the Bronx - and that's why I am pledging to work with him to push for these investments, which I know we both believe will lead to greater opportunities for the borough's next genera-

tion."

"For nearly eight years, my office and our partners have development and executed policies of equality and smart services, making the Bronx an even better place for all its residents," Diaz said. "We have seen considerable improvement, but life is certainly not perfect in our borough - services and amenities abundant in other boroughs are lacking here and, despite having world-class hospitals, our borough's health indicators have been slow to improve."

Nearly 100,000 more Bronxites are currently employed than when Diaz took office in May 2009.

The State of the Borough address was attended by Salamanca, NYC comptroller Scott Stringer, Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, District Attorney Darcel Clark, Councilwoman Annabel Palma, Councilman Jimmy Vacca, Congressman Jose Serrano, senators Ruben



Diaz (c) met with Manhattan borough president Gail Brewer (l) and Queens borough president Malinda Katz following his address.

Photo by Walter Pofeldt

Diaz, Jeff Klein, Gustavo Rivera and Jamaal Bailey, assemblymen Jeffrey Dinowitz, Mark Gjonaj, Marcos Crespo and Victor Pichardo, president of the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation Marlene Cintron as well

as Adolfo Carrion, Jr., a former Bronx borough president. Aurelia Greene, Bronx deputy borough president, acted as the mistress of ceremonies for the event.

The address was broadcasted live on BronxNet,

Channel 67 for Optimum customers and Channel 33 for Verizon FiOs customers, and also streamed on bronxnet.tv. Viewers and those in attendance hash tagged #SOTBX17 on social media to stay engaged during the events.

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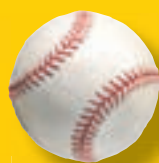
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