

## Soundview NYC Ferry plan moves forward

BY ARTHUR CUSANO

A NYC Ferry route from Soundview to Manhattan sometime next year is moving forward, as plans for the route and a required dock at Clason Point have been submitted by the city.

Plans were submitted to the Army Corps of Engineers earlier this month by the NYC Economic Development Corporation.

The application lists a total of six stops to be added. The others include three in Manhattan and two in Brooklyn.

The route of the Soundview ferry has been altered since it was announced last year.

While it will still stop at East 90th Street and Wall Street Pier 11 as originally announced, another stop has been added at 34th Street after feedback from residents.

That stop will allow Bronx residents to switch to another ferry headed directly to Queens and Brooklyn, saving commuters headed to those boroughs considerable time by bypassing lower Manhattan.

The addition was proposed by Manhattan Councilman Daniel Garodnick earlier this month.

A free shuttle bus operated by NYC Ferry also departs from the 34th Street docks to midtown, according to the official website, [www.ferry.nyc](http://www.ferry.nyc).

"I'm looking forward to the expansion of NYC Ferry service into my district, which will offer my constituents a quick, affordable and scenic travel alternative to locations across the city," said Senator Jeff Klein, who represents Soundview. "Once the Soundview route launches next year, residents of the south Bronx

*Continued on Page 4*

# TN STRONG TO TACKLE 2800

## Community set to defeat Bruckner Blvd. landlord

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

The community is coming together, perhaps as never before, to fight the landlord of a Throggs Neck office building.

Members of the Throggs Neck Strong coalition have further mobilized homeowners, merchants and the building's tenants to fight evictions of the commercial renters at 2800 Bruckner Boulevard.

Local elected officials have penned a letter to the two individuals that might be partners in the building's new management and/or ownership: its longtime owner Michael

D'Alessio and its purported new owner Michael Fernandes.

They are asking that D'Alessio and Fernandes submit to Community Board 10 a plan concerning the building's future use.

Coalition leaders said they suspect that a proposed "wellness center" described on the Internet and by Fernandes will include some sort of substance abuse detox or rehabilitation, though Fernandes has been vague on this matter.

Residents at the building received a second round of eviction notices on

*Continued on Page 4*



## SUV's Peace Walk

Senator Jeff Klein, Stand Up to Violence and residents marched in the third annual Peace Walk on Thursday, August 10 at White Plains and East Gun Hill roads. Dr. Noe Romo, SUV medical director, rallied the crowd against the scourge of gun violence.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico

## Montefiore plans housing at Hutch Metro Center

BY BOB GUILIANO

Community Board 11 voted to approve a project to build housing for graduate medical students at 1776 Eastchester Road within the Hutchinson Metro Center during a full board meeting Wednesday, August 9.

The board voted to inform NYC Department of City Planning that it has no objection to Montefiore's proposed staff housing as it pertains to the parcel of land it intends to purchase within the Hutchinson

Metro Center, according to district manager Jeremy Warneke.

Montefiore Hospital is proposing a 12-story, 182-unit staff housing building and has a non-binding letter of intent to purchase the property to provide housing for graduate medical students, according to Montefiore spokeswoman Lara Markenson.

The proposal depends on whether zoning allows for the building to be used for this purpose.

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The Sam's Floor Coverings building at 3041 Webster Avenue is the proposed site of a men's homeless shelter, according to Community Board 7 leaders. Arthur Cusano

## Cohen, CB 7 blast Sam's Carpeting shelter proposal

BY ARTHUR CUSANO

Community Board 7 wasn't scheduled to meet again until September.

That, however, was before board members caught wind of a proposal to put a homeless shelter on a busy stretch of Webster Avenue.

Sam's Floor Coverings at 3041 Webster Avenue, better known as Sam's Carpets, has filed a building permit to add a third level to the two-floor commercial building.

The work application, filed January 26, 2017 and since approved, lists work to alter the building from commercial/mercantile use to R-1 residential, hotel and dormitory use and to add an additional floor with 7,940 square feet of additional space.

Local leaders have since learned the city is proposing a men's shelter at the site.

At Monday's emergency meeting at the Sister Annunziata Bethell Senior Center on 204th Street, Land Use, Zoning and Housing Committee chair Jean Hill explained the building is just steps from P.S. 20/M.S. 20.

"That will be a 200-bed men's shelter, and we have a lot of feedback from the

community about this kind of structure being built directly across the street from a school," she said.

Councilman Andrew Cohen gave board members and roughly two-dozen concerned residents a rundown on what he knew and what neighborhood residents could do about the plan.

He said he was willing to put his relationship with the mayor on the line to get the proposed site moved.

"It's going to be a long four years if the administration and I cannot work this out," Cohen said. "There is no compromise in that this site is unacceptable."

Cohen told attendees that simply railing against the proposed site would yield little result, and instead asked for input on other potential sites in the area better suited for such a facility that he could float as alternatives to City Hall.

"Telling the city 'no' in a vacuum I don't think will be proactive," Cohen said.

Some in attendance brought up 3600 Jerome Avenue, the former FECS Bronx Mental Health Center located near the Woodlawn train station they said DHS had eyed in the past.

Board chair Adaline Walker-Santiago said the

borough president's office notified the board of the possible shelter in October of 2016.

However a city representative had told her just recently that no final decision had been made about the site and that the city was open to dialogue. Even so, she urged swift action by the board to avoid being caught off guard.

"One thing said at the end of our conversation is that if the site is chosen, a community board can propose an alternative site, so maybe we need to take a look at that," she said. "If not FECS, what is an alternative site that is not near a school?"

The proposed shelter would not be the first to be built in the northwest Bronx in the last few years.

Landing Road Residence, a building now under construction at 233 Landing Road in University Heights, will include shelter space in addition to affordable housing.

An inquiry sent to the NYC Department of Homeless Services into the status of the shelter proposal and to Sam's owner Carmine Rossi for comment were not returned by press time.



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# TN Strong to tackle 2800; community set to defeat landlord

from Page 1

Wednesday, August 9, even though many have leases. Building services have been stopped, several said.

The latest notices sent to tenants stated that even though 2800 Bruckner Boulevard was rented for 20 years to for-profit business, the building's Certificate of Occupancy is for a 'community facility' that only allows non-profit, non-residential use.

"He is trying to use illegality as a weapon to evict tenants," said Steven Kaufman, TNS chairman.

A NYC Department of Buildings Certificate of Occupancy sent with the latest eviction notices confirms that it is a community facility without sleeping accommodations, something tenants say they were not aware of when they signed leases.

About a dozen tenants still remain in the building.

After the latest round of eviction notices, on Thursday, August 10 the coalition's chair and vice chair Bob Jaen, Congressman Joseph Crowley, Senator Jeff Klein, Assemblyman Michael Benedetto, Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj and Councilman James Vacca wrote to D'Alessio and Fernandes, citing a "vast amount of controversy regarding 2800 Bruckner" that they have failed to address.

Tenants received notices to vacate by Saturday, September 1 and the future use of the building has been surrounded by rumors, exacerbated by storing mattresses in the interior parking lot, contrary to the CoFO, they said.

"In the wake of these abrupt notices, there were no concrete plans for the building's future beyond evicting good tenants who were serving our constituencies," the letter stated.

The letter cited inconsistent statements made to community organizations, local media and elected officials concerning the property's future plans.

"This is not a manner in which to enter any community, regardless of your intentions," their letter stated. "The lack of a clear understanding of what is going on and your lack of forthrightness has complicated this situation."

The letter asks the owners to contact Matt Cruz, Community Board 10 district manager and appear before the appropriate CB 10 subcommittee to discuss the owners' future intended uses for the building, presenting "a concrete proposal."

Throggs Neck Strong continues to gather petition signatures opposing "any homeless shelters, half way houses and addiction treatment programs."

Over 700 signatures have been gathered as of press time.

Kaufman said that the mobilization of the community around the issue has been fantastic.

Jaen drew a parallel between this fight and a successful 1980s effort called 'Save Our Neck' that many credited with blocking a homeless shelter from occupying a vacant nursing home at 707 Throggs Neck Expressway.

"We have not seen this level of community awareness and support for over 30 years," said Jaen, adding "They picked the wrong neighborhood to fool around with."

Fernandes' company Steward Redevelopment is a known developer of transitional housing, and according to its website, appears to even sell small stakes in its converted buildings to individual investors for as little as \$10,000.

The website section soliciting investments also includes a general interest video about REITs (Real Estate Investment Trusts), a type of real estate investment vehicle that typically have specific rules as to taxes, minimum number of shareholders, and other functions.

Steward Redevelopment "guarantees" returns of 250% to 500% on its investments.

Yolanda Arce of The Arce Law Office PLLC, said that Fernandes first appeared at the building several weeks ago claiming to be the owner's partner.

Arce said that since that time, she's received letters calling for her firm to vacate even though they recently signed a five-year lease.

"We are rejecting this notice of eviction because by law you inherit occupants of a building who have a lease," said Arce, adding she had never been told by either party that the building was classified a 'community facility.'

She also said that some for-profit tenants have spent tens of thousands of dollars on office improvements.

The building's maintenance has been neglected, said Arce.

"(Fernandes) does this for a living," said Herbert Corzantes, a representative of another tenant. "He buys property in distress and tries to evict tenants."

Corzantes believes the strategy is to make life so difficult for the tenants that they will voluntarily move elsewhere.

He added that services like cleaning bathrooms and removing trash have declined.

Community leader James McQuade named the coalition searching for answers Throggs Neck Strong, according to members.



The NYC Ferry program will begin service to the Bronx via Clason Point in Soundview next year. NYC Ferry

## Soundview NYC Ferry plan moves forward, adds a third stop

from Page 1

can travel to Wall Street in just 43 minutes for the same price as a single subway ride."

Calls to Councilwoman Annabel Palma for comment on the impact of the ferry service on her district were not returned by press time.

Adding the Soundview route will require the construction of a new 20-foot wide, 57-foot long fixed concrete pier and a 10' by 80' long gangway leading to a 20' by 28' foot wide fixed platform.

A second 80-foot long gangway connected to the platform will allow up to three ferry vessels to dock at a time.

Altogether, the dock structure will extend 291 feet into the waterway when the ferries are attached.

NYC Ferry launched earlier this year to much fanfare, adding a new way for people to travel across the city, but Bronx residents have been left out in the cold as the other four boroughs already have ferries up and running.

The 86-foot-long blue and

white ferries carry 149 people, and have space for bicycles for an additional \$1 fee.

They also feature high-tech concession stands and will soon have free Wi-Fi.

One-way tickets are selling for \$2.75

Tickets are purchased at docking sites, while 30-day passes sell for \$121, or \$141 with a bicycle.

Councilman James Vacca has called for another NYC Ferry route to be added from Throggs Neck, where there is no nearby subway line to the other boroughs.



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# Brooklyn man killed in Morris Park skirmish

BY ARTHUR CUSANO

A Bronx resident has been arrested on weapon and drug possession charges following a clash with another man he allegedly killed in self-defense at his Morris Park home.

Joseph Matos, 26, of 1651 Tomlinson Avenue, was arrested and charged with two counts of second-degree criminal possession of a weapon, third-degree criminal possession of a weapon, fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon and fourth-degree criminal possession of a firearm.

According to the indictment obtained from the district attorney's office, Matos fired a firearm from inside the residence on the morning of Friday, August 11, at 21-year-old Michael Mendoza of Brooklyn, who was standing on Matos's back porch while holding a shotgun.

Police responded to a 911 report of a man shot at the home at approximately 9:26 a.m.

Mendoza was found shot near the home and transported to Jacobi Medical Center where he was later pronounced dead.

Law enforcement sources familiar with the investigation said Matos was not charged with murder

or manslaughter because the DA's office determined the killing was in self-defense.

Matos was also charged with both criminal and unlawful possession of marijuana after the drug was found in his home, according to the indictment.

He had previously been convicted of fourth-degree Criminal Possession of Marijuana in 2015, according to the indictment.

Bail was set at \$10,000 cash or \$15,000 bond. It was not known if Matos was still in custody as of press time.

Neighbor Maria Battaglia said she and other neighborhood residents had grown increasingly upset about activity at 1651 Tomlinson since new tenants moved in several months ago on the ground floor.

She said loud music and other noise, several unruly dogs and sketchy late night activity had become the new normal at the site.

"The woman who lived there passed away and a man bought it," she said. "He doesn't live here, he just rents it out."

"I saw who moved in, it's just a bunch of kids in their twenties," she said. "There is a lot of activity in

and out, motorcycles going up and down the driveway. All the neighbors are angry."

Battaglia said she heard two gunshots early Friday morning and later found that a stretch of street closed off with police tape for the weekend due to a crime scene investigation.

"I wasn't able to move my car for three days," she said.

Records obtained through the NYC Department of Finance show the three-family home was purchased by Florjan and Albana Pepa of Howard Beach, Queens, in April of 2016.

When reached for comment at his Flushing businesses, Tecno Stone Inc., Florjan Pepa said he had heard about the incident but said he had been out of town when it happened and knew little about it.

Pepa said he was unaware of any recent complaints by neighbors, and denied his tenants had been causing any disturbances.

He said his sister lives in the house and leases out the other two apartments.

"I sent my daughter to find out what happened and she said she could not get any information," he said.



The home at 1651 Tomlinson Avenue was the site of a shooting in the early morning of Friday, August 11 that left one man dead.

Arthur cusano

## Country Club man alleges 311 abuse by neighbor

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

A Country Club resident says he is being singled out for abuse by one of his neighbors who is using the city's 311 system to file bogus complaints resulting in NYC Department of Building violations.

Paul Calderone was hit with 68 DOB complaints about purported illegal work on his private home in the past 23 months that originated via the city's 311 system, with virtually all of them now dismissed as unfounded.

Calderone said DOB visits his home for the same infractions over and over again.

"I am a senior citizen; I am in bad health," said Calderone. "Not only was I issued summonses but I was issued repeated summonses after they were vacated."

Standing in his driveway on Wilcox Avenue with Assemblyman Michael Benedetto on Thursday, August 10, Calderone was described by the assemblyman as someone who is the victim of harassment or bullying by a neighbor taking advantage of the city's anonymous 311 system.

The assemblyman said that

based on his own investigation, the city's 311 system, otherwise a useful tool that serves an important purpose, apparently has no safeguards in place to prevent it from being used as a tool of harassing neighbors or those seeking revenge.

"Common sense must be applied; you cannot let people use the city complaint line for harassment," said Benedetto.

In cases where city agencies repeatedly return to the same locations, and respond to complaints that are mostly unfounded, a different approach must be taken, said the assemblyman.

One summons Calderone received, and was found guilty of, is one that most people living in a low-density zone are violating.

A 1960's zoning regulation dictates that only one 'pleasure' vehicle can be parked on a residential property 25 feet wide or less.

Calderone, unaware of this obscure regulation, parked his second car in his driveway when he entered the hospital for open-heart surgery.

When he returned from the hospital he had received several

summons for violating his property's Certificate of Occupancy. The complaints were placed through 311

The summonses which originally added up to \$1,200 were reduced after an OATH hearing to \$450.

Benedetto said that his own family, who lived for years in Country Club, often parked several vehicles in their driveway.

It is a commonplace sight in Country Club, Throggs Neck and Pelham Bay to see multiple cars parked in a single driveway, Benedetto said.

Another open violation is for a wooden deck that was constructed decades before Calderone purchased the house, perhaps 35 years, according to the homeowner.

"Mr. Calderone constantly has (to go to hearings) and waste his time and waste the manpower hours of city administrators," said the assemblyman.

Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj, a local real estate broker and property owner, joined in the press conference.

Gjonaj said that while peo-



Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj joined the press conference on "Revenge 311," speaking out on the issue along with Assemblyman Michael Benedetto and homeowner Paul Calderone.

Community News Group / Patrick Rocchio

ple like Calderone and others throughout the city are the victims of harassment, others are not getting the city services they need because the 311 is overloaded with needless complaints and city

agencies lack resources.

"Our resources are being deterred and being used as a weapon, in this case, as a tool of harassment," said Gjonaj.



# Interclub Swim Races A 'Swimming Success'

The 62nd annual Interclub Swim Races swimming tournament was held on Saturday, August 12 at the White Cross Fishing Club. In keeping with the time honored tradition, this year's participating clubs Manhem Club, the D.A. Beach Club, the American Turners New York, the White Cross Fishing Club and Askov Hall competed in maritime races in Eastchester Bay.



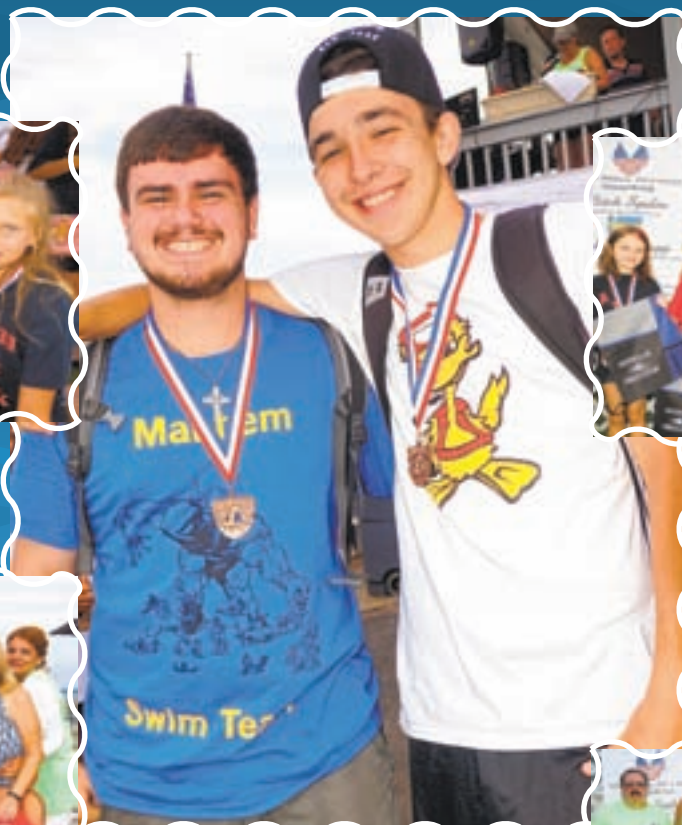
The American Turner Club of New York winners proudly displayed their medals.

Photo by Laura Stone



Manhem Club's Ron Watson (back, 2nd from l) celebrated with Askov Hall members.

Photo by Laura Stone



This year's Men's 16-18 years winners were Brian Cassidy (l), Manhem Club member and Bill Corean, D.A. Beach Club member.

Photo by Laura Stone



Senator Jeff Klein with the Girls 8 and 9 category winners first place champion, Madison Clark (3rd from r), D.A. Beach Club member; second place victor Jacklyn Aylward (3rd from l), D.A. Beach Club; third place honoree Amanda Dzuima (2nd from r), American Turner Club of New York; fourth place winner Jenna Pasanicci (r) American Turner Club of New York and fifth place awardee Julia Palazzo (2nd from l), Manhem Club.

Photo by Laura



Interclub Association Committee members with Senator Klein (back, c)

Photo by Laura Stone



Representatives from winning teams included first place champions Manhem Club, second place victor D.A. Beach Club, third place honoree American Turner Club of New York, fourth place winner White Cross Fishing Club and fifth place awardee Askov Hall.

Photo by Laura Stone



(l-r) D.A. Beach Club members Jillian Dunn; Madison Clark, first place girls 8 and 9 champion and Jacklyn Aylward, second place girls 8 and 9 victor.

Photo by Laura Stone



Joanie Gardiner-Vareta swam in the Ladies Over 60 category.

Photo by Laura Stone



# Local author writes children's books

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

A local community leader who is a well-known author in the nursing field is branching off into a completely new writing genre.

Deborah Hunt, a Community Board 10 volunteer from Pelham Bay who has three books on the nursing profession to her credit, now also has two children's books due out in August and September. This is a first for her.

Waldorf Publishing released one of Hunt's new books, 'The One-Eyed Pug,' on Tuesday, August 15.

It is a 48-page chapter book that is lightly illustrated.

The book has a surprise, happy ending, said Hunt.

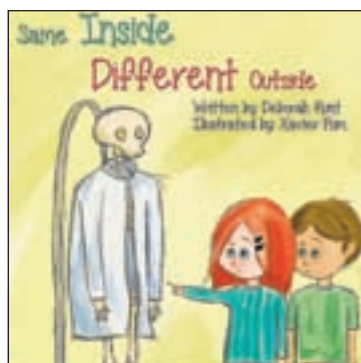
It will be followed on Friday, September 15 by a non-fiction picture book called 'Same Inside, Different Outside,' focusing on multicultural themes along with practical lessons about the functions of the organs of the human body.

"I have been wanting to write children's books since I was in grade school," said Hunt, adding that she took creative writ-



'The One Eyed Pug' has a publication date on Tuesday, August 15.

Photos courtesy of Deborah Hunt



'Same Inside Different Outside,' has a publication date of Friday, September 15.

Photos courtesy of Deborah Hunt



Deborah Hunt with her two new children's books 'The One Eyed Pug' and 'Same Inside Different Outside.' The books are two of five published by the Pelham Bay author.

Photos courtesy of Deborah Hunt

ing with the illustrator, Xavier Pom. This doesn't always happen, said Hunt.

Hunt said that her children's writing mainly took place in the basement of her home with the help of some online course and paid writing critiques from Writers Digest.

Hunt, a Registered Nurse, was already the author of *The Nurse Professional: Leveraging Your Education*, *The New Nurse Educator: Mastering Academic and Fast Facts about the Nursing Profession*.

While the types of writing may be different, learning how to write well allows you to make your thoughts and words flow, no matter what the genre, indicated the author.

"I believe that the more you write, the more it becomes second nature," she said. "You are developing your craft."

The new children's books written by Hunt are available for order and pre-order through Amazon, Waldorf Publishers, Follett, Barnes & Noble and Target, along with other retailers.

changes to her two books.

She urged Hunt to enlarge the length of the 'The One-Eyed Pug' and publish it as a chapter book instead of a picture book as the author had originally envisioned.

With 'Same Inside, Different Outside,' the publisher allowed Hunt the privilege of collaborat-

'Happy Hands' and 'Mary's Magical Garden' to keep her developing her youth writing.

Hunt said she did not want to self-publish her children's books, citing a cost that could have reached tens of thousands of dollars.

"I was looking for a traditional publisher and found it," said Hunt, adding that she inked a contract with Waldorf, a Texas-based publisher, in December 2015.

Her publisher encouraged

ing classes in high school, before starting a career and raising a family.

Hunt, who has a career as a Nursing professor at the College of New Rochelle, said that she had been writing children's stories, including several short stories published in online magazines, for that past 10 years or so.

After facing a number of rejections, she had a enough small successes publishing stories with names like 'Johnny Snowman',

## 2763 Morris Avenue occupancy set for Sept. 1

BY BOB GUILIANO

Occupancy of the luxury apartments at 2763 Morris Avenue in Bedford Park is projected to start Friday, September 1 or a little after, according to the real estate agent handling the leases.

Concern that the building's marketing plan to attract high-end renters may falter has left some local leaders nervous about the property's eventual fate, according to Community Board 7 chairwoman Adaline Walker-Santiago.

But leases are being signed, according to Douglas Elliman real estate agent Elina Golovko.

"There are people who are paying those prices," Golovko said, adding that Elliman plans to issue a press release with figures when 70 to 80 percent of the apartments are leased.

One factor the community leaders pointed to was that studios were at times priced higher than 1- and 2-family apartments.

The reason rental rates fluctuate — with studios priced higher than 2-bedrooms — is that the 9th, 10th and 11th floor apartments have 360-degree views and are part of a 'signature collection' that makes them more expensive,

according to Golovko.

For example, 1-bedroom apartment rentals vary from \$1,755 and \$1,985 to \$2,540, depending on whether they're on the lower or upper floors.

Square footage also varies among the 1-bedroom apartments.

The two-bedroom apartments are priced from \$2,075 to \$2,310 based on living area.

To address concerns about the building, CB 7 will schedule a Housing Committee meeting in September, according to Walker-Santiago.

"When they came to us last year, they told us it was going to be a senior housing development," Walker-Santiago said. "Why didn't it become affordable senior housing? We were not informed of the details. So we need to have that information brought to us in September when we start meeting."

The land was purchased by Alex Berkovitch's Universal Contracting in two parts — one lot, a demolished single-family detached home in 2008 for \$1.55 million; and the other from a non-denominational Christian church in 2016 for \$950,000.

"Initially this property was in-

tended for affordable housing and senior housing," said Councilman Fernando Cabrera. "However, after seeking approval for three years, the developer's applications for these purposes were rejected by the City of New York."

Then, through private financing, the project became market rate housing, Cabrera said

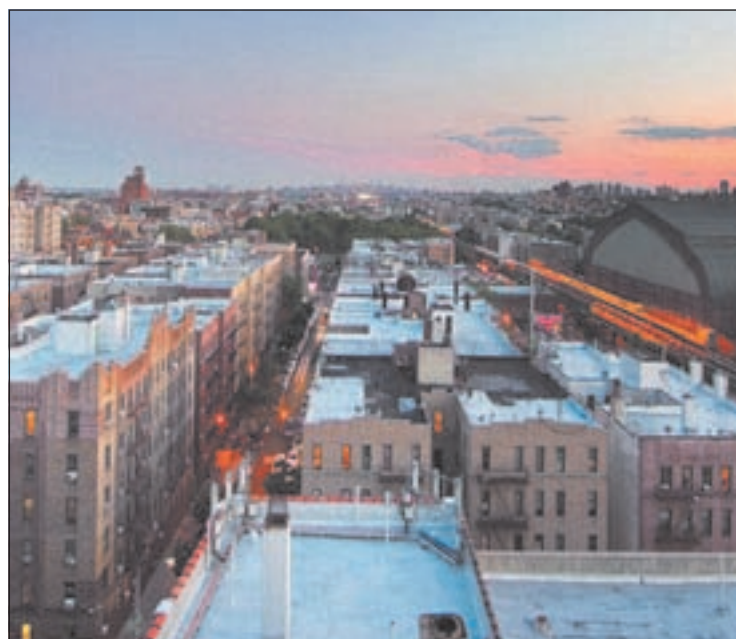
The church sold for less money because it was being replaced within the new building with nearly 9,000 square feet of space.

The ground floor and lower level will house the church, with room for a Sunday school, accessory offices, and a cafeteria, in addition to the church's worship space.

Cabrera acknowledged that he is the pastor of the church, and as a councilman in the area, he was vetted about potential conflict of interest.

"There have been several 'bait and switch' occurrences of new market rate housing in the Bronx being converted to shelters and low income housing, taking neighborhood residents by surprise," Cabrera said.

"This is an understandable concern," Cabrera said. "I remain



An exterior view above 2763 Morris Avenue in Bedford Park. A new luxury apartment building featuring 75 residences is now accepting leases. Apartments on the 9th, 10th and 11th floors are more expensive because of the panoramic views.

Courtesy of Douglas Elliman Real Estate

strongly committed to the preservation of existing affordable housing and development of new affordable housing properties to

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# Former HP jail secured as it awaits demolition

BY ARTHUR CUSANO

The future site of a major mixed-use development in Hunts Point has been secured by the city after numerous community complaints as it awaits demolition.

Measures have been taken by the city to clean up and secure the defunct Spofford Detention Center in Hunts Point in response to criticisms about an uptick in trespassing and vandalism.

The notorious detention center, also known as Bridges Juvenile Center, was shuttered in 2011 following years of complaints and protests from community leaders over treatment of patients, rodent infestations and other issues.

Vandalism - most notably graffiti - and squatters had become prolific at the site, according to Councilman Rafael Salamanca and Senator Jeff Klein, who worked with Community Board 2 to get the facility renovated.

The fence lining the Spofford was littered with holes, a roll-down gate was left unlocked and a door to the complex was left open, allowing trespassers, loiterers and squatters full access to the site, according to the officials.

"The community board re-

ceived multiple complaints from residents and is pleased with the efforts our local elected officials have made to address these complaints," said CB 2 chairman Roberto Crespo.

In late July representatives from the NYC Economic Development Corporation, NYC Administration for Children's Services, NYC Department of Sanitation and the NYPD began efforts to improve the facility and the surrounding area.

Police engaged in several sweeps and arrested eight trespassers on site.

City employees patched up the fence holes, fixed the gate and once again secured the doors.

Overgrown brush and litter on the property were also removed.

A Graffiti-Free NYC truck power-washed the graffiti from the walls of the buildings.

"Following a number of community complaints over the past month about vandals breaking into the former jail complex, our offices worked collectively to ensure the city was made aware," Klein said. "I'm pleased that in the past week the city cleaned up and took measures to secure the facility."



Vandals were successful in defacing the shuttered Spofford jail complex by entering unsecured holes in its fencing.

Photo courtesy of Senator Jeff Klein's Office

The property is still owned by ACS, which Salamanca's chief of staff Ryan Monell said the councilman and senator wanted to see changed sooner rather than later.

"We requested they expedite the process to get the building construction moving forward for the new development," Monell said.

The planned five-building, 740-unit mixed use project will include affordable housing units, as well as retail, community and light industrial space.

The project is being developed by Gilbane Development Company, Hudson Company and Mutual Housing of New York.

As of right now, the property is still owned by the ACS, said EDC spokeswoman Brooke Goren.

"The project is set to go through ULURP this fall and we anticipate that demolition of the facility will begin early next year," Goren said.

## Ferry Point Park visitors are still waiting for relief

BY ARTHUR CUSANO

A sunny afternoon in August should be prime time for park-goers to use Ferry Point Park in Throgs Neck, but on Thursday, August 10, visitors were few and far between.

That could be due, at least in part, to the lack of adequate restrooms.

Local residents were thrilled when the NYC Parks Department announced a new comfort facility would be built in the park last year.

That facility, located near the picnic table area, is expected to be completed this month.

Unfortunately, the actual plumbing and electrical work for the facility are not.

"The building's shell is scheduled for completion this summer and is on schedule," said a Parks Department spokesperson. "The comfort station will be completed in its entirety (including plumbing, electric and mechanical) by the end of this year."

The spokesman cited Wick's Law, which requires separate bid contracts for construction, electrical, HVAC and plumbing on pub-



The new restroom facility at Ferry Point Park, formerly expected to open this month, will now open be completed by the end of the year, according to the parks department.

Arthur Cusano

licly funded projects over \$3 million, for the delay.

The project was green lighted a decade ago and was partly funded by \$2 million from the Croton Filtration Plant Mitigation Funds.

The few park visitors on Thursday, August 10 said they did not realize the half-shell structure being erected would eventually be a restroom facility.

"I thought it was a stage," said Bhojkumar Singh, a Bronx resi-

dent jogging through the park.

Singh said the bathrooms would be welcome, since he avoids the portable toilets.

When asked if anything else in the park needed work, he pointed to the foot-high weeds that had taken over many of the playing fields.

"That grass is a little high," he said, laughing.

But those that were there to picnic with their families like Bronx

resident Stephanie Lopez said they were relieved to hear a restroom was being built.

"It's great because I walk to those (portables) and I just used them and I do not feel comfortable in there at all. It's gross. The fact that we have to walk from where we are, it's a trip, especially for the kids."

Angie Rivera, another picnicker at the park with a family, agreed.

"It's a great idea because it's a huge park and you definitely need facilities, and those porta-potties are not it," Rivera said.

Friends of Ferry Point Park Dorothy Poggi had lobbied for the new restroom facility for years.

She said she did not know how close the structure was to completion, but stressed that the park is used heavily on weekends by soccer and cricket teams, which play on fields on the far eastern side of the park.

Poggi said players and their families often resort to relieving themselves in nearby wooded areas rather than walk to the parking lot where the portable toilets have been installed.

Despite heavy use, there are no plans to renovate the aging and rusting athletic facilities at the site, but the Parks Department has proposed converting 20 acres of parkland adjacent to the Trump Links at Ferry Point golf course to passive parkland that highlights its tidal wetlands.

A competing plan by the Trump Organization to use the land to expand its 18-hole course was rejected last year by the city.



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# ConEd replacing 4 miles of gas mains in MP

BY BOB GUILIANO

A Con Edison project currently underway in Morris Park will replace about four miles of gas mains by its estimated completion date in late November, according to a Con Edison spokesman.

"Currently, we are targeting streets with schools to complete the work there prior to the commencement of the school year in September," said Sidney Alvarez, a media manager at Con Edison.

While Con Edison has been digging up streets and laying down metal plates to cover the trenches, area residents have had to park up to six blocks away from their homes, according to Al D'Angelo, president of Morris Park Community Association.

D'Angelo said he would like alternate side of the street parking suspended along the affected streets so residents will have more parking spots.

However Community Board 11 is going all out and putting in a request to the NYC Department of Sanitation to permanently end alternate side of the street parking in the area, according to Jeremy Warneke, district manager.

"(NYC Department of Transportation) puts up the signs at the re-

quest of DSNY, Warneke said."

Con Edison is working the Morris Park/Van Nest jobs at the following locations:

- Neill Avenue between Mulliner Avenue and Hering Avenue
- Rhineland Avenue between Bronxdale Avenue and Radcliff Avenue
- Rhineland Avenue between Paulding Avenue and Yates Avenue
- Brady Avenue and Radcliff Avenue
- Bogart Avenue between Neill Avenue and Morris Park Avenue
- Radcliff Avenue between Neill Avenue and Morris Park Avenue
- Colden Avenue between Lydig Avenue and Neill Avenue
- Paulding Avenue between Lydig Avenue and Neill Avenue
- Hone Avenue between Lydig Avenue and Rhineland Avenue
- Lrting Avenue between Lydig Avenue and Rhineland Avenue
- Haight Avenue between Lydig Avenue and Rhineland Avenue
- Tomlinson Avenue between Lydig Avenue and Rhineland Avenue
- Williamsbridge Avenue between Lydig Avenue and Rhineland Avenue
- Yates Avenue between Lydig Avenue and Rhineland Avenue

"In terms of community outreach, we have sent out the notices prior to starting work and we've been in constant contact with Community Board 11 and area elected officials," Alvarez said. "We've also sent representatives who attended and spoke before the Morris Park Community Association."

According to a May 2 work notice sent to residents from Con Edison, it is upgrading the gas service in these locations from Monday, May 8, through late November:

- Morris Park Avenue between White Plains Road and Bronxdale Avenue
  - Kinsella Street between Matthews and Bronxdale avenues
  - Holland Avenue between Rhineland and Van Nest avenues
  - Hunt Avenue between Rhineland and Van Nest avenues
  - Wallace Avenue between Rhineland and Van Nest avenues
  - Barnes Avenue between Rhineland and Van Nest avenues
  - Matthews Avenue between Rhineland and Van Nest avenues
  - Muliner Avenue between Rhineland and Van Nest avenues
- The work has been scheduled to take place weekdays 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.



ConEd continues working on gas line projects on streets in Morris Park. Here metal plates covering newly dug ditches are laid along the street on Williamsbridge Road off Rhineland on Friday, August 11.

Community News Group/Bob Guiliano

Residents were advised to expect street closures, parking restrictions, sidewalk closure, service interruptions and traffic obstruction.

According to a March 20 work notice, Con Edison is also upgrading the gas service in these locations from March 22 through late November:

- Colden Avenue between Lydig and Neill avenues
- Neill Avenue between Colden Avenue and Hone avenues

Residents were advised to expect parking restrictions, temporary pedestrian walkways, temporary lane closures, noise and work near schools.

## Waring Playground to get \$3.6 million face lift

BY ROBERT WIRSING

Renovations are planned for a 77-year-old Allerton playground.

On Tuesday, August 8, Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr.; Senator Jeff Klein and Councilman Ritchie Torres joined Bronx Parks Commissioner Iris Rodriguez-Rosa at Waring Playground to announce the joint allocation of \$3.6 million to reconstruct portions of the park.

"Our city parks are valuable assets to the community and the residents we serve deserve a clean, safe and modernized recreational space to gather with friends and families," expressed Klein.

Commissioner Rodriguez-Rosa is excited for Waring Playground's renovation.

"We can't wait to start transforming this playground into a space the Allerton community deserves," she shared.

Rodriguez-Rosa noted the NYC Parks Department will design the 0.62 acre playground with residents' input ensuring it fulfills their vision.

This year, Diaz will allocate approximately \$10 million to nine borough parks including War-



(l-r) Borough President Diaz, Senator Klein, Councilman Torres and Anthony Vitaliano presented two hefty ceremonial checks for Waring Playground's renovation.

Photo by Aracelis Batista

ing Playground, Seton Park, Kosuth Playground, Starlight Park, Woodlawn Playground, Owen Dolan Recreation Center, Bronx Children's Museum, Highbridge Park Step Street and the Harlem River Greenway Promenade.

"As we work to build a health-

ier Bronx through our '#Not62' campaign, we must make sure that our shared recreational spaces are in good condition and inviting to the public so that more and more Bronxites of all ages will take advantage of them," said Diaz.

"The residents have waited far

too long for renovations to Waring Playground to get underway," said Torres. "We are proud to announce that through our joint collaboration financial resources have been allocated so that the playground and basketball courts can get necessary upgrades."

While the project hasn't been officially scoped, some potential improvements include new playground equipment, new safety surfacing throughout the playground, new benches, an improved spray shower area and improved landscaping.

A Parks spokeswoman said a fall 2017 community scope meeting will engage residents on what improvements they would prefer at Waring Playground. A specific date hasn't been determined.

The project's progress is viewable via Parks' Capital Project Tracker at [www.nycgovparks.org/planning-and-building/capital-project-tracker](http://www.nycgovparks.org/planning-and-building/capital-project-tracker). Waring Playground is under the Proposed Projects tab as projects don't officially begin until Parks holds a scope meeting.

"When I attended the ceremony last Tuesday at Waring

Playground, I noticed how beaten up the park was," said Anthony Vitaliano, Community Board 11 chairman. "Anything that can help improve this playground, I'm for it."

Waring Playground and Waring Avenue are named for Robert Payne Waring's daughter, Maria Waring who was a local landowner between 1859 and 1872.

The playground, located in Bronx Park at the corner of Bronx Park East and Waring Avenue, occupies an area bordering the former Pierre Lorillard and Company's snuff mill.

The mill opened in 1792 and produced more tobacco and snuff than any other American factory in the late 1800s.

The company relocated to New Jersey in 1870 and Parks acquired the building in 1937 to utilize as a restaurant for the New York Botanical Garden.

Opening on September 28, 1939, Waring Playground was one of many playgrounds constructed during NYC Parks Commissioner Robert Moses' tenure from 1934 to 1960.





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# Firm schedule set for Hammond Cove dredging

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

A project to remove a hazardous silt-build up in Throgs Neck's Hammond Cove now has firmed-up work dates.

The study phase for the dredging of a waterway bottleneck has been pegged for this summer to fall period with dredging planned for a three to eight week time span from the late fall of 2017 to early spring of 2018.

The same project update from the NYC City Economic Development Corporation and Department of Environmental Conservation dated August 2017 states that the dredging is subject to regulatory approval and will depend on weather and project's final size.

Senator Jeff Klein, who secured \$1.1 million in state funding for the study and dredging, hailed the development.

"The latest update on the Hammond Cove dredging project indicates we're continuing to move in the right direction," said Klein. "The NYC (EDC) has now presented us with estimated timelines and an approximate rendering of the area to be dredged."

Dredging Hammond Cove has been a Community Board 10 capi-

tal budget request for years.

Pat Devine, a former CB 10 member for four decades, said that the project was brought to the senator's attention at a house party for Klein he hosted for the Silver Beach community four years ago.

Devine said that a challenge was getting city and state agencies on board, and the funding in place. It required a great deal of persistence.

"We want to keep them tracked and keep them on their word that the completion of the dredging will be for the 2018 boating season," said Devine.

"The surrounding communities are excited and cannot wait for this to happen," said Devine. "It will reduce flooding in that area and give access for emergency boating vehicles."

At the lowest tides, it is difficult for larger boats to make it through a narrowing of the cove near the Locust Point Yacht Club, with only a two to three foot draft, or clearance for the boat's hulls, said Devine.

When the work is complete, at lowest tide there would be a ten-foot draft, said Devine.

Justin Dambinskas, proprietor



The EDC has set a firm timetable for the dredging of Hammond Cove.

Community News Group / Patrick Rocchio

of Hammonds Cove Marina, said that he was happy to get something in writing from EDC, saying he felt like he was 'crying wolf' when speaking about the planned project.

"We think that three to eight weeks are ambiguous, but as long as the work is done by March, we are okay with it," said Dambinskas.

Both Devine and Dambinskas

thanked the senator for promoting and funding the project.

EDC is involved in the dredging, stated an agency spokeswoman, because the process requires a municipal authority receive the funding allocation.

The agency is coordinating the project with state agencies, including the NYS Department of State, because this is required to receive dredging permits, she said.

Locust Point community leader Jim McQuade said that runoff from the Throgs Neck Bridge is piped into shallow water, creating silt nearby.

He believes some of this runoff resulted in the silting of Hammond Cove, and he and his neighbors are calling for an environmental study of the waters off Locust Point, which he said are experiencing severe silting.

## Montefiore plans housing at Hutch Metro Center

from Page 1  
pose.

The board met at the Morris Park Community Association, 1824 Bronxdale Avenue.

"Everything went well" at the Wednesday, August 9 meeting, said Joe Kelleher, president of Simone Metro Properties at the Hutchinson Metro Center.

CB 11's Land Use Committee had held a previous meeting on Wednesday, July 12, that focused on the zoning matter.

Kelleher recalled in an interview Wednesday, August 16, that Joseph McManus, chairman of the Land Use Committee, was very thorough in his questioning during the July 12 meeting.

McManus wanted to understand the project and

how it was going to fit the neighborhood, how tall it would be, etc.

Kelleher described how the Hutchinson Metro Center helps community groups, and also updated CB 11 on his conversations with the police and fire departments to establish an evacuation plan for the whole Hutchinson Metro Center, according to minutes from that meeting.

Also at the meeting Adam Rothkrug, a zoning attorney for Simone Metro Properties, explained the project will be built on top of the parking lot parallel to Bassett Avenue, near the Marriot Atrium in the Hutchinson Metro Center.

The rezoning would change two parcels from M1-1 to C4-2 and C4-2A and move the M1-1 zone down the

middle of Marconi Street.

However, City Planning is pushing to rezone the whole area, according to Warneke.

CB 11 contends the rezoning should be confined to the site where Montefiore intends to build its staff housing only.

"We don't want the whole area to be rezoned, but that's probably what's going to happen," Warneke said. "We're opposed to that."

The Land Use Committee did not have a quorum during its meeting and could not take official action on the project.

Additionally, since the project was certified on Wednesday, June 14, CB 11 had only until Friday, July 14, to act within the time frame of the ULURP process.



Montefiore Health System is looking into purchasing the parking garage at 1776 Eastchester Road to build housing for graduate medical students on top of it. The lot faces LA Fitness, along with other businesses in the Hutch Metro Center.

Community News Group/Bob Guiliano



# TOP DRIVER DISTRACTIONS

## Using mobile phones

Leading the list of the top distractions behind the wheel are mobile phones. Phones now do more than just place calls, and drivers often cannot pull away from their phones, even when driving. According to the California Department of Motor Vehicles, studies have shown that driving performance is lowered and the level of distraction is higher for drivers who are heavily engaged in cell

phone conversations. The use of a hands-free device does not lower distraction levels. The percentage of vehicle crashes and near-crashes attributed to dialing is nearly identical to the number associated with talking or listening.

## Daydreaming

Many people will admit to daydreaming behind the wheel or looking at a person or object outside of the car for too long. Per-

haps they're checking out a house in a new neighborhood or thought they saw someone they knew on the street corner. It can be easy to veer into the direction your eyes are focused, causing an accident. In addition to trying to stay focused on the road, some drivers prefer the help of lane departure warning systems.

## Eating

Those who haven't quite mastered walking and

chewing gum at the same time may want to avoid eating while driving. The majority of foods require a person's hands to be taken off of the wheel and their eyes to be diverted from the road. Reaching in the back seat to share some French fries with the kids is also distracting.

Try to eat meals before getting in the car. For those who must snack while en route, take a moment to pull over at

a rest area and spend 10 minutes snacking there before resuming the trip.

## Reading

Glancing at an advertisement, updating a Facebook status or reading a book are all activities that should be avoided when driving. Even pouring over a traffic map or consulting the digital display of a GPS system can be distracting.

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- Unsafe sidewalk?
- Medical malpractice?
- Police misconduct?
- Construction accident?
- Slip and Fall?

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