December 24, 2017

#### Four more churches 'deconsecrated'

#### BY BOB GUILIANO

The Archdiocese of New York deconsecrated four more churches on Thursday, November 30: St. Roch's and St. Pius V, both in Mott Haven; Our Lady of Pity in Melrose; and St. Joseph's in Tremont.

The deconsecrations set the stage for the eventual sale of the properties.

These latest deconsecrations join four other parishes - St. Brendan/St. Ann, St. John/Visitation — which merged into two and resulted in the churches of St. Ann and Visitation being 'deconsecrated' over the summer.

With the ongoing development boom in the Bronx, particularly in the south Bronx which is fueling gentrification, by relegating these churches from sacred to profane use —called 'deconsecration' — the Catholic Church will play a role as developers buy these properties located in prime locations, according to Welcome2thebronx.

The Archdiocese has yet to put them up for sale, but this is generally the last process before putting them on the market.

Church officials contend these sacred places of worship are not museums and that the church is made up of its parishioners and not a brick and mortar building.

Particularly in the south Bronx, these places have played an important role in the preservation of communities.

Bronx resident Felix Cepeda thinks these churches should be used as sanctuaries for undocumented immigrants facing deportation.

"As a Catholic, I feel these churches should be used to offer sanctuary to immigrants facing deportation, serve the homeless and as a community spaces, not to be sold to the rich," Cepeda told Welcome2TheBronx.

Parishioners had until Sunday, December 10, to appeal to the

Continued on Page 4

## DEPUTY BP T TAKE IT EASY



#### Waterbury LaSalle Lights Up

North Pole native Santa Claus paid a surprise visit to the Waterbury La-Salle Community Association's annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony on Sunday, December 16 at Schneider Sampson Park, Audrey Beach met Santa and his helpers Joseph Kuletsky (I) and Nicholas Dranieri.

Photo by Laura Stone

## Greene ends 4 decades in public service

#### BY ROBERT WIRSING

A beloved role model and mother to all has announced her retirement from local government.

Deputy Borough President Aurelia Greene announced on Wednesday, December 13 that she will retire at the end of the year after more than four decades of dedicated public service.

"My life's greatest reward was being able to serve the constituents of the Bronx," expressed Greene.

"My time working with Borough President Diaz has been a major highlight of my career and I appreciate the opportunity to have served."

Greene served as the borough president's partner for more than

"She stood with me every step of the way as we brought new investment and new attention to our borough, helping to guide my office's

Continued on Page 4

#### Ethics panel probes alleged misconduct by Councilman King

#### BY BOB GUILIANO

Councilman Andy King is the subject of a City Council investigation into sexual harassment allegations, according to sources.

In a statement by Standard and Ethics Committee chairman Alan Maisel, regarding action taken on Friday, December 15, "the Committee on Standards and Ethics deliberated and voted to formally open a matter concerning alleged misconduct by a council member."

specifically name King, or specify the charges, sources con-

firmed to the NY Daily News that the councilman was the target.

King's press secretary, Stephannia Cleaton, did not respond to a request for a statement from the councilman regarding the proceedings.

Maisel's statement was released to the Bronx Times Reporter by Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito's office.

"To protect the confidentiality of individuals who report misconduct — and to ensure that in the future people feel comfort-While the council would not able coming forward with complaints — the committee voted

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## Firefighter remembered at Engine 90 Ladder 41 dedication

#### BY SARAH VALENZUELA

In 2016 a community and a family lost a most beloved mem-

This year, he was permanently memorialized during a plaque dedication in his former firehouse.

Joseph O' Toole was a firefighter at Engine 90 Ladder 41 on White Plains Road in Van Nest for over two decades and an FDNY First Responder who also was one of the first to help clean up the 'pile' after the 9/11 attacks.

Toolie, as he was affectionately called by friends and family, developed 9/11 related cancer and lost his battle to the illness less than 15 years later.

On Wednesday, December 13, 2017, a year after he passed away, the firehouse he called his second home dedicated a plaque in his memory with a sad but very touching special ceremony.

"Normally a plaque dedication takes place when the member passes away and it's kind of routine," said Chris Vignali, a firefighter at Engine 90 Ladder 41. "Toolie, he was larger than life. And that's why this particular ceremony was a little more indepth than the other ones because



Standing by the plaque (I-r) is Christopher Vignali of Engine 90 and Michael Cook of ladder 41. O'Toole wife Christine, Grandson Milo, Fire Commissioner Daniel A. Nigro. Photo by Aracelis Batista

of how much of an impact he had on the members of the house and what we lost that day."

"As a person, Toolie was very loving and caring and that goes beyond the firehouse in the way he interacted with his wife and kids," Vignali said.

The ceremony garnered more attention than have many others because of the sheer number of people who knew and respected wife Christine O'Toole.

"People were saying it was amazing and that they'd never seen a turnout for anybody like that with family and friends," said O'Toole about the ceremony. "There were men that were standing in the street that's how many people there were."

"He was the most caring person you ever wanted to meet in

Joseph O'Toole, according to his your life," O'Toole said tearyeved. "He was the first one if ever anyone ever needed anything he was the first one there. And it showed when he was down at Ground Zero."

In addition to the plaque dedication, the ceremony concluded with the presentation of an FDNY family transport van the O'Toole family had donated.

The van, which also had Jo-

seph O'Toole's image on it, was paraded down the street to the firehouse.

"Toolie was someone who was always out to help somebody," said O'Toole. "Now his van will be able to go out and help other people."

"He needed the van unfortunately when he was going down to radiation and the van that he was in was donated by another family," O'Toole continued. "This is our way of giving back in Toolie's

The plaque has been placed inside the firehouse. It is expected to be moved to another location in the firehouse next to fellow firefighter and his friend, Alex Lopez' plaque, according to an Engine 90 Ladder 41 representative.

"He was just an all-around fantastic guy who always thought of everybody first," O'Toole explained. "Even when he got sick he never wanted anyone to worry about him."

"It's just, you know, there's no other word for it, it's terrible," O'Toole continued. "But, it was a very proud moment and beautiful ceremony with the plaque dedication because I knew he was looking down and he was extremely happy."





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## Deputy BP to take it easy; Aurelia Greene ends 4 decades in public service

from Page 1

agenda through the benefit of her considerable experience as a legislator and community activist," shared Diaz. "Her passion for service will be truly missed and I wish her nothing, but the best in her retirement."

The Morrisania native served as an assemblywoman for the 77th District, encompassing Highbridge, Morrisania and Morris Heights, from 1982 to 2009.

Prior to the Assembly, Greene was the Female Democratic District Leader for the 76th Assembly District and an active south Bronx civic leader.

During her 27-year Assembly career, she used her urban planning skills to negotiate for affordable housing and effective tenant groups, quality education, employment opportunities, affordable healthcare and housing, senior services, youth services, economic development and worked diligently for a fortified business community.

The first woman to lead the Assembly's Committee on Banks, Greene passed landmark legislation to combat predatory lending.

In January 2006, she became the first African American appointed as Speaker Pro Tempore, allowing her to preside over session proceedings in the speaker's absence.

She was a member of the Assembly's Rules, Ways and Means and Social Services and Cities committees, a ranking member of the Education Committee and the Bronx Delegation chair-

Prior to becoming deputy borough president in April 2009, Greene was the longest serving Assembly member



(Above) Outgoing Deputy Borough President Aurelia Greene (I) has served as Diaz's partner for more than eight years and as a dedicated public servant for over four decades.

Photo courtesy of Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr.'s Office

in the Bronx.

Greene was succeeded by former assemblywoman Vanessa Gibson in June 2009 before Gibson was elected to Council in November 2013.

Gibson interned for assemblywoman Greene in summer 2001 and was promoted to Greene's district office manager in November 2003.

"She's been such a great role model, mentor and a huge inspiration for my career in government; she has been my everything," said Gibson. "Aurelia has always been held in high regard by her peers and has commended others' respect as a mother figure to all."

At 83-years-young Greene is retiring from government, but will remain an active

leader in her community and parish, St. David's Episcopal Church.

As deputy borough president, Greene led the Bronx Borough Board's meetings and assisted in the office's management of the budget and community board process.

A Livingston College at Rutgers University alumna, Greene majored in Community Development and formerly served as a public agency administrator.

She was married to the late Rev. Jerome A. Greene and is the mother of two children, Rhonda and Russell, and a grandmother of five.

An announcement regarding Greene's successor will be made in the upcoming weeks.



St. Joseph's school remains open, but as of August 1, 2015, St. Joseph's church on Bathgate Avenue in Tremont was closed, and the parish is merged with St. Simon Stock.

Courtesy of Archdiocese of New York

#### Four Bronx churches 'deconsecrated'

from Page 1

Archdiocese for reconsideration of their decision.

As Catholic parishes in the Bronx continue to merge, some parishioners have had to choose another location to worship.

During the summer, the church of St. Brendan, 333 E. 206th Street, absorbed former St. Ann parishioners; and the church of St. John, 321 Kingsbridge Avenue, absorbed former Visitation parishioners.

"Several years ago we went through a lengthly parish planning process called 'Making All Things New," Joseph Zwilling, director of the office of communications for the archdiocese, told the Bronx Times Reporter.

"We looked at all parishes in all parts of the archdiocese, what our needs and resources were, needs of the people were, and how best to use our resources to meet those needs; and how we can use them to build vibrant communities of

faith," Zwilling said.

At first, with the mergers of certain parishes, both church buildings continued to be used for Masses and sacraments.

In other cases, only one of the church buildings would be used on a regular basis, and the other would be returned to service on special occasions.

Then, parishes requested permission to dispose of one of their church buildings, according to Zwilling.

As no longer a consecrated space, such church buildings would no longer be appropriate to offer Masses and sacraments.

When a church is closed in this fashion, a team goes in and reviews what is of sacramental and liturgical importance and what has monetary, historical and artistic value, according to Zwilling.

Such items are preserved in a warehouse on Staten Island.

If a church is looking for an altar, a statue of Saint

Ann or a set of stained glass windows, for example, they have a resource at that warehouse, where they can find such items and use them in the new church.

Should a parish decide it wants to do something else with the building that has been reduced to a deconsecrated state, it may want to convert it to something for Catholic charities, or to lease it to another religious group, or sell it outright.

The Catholic church restricts reuse of a church building.

The building cannot be used for anything that would violate church teachings, according to Zwilling.

For example, housing working class families on the site would be considered a secular, non-church purpose.

But selling a church to Planned Parenthood to be used as an abortion clinic would not be allowed because the building cannot serve purposes contrary to the Catholic faith.



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## 9-story building to grace Bronx Pentecostal Deliverance site

Permits have been filed for a 312,880-square-foot mixed-use building at 1755 Watson Avenue in Soundview.

The project was made possible after the site was rezoned from R5 to R7A. R5 zoning allows for a Floor Area Ratio of only 1.25, which would typically produce a threeor four-story attached house, according to New York YIMBY.

R7A zoning allows for 4.0 FAR, and a maximum height of 85 feet, the exact height of this new build-

Azimuth Development Group is responsible for development of the site.

The nine-story structure will yield 255,860 square feet for residential use, 16,590 square feet for commercial-retail use on the ground floor, and 10.420 square feet for the Bronx Pentecostal Deliverance center, which currently occupies the site, according to YIMBY.

There will be 326 rental apartments created.

The building will have three elevators, a courtyard, laundry room, fitness center, media room,



Rendering of 1755 Watson Avenue, for which permits have been filed for a 312,880-square-foot mixed-use building in Soundview.

Courtesy of Via Azimuth Development Group

storage for 17 bicycles, and parking for 54 vehicles.

Permits had been filed in 2015, as YIMBY reported, but the new documents show an increase in size. Previously, the site was to have just 250 apartments.

Aufgang Architects will be responsible for the design.

Demolition permits have not Real Deal. been filed yet. Construction is expected to begin by the summer of 2018, which means a 2020 or 2021 completion date is pos-

Azimuth Development is doubling down on its huge project in the Bronx, according to The

The company, based in the Financial District, had initially planned to construct a 250-unit development at 1755 Watson Avenue in Soundview, according to plans filed with the NYC Department of Buildings on Monday.

Azimuth, led by Guido Subot-

ovsky, is also planning a trio of residential buildings in Grand Concourse at 707 Concourse Village West, 702 Grand Concourse and 180 E. 156th Street on former parking lots.

The buildings would contain about 212,800 square feet of living area and include 275 units.



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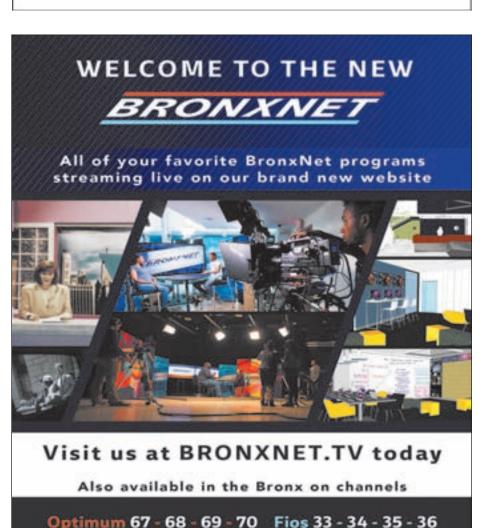
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## Sepulveda expresses intent to fill 32nd Senate District vacancy

#### BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

A special election is expected to be called for a vacant Bronx senate seat sometime next year.

While the date has not yet been announced, Governor Cuomo will probably call for a special election in the spring for the 32nd Senate District.

Senator Ruben Diaz Sr., who is moving on to the NYC City Council to replace the term-limited Councilwoman Annabel Palma, previously held the seat.

The election may possibly occur after the state budget is finalized in mid-April, a source with knowledge of state politics said. The governor also has the option to leave the seat vacant for its remaining term.

The district covers Parkchester, Longwood, West Farms, and parts of Soundview, Melrose and Hunts Point.

Assemblyman Luis Sepulveda, a progressive Democrat who represents parts of the 32nd Senate District in the assembly, said he is running for the spot.

Sepulveda said he has a close working relationships with Diaz and Assemblyman Marcos Crespo, the Bronx Democratic County Party Leader who represents communities in the 32nd District.

The assemblyman was also a Democratic district leader in the 85th Assembly District, currently represented by Crespo, and was a member of Holy Cross Church located in the district he hopes to represent, he said.

"I have ties to big parts of the senate district," said Sepulveda, adding "I am proud of the work we have done in the Assembly and I would like to continue that work in the Senate."

The assemblyman, who has served in the chamber since 2013, has been a strong proponent of 'Raise lathe Age' legislation recently signed into law to lift the age of adult criminal liability from 16-years-



Assemblyman Luis Sepulveda, a progressive Democrat who represents part of the 32nd Senate District, said he would run in the Democratic primary when the special election is called.

Photo courtesy of Assemblyman Sepulveda's office

old to 18-years-old.

He said that he felt that this was something that lifted an onus off young people of color, as well as youth who are suffering from mental illnesses and who could use treatment, not jail.

The assemblyman is an advocate for helping immigrants, he said.

He said he also worked on legislation complementing efforts of President Obama's administrations efforts to help 'DREAMers', young people who were brought by their parents into the United States as children.

A local issue Sepulveda said he worked on with other electeds was to convince the Parkchester South Condominium to stager its steep 15.19% maintenance charge increase over four years, he said.

He also similarly worked to help tenants in Mitchell-Lama housing, the assemblyman said.

Another top community concern is making sure there is a good working relationship between police and the community.

Sepulveda was one of a handful of assembly members who supported Bernie

Sanders in his presidential

"I am a progressive who believes in helping the middle class, and my policies are geared toward seeing that everyone gets a fair shake," said Sepulveda, adding he works to see that the communities of color he represents get their fair share of state budgets.

Over the past five years, the assemblyman said he has learned how to conquer obstacles, artificial or otherwise, to get legislation passed, projects funded or polices enacted.

He feels being a lawyer has been an asset for him in the legislature, he said.

If elected, Sepulveda said he would caucus with the regular Democrats, not the Independent Democratic Caucus, because he believes he can get more done with Democratic majority.

He added he's met with Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, a Democrat who is currently the assembly's minority leader and Senator Jeff Klein, IDC leader, and respects both greatly.

Sepulveda has two children, a 25-year-old and a six-year-old, and is a Civil War buff.

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## Yankees' food drive swaps game tickets for donations

#### BY SARAH VALENZUELA

On Wednesday, December 20, the New York Yankees kicked off their annual Holiday Food

The event was held inside Gate Two of Yankee Stadium. The temperature for this semienclosed area felt closer to the upper 30s, but it did not deter fans and community members from stopping by to donate.

"I do this every year. It's for the less fortunate," said Edgar Torres, a Soundview resident who donated over 250 pounds of potatoes. "It's good to do this. I wish everyone did this."

For every 30 pounds of food donated, the Yankees gifted two free tickets to 2018 regular season games to the donors.

"I'm trying to help spread the joy and help out," said Ethan Perez, an 8th grader from the Immaculate Concepcion School in the south Bronx. Ethan, along with his school principal, Sr. Patrice Owens and a few other classmates helped deliver 4,200 pounds of food the Immaculate Concepcion School donated.

"We are ten blocks south of

cilitating the donation to this drive for her school over the years, explained. "Being apart of this wonderful thing that the Yankees do for the community, we feel that it's a win/win."

The food collected at this drive was sent directly to the Kingsbridge Armory, where over 50 volunteers were already in the process of packing and sorting the first donation from Krasdale Foods.

"When we started this the goal was to create a gathering point for all of our fans to come together to give back to the community," said Deborah Tymon, the senior vice president of Marketing for the New York Yan-

"The very first drive collected about 2,000 pounds of food and here we are on the 24th anniversary with our corporate partner Krasdale and they have kicked off the event with over 60,000 pounds of food donated," Tymon continued.

"Krasdale has a long history of giving back to the community, we've been doing business in the Bronx for 110 years," said Dennis here," Owens, who had been fa- Hickey, the chief merchandising



NY Yankees staff and Church Alive members unload food for distribution.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico

officer of Krasdale Foods. "It's real appropriate giving back to the community, food, in a festive time, to people that can't afford it to allow them the opportunity to have a meal and enjoy the holidays like they should."

The drive has been coordinated by Bishop Dr. Timothy Birkett of the Church Alive Community Church since it started 24 years ago.

"The Bronx is probably one of the poorest areas, especially the south Bronx," remarked Birkett. "It has been a real blessing especially during Christmas time to give people food. It's labor intensive, but it's a labor of love."

After the food is sorted at the Kingsbridge Armory, the food gets packed into smaller, family-sized portions and sent to 27 churches all over the Bronx to be distributed to the different neighborhoods in the borough.

Yankees pitcher Dellin Betances also took part in the back."

event, helping collect and weigh donations and distribute tickets

"I think it's big growing up in the community I did. I think it was always important when people gave back to us," said Betances, who grew up in neighboring Washington Heights. "Now I have the platform and the chance to be out here representing the community I came from and at the same time give

#### Ethics panel probes alleged misconduct by Councilman King

from Page 1

to keep all proceedings confidential while this matter is under review,' Maisel said.

The council takes this matter and all allegations of misconduct by council members and council employees very seriously and will conduct a thorough, expedient, and fair review and resolution of this matter, according to Maisel.

"As always, council employees are encouraged to report any misconduct in accordance with Council's Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy," Maisel

In Mayor de Blasio's response to a query from the Bronx Times Reporter, asking about King, deputy press secretary Ben Sarle emailed, "I received your inquiry, and we are going to have to decline comment at the moment. Thanks!"

The council's Standards and Ethics committee handles misconduct charges against council members.

The investigation involves alleged violations of a council rule prohibiting disorderly behavior, which includes sexual harassment.

The charge reportedly stems from a staffer who filed a complaint. saying King had made inappropriate and sexually suggestive comments to her.

"Any issues and concerns regarding, obviously, sexual harassment are taken seriously in this council," Mark-Viverito told reporters at City Hall.

If the committee finds King broke any rules, the council could move to expel him, hit him with a fine or reprimand or yank his committee assignments, according to the NY Daily News.

"We have a process which we're going through. I'm not going to put the cart ahead of the

horse," Mark-Viverito said. "We acted quickly. I thank the council members for their deliberations."

King was hit with a separate sexual harassment complaint two years ago, charging he made advances toward a staffer and got her fired when she turned him down, according to a report in the Daily News.

The incident in 2015. involved a former staffer with the council's Black, Latino and Asian Caucus, which King co-chaired. She filed a notice of claim for a \$1.25 million suit against the city charging he had harassed her, according to the daily.

"King created a hostile work environment by sexually harassing and intimidating claimant," the papers said, also charging he "made demeaning, sexist remarks" and "inappropriate, unwelcome advances."

The woman charged



Councilman Andy L. King. Courtesy of Councilman King

he abused his authority by trying to change caucus rules to give himself sole power to hire and fire staff.





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9404 Fourth Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11209 (718) 238-8899, www.HuntersSteakhouse.com *IL FORNETTO* 

2902 Emmons Avenue in Brooklyn (718) 332-8494

www.ilFornettoRestaurant.com

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220-33 Northern Boulevard Bayside, NY 11361, (718) 423-0100 www.marbella-restaurant.com

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www.theparadisecateringhall.com

#### THE PEARL ROOM

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#### SIRICO'S CATERERS

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5140 West 13<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY (212) 647-1001, sotto13.com

#### **TERRACE ON THE PARK**

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www.terraceonthepark.com

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www. whipped pastry boutique. com

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