

East Side officials unite against lopsided development

by George Morin

An impressive gathering of East Side elected officials transformed a medical center auditorium into the epicenter of an impending battle between a concerned community and a determined developer.

The officials were Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, Borough President Scott Stringer, State Senator Liz Krueger, Assembly Member Jonathan Bing and three City Council Members – Dan Garodnick, Jennifer Lappin and Rosie Mendez.

Opposing forces

The battleground is the site of the former Con Edison plant that had faced First Avenue between 38th and 41st Streets. The developer, Sheldon Solow, proposes to build a collection of skyscrapers on the site, the highest of which would be 836 feet, dwarfing the nearby 505-foot tower of the United Nations Secretariat.

The Solow plan would keep all the streets private, combine office space with residential units, offer no affordable housing, no waterfront park and doesn't even mention schools.

Community Board 6, on the other hand, proposes that the site have *only* residential buildings no higher than 400 feet (about 40 stories), include substantial affordable housing, public streets and an extraordinary public park.

Community gets universal support

Newly elected District 4 City Council Member Dan Garodnick moderated the event and introduced the speakers.

The community board presented its plan with interactive graphics that visually compared the developer's plan with the community's counter proposal.

One of the highlights of the community's plan is the public park that would be built over the F.D.R. drive and lead to a waterfront esplanade.

The plan also called for a new public elementary school and limited parking in the new buildings to discourage additional traffic. The elected officials present universally supported the Community Board's version, complimenting the Board for the plan's vision and scope.

Petitioning drive

A petition to Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Commissioner Amanda Burden was also introduced. The petition detailed the community's objections to the a proposed plan, including too-tall buildings that would overshadow the neighborhood, the overburdening of local schools and mass transit, the absence of affordable housing, and a public park that would *not* be welcoming to the public.

Join the fight

The next round in the struggle will be the city planning commission hearing on Tuesday, March 28 at 4 p.m. or 7 p.m. at the Schottenstein Cultural Center, 239 East 34th Street. Since there's strength in numbers, an overwhelming turnout is encouraged.

Those wishing to testify should contact Marianna Vaidman Stone of Dan Garodnick's office at 212 818-0580. **LDC**



District 4 Council Member Dan Garodnick moderated the town hall meeting at the N.Y.U. Medical Center's Farkas Hall on First Avenue at 31st Street.

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District 5 Council Member Jessica Lappin strongly supported the counter proposal of Community Board 6.

Eleanor Roosevelt's Legacy

by Judith Hope

Women's History Month is a good time to talk about the Eleanor Roosevelt Legacy Committee. Founded in October of 2001, the Committee raises campaign funds and sponsors women's campaign schools for pro-choice Democratic women candidates all across New York State. We are proud to have played a role in electing State Senator Liz Krueger and City Council Member Jessica Lappin.



Powerful impact

Even though the Eleanor Roosevelt Legacy Committee has been in existence only a short time, it has had a powerful impact on New York State's electoral process. Over 300 women candidates have received intensive training in one of our regional campaign schools, often offered in partnership with EMILY's List. Eleanor's Legacy has provided campaign funding to hundreds of the candidates. Last year we awarded over \$130,000 to 196 candidates. Forty-five were first-time candidates and 23 of those attended one of our campaign schools.

Batting .510

The result: 100 of the 196 Committee's grant recipients were victorious in the last election, many in Republican-dominated upstate counties where Democrats have seldom if ever won. To date, 258 of the women supported by Eleanor's Legacy have won their races. It is our hope that these women will be powerful agents for progressive change in their communities and that they will go on to run for higher offices in the future.

Triples Manhattan's representation

Why is an organization like Eleanor Roosevelt Legacy Committee needed in a liberal-leaning state like New York? Consider this: Prior to the recent special elections to fill vacancies, Assembly Member Deborah Glick was the only woman in the State Assembly from Manhattan. We were pleased to financially support Sylvia Friedman and Linda Rosenthal in their successful bids that tripled the number of Manhattan women in the Assembly.

New York's proud heritage

In a ranking of women in state legislatures, New York is 25th with 22 per cent representation. Clearly, we can do better. After all, New York is the state that gave women full suffrage in 1917, three years before the 19th Amendment, and produced great political leaders such as Susan B. Anthony, Eleanor Roosevelt, Shirley Chisholm, Bella Abzug, Geraldine Ferraro and Elizabeth Holtzman.

Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, a courageous leader for women's rights, understands that women candidates are still at a disadvantage when it comes to fundraising and fair treatment by the media. That's one reason why she's so supportive of women candidates.

New York State gets results

America has yet to demonstrate its confidence in the abilities of women that has been shown in Britain, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, Liberia, Chili, Indonesia and other countries who've elected women as heads of state. In fact, America is ranked 60th among nations electing women to their national congress. The good news here in New York State is that we are doing something about it – and getting results. **LDC**

Judith Hope is the founder and president of the Eleanor Roosevelt Legacy Committee and the former chair of the New York State Democratic Committee.

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225 EAST 93RD STREET
Between 3rd & 2nd Avenues
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volunteering for one of the
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THIS JUST IN . . . New York County Committee Dinner at the Grand Hyatt, Thursday, March 9th



A wonderful night of good food, good drink and great people. Clockwise from the upper left: Brice Peyre, Alex Tisch, Martin Plotkin, Denny Farrell, Marion Bell, Donna Manganello, Cathy Finlayson, Jessica Lappin, James d'Auguste, Heather Leifer, Dan Garodnick, Christine Quinn, Heather Leifer, Alex Tisch, Susan Avery, Andy Tulloch, Christina Harvey, Glen Hardy and Larry Rosenstock.

OFFICIALS' ROUNDUP

Recent news and views from Club's Elected officials

Liz Krueger chairs Democratic task force to improve N.Y. State government.

State Senator Liz Krueger led the fourth public hearing of the Senate Democratic Task Force on Legislative and Budgetary Reform on March 1.

"New York State is still home to the best and brightest people in the nation," Senator Krueger said as the testimony began. Those testifying included leaders from an array of New York State advocacy groups including Jobs with Justice, Common Cause, the League of Women Voters, Citizens Union, the Public Policy Institute and the Manhattan Institute.

Members of the task force from New York City are Senators Eric Schneiderman, George Onorato, John Sabini, Kevin Parker, Thomas Duane and Malcolm Smith.

"While the Assembly took some genuinely positive steps toward democracy and transparency last year, the Senate appears to be moving backward," Senator Schneiderman observed.

Senator Krueger concluded, "Our children deserve to have a healthy, vibrant state handed to them one day."

The task force will continue to examine ways to reform the state government through the current session and into the summer and fall.

Second Avenue subway task force

Senator Krueger also reports that she and other East Side elected officials are working with Community Board 8's subway task force to deal with unresolved issues facing tenants who may be evicted from their apartments and those living in buildings where the M.T.A. has proposed to build subway entrances. **LDC**

Jonathan Bing reports that the veto of emergency drug legislation has been overridden.

The veto of the bill sponsored by Assembly Member Jonathan Bing that would protect seniors from the poorly implemented Medicare Part D plan has been unanimously overridden by the Assembly and Senate.

Governor Pataki had vetoed the bill even though the Bush Administration had promised to reimburse the state for filling emergency prescriptions that had been wrongfully denied.

Assembly seeks to restore education funds

In the face of the governor's budget reducing funds for education, Bing supports the Assembly's plan to restore \$320 million of state support for local colleges and universities. The amount includes funds to offset tuition hikes at SUNY and CUNY and for the Tuition Assistance program.

Mr. Bing said, "It is important that we give New York students the financial resources to stay in school ... to obtain the high-tech and other jobs of tomorrow..."

Bing speaks at Islamic Center

With the assistance of the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, Bing was invited to speak at the Islamic Cultural Center at 96th Street and Third Avenue.

He addressed some 1,000 congregants during the prayer service, discussing the historical relationship between Judaism and Islam as well as the controversial cartoons in Danish newspapers.

Additional resources for the Arts

A Bing authored bill to allow New Yorkers to make a gift to the New York Council for the Arts through a check-off on personal income tax returns passed the Assembly and is now in the Senate.

During his three years in office, Bing has secured \$1 million in capital funding for East Side cultural institutions.

Bike messenger safety

In an effort to reduce the risk from commercial bikes careening through city streets, Bing has introduced a bill to put the brakes on. It would require commercial bikes to be registered, identified, insured and safely ridden. **LDC**

Carolyn Maloney applauds Wal-Mart's morning-after decision

As the author of legislation that would stop the F.D.A. from postponing its decision on making the "morning-after" pill available over the counter, Representative Carolyn Maloney complimented Wal-Mart's decision to stock the drug, currently available only by prescription, in all of its pharmacies.

"Wal-Mart's action is a huge step forward for women's health in this country," Maloney said. "It's time for the FDA to ... heed the scientific evidence and make Plan B available over the counter." Plan B is the formal name for the "morning-after" pill.

Fuel companies overcharging taxpayers

Ms. Maloney, along with several congressional colleagues, has called for congressional hearings about royalties owed American taxpayers by oil and gas companies drilling on government land.

On January 23rd, the *New York Times* reported that oil and gas companies shortchanged American taxpayers as much as \$700 million in royalty payments.

Maloney asserted, "The oil and gas companies must answer questions about their practices, and Congress should take appropriate action..." **LDC**

Interested in joining your Community Board?

The new Manhattan Borough President, Scott Stringer, is accepting applications for all 12 community boards in Manhattan.

If you're interested in getting involved in your community by serving on its board, you can obtain an application from the borough president's website at www.mbps.org or from your local community board office.

You're Invited.

Lex Club Annual Dinner

to honor
Robert Levinsohn
and
Douglas Kellner
with a tribute by
Assembly Member
Herman "Denny" Farrell

Thursday, April 6, 2006
The Yale Club
50 Vanderbilt Avenue
@ East 44th Street

Reception 6 p.m.
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\$500 Benefactor
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For more information e-mail
Linda Foa at
lindafoa@yahoo.com
or call Trudy L. Mason at
917 443-3315

Read how Eleanor Roosevelt's Legacy is making history today.

March is Women's History Month.

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MARCH 2006

NEWS

THE Lexington Democratic CLUB

NEW SPEAKER TAKES CHARGE *by Robin Marsico*

New City Council Speaker Christine Quinn lost no time making her mark at City Hall. Apart from her housecleaning of some 60 city council staff members, she's announced several measures of great benefit to New Yorkers.

PATIENT INFORMATION ACT

She introduced the Patient Information Act, also known as Manny's Law.



City Council Speaker
Christine Quinn

It's designed to prevent the city's uninsured and underinsured from being turned away from hospitals when critical care is needed.

The law's namesake, Manny Lanza, died of a serious brain condition last November after

being denied care because he did not have insurance.

The legislation will require hospitals to

provide written and oral notification to patients about their charity care policies and procedures, and sets notification and reporting requirements for hospitals.

Mending healthcare cracks

"No one should have to experience the same tragedy as Manny Lanza's parents simply because a hospital failed to provide this information," said Speaker Quinn.

"This bill is something that we can do at the city level to address just one of the many cracks in the health care system that result in the uninsured and underinsured being denied the care they need."

LOBBYING REFORM PLAN

Speaker Quinn and Mayor Bloomberg also announced a lobbying reform plan that will reduce the impact of the lobbying culture and special interests in City Hall and strengthen public trust in city government.

Gift ban

The plan proposes to prevent lobbyists' contributions being matched with public funds; to ban all gifts from lobbyists to city

officials; to create a mandatory electronic filing system for lobbyists; to require full lobbyist disclosure of all fundraising and consulting activity; and to strengthen enforcement of and penalties for violations of lobbying law.

Conflicts of interest

In addition, the speaker announced changes to city council rules to avert conflicts of interest and limit lobbyists' access to members and the speaker during legislative business. The rules changes would prohibit lobbyists from specified areas within the council chambers and the speaker's office unless there's a scheduled meeting or a special event.

Joint effort

The speaker said, "I am proud to stand with Mayor Bloomberg today in this significant joint effort to reduce the influence of special interests in city government.

"Sadly, we've seen the effect of lobbyists gone wild in Washington and Albany. Today, we are making sure that will not happen at City Hall." **LDC**