



NORWOOD NEWS

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Photo courtesy of FXCollaborative

A RENDERING OF the soon-to-be redeveloped (hopefully) Kingsbridge Armory

By SÍLE MOLONEY

New York City Mayor Eric Adams, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, Rep. Adriano Espaillat (NY-13), Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, City Councilmember Pierina Sanchez (C.D. 14), and NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC) President and CEO Andrew Kimball unveiled the latest two-

phase, mixed-use plan for the long-vacant Kingsbridge Armory on Tuesday, Jan. 7.

“El Centro Kingsbridge” (Kingsbridge Center) is the latest redevelopment plan for the future of the Kingsbridge Heights-based Armory, after the conclusion of the latest request for proposal process which kicked off last summer to

redevelop the historic and long-underutilized site with the aim of creating new economic opportunities for the neighborhood.

City officials said, “Phase One of the project envisions a vibrant, mixed-use development with a state-of-the-art event venue space, sports fields for local youth academies, cultural and commercial space, over

25,000 square-feet of dedicated community space, an educational facility focused on workforce development, and more.”

They added, “Phase Two includes 450 units of permanently affordable rental housing adjacent to the armory,” adding that the redevelopment is ex-

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Mother Used as Human Shield in Bodega Shoot Out pg 3



Burst Water Mains Pipe Causes Major flooding in Norwood pg 7

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Three Kings Event Brings Joy to Kids

By MIRIAM QUIÑONES

The Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade Committee held its 2nd Annual Health & Resource Fair & Toy Giveaway to mark Three Kings Day (Jan. 6) on Saturday, Jan. 4, and this year, the event was held at James Monroe Houses, located at 1780 Story Avenue in Soundview.

Three Kings Day or “*El Día de los Reyes*” in Spanish is a cherished tradition in Puerto Rican culture, commemorating the arrival of the Magi, who brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to honor the Baby Jesus after his birth on Dec. 25. The committee members said the annual tradition keeps the spirit of giving alive for the children of The Bronx.

Hundreds of toys were distributed to children ages 1-12 from the Monroe Houses community, with the aim of providing a joyful and free community experience.

In addition to the toy giveaway, the event also featured health information and support services tailored for seniors to promote well-being.

In advance of the event, The Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade committee accepted donations of unwrapped toys or monetary contributions to support the giveaway.

Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade President Maribel Mercado, committee board members, volunteers, “The Three Kings,” Miriam Sanchez, president of Monroe Housing Center, the NYPD Bronx Borough Community Affairs team, P.S. 8 representatives, the NYPD Explorers, and the Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade 2024 queen and princesses all took part in the event.

State Sen. Nathalia Fernandez (S.D. 34) and all the event sponsors were thanked on the day. Attendees also included representatives from Fidelis, S&A Homecare, Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson and cure violence group, Stand Up to Violence (SUV), all of whom came together to make the fair a memorable occasion for the kids.

The parade committee members said it was heartwarming to witness the enthusiasm and support and community spirit in action, bringing together so many dedicated people and organizations, and sponsors, all of whom played a crucial role in ensuring the event’s success. “Kudos to all involved for their hard work and dedication,” they said.

The Office of the Bronx Borough President held a separate Three Kings Day celebration on Three Kings Day itself, Jan. 6, at P.S. 48, located at 1290 Spofford Avenue in Hunts Point, in conjunction with various community partners and sponsors.

Editor’s Note: Miriam Quiñones is a freelance photographer with Norwood News.



Photo courtesy of the Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade Committee

PICTURED AT THE Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade Committee’s Health & Resource Fair at James Monroe Houses, located at 1780 Story Avenue in Soundview, on Saturday, Jan. 4, 2025, to celebrate Three Kings Day are Diane Marie Carrion, Rebecca Carrion, Maribel Mercado, Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade president, Raymond Vargas, one of the 3 Kings and the men’s pageant coordinator, Miriam Quiñones, parade committee board member, and new board members, Karoline Rodriguez, Janet Vazquez-John and Jacqueline Acevedo, and (center front row), Miriam Sanchez, Monroe Housing president.



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

AT THE BRONX Puerto Rican Day Parade Committee’s Health & Resource Fair, to celebrate Three Kings Day, at James Monroe Houses, located at 1780 Story Avenue in Soundview, on Saturday, Jan. 4, 2025, are the 2024 Parade pageant 2nd princess winner, Liz, Doris Martinez, queen, and 1st princess, Maria Mariposa Flow.



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

A LITTLE GIRL hugs her baby doll at the Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade Committee’s Health & Resource Fair, held to celebrate Three Kings Day at James Monroe Houses at 1780 Story Avenue in Soundview, on Saturday, Jan. 4, 2025.



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

“THE THREE KINGS,” and Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade Committee board members, princesses and community children are pictured at the Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade Committee’s Health & Resource Fair, to celebrate Three Kings Day, held at James Monroe Houses, located at 1780 Story Avenue in Soundview, on Saturday, Jan. 4, 2025.

Olinville: Mother Used as Human Shield in Store Shooting

By **SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE**

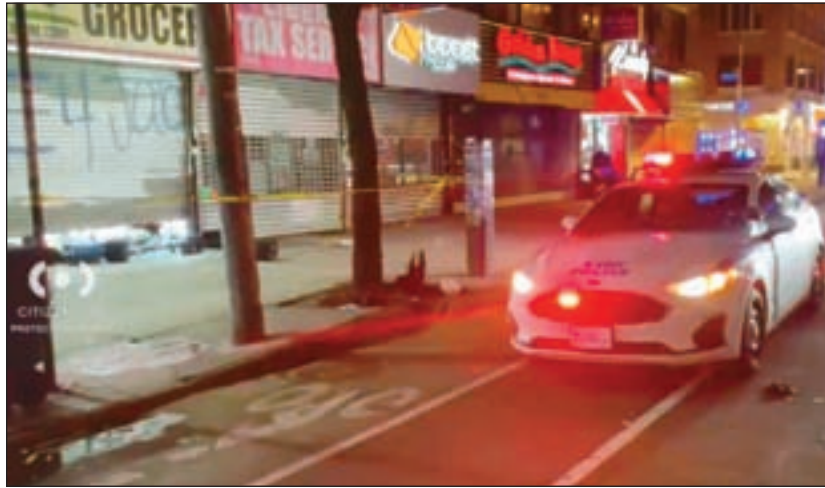
The NYPD has released photo and video of two unidentified gunmen sought for questioning in connection to the shooting of six people, including a 40-year-old mother who was used as a human shield, and her 12-year-old daughter, inside a White Plains Road convenience store in the Olinville section of The Bronx on Monday evening, Dec. 30. They said the two “opened fire in the middle of the street” and continued shooting inside the small “crowded convenience store” injuring all six people in the process.

During a press conference held at the crime scene in the vicinity of East Gun Hill Road and White Plains Road later on Dec. 30, NYPD Det. John Chell, chief of patrol, and colleagues described the incident, which they said unfolded at around 4.50 p.m. as a “brazen and heartless attack” on innocent Bronx community members, involving “cowardly intended victims who used a mother as a [human] shield.”

“Uniformed police from the 47 Precinct received numerous [911] calls for shots fired, and people being shot at 3544 White Plains Road,” Chell said. “What we know by video so far is we have two shooters running across White Plains Road, shooting at a group of people in front of the convenience store (G&W Grocery).”

He continued, “Some members of this group ran into the store, and ran to the counter and were being fired upon and one of the intended targets [who] was not hit, grabbed a mother of 40 years old as a [human] shield and she was shot one time in the stomach.”

Chell added, “We also have her daughter, 12 years old, shot in the leg. We’ve an



Screenshot courtesy of the Citizens' App

CRIME SCENE TAP cordons off the crime scene of a multiple shooting at 3544 White Plains Road by East Gun Hill Road in the Olinville section of The Bronx on Monday evening, Dec. 30, 2024, after six people, including a young mother who was used as a human shield, and her 12-year old daughter, were shot by two unidentified gunmen. Police said the shoot-out began on the street and ended inside a crowded local convenience store.

additional four males, shot in their arms and legs, their ages from 18 to 21. Who are we looking for right now? We have a male, Black, in a black, Nike sweatsuit, and a male, Black, in a gray hoodie, who have fled the scene. At this time, we do not have a motive for the shooting. If anyone on White Plains Road, shopping, walking around, saw anything, please call us on 1-800-5777 Tips.”

In response to questions, Chell said police believed the incident wasn’t random and was a targeted attack on the person or group of people standing in front of the store. He said detectives were working to find out who was the intended target or targets. “They have a lot of work to do tonight; this is kind of early tonight [at this stage],” Chell added.

He explained that the mother and

daughter were at the counter when the intended targets of the shooting entered the store, and one of them allegedly grabbed the mother and turned her around as a human shield as he and another target were being shot at.

On Dec. 31, police released a video and photo of the suspects and asked the public for help identifying them. They said the first suspect is described as male, is estimated to be between 18 and 25 years of age, is 5 foot 7 inches tall, and weighs around 160 pounds. They said he was last seen wearing a black, hooded sweatshirt, a black mask, black sweatpants and black shoes.

They said the second person is described as male, is estimated to be between 18 and 25 years of age, is 5 foot, 8 inches tall, weighs around 140 pounds, and was last seen wearing a black hat, a grey, hooded sweatshirt, blue pants, grey sneakers, and a surgical mask.

In nearby Williamsbridge, police also recently appealed for help locating 15-year-old Cordell Hunte who was reported missing in December.

Meanwhile, Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson released a statement on Dec. 31 in response to the multiple shooting, saying, “I am deeply saddened and outraged by the senseless act of violence that occurred in our borough just days before the start of the new year, leaving six people injured, including a mother and her child. This is a heartbreaking reminder of the urgent need to address the root causes of violence in our communities.”

Gibson added, “We are communicating with the NYPD as they diligently investigate this horrific incident. I urge anyone with information that could assist in bringing those responsible to jus-

tice to come forward by calling 1-800-577-TIPS. My team and I stand ready to work with my colleagues in government, the NYPD, advocates, faith leaders, community groups, crisis management organizations, and all stakeholders. The Bronx is a community of resilience and unity, and we will continue to pray for the victims of this attack and their families.”

The incident took place just over a block away from Marcus Garvey Square located under East Gun Hill Road subway station’s elevated train tracks. The square, as reported, was formally renamed in November from Williamsbridge Square in honor of Garvey, the founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), an organization which aimed to achieve Black nationalism through the celebration of African history and culture.

Addressing Garvey posthumously at the ceremony on Nov. 28, one of the speakers, Rev. Margaret DeMosh said, “Bless us and comfort us, strengthen us so we can continue to work together in this community, especially in The Bronx, so we can see the change that we wanted to see here in your place, in your community, in our neighborhood.”

Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to call the NYPD’s Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA (74782). The public can also submit their tips by logging onto the Crime Stoppers website at <https://crimestoppers.nypdonline.org/>, on X @NYPDTips.

All calls are strictly confidential.



Screenshot courtesy of the NYPD

THE NYPD IS asking the public for help identifying and locating the people seen in this screenshot who they say are sought for questioning in connection with the shooting of six people on Monday evening, Dec. 30, 2024, at 3544 White Plains Road by East Gun Hill Road in the Olinville section of The Bronx.



Screenshot courtesy of the NYPD

NYPD DET. JOHN Chell, chief of patrol, and colleagues hold a press conference at the crime scene in the vicinity of White Plains Road and East Gun Hill Road in the Olinville section of The Bronx on Monday evening, Dec. 30, 2024, after six people, including a young mother who was used as a human shield, and her 12-year-old daughter, were shot by two unidentified gunmen during a shoot-out which began on the street and ended inside a small, crowded local convenience store.

INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By **DAVID GREENE**



With the recent assassination of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson, we asked readers about their experiences dealing with healthcare insurance claims for themselves or their family members.



"As a mom of two uninsured adult kids, I feel bad about the cost of doctors, diagnostic and blood panel tests that are too exorbitant, and to be self-insured is equal to making two car payments per month. These days, you either get decent pay but don't get any medical benefits, or you get low pay and basic medical. I went to an ear, nose and throat specialist and my cost was \$4.15, my son visited a dermatologist and his cost was \$100, how in the world is that fair?"

Lisa Meyer,
West Islip
Photo courtesy of Lisa Meyer



"I am starting a new health insurance plan this month because the plan that I had, the benefits were not great. Now that I've switched, I get unlimited transportation, and my plan now covers over-the-counter medications that will now lower my [overall] cost for medications."

Pastor Mildred Hedrington,
Morrisania
Photo courtesy of Pastor Mildred Hedrington



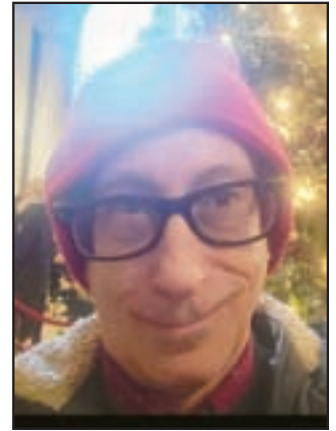
"I have been with HealthFirst health insurance for many years. I have a case manager who checks on me every month and helps me get the proper services from hospitals and clinics. When I run into problems with appointments or receiving medication, they are very supportive of my needs. The downside is the constant letters I receive are overwhelming. I get six to eight of the same letters every month which is a waste; most of the time they say the same thing."

Frances Garcia,
Morrisania
Photo courtesy of Frances Garcia



"I have had the same health insurance plan for some time now, but now they call you to see if you need any help, which is good. But I wish they'd learn how to talk to you over the phone without sounding like they're giving you a speech."


Lashonda Soto,
Parkchester
Photo courtesy of Lashonda Soto



"I personally support single payer healthcare, but I have no complaints about my own coverage. My issue isn't with my plan, but I do think that full dental, vision and hearing should be included in all plans."

Scott Caplan,
Long Island City
Photo courtesy of Scott Caplan

Editor's Note: The Associated Press reported that Luigi Mangione, the man accused of killing Thompson, has been charged in New York with murder as an act of terrorism, according to prosecutors. Mangione, 26, is being held without bail in Pennsylvania, where he was arrested at a McDonald's on Dec. 9, 2024, after a broad search following the Dec. 4, 2024, shooting of Thompson in midtown Manhattan.



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Fordham Manor: Machine Gun Man Back Living Over Daycare?

By DAVID GREENE

After police officers scuffled with two trespassers inside Kingsbridge Road Subway Station, which serves the D train, on Election Day, Nov. 5, a concealed AR-15-style assault weapon fell to the ground, as reported. Court records show one of the men has since been released without bail and the NYPD said he lives in a three-story building in Van Nest that also houses a children's daycare on the first floor.

Shortly after the incident occurred on Election Day, an NYPD spokesperson told *Norwood News*, "Officers approached the male on the northbound platform and repeatedly requested his identification which the male refused to provide. When officers then attempted to place the male under arrest, the male resisted." The spokesperson continued, "During a brief struggle, a loaded and defaced Palmetto State Armory PA-15 firearm fell out of the male's backpack."

Police said the weapon had 25 bullets loaded inside it. As later reported, Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark announced on Dec. 10, that Abraham Sosa, 20, of Filmore Street in Van Nest was charged with a slew of offenses in connection with the incident in which the assault-style rifle and large-capacity magazine were seized from inside his backpack.

These included criminal possession of a machine gun, criminal possession of ammunition, criminal possession of a defaced weapon, criminal possession of an ammunition clip, resisting arrest, obstruction of governmental administration, 25 counts of criminal possession of a weapon (bullets), resisting arrest, and two counts of assaulting a police officer.

According to the investigation, and as reported, on Nov.

5, at around 4.31 p.m., NYPD Transit Officers allegedly saw Sosa enter a restricted tunnel at the Kingsbridge Road station and started to urinate. Prosecutors said that when approached by officers, he allegedly resisted arrest and attempted to run away, knocking three officers to the ground.

They said when Sosa was placed under arrest, the disassembled rifle, which was in two parts, fell out of his backpack. They said the serial number on the gun was defaced.

Clark said of the charges, "The defendant allegedly brought a disassembled semi-automatic rifle and ammunition typically used in hunting into a subway station, putting commuters at risk." She added, "We will not tolerate firearms in public places, especially high-powered weapons that can cause mass injuries." The district attorney said Sosa was arraigned before Bronx Supreme Court Justice Seth Steed on Dec. 6 when bail was set at \$25,000 cash/\$75,000 bond/\$75,000 partially secured bond at 5% and is due back in court in March 2025.

On the same day as the incident occurred, as reported, police also arrested and charged Morris Park resident Christopher Mayren, 21, of Rhinelander Avenue with obstruction of governmental administration, criminal mischief, criminal possession of stolen property, petit larceny, aggravated harassment and harassment, when he intervened in the subway station situation. Mayren pleaded not guilty to all charges before Judge Matthew Bondy and was released without bail on Wednesday, Nov. 6.

Norwood News visited the Fillmore Street home of Sosa on Tuesday, Nov. 19, where the first floor of the home is rented to Tiny Fingers, Tiny



Photo by David Greene

DOCUMENTS SHOW ABRAHAM Sosa, 20, who was arrested with a machine gun inside Kingsbridge Road subway station in Fordham Manor on Election Day, Nov. 5, 2024, was later released without bail and may have since returned to his Filmore Street home in Van Nest that also houses a daycare, seen here on Nov. 20, 2024.

Toes Daycare, Inc. Two women were observed in the front yard watching over a half dozen preschoolers.

When asked about Sosa, a third woman came out of the home and said, "We cannot give that information. We cannot disclose information. If you want you can come back after 6 (p.m.), okay." *Norwood News* returned at around 6 p.m. and no one answered the door.

On Wednesday, Nov. 20, the unidentified female owner of the daycare was contacted by telephone and was asked about Sosa. She replied, "Who? Sosa? I have a child named Sosa." When told that the NYPD said Abraham Sosa, the man arrested on Nov. 5, lived at the same address as the daycare, she replied, "No, no, no... that house has like three apartments, so my daycare doesn't have anything (to do) with that."

The woman continued, "I don't know anybody else in the house." Asked if she owned the building, she said, "No, I'm not the owner of the house. I rent the first floor." Asked how it was possible to open a daycare in a building without knowing/screening who the other tenants are in the building, the owner fired back, "No, no, no! I have been in the daycare since 2011, so you're not going to tell me what to do or not to do with my program because I don't have anything to do with it [the arrest]." She then asked, "That just happened recently?"

When asked for the name of the owner of the building, the daycare operator said, "I don't know if I'm allowed to." She added, "The only thing that you

should care [about] is I'm not the owner of the house. That's it, thank you, and don't bother me anymore." She then hung up the phone.

A male resident who lives across the street from the building later complained that over several years, he'd never once seen anyone from the daycare speak to any residents of the block. He then asked when the daycare would remove the life-size skeleton from the driveway railing located next to the building, saying it had been placed there several years ago and was never removed.

Another male resident of the area who uses the daycare services recalled, "Not once have I seen another male come out of the daycare. I'm the only male, technically, that comes out of there to pick up my daughter." Another resident fumed, "It should concern everybody! Look what's happening these (expletive) days, Bro! People are doing what they want to do!" He asked, "Who's to blame? The judge? I don't know..."

As reported, one-year-old Nicholas Dominici died on Sept. 15, 2023, from fentanyl poisoning at the now-closed Divino Niño (Divine Child) daycare center located at 2707 Morris Avenue in Kingsbridge Heights, where an illegal fentanyl smuggling operation was being run. Four defendants, Felix Herrera Garcia, 36, Renny Antonio Parra Paredes, 38, and Carlito Acevedo Brito, 42, a cousin of Herrera Garcia, as well as the female daycare operator, Grei Mendez, wife of Herrera Garcia, were charged with various federal offenses filed in connec-

tion to the incident.

Herrera Garcia, Parra Paredes and Mendez have pleaded guilty. Three other infants were also poisoned but survived after they were administered Narcan, an overdose prevention medication. All four are also charged with various State crimes.

In a similar case, as reported, in October, Jhan Carlos Capellan Maldonado, 35, was sentenced to 13 years in prison for operating a drug mill at 1880 University Place (Avenue) in Morris Heights, which resulted in the death of another one-year-old infant in December 2018. Capella Maldonado pleaded guilty to one count of distributing heroin and fentanyl from the drug mill and admitted that his distribution of fentanyl caused the death of the 15-month-old child.

In a separate case, Silfredo A. Castillo Martinez, 32, the operator of a Bronx daycare located on Decatur Avenue in Norwood was sentenced to 25 years earlier this year for sexual exploitation of a child and producing child pornography.

In yet another case, as reported, a Harlem-based daycare operation was busted also in September 2023 and ghost guns were discovered in an unlocked room, along with a ghost gun 3D printing machine. Ghost guns are untraceable firearms, the component parts of which can be ordered online and assembled at home.

The NY Post previously reported that at least one Bronx detective and a representative for the Police Benevolent Association (PBA) had been critical of the fact that Sosa had been released on bail. *Norwood News* asked the Bronx District Attorney's office if bail had been opposed by the prosecution during Sosa's arraignment. We did not receive an immediate response.

We also reached out to the PBA for comment on the matter. We did not receive an immediate response. According to the Palmetto State Armory website, the PSA PA-15 is currently on sale for \$499, discounted from \$879.99. We also attempted to reach the registered owner/trustee of the daycare building, which according to City records, is Elias R. Estudillo of The Bronx, but were unsuccessful. Both referenced defendants are deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*



Photo by David Greene

POLICE SAID THIS Van Nest-based building, seen on Wednesday, Nov. 20, 2024, is the Filmore Street home of Abraham Sosa, 20, who was arrested in Kingsbridge Road Subway Station on Election Day Nov. 5, 2024 in possession of an illegal machine gun. The first floor of the building is a children's daycare.

Bedford Park: Water Main Burst Causes Major Flooding

By DAVID GREENE & SÍLE MOLONEY

A burst to a water main pipe caused major flooding and havoc to both residents and local businesses in the vicinity of Webster Avenue, East 201st Street, Mosholu Parkway South, and Bedford Park Boulevard in Norwood / Bedford Park on Monday evening, Dec. 16, 2024, according to eyewitness accounts.

Several cars in the area were seen semi-submerged in water amid the flooding and according to the Red Cross, over two dozen families were temporarily rehoused amid one of the busiest holiday seasons.

NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) officials later said a DEP emergency contractor successfully completed the temporary restoration of street repaving along Webster Avenue following street damage caused by the flooding, that clean-up operations had been finalized, and that the roadway was reopened to two-way traffic.

A water main is a large underground pipe designed to allow water to flow through it and into multiple connected smaller pipes which lead to buildings, both residential and commercial, to provide running water.

The DEP representative said that due to the depth of the water main, the complexity of the required repair, and to limit any further disruption to the holiday season, final/permanent reconstruction of the repaving was scheduled for a later date.

DEP officials added, “Residents and businesses who suffered any property damage are encouraged to file a claim with the Comptroller’s Office and any DEP-related concerns or inquiries can be directed to BronxDEP@dep.nyc.gov.”

DEP officials confirmed that all residents and businesses continued to have water service throughout the incident and added that inquiries on electric and gas should be directed to the appropriate company.

Asked about the cause of the incident, a DEP spokesperson told *Norwood News*, “We won’t know that for several weeks – water main will be sent to a lab for an



Photo courtesy of Erik Gonzalez

EMERGENCY SERVICES ARE seen on Webster Avenue in front of the 52nd Precinct from the Mosholu Parkway South overpass in Bedford Park on Monday night, Dec. 16, 2024, after a water mains burst flooded the area.

analysis.” We also asked about the exact location of the burst and the timing of same. We did not receive an immediate response but will share any further updates we receive.

Meanwhile, when contacted about the incident and any possible injuries resulting from it, the FDNY said there were no injuries reported and referred us to the NYPD for information on any potential criminality relating to the incident. We reached out to the NYPD and did not receive any response but will share any future updates we receive.

Norwood News also reached out to Con Edison for more information about the incident and a spokesperson said, “Con Edison infrastructure repairs were completed Tuesday night. We continue to work collaboratively with the interagency response team to restore gas and electric service to customers in the impacted area.”

The statement continued, “We are ready to restore service as quickly and safely as possible once building repairs are completed and cleared by inspection. We have reached out to impacted customers and have a Con Edison Customer Outreach van on site to actively answer customer questions.”

Erik Gonzalez, a resident and mem-

ber of local walking and running group, Bronx Nomads, witnessed the flooding as it occurred. “We walked right under the Mosholu Parkway overpass where unbeknownst to us at that time, not even 15 minutes later, would be quite a chaotic scene. As we continued our walk, and as we turned off of Webster, onto Bedford, and on our way back to our start, we could not help but to turn back onto Webster where we were just moments ago at the sight of currents of water flowing, not expected with the fizzle of rain at the time.”

Gonzalez said as he and his colleagues stood at the corner of East 201st Street and Webster Avenue, looking in disbelief at the amount of water accumulating in the area, they notified both FDNY and NYPD first responders of a homeless person they had seen earlier who Gonzalez described as “only sheltered by a thick, dark blanket and the roof of the overpass near the area where the water was gushing the fiercest.”

“In this cold, wet weather, I cannot imagine anyone getting caught off guard by something so unexpected like this occurrence,” he said. “I really hope this homeless person made it out on time and is safe, and not swept away. I get a feeling this homeless person may have been known to be at this location somewhat regularly. I’d like to think that this person is safe and made it through the night, but if any update is known about this person I’d like to know for [peace] of mind.”

Norwood News reached out to the City’s emergency services to inquire about the homeless person in question. The FDNY confirmed no person was rescued during the incident and they had no information about the person seen by the running group. We will share any further updates we receive from the NYPD.

A representative from the American Red Cross of Greater New York later said as of Dec. 22, at 8 p.m., the organization

had provided 25 households (44 adults and 19 children) with temporary lodging and had distributed 1,960 meals, 1,925 snacks, 618 blankets, and 60 kits with cleaning supplies.

The representative said Red Cross responders were to remain on site at Botanical Square in Bedford Park daily, from Monday, Dec. 21, through Friday, Dec. 27, from noon to 7 p.m., to distribute lunch (at noon) and dinner (at 5 p.m.) as well as supplies.

They said any residents who remained or remain without power due to the water main break and who needed or continue to need help from the Red Cross should call 1-877-RED CROSS (1-877-733-2767) and select Option 1 or speak to a Red Cross representative on site between noon and 7 p.m.

The Red Cross provided a further update as of Dec. 26, saying it was continuing to support residents impacted by the incident. Representatives said that as of 8 p.m., it was providing 23 households with temporary lodging, and had distributed 3,223 meals, 3,036 snacks, 662 blankets, and 75 kits with cleaning supplies. They said Red Cross volunteers would again continue to be on site on Botanical Square daily from Friday, Dec. 27, through Sunday, Dec. 29, from noon to 7 p.m. to distribute lunch (at noon) and dinner (at 5 p.m.) as well as supplies.

The American Red Cross erected a tent in the area twice a day as they distributed the meals, blankets and bottled water to residents of both 2985 and 2995 Botanical Square. The water burst had left the two buildings without water, electricity or elevator services. Two portable generators were quickly installed and returned heat to the building for the tenants that remained.

Gonzalez added, “Not many will recognize the lives that were affected that night. There are many people in need through this corridor and I hope they are able to get the help they need to
(continued on next page)



Photo courtesy of Erik Gonzalez

THE JUNCTION AT East 201st Street and Webster Avenue in Bedford Park is seen flooded on Monday night, Dec. 16, 2024, after a water mains burst.

NEWS BRIEFS

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

Reets-DuPont Targets 13th City Council Seat

Theona Reets-DuPont of The Bronx, a chief of staff for almost four years to Bronx Democratic City Councilman Oswald Feliz (NY-15), announced on Jan. 7 that she will be running this year for City Council in the East Bronx's 13th District. The district covers Bruckner-Bronx River, Throggs Neck-Schuylerville, Pelham Bay-Country Club-City Island, Hart Island, Ferry Point Park-St. Raymond Cemetery, Pelham Parkway-Van Nest, Morris Park and Pelham Bay Park.

"I will represent and serve the people of District 13 with the same energy and tenacity that characterized my public service over the last four years in the Bronx," Reets-DuPont wrote in part. Her campaign said she has experienced firsthand how city government and economics have affected New Yorkers.

"I am a mother and a homeowner in District 13 [..], but it has taken a lot of work and sacrifice to get here," she said.

"Only a few years ago, my family and I were displaced due to a natural disaster. Having worked in city government, I know the priorities that will guide my policies: taking care of our seniors, improving our housing conditions whether you own or rent, making sure our families are safe, and our children are thriving in school."

New York City Celebrates 400 Years

NYC Mayor Eric Adams launched "Founded by NYC," a year-long inclusive, comprehensive celebration of the 400th anniversary of New York City, on Dec. 31, 2024. In partnership with NYC Tourism + Conventions, he said "Founded by NYC" will celebrate how New York City has and continues to make history, highlighting the achievements driven by the creativity and resilience of New Yorkers from all five boroughs, including the perspectives of marginalized people like the indigenous community, women, and people of color.

"For four centuries, history has happened here," said Adams. "And in 2025, through our 'Founded By NYC' campaign, we will celebrate all those who came here from around the world over those 400 years to build our great city, the New Yorkers whose vibrant culture, innovation, and abilities continue to make us the envy of the world today, as well as all we continue to do every day to build a future that is safer and more affordable."

He added, "But we know that our city's history has not been without its challenges, and that the story of New York City began a millennia ago, long before the Dutch arrived, when this land was inhabited by the Lenape people. To properly recognize our city's complex, diverse, and unparalleled history, we must also acknowledge the painful parts of its origin, and ensure we are celebrating the Lenape's rich contributions to our city as much as anyone else's. The story of New York City is one of perseverance and triumph, and, in 2025, we will show the world why we are the greatest city in the world."

Schools Chancellor Kicks Off Education Council Elections

NYC Public Schools Chancellor Melissa Aviles-Ramos announced the beginning of the biennial Community and Citywide Education Council (CEC) election season on Jan. 8, opening applications for parents to apply for candidacy for a CEC.

She said families are encouraged to join an information session, taking place daily, to learn more about election protocol. Information about this, as well as the structure and roles of Community Education Councils, the election process, eligibility guidelines, key dates, and frequently asked questions are available at schools.nyc.gov/Elections2025. Applications can also be submitted online at the same link from Jan.

13 through Feb. 16.

Advocates Call for No Cuts to Education Funding

Ahead of the release of the City's fiscal year 2026 preliminary budget, the Coalition for Equitable Education Funding, comprised of more than 120 organizations, has asked NYC Mayor Eric Adams and the City Council not to cut certain education programs set to expire in June. The group is urging the mayor to focus on those with the greatest needs and to include these programs in the budget annually.

They said significant investments were made in last year's budget to continue funding what they said were essential education programs, staff, and services that had been at risk due to expiring temporary federal stimulus dollars and City funds. They said while the City "baselined" many of these programs, providing long-term funding for them, others were funded for one year only.

They said critical education programs at risk which are currently benefitting tens of thousands of NYC students, include early childhood education, summer programming, arts programming, learning to work, community schools, restorative justice, teacher recruitment, mental health continuum, immigrant family communications and outreach, high-impact tutoring, and student success centers.

Bedford Park: Water Main Burst Causes Major Flooding

(continued from previous page)

cover."

Bronx Community Board 7 also shared information with residents on how to file a claim for property damage following the flooding.

Con Edison and NYC Department of Sanitation workers were later observed in the area removing mud and debris from the roadways, along with NYC Department of Emergency Management and the NYPD.

Some residents of Botanical Square spent Christmas and part of Hanukkah at hotels across the city or remained in their homes without power and gas until it was eventually restored on Friday, December 27.

Things were slowly returned to normal as trucks belonging to construction workers and electricians were later seen parked along Webster Avenue.

Dozens of vehicles which had previously been towed by the NYPD and parked near the 52nd Precinct along Webster Avenue under the Mosholu Parkway overpass were later moved again and were possibly damaged by the flood waters, including vehicles confiscated as possible evidence of crimes.

Contractors at Vanity Fair Bathmart, Inc., located at 2971 Webster Avenue were later observed removing 3 feet of drywall from their premises, and replacing the shop's electrical wiring.

Floor tiles in the shop also appeared to be damaged from the flood waters that were two to three feet high in some areas.

Workers were later seen carrying in a large supply of sheetrock to "Bedford Manor" apartments at 2985 Webster Avenue, an apartment building that also houses Little Stars Child Care.

Lou, a resident of 2985 Botanical Square, later told *Norwood News* on Monday, Dec. 23, "I live in the building but I'm out because there's no elevator or hot water. I'm not living here." He added, "The building has heat, they have lights (in the hallways) but no hot water and no elevator." Lou added that the building next door at 2995 Botanical Square was in the same situation.

Also on Dec. 23, David, another resident of 2985 Botanical Square, who said he's lived in the building for 44 years, was asked what it had been like since the water main break. "Hell, straight up!" he said. "What I don't understand is that they replaced all of the water mains all through here, why didn't they replace all of the water mains? Why didn't they replace that one all the way down there?"

David continued, "They have been tearing up the entire Bedford Park for the last four years, not only Con Ed. It wasn't only Con Edison because they're building these new buildings, so they had to add stuff in the ground." He

added, "So I don't understand why they didn't come and just do the whole thing. I blame the City."

David said some families remained in the two buildings on Botanical Square while others were given vouchers and sent to hotels in Manhattan and Queens, having been told Bronx hotels were full. David recalled how he was sent to a hotel in Queens, but it had roaches so he left and returned home.

David said both affected buildings on Botanical Square were without heat and hot water for three days before two portable generators were installed outside. Lee Williams, another resident of 2985 Botanical Square fumed, "I don't know who is to blame for this, but the thing about the whole situation is they need to have more resources available when emergencies like this happen."

He added, "We pay taxes. They raised the train fare, they have this new toll



Image courtesy of Bronx Community Board 7

INSTRUCTIONS SHARED BY Bronx Community Board 7 of how to file a claim following the flooding caused by the water mains burst in Bedford Park on Monday, Dec. 16, 2024.

when you drive downtown, so they take, take, take." Williams continued, "But when we really need something, they need to give us the appropriate resources." Pointing to a man with a pair of small children carrying several bags, he said, "Look at him. He's got kids, and

(continued on page 8)

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY ARIEL PACHECO & SÍLE MOLONEY

Volunteers Needed

The BOLD Boutique is seeking volunteers to help operate a community-inspired clothing store for cancer patients in The Bronx. It is run by the Montefiore Einstein Comprehensive Cancer Center, 1575 Blondell Avenue in Westchester Square, and is open most Tuesdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, email cancersupport@einsteinmed.edu.

Resume Writing Workshop

The Bronx Library Center, located at 310 East Kingsbridge Road, Bronx, NY 10458, is hosting a resume-writing workshop on Tuesday, Jan. 14, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Learn tips on how to craft a resume that catches the eye of prospective employers and best practices to showcase your skills and experience effectively. For more information, call (718) 579-4244.

Adopt a Pet

Adopt a Pet Animal Care Center New York has a variety of pets looking for loving homes. Check out the list of pets available for adoption at <https://nycacc.app/>. To become an ACC foster, visit nycacc.org/foster.

The Bronx Council on the Arts Grants

The Bronx Council on the Arts is currently accepting applications for its "Bronx Recognizes its Own" grant which recognizes artists from a wide range of creative disciplines who demonstrate proficiency, knowledge, and intense practice in their chosen art form. The \$5,000 grant provides direct support to individual Bronx artists who create works in literary, media, visual, and performing arts. The deadline to apply for the grant is Monday, Jan. 13. For more information, visit <https://www.bronxarts.org/grants/bronx-recognizes-its-own/>.

We Speak NYC

We Speak NYC, the Grammy-Award-winning TV show will be shown at Mosholu Public Library, 285 E 205th St,

Bronx, NY 10467 on Friday, Jan. 17, from 11.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. The show was created to help people practice English. The program works best for adult learners who speak some English and want to practice. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

Affordable Housing Lotteries

NYC Department of Housing, Preservation and Development (HPD) has open affordable housing lotteries for housing units in The Bronx. These include, among others, units at 113 East 184th Street in Fordham Heights with a deadline of Jan. 16, and at 790 Allerton Avenue in Allerton with a deadline of Jan. 24. Visit <https://housingconnect.nyc.gov/PublicWeb/searchlotteries> for more information.



Photo courtesy of the NYPD

DOMINIQUE GRAVES, 45, IS reported missing.

Kingsbridge Heights Woman Reported Missing

The NYPD is asking for the public's help locating a 45-year-old woman, shown above, who is reported missing from Kingsbridge Heights. Police said Dominique Graves, of 3340 Bailey Avenue was last seen leaving her home on Wednesday, Jan. 1, at around 9.32 a.m.

They said she is described as female, Black, is around 5 feet, 4 inches tall, weighs around 140 pounds, has brown eyes, and black hair. They said she was last seen wearing a navy-blue jacket with white stripes across the front and on the sleeves, blue jeans, black boots, and a black skullcap. They added that Graves has schizophrenia.

Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA (74782). The public can also submit their tips by logging onto the Crime Stoppers website at <https://crimestoppers.nypdonline.org/>, or on X @NYPDTips.

All calls are strictly confidential.

Montefiore Einstein Names Inaugural Chief Pharmacy Officer

Ruth E. Cassidy B.S., PharmD, MBA, FACHE, FASHP, shown right, was named the inaugural chief pharmacy officer at Montefiore Health System on Monday, Jan. 6, hospital officials said. Dr. Cassidy assumed her new position the same day.

Hospital officials said Dr. Cassidy brings decades of pharmacy practice excellence, with an eye towards medication safety, regulatory oversight, and delivery of exceptional patient care. They said she will oversee pharmacy services across Montefiore's acute and ambulatory locations as well as its specialty pharmacy, which they said is one of the most advanced specialty pharmacies in the region, providing home delivery of medications throughout The Bronx and Westchester.

According to Montefiore officials, chronic disease exacts a significant toll on the health and well-being of New Yorkers, and more than 40 percent of New York adults suffer from at least one chronic disease. They said such statistics make medication management vital and added that Cassidy will be responsible for managing pharmacy operations at the private hospital network.

They said Cassidy earned an MBA from West Texas A&M University, a doc-

toral pharmacy degree from the University of Florida College of Medicine, and a bachelor of science degree in pharmacy at St. John's University.



Photo courtesy of Montefiore Health System
DR. RUTH E. CASSIDY is the inaugural chief pharmacy officer at Montefiore Health System.

Building Applications Filed for New 8-Story Building at 3180 Villa Ave

Building applications have been filed with NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) for a new, 8-story residential building at 3180 Villa Avenue in Bedford Park as reported by YIMBY. Located between East 205th Street and Van Cortlandt Avenue East, the lot is near the Mosholu Parkway subway station served by the 4 train, and A.L. Lowy is listed as the owner behind the applications.

According to the filing, the proposed 75-foot-tall development will yield 17,283 square feet designated for residential space and will yield 27 residential units, most likely rentals, based on the average unit scope of 640 square feet. The masonry-based structure will also include a 35-foot-long rear yard but no accessory parking. Nikolai Katz Architect is listed as the architect of record. Demolition permits have not yet been filed for the existing structure and there is no estimated completion date announced for the new building.

Bedford Park: Water Main Burst Causes Major Flooding

(continued from page 7)

nobody even offered him a hotel room. They're not even being honest about the situation and what happened."

Willaims said he had been told two different stories i.e. that the burst was caused by a water main break and by a sewer main break. He recalled how some residents were forced to walk in the water to get to their apartments or to go to work on the day/evening the burst occurred. He also complained that the

Red Cross was only handing out food at noon and 6 p.m. and some residents who worked the 4 p.m. to midnight shift often missed both meals.

He added, "So it doesn't cater to everybody's needs in a building that holds between 300 to 400 people. Willaims continued, "What about the building's management? They haven't said anything to us yet. What about us paying rent? I'm pretty sure nobody's going to pay rent next month (January) because everyone is displaced. There's no electricity. Some

people have no water. Some water comes out brown."

The post office on Webster Avenue and the New York Botanical Garden Parking Garage remained closed as of Friday, Jan. 3.

Another male resident told *Norwood News* if authorities had fixed the water main pipe beforehand, the flooding would not have happened. In October 2024, *Norwood News* reported how several small businesses were without water temporarily after a contractor

performing work for one of them accidentally struck a water pipe.

Of the latest flooding, one young woman said it had been a scary situation and had reminded her of high waves at the beach. Another man called Jose said he lived on the block and had parked his car near the 52nd Precinct. He said he thought it would be safe there but was wrong. "The criminals did not get into it, but the water sure did," he said.

**Miriam Quiñones contributed to this story.*



Department of Transportation

Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner

The New York City Department of Transportation Division of Traffic Operations cordially invites your company to submit a competitive seal bid for the following Solicitation.

**EPIN # 84124B0006 – 84124MBTR639
Furnish and Install M2 Poles to Support Gantry Signs throughout New York City**

This Competitive Sealed Bid is being released through PASSPort, the New York City's online procurement portal. Responses to this Bid must be submitted via PASSPort.

To access the Competitive Sealed Bid, vendors should visit the PASSPort public portal at: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/mocs/passport/about-passport.page>, click on the "Procurement Navigator." This will take you to the Public Portal of all procurements in the PASSPort system.

To locate the Competitive Sealed Bid, insert the EPIN **84124B0006** into the keyword search field. In order to respond to the Competitive Sealed Bid, vendors must create an account within the PASSPort system if they have not already done so.

A Pre-Bid conference via Zoom/Teams is scheduled for **01/21/25 at 10:00 AM**. Those wishing to attend must email the authorized agency contact for a link no later than **01/17/2025 by 4:00PM**. The deadline for the submission of questions is **01/30/2025 by 4:00 PM**.

The bid due date submission via PASSPort is **on 03/05/2025 by 11:00 AM**.
Date of Bid Opening: **3/5/2025 at 11:30 AM**.

This procurement is subject to participation goals for Minority/Women-owned Business Enterprises. The M/WBE goal for this project is 15%.

Any inquiries concerning this Competitive Sealed Bid should be directed to agency contact Ereny Hanna via email EHanna@dot.nyc.gov, under the subject line EPIN 84124B0006.

**Eric Adams, Mayor
Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner**

CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY, DAVID GREENE



Female NYPD Employee Arrested for Child Endangerment

An off-duty, female NYPD employee was arrested on Friday, Dec. 13, police said. They said Crystal Underdue, 30, an NYPD police communications technician, was arrested and charged within the confines of the 46th Precinct, which covers the neighborhoods of Fordham, University Heights, Morris Heights and Mount Hope, with second-degree assault, endangering the welfare of a child, and third-degree assault. Underdue is presumed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

Norwood: Man Assaulted Near French Charley's Playground

A 30-year-old man was assaulted in Norwood on Christmas Eve, Tuesday, Dec. 24, police said. They said the assault took place at around 7.15 p.m. [in French Charley's Park/Bronx Park East] at the intersection of East 204th Street and Webster Avenue, when the victim was walking past the playground.

Police said two unidentified males attacked the victim with sharp objects and he sustained minor lacerations. They said he went to Montefiore Medical Center in Norwood for treatment in stable condition. They said there are no arrests and the investigation remains ongoing.

As reported, the body of a man believed to be missing and homeless was found previously in French Charley's Park in August 2023.

Fordham Manor: Group Seen with Stolen Vehicle Sought for Questioning

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the group of people seen in the accompanying top right photo who they say are wanted for questioning in connection with the theft of a vehicle in Fordham Manor. Police said that on Monday, Dec. 30, at around

10 p.m. in front of 2740 Webster Avenue, a 2022 Mercedes GLE was stolen from inside a parking lot.

They said the vehicle was later recovered on Jan. 2, inside 2355 Webster Avenue. Police said detectives are attempting to identify a group of people later observed in possession of the stolen vehicle. They said nobody was injured during the incident.



Bedford Park: Man Sought for Stealing from 63-Year-Old Woman

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the person seen in the accompanying photo below who they say is sought for questioning in connection with theft from a senior in Bedford Park. Police said that on Tuesday, Nov. 26, at around 4 p.m., inside a residential building located in the vicinity of Mosholu Parkway and East 205th Street, an unidentified person stole a wallet containing credit cards from a 63-year-old female victim and made unauthorized transactions using the cards. Police said no injuries were reported as a result of the incident.



Norwood: Three Sought for Assault & Robbery

The NYPD is asking for the

public's help identifying the people seen in the accompanying photo below who they say are wanted in connection to an assault and robbery that occurred in Norwood. Police said that on Friday, Dec. 6, at around 12.50 p.m. a 33-year-old male victim was in front of 3300 Webster Avenue when three people approached him, punched and kicked him about the body. They said the group also stole the victim's car keys and \$600 in cash before fleeing the location, northbound along Webster Avenue. Police said the victim did not report any injuries following the incident.



Man Sought for Bronx & Manhattan Subway Stabbings

The NYPD is asking for the public's help locating the person seen in the accompanying photo at right who they say is wanted in connection to a citywide assault pattern identified in Manhattan and The Bronx. They said the first incident occurred in Manhattan on Wednesday, Jan. 1, at around 9.40 a.m. when a 31-year-old male victim was on a northbound 2 train at the 14th Street and 7th Avenue Subway Station. Police said the suspect approached the victim, started a verbal dispute, displayed a knife, and stabbed the victim in the back.

They said the suspect then exited the station on foot and fled to parts unknown, EMS responded and transported the victim to NYC Health and Hospitals/Bellevue in stable condition. Police said the second incident took place on Thursday, Jan. 2, at around 6.10 a.m. when an off-duty 47-year-old, male, MTA employee was on the northbound 5 train platform at the Pelham Parkway Subway Station. Once again, they said

the suspect approached the victim, started a verbal dispute, displayed a knife, and stabbed the victim in the armpit and back.

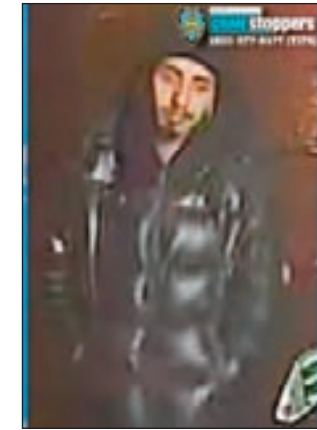
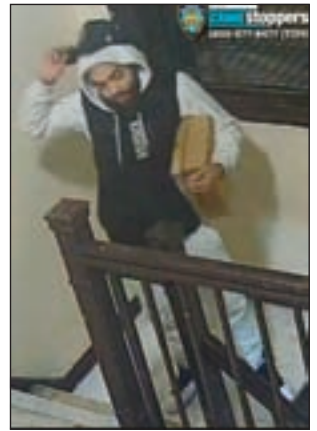
They said the suspect then exited the station on foot and fled to parts unknown, EMS responded and transported the victim to NYC Health and Hospitals/Jacobi in stable condition. Police said that pursuant to an ongoing investigation, the suspect has been identified as Jamar Banks, 52. They said he is described as male, has a dark complexion, is around 5 feet, 11 inches tall, and weighs 120 pounds.



Fordham Manor: Three Sought for Robbery of Man

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the people seen in the accompanying photos at right who they say are sought in connection with a robbery that occurred in Fordham Manor. Police said that on Wednesday, Dec. 18, at around 11.45 p.m., a 28-year-old man was walking in the vicinity of Briggs Avenue and East 194th Street when he was approached by three unknown males.

They said the group punched and kicked the victim before stealing his bag which contained cell phones and cash. They said they then fled on foot along East 194th Street, and the victim was transported to an area hospital for injuries to his head and body.



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

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Letters To The Editor

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

New Year's Resolutions

New year's resolutions, anyone? How about one with multiple benefits for our health, our planet, and the animals? Eating more veggies, fruits, legumes, grains, and nuts helps us stay healthier, reduce global warming, and stops animal suffering. It requires no exertion or deprivation, and it saves money too!

The abundant nutrients and vitamins in plant foods keep us in top health, while their fiber keeps us regular. Plant foods don't do drugs, antibiotics, hormones, cholesterol, or saturated fats. Concerned about ultra-processed foods? Then you certainly don't want your food processed through an animal's digestive tract.

Best of all, plant-based eating is supported by your local supermarket, which offers a rich variety of plant meats, cheeses, and ice creams in their frozen food section, as well as a wide selection of nut and grain milks. Same goes for your favorite family restaurant and nearly every fast-food franchise.

More food for thought can be found at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/15/well/eat/plant-based-diet-nuts-beans-grains.html>, <https://www.forks-overknives.com/>, and <http://www.bite-sizevegan.org/>

Bon appetit!

Niles Neusbaum
Williamsbridge

Rent \$3K+ Not Affordable

In the Inquiring Photographer column in the Oct. 31-Nov. 14, 2024, edition of the *Norwood News*, it was reported that not only is rent at over \$3,000/month for a studio apartment at 114 East 198th Street in The Bronx advertised as "affordable" by NYC Department of Housing, Preservation & Development (HPD), but that

applicants must earn over \$105,000/year to be eligible to apply for it!

It's shocking that monthly rent for a studio apartment at \$3,000+ is considered affordable by the City and it's outrageous that those eligible must earn over \$105,000/year. Surely there are larger apartments available at that rent with possibly lower income requirements. I would venture to guess that such high

wage earners would choose to live in better neighborhoods.

Judy Noy
Norwood

Editor's Note: Judy Noy is the former proofreader and longest-serving member of the Norwood News team, having worked on the paper for over three decades.

Opinion

Puerto Rico Status Imposters

By GENE ROMAN

It is nothing new for a member of Congress to travel to Puerto Rico. In the early 20th century, the Island's business and political elites conferred the title of "Cangrimanes" on their visitors, a Spanish slang term describing a person of influence.

In October, two of New York's "Cangrimanes" endorsed the Puerto Rican Independence Party's candidates for governor in San Juan. "Today, with our faces to the sun, we give our endorsements to Juan Dalmau for governor," proclaimed Congresswomen Nydia Velázquez (D-NY-7) and Alexandra Ocasio Cortez (D-NY-14) ahead of the November 5 elections, according to The

San Juan Star.

The hypocritical thing about this endorsement is that it was conferred in a U.S. territory with zero electoral power in Congress by two elected officials from a state on behalf of candidates advocating for political independence for Puerto Rico, a status option that has been consistently rejected by that Island's electorate.

"That these two ladies would advise the American citizens of Puerto Rico to vote for candidates representing an ideology that would distance us from enjoying the same opportunities, equal rights and prerogatives that they are enjoying as federal legislators from the State of New York is mind boggling and unbelievable," declared statehood advocate Orlando Parga in *El Nuevo Dia*.

As an unincorporated territory, the 3.1 million U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico live under a system of legally sanctioned political apartheid. They cannot vote for president, have no voting power in the House or Senate and must abide by all federal laws.

This unequal treatment extends to

how the feds allocate taxpayer money to Medicare, Medicaid and Nutrition Assistance programs on the Island. Congress can and does treat Puerto Rico worse than it does the residents of a state in ALL of these federal social safety net programs, according to the Center of Policy and Budget Priorities.

The U.S. Supreme Court sanctioned this congressional bigotry in *Harris v. Rosario* (1980) when it ruled that Congress can treat Puerto Rico differently "as long as there is a rational basis for doing so."

Velázquez, AOC and their constituents are shielded from this Jim Crow era discriminatory conduct because they live in a state protected by the equal protection clause of the Constitution.

Velázquez herself came of age as a young woman in Puerto Rico as a member of the Popular Democratic Party of Puerto Rico (PPD). The PPD created, sustains and protects the unequal, undemocratic and discriminatory political status of U.S. territory that is

(continued on page 12)

Norwood Man Gets 40 Years to Life for Fatal Shooting of Bodega Clerk & Wounding of Bodega Owner

By DAVID GREENE & SÍLE MOLONEY

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark announced on Monday, Jan. 6, that a Bronx man from Norwood was sentenced to 40 years to life in prison after being convicted of second-degree murder and additional charges for fatally shooting a bodega clerk and wounding the store's owner in the Mt. Eden section of The Bronx in 2021.

In the context of the announcement, Clark said, "The defendant killed a bodega worker in a completely unprovoked act. He then shot the owner of the deli, who along with another employee subdued the defendant before he could harm others."

Officials from the Bronx District Attorney's Office said the defendant, Tykwan McLeod, 49, last of Dekalb Avenue in Norwood, was sentenced on Monday to 40 years to life in prison and five years post-release supervision after being convicted by a jury of second-degree murder, attempted assault in the first degree, and second-degree criminal possession of a weapon by Bronx Supreme

Court Justice Ralph Fabrizio.

According to the investigation, on Feb. 16, 2021, at around 8.40 p.m., the defendant entered K's Convenient Deli at 8 East Mount Eden Avenue in the Mt. Eden section of The Bronx and immediately shot the store clerk, Donte Thomas, 33, in the face, killing him instantly.

The court heard that as Thomas fell, McLeod shot him twice, and as McLeod attempted to flee, the bodega's owner grabbed him. Prosecutors said that as he did so, McLeod shot the owner in the chest at point blank range. According to court records, the owner and another employee wrestled the gun away from McLeod, and an off-duty NYPD auxiliary officer then picked it up from the floor.

Bronx DA officials said the case was prosecuted by Karl Miller, homicide counsel, under the supervision of Burim Namani, deputy chief of the Homicide Bureau, and Christine Scaccia, chief of the Homicide Bureau, under the overall supervision of James Brennan, deputy chief of the Trial Division, and Theresa



Photo by Síle Moloney

BRONX COUNTY HALL of Justice, Sept. 15, 2023

Gottlieb, chief of the Trial Division.

Clark thanked Bronx DA video technician Stalin Crespo of the video unit for his work on the case. She also thanked NYPD Det. Curtis Cato and Sgt. Paul

Neggersmith of the 44th Precinct, along with NYPD Officer Elmehdi Eddoubaji of the 19th Precinct and retired NYPD Det. Francis Orlando of the Bronx Homicide Detective Squad.

HPD Launches Housing Lottery Described as “Affordable” in Allerton

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

NYC Department of Housing, Preservation & Development (HPD) has launched a housing lottery described as “affordable” for units at 790 Allerton Avenue, a 7-story, mixed-use building in Allerton, as reported by YIMBY. Designed by Michael S. Mazzella and developed by Louis Vele of 790 Allerton LLC, the structure yields 43 residential units.

Available on NYC Housing Connect, HPD’s online portal, are 13 units for residents earning 130 percent of the area median income (AMI), ranging in eligible income from \$86,400 to \$218,010.



.Rendering courtesy of NYC Housing Connect 790 ALLERTON AVENUE IN Allerton, The Bronx

The AMI for all cities across the country is defined each year by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The 2023 AMI for the New York City region is \$127,100 for a three-person family (100% AMI). We’ve asked HUD if it could provide the AMI for a single person. We did not receive an immediate response.

According to HPD, amenities include a garage, gym, elevator, and rooftop terrace. Units come equipped with washers and dryers, air conditioning, energy-efficient appliances, intercoms, high-speed internet, and name-brand kitchen appliances, countertops, and finishes. Tenants are responsible for electricity including heat, stove, and hot water.

At 130 percent of the AMI, there are eight one-bedroom units available with a monthly rent of \$2,520 for those on incomes ranging from \$86,400 to \$181,740, and five 2-bedroom units with a monthly rent of \$2,795 for those earning incomes ranging from \$95,829 to \$218,010.

This building is anticipated to receive a tax exemption through HPD’s 421a tax incentive program. No deposits/application fees apply. More information can be found at <https://bit.ly/48W9SCS>.

According to HPD, prospective renters must meet income and household size requirements to apply for these apartments, and applications must be postmarked or submitted online no later than Jan. 24

HPD officials say housing is considered affordable if it costs about one-third or less of what the people living in the local area earn. Income eligibility and rent for City-financed affordable housing projects are based on a measure called Area Median Income (AMI).

Opinion Puerto Rico Status Imposters

(continued from page 11)

the cause of many of the Island’s fiscal woes.

Velázquez rose to power as an elected official in New York under the sponsorship of PPD Gov. Rafael Hernandez Colon in San Juan. Colon laid the groundwork for her political career when he appointed her the director of his government of Puerto Rico office in NYC in 1986.

It was from this perch that she won election to a congressional seat representing Brooklyn and Queens in 1992.

Orlando Parga called Ocasio Cortez’s “meddling” in Puerto Rican elections a real-life essay reflecting ignorance. “The young congresswoman from The Bronx justifies her support for candidates who favor political in-

dependence for Puerto Rico by citing a hard-core socialist philosophy that has no place or roots in the thinking of the people of Puerto Rico,” Parga wrote in El Nuevo Dia.

The San Juan Star called the actions of elected officials residing in states while urging independence for Puerto Rico a paradox.

Roberto Guzman of the University of Puerto Rico castigated these congresswomen a bit more harshly in an essay in The San Juan Star. “It seems somewhat hypocritical for someone who is living the American dream to the extent that you are to deny the same dream to millions of Puerto Ricans who call this Island home,” Guzman wrote. “Please stop undermining our struggle for equality. You are not our elected representatives.”

Gene Roman lives in the Bronx and works as a freelance reporter wherever there is a good story.

Editor’s Note: Norwood News reached out to the Offices of both Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez for comment on this op-ed. We did not receive an immediate response.

Income Bands and Percent of AMI

Income Band	Percent of AMI
Extremely Low-Income	0-30%
Very Low-Income	31-50%
Low-Income	51-80%
Moderate-Income	81-120%
Middle-Income	121-165%

Source: NYC Department of Housing, Preservation & Development

INCOME BANDS AND Percent of AMI

Out & About

Compiled by **ARIEL PACHECO**

EVENTS

Join the Bronx Zoo at 2300 Southern Blvd Bronx, NY 10460 for **World Waterfowl Day** on Friday, Jan. 17, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Bronx Zoo will be hosting several keeper chats in areas around the Zoo. World Waterfowl Day highlights global conservation efforts and the beauty of nature. For more information, call (718) 220-5100.

Catch the **Holiday Train Show** at New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) at 2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx 10458 before it ends on Monday, Jan. 20, Enter a winter wonderland like no other as model trolleys trundle through the lawn display, and in the landmark glasshouse, where you’ll also see plant-based replicas of famed local architecture. For tickets and more information, call (718) 817-8700.

LITERATURE

Join Woodlawn Conservancy for a virtual **Book Talk** on Tuesday, Jan. 14, at 7 p.m. on Zoom. Travis Vogan will talk about his new book, *LeRoy Neiman: The Life of America’s Most Beloved and Belittled Artist*. Registration links and more information can be found at <https://www.woodlawn.org/conservancy/tours-events/>.

Norwood Community Library will be distributing **Free Books** on Saturday, Jan. 18, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at 169 East Gun Hill Road, Bronx 10467. All are welcome to join and grab a free book. For more information,

follow @norwoodcommunitylibrary on Instagram and Twitter.

Join Kingsbridge Public Library’s Teen Advisory Group on Tuesday, Jan. 21, from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Google Meet. Teens aged 13-18 are welcome to help discuss books, programs, and ways to improve the library. For more information, call (718) 548-5656.

MUSIC

The Lehman Center for Performing Arts, located at 250 Bedford Park Blvd West, Bronx, NY 10468, will host **Drumline Live** on Saturday, Jan. 18, at 6 p.m. Drumline Live, the legendary Historically Black College and University band experience, is a high-octane musical that will have you laughing, singing, and dancing. For more information, call (718) 960-8000.

FAMILY

The Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center will host a **Creative Art Family Edition** class on Sunday, Jan. 12, from noon to 1:30 p.m. Participants are welcome to explore the arts through different mediums, including collage, painting, and drawing. All family members are welcome. For more information, call (718) 543-867.

MOVEMENT

Join NYC Parks for a **Yoga** session on Saturday, Jan. 11, from 11.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. at St. James Recreation Center, 2530 Jerome Ave, Bronx, NY 10468. This is an open level class designed to awaken your mind, body and senses through controlled breathing, simple meditation, and the adoption of specific bodily postures. Bring a mat! For more information, call (718) 367-3657.



Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

By **CLAIRE GARON**

January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. Cervical cancer is a serious condition, but also one of the most preventable and treatable forms of cancer. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), about 11,500 new cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed each year in the United States.

In this article, I will discuss ways to prevent and detect cervical cancer, but first, let's do introductions; meet the cervix! The cervix is the narrow part of the uterus, the pear-shaped organ of the female reproductive system. The cervix is a type of sphincter, a circular muscle that can tighten or relax to allow things to pass. Beyond the cervix is the vagina.

You may be familiar with the cervix from getting swabbed during a pap smear, feeling it while using a tampon, checking the placement of an IUD, or from vaginal sexual activity. You may also know it opens slowly (dilates) during labor before childbirth. The cervix feels a bit like the tip of your nose!

What you may not know is that the healthy cells of the cervix can become unhealthy, and the cervix can develop cancer. Fortunately, there are ways to prevent and detect cervical cancer: the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine, the pap smear, and the HPV test.

PREVENT HPV with the HPV Vaccine

HPV plays a role in most cases of cervical cancer. HPV is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) passed through sexual contact. Most folks who've had more than one sexual partner in their lifetime will get HPV.

For most people, HPV is no sweat and the body's immune system clears the virus. For some, the virus causes cells of the cervix to become cancer cells. It can also cause cancers in the vagina and vulva, the penis, and the mouth. The great news is the HPV vaccine prevents most strains of HPV!

Experts recommend giving the HPV vaccine to boys and girls at 11 or 12 years of age to prevent contracting HPV once they become sexually active. You can also get the vaccine later in life. Many people have mixed feelings about vaccines for themselves and their young ones. Check out this decision-making tool from Montefiore at <https://www.cham.org/health-library/article?id=abo9722> that will help you explore those feelings and make healthy decisions.

DETECT Changes to the Cervix with Pap Smears

Cervical cancer develops slowly, which means it can be spotted and treated in its earliest stages. Reader,

meet the Pap smear: a test that spots changes in the cervix cells. During a Pap smear, a healthcare provider inserts a swab into a patient's vagina and sweeps the cervix, where it collects cells. Those cells are analyzed, and abnormal cells can be treated in various ways. Sadly, most women who are diagnosed with cervical cancer today have not had regular Pap smears or have not received care after an abnormal Pap result.

Many folks skip recommended Pap smears because they feel uncomfortable or nervous about them. People who have experienced unwanted sexual touching may avoid Pap smears and other pelvic exams because the physical contact leads to panic and stress.

Visit <https://www.healthline.com/health/navigating-medical-exams-after-sexual-assault#Tips-to-feel-safe-and-informed-during-your-exam> to learn more about how survivors of sexual abuse can prepare for pap smears and visits to the gynecologist.

Other people forget to schedule their exams at the recommended times or struggle to get time off work. Patient portals like Montefiore's MyChart, <https://mychart.montefiore.org/mychart/Signup>, automatically remind patients of the need to schedule regular Pap smears, HPV tests, and vaccines. The portal allows patients to see the results of past Pap smears, which determines the timing of the next screening.

DETECT HPV with the HPV Test

The HPV test looks for the strains



of HPV that are most likely to cause cancer. It's a newer test than the Pap smear and can alert people with HPV about their higher risk of getting cancer in the future and the need for more screening. Visit <https://www.acog.org/womens-health/infographics/cervical-cancer-screening> or google "ACOG cervical cancer infographic" to learn how often women should get HPV tests and Pap smears.

The cervix deserves your care and protection. Remember, cervical cancer develops slowly and can be spotted with a pap smear and treated early. The HPV vaccine can prevent you from getting HPV, an extremely common STI that causes cancers of

the genitals and mouth in men and women.

To get a pap smear or treatment for abnormal pap results, contact Montefiore's OBGYN team at <https://montefioreeinsteinsteam.org/patient-care/services/womens/contact> and visit Montefiore's Cancer Screening website at <https://montefioreeinsteinsteam.org/cancer/community-outreach-engagement/screenings>. For more information about the HPV vaccine, speak to your doctor or your children's doctor.

Claire Garon MPH, CLC is a senior health educator with the Office of Community & Population Health at Montefiore Health System.

New Police Boss Announces Shake-up at NYPD

By **DAVID GREENE & SILE MOLONEY**

Appointed as the 48th Police Commissioner of the NYPD on Monday, Nov. 25, by New York City Mayor Eric Adams, Jessica Tisch has since announced a series of shake-ups within the top echelon of the City's police department.

On Tuesday, Dec. 31, Tisch announced that John Chell, former Chief of Patrol was named chief of department where he will oversee crime-fighting strategies, quality-of-life initiatives and operational plans.

Chell is a 30-year member of the department, and replaces former NYPD Chief of Department Jeffrey Maddrey, the highest-ranking uniformed police official who abruptly resigned on Friday, Dec. 20, amid allegations he offered overtime work to an NYPD lieutenant, Lt. Quathisha Epps, in exchange for sexual favors, between June 2023 and Dec. 16, 2024, according to an Equal Opportunity Employment discrimination claim filed against the City, as reported by The New York Post.

Epps has been identified as one of the top NYPD overtime earners, pocketing around \$200,000. Maddrey has denied the allegations, saying the sexual encounters with his accuser were consensual. Tisch said federal agents raided Maddrey's home on Thursday, Jan. 2.

Tisch has also named Philip Rivera

as chief of patrol. Rivera will oversee the nearly 15,000 uniformed officers and 3,000 civilian employees who work for the NYPD. Meanwhile, Edward Thompson was named chief of internal affairs and will be responsible for preserving integrity and rooting out corruption within the department.

According to the NYPD, Thompson joined the department in January 1986 and began his career as a patrol officer at the 52nd Precinct. A 38-year veteran of the NYPD, he replaces former Chief Miguel Iglesias who was relieved of his duties on Dec. 21, at which time he notified the department of his intention to retire.

In a press release announcing the shake-up, Tisch said, "In 2025, the NYPD will build on the gains of the past year to make every New York City Neighborhood even safer." She added, "These leaders will ensure we continue to drive down crime and improve quality of life, maintain honor and integrity across the department, and strengthen the bonds of partnership between the police and the people of our great city."



Photo by David Greene

AT AN NYPD press conference in Castle Hill on April 3, 2023, are (l-r) New York City Mayor Eric Adams, NYPD former Chief of Patrol John Chell, and NYPD former Chief of Department Jeffrey Maddrey.

The NYPD shake-up began on Thursday, Dec. 19, when the NYPD announced that Delaney Kempner, the former director of communications for New York State Attorney General Letitia James, was to be named the new deputy commissioner of public information for the police department, effective Jan. 13.

(continued on page 14)



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Public and Community Meetings

The next 52nd **PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meeting will take place on Thursday, Jan. 23, at 7 p.m. at Serviam Gardens, 2848 Bainbridge Avenue, Bronx. Call the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office at (718) 220-5824 to be added to the email distribution list.

The next **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7 (CB7)** general board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 28, at 6.30 p.m. at P.S. 246 Poe Center's Gymnasium, 2641 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10468. (Enter through E 193rd St. between Grand Concourse & Creston Ave.) Contact KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov to be added to the distribution list. All meetings are in person unless otherwise notified by Bronx CB7.

The next **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8** full board (hybrid) meeting will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 14, at 7 p.m. at Manhattan College, 3900 Waldo Avenue, Kelly Commons, Room 5A. Contact BX08@cb.nyc.gov to be added to the distribution list.

The **BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy. South in Apt. B1 (lobby floor). For more details, please contact bedfordmosholu@verizon.net.

New Police Boss Announces Shake-up at NYPD

(continued from page 13)

Kristine Ryan was named deputy commissioner of management and budget effective Jan. 2 and will return to the job she held from February 2020 through December 2023. Yisorel Hecht was named deputy commissioner of information and technology.

It was also announced on Dec. 19 that Alex Crohn will serve as the deputy commissioner of strategic initiatives and that Steven Harte will serve as deputy commissioner of support services.

With the Dec. 19 announcements, Tisch said, "This group of skilled and experienced leaders will answer the public call to transform NYPD technology, modernize our fleet, and elevate the department's voice to make Courtesy, Professionalism, and Respect central to our communication and interaction with the people we serve."

Tisch is the second female police commissioner in the department's history, after former Police Commissioner Keechant Sewell abruptly gave her resignation to Adams in June 2023 after just around a year and a half in the job amid rumors the mayor had overruled her when she had attempted to discipline

Maddrey.

Tisch said, "New Yorkers should have every confidence that these appointments make their police department stronger, our service better, and our city safer. I thank these professionals, and I look forward to working with them as we further reduce crime and increase public trust."



Photo by David Greene

FORMER NYPD CHIEF of Patrol John Chell briefs reporters on a police-involved shooting on Creston Avenue in Bedford Park on Dec. 23, 2023.



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Armory Plans Unveiled

(continued from page 1)

pected to generate nearly \$2.6 billion in economic impact over the next 30 years, creating over 3,000 construction jobs and 360 permanent jobs.

As reported in November, NYC Mayor Eric Adams announced on Nov. 21 that two Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) had been secured with the NYC Building & Construction Trades Council (BCTC) for various, major City development projects, with more to follow, including the Armory project, garnering positive feedback from Sandra Lobo, executive director of the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC), which has campaigned over decades to ensure the armory redevelopment serves the local community and workers both during and post-development and construction.

Lobo was a co-chair of the “Together for Kingsbridge” envisioning process and coalition behind the latest redevelopment of the City-owned Armory, located at West Kingsbridge Road and Jerome Avenue, along with Sanchez.

Elected officials confirmed the construction of the development would indeed be carried out under a project labor agreement, ensuring fair wages and benefits for construction workers. The environmental review is expected to begin this winter, and the uniform land use review procedure is anticipated to commence in mid-2025.

The latest (RFP) bidding process followed the failed Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC) project which fell through amid a further legal dispute at the end of the De Blasio administration over financing concerns. The previous developer denied financing was an issue.

Meanwhile, City officials said the latest development team for the planned mixed-use project will be led by 8th Regiment Partners LLC, who they said was “selected through a competitive request for proposals for the development rights.”

“At the Kingsbridge Armory, our administration saw a historic yet underuti-

lized site as an opportunity to dream and deliver a bold, forward-looking vision for the Bronx,” said Adams. “In just one location, we’re delivering affordable housing for our neighbors, sports fields for our children, community spaces for our families, and so much more.”

He added, “The future of The Bronx rests in the Kingsbridge Armory, a proposal made possible thanks to the partnership of Governor Hochul, Representative Espaillat, and the countless, everyday New Yorkers who made their voices heard. Together, we are building a brighter, better future for The Bronx, starting with the Kingsbridge Armory.”

As reported, led by EDC, countless envisioning workshops were held over nine months with residents to gather their views and preferences on the Armory’s future use, which were later documented in the “Together for Kingsbridge Vision Plan” and shared with prospective development bidders.

EDC officials said the public-engagement process gathered feedback from over 4,000 participants and included over 950 survey responses, nine Community Board meetings, 16 small group discussions, and conversations with approximately 75 additional stakeholders across various industries.

They said participants included residents, local elected officials, as well as representatives from community-based organizations, nearby schools and colleges, health care providers, merchant associations, and labor.

“For decades, Bronx residents have been promised a new Kingsbridge Armory—and we’re partnering with the city to finally get the job done,” said Hochul. “This transformative project will unite communities across The Bronx, provide spaces for recreation and academics, and deliver much-needed affordable housing.”

Espaillat said in part, “Congratulations to the winning proposal, led by the 8th Regiment Partners, to develop El Centro Kingsbridge into a vibrant multi-purpose facility and economic engine that all throughout our community can enjoy for many years to come.”

For her part, Gibson said, in part, “El Centro Kingsbridge has the potential to boost the economy; increase tourism; invest in workforce development and small businesses; and create community space, recreational space, and opportunities for education and emerging markets.”

Meanwhile, Sanchez, who has previously said she grew up in the shadow of the Armory, seeing it from the eyes of a small child as a local castle, said, “As a daugh-



Photo by Adi Talwar

THE KINGBRIDGE ARMORY (file photo).

ter of Kingsbridge, I know firsthand the Kingsbridge Armory represents the vast potential of our community.”

She added, “As this project enters its next stage, I remain committed to the guiding principles set forth in the ‘Together for Kingsbridge Vision Plan’: to prioritize our youth, uplift older adults, foster intergenerational relationships, create jobs and wealth for local workers, grow a regenerative, Bronx-centered economy, and maximize community ownership.”

Sanchez said, “Over nine months, we successfully engaged more than 4,000 community members through 20 community events and 900 survey responses—culminating in the creation of the vision plan. With our community’s priorities as the North Star, I look forward to a close review of the selected proposal. We must ensure that the redevelopment of this great structure is both transformative and equitable for generations to come.”

Lobo said in part, “We are glad to see the City has selected, at long last, a new plan for the transformation of the Kingsbridge Armory. While we are disappointed that our proposed project, La Armería, was not selected, we are eager to understand how the designated plan will meet the City’s Together for Kingsbridge vision.”

She added, “The City’s vision calls for a ‘redevelopment that creates quality jobs, supports career development, [and] elevates entrepreneurs.’ So far, there is only a general list of intended future uses for the Armory, without any concrete information on the programming or partners who will help bring it to life and meet these goals.”

She said this was of concern to those who, after 25 years, want the Armory finally transformed into an economic engine that prepares people for good-paying jobs of today and tomorrow, and maps a path for the power and capital generated by The Bronx to support The Bronx.

“We are convening a Coalition of Accountability made up of faith, community, labor, and small businesses that will continually monitor and advocate for a project that is transparent and genuinely invests in the community that surrounds it,” Lobo said. “The coalition will center its work around four areas: good jobs, community ownership, anti-displacement, and environmental standards. It will also pursue a legally

binding Community Benefits Agreement that ensures these core priorities become a reality.”

She added, “The Armory must be rebuilt by workers who can be sure of their safety, and be home to good union jobs once construction is complete. Its activation cannot jeopardize the economic livelihood of the working people of the Bronx and accelerate the displacement of residents and busi-

nesses. We also seek to understand how the City’s Guiding Principle of community ownership will come to life.”

Lobo concluded, “This is the third attempt to develop the Armory, one that may finally be on the road to [ensuring] this community gets the investment it deserves, while strengthening New York City’s economy,” as the vision articulates. We will remain cautiously optimistic and proactive in our work to achieve this vision, ensuring that our community can withstand the pressures of gentrification and thrive amid the coming changes. Kingsbridge and the Bronx deserve nothing less.”

The project is backed by a \$200 million investment by the City and State governments, \$2 million from the Bronx Borough President’s office, \$12 million from Sanchez’s office, and a \$1.05 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with the support of Espaillat.

City officials said the latest plan is designed to serve both the local community and the broader region and the proposal’s programming is centered around the 180,000-square foot, column-free Drill Hall. They said the development team will lead the design and construction stages of the project, as well as the operation of the renovated Armory.

Gabriella Madruga, principal at Long Island-based Madd Equities, the entity behind 8th Regiment Partners, said in part of the project, “This is a wonderful example of a public-private partnership that will revitalize one of the most unique and historical buildings in New York.”

For his part, New York City and New York State Building and Construction Trades Council President Gary LaBarbera, said, “The redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory is a transformational project that will see this historic structure become another major destination in The Bronx and provide much needed, well-paying union construction jobs for New Yorkers.”

State Sen. Gustavo Rivera (S.D. 33) said he was cautiously optimistic about the project. He said in part, “While this is an overdue step given how long this site has been vacant, I’m committed to maintaining a watchful eye on the new developer to ensure that the new project fosters economic growth, leads in sustainability, and generates good-paying union jobs.”



Photo by Sile Moloney

A LITTLE GIRL wears a “Together for Kingsbridge” button during a community event held on the future of the Kingsbridge Armory at our Lady of Angels Church on Sedgwick Avenue in Kingsbridge on Sunday, Feb. 26, 2023, attended by several elected and City officials, including New York City Mayor Eric Adams, seated to the left of the little girl and her mother. The young mom told the mayor she hoped to see “free” programs at the armory.

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