

NEWS FROM

[JULY]

Gale A. Brewer

MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

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East Midtown Steering Committee announced.

Councilmember Dan Garodnick and I will co-chair a new group to help define future zoning changes and make recommendations to the City Planning Commission about the area surrounding Grand Central Station.

The East Midtown Steering Committee, made up of representatives of community residents, preservationists, real estate owners and developers will conduct a ground-up process to study and identify the area's needs and to develop a framework for future rezoning.

The Steering Committee will begin meeting in September, with the help of a facilitator hired for the purpose, and hold meetings twice a month. The goal is to deliver a final set of recommendations to the Department of City Planning by Spring 2015.

The committee will review a wide range of topics, including the need for updated commercial building stock in East Midtown, the appropriate density for the area, historic preservation, transit and other infrastructure priorities, and environmental concerns.

The Steering Committee's creation was announced in May by Mayor de Blasio as part of a two-step process defining needed improvements in the area. The first phase, a rezoning of Vanderbuilt Avenue, will help finance needed transit and infrastructure improvements.

MBPO succeeds in expanding access to free summer meals for kids across Manhattan!

In early June, I called on the Department of Education to release the list of locations for its summer meals program in time for families to know about the program-- the chief barrier to its use, according to surveys. The DOE responded! My office then prepared flyers listing sites and hours for the summer meals program-- and virtually my entire staff joined with many volunteers to distribute those flyers across Manhattan school sites, while school was still in session last month.

If you'd like a PDF copy of those flyers (organized by school district and neighborhood) listing summer meals sites and hours, please visit my website at www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov/summermeals.

If you'd like to find the nearest location where kids can obtain a summer meal (some sites have both breakfast and lunch), you can search by school name, borough, or zip code at the top of the web page at www.schoolfoodnyc.org.

ArtsForward report from MBPO outlines deficits in arts education in public schools.

Every year the DOE surveys its schools to monitor compliance with state arts education mandates. But the "Annual Arts Survey" (AAS) has flaws that limit its usefulness in ensuring that public school students are effectively exposed to the inspiration that drawing, painting, music and dance can provide.

Last month, my office released "ArtsForward," a 20-page report identifying the AAS flaws and making detailed recommendations to improve arts education in the schools, including putting added focus on middle school arts education, reforming arts education funding, implementing collaborative arts programming, providing new opportunities for teacher certification in the arts, and expanding arts education outreach.

What's more, we've put our money where our study is! We've made two \$10,000 grants to fund in-school arts education targeted for English Language Learner (ELL) and special education students-- two underserved groups. The two schools receiving the grants are: MS 328 Manhattan Middle School for Scientific Inquiry in Washington Heights, and MS 332 University Neighborhood Middle School on the Lower East Side.

You can obtain a pdf copy of [ArtsForward](#) at this link: <http://on.nyc.gov/1qKk8CU> or you can have a hard copy mailed to you by calling my office at 212-669-8300.

EVENTS

Paid Sick Day “Day of Action” July 16.

To help spread the word that employees can start using paid sick leave on July 30, volunteers from my office and the NYC Dept. of Consumer Affairs will fan out across the City to distribute information on the new regulations during the morning and evening rush hours, 7 - 9 am and 5- 7 pm, on Wednesday, July 16.

My office will staff the Union Square area--and other subways need to be staffed, too. If you'd like to help, you can register at this link: <http://on.nyc.gov/1iY5JTy>

The original Paid Sick Days legislation, which I sponsored as City Councilmember, covered employers with 15 or more employees, allowing them up to five paid sick days off from work to care for themselves or a family member. The new law adds employers with five to 14 employees, and was passed by the City Council and signed into law by Mayor de Blasio earlier this year.

Free kayaking on the East River!

Free monthly kayaking has returned to Stuyvesant Cove Park (East 20th Street and the East River) this summer. Volunteers of the Long Island City Community Boathouse (www.licboathouse.org) will sponsor the afternoons on Sunday, July 27, from 2 – 6 PM and again on Sunday, August 10, from 1:15 – 5:15 PM. Kayaks and life jackets will be provided; waivers must be signed before embarking on a 20-30-minute kayak trip.

Harlem Week’s 40th Anniversary begins July 27.

There may be no more famous neighborhood in the world. Harlem Week brings together millions of New Yorkers of all age groups and cultures to explore the unique and diverse essence of Harlem through a series of concerts, festivals and family events. Begun in 1974, the week has expanded to many weeks, and this year's kickoff is Saturday, July 27. Visit www.harlemweek.org for a complete events listing, but save the following two dates for these MBPO-sponsored events:

--The “Elders Jubilee” on August 5th at the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building featuring an indoor/outdoor expo, farmers market and awards luncheon.

--The Percy Sutton Harlem 5K Run & Anti-Gun Violence Walk is on Saturday, August 23rd, at 9 am in St. Nicholas Park at 135th St. Register at <http://www.nyrr.org> or call (212) 423-2286.

Arts Students League opens the summer show at my office gallery.

“Classical Realism” is the summer show now open in my office gallery, open until August 28 during normal business hours at 1 Centre Street, 19th Floor South.

New staff.

Over 40 summer interns have joined my staff, from schools all over the city and country. They are an essential part of how I've always run my offices. They learn, and our city benefits!

[Barbara Sutton](#) has joined my staff as Managing Editor in the communications department. She has worked as a writer and communications strategist for nonprofits ranging from Harvard Divinity School to the YWCA and is a Manhattan resident. She holds a B.A. in journalism and political science from Syracuse University.

[Alexandra Lombardi](#) is also a new hire in the communications shop, in charge of New Media (which isn't so new anymore!). She previously managed digital strategy for NOW-NYC and Middle Sister Wines and graduated with a B.S. in Media, Culture and Communications from New York University.