



Assembly Member Dick Gottfried

Community Update

Manhattan Community Board 4, March 2014

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**Assembly Member
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Manhattan West Text Amendment

On February 19th, I delivered testimony to the New York City Planning Commission on behalf of my local elected colleagues and myself in support of Brookfield's text amendment for the Manhattan West development site between Ninth and Tenth Avenues and 31st and 33rd Streets. This text amendment allows the development to include more outdoor open space in the form of gardens, plazas, terraces, and pathways along with a deck over the existing Dyer Avenue between 31st and 33rd Streets to create a seamless public open space in place of the open cut roadway.

In my testimony, I reiterated Community Board 4's requests for this development: 1) keep the public spaces open to the general public for 24 hours a day; 2) ensure that the affordable residential units be interspersed with the market rate units; 3) include a larger percentage of affordable units in the residential development; 4) continue to include Community Board 4 in decision-making processes as the development moves forward.

Moynihan Station Update: ESDC Issues an RFP to Sell Air Rights over Farley

On February 6th, Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) and the Moynihan Station Development Corporation released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a broker to market and sell the remaining unsold air rights (1.5 million square feet) over the Farley Post Office to help fund the second phase of the Moynihan Station development. This news was alarming to me. Selling such a large portion of development rights for use in the vicinity near Farley could lead to overdevelopment of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Today, my local elected colleagues and I wrote to the ESDC asking that they consider the use of New York City's system of public review for land use-related matters called the Unified Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). ULURP would enable local residents and elected officials, Community Board 4, the City Planning Commission, and the entire City Council

to weigh in on the sale of these development rights. This would help ensure that the surrounding community could benefit from the sale and not become overwhelmed by overdevelopment. In addition, the letter requests that consideration be given to selling the air rights outside of the immediate vicinity.

Upcoming Changes to Services at Social Security Offices

There are changes coming to the services provided at Social Security field offices. Beginning August 2014, field offices will no longer issue Social Security number printouts. If you need proof of your Social Security number and cannot find your card, you will have to apply for a replacement card. Beginning October 2014, field offices will stop providing benefit verification letters, except in emergencies. Benefit verifications are available online, and can be obtained by registering for a "my Social Security" account located at: www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount, or requested through this national toll-free number: (800) 772-1213.

Please do not hesitate to contact my community office ((212) 807-7900) for assistance with this and other matters.

Con Edison Working with Customers on High Winter Bills

This winter's extreme cold weather has caused an increase in gas and electric prices, which is causing financial strain among residential energy customers. Con Ed allows customers to spread their energy costs over a 12-month period to ease the impact of energy price fluctuations. Under a level-payment plan, Con Ed will estimate a customer's yearly energy usage and spread that cost over 12 months. After the year is up, Con Ed will reconcile the estimates with the customer's actual usage. For more information on level-payment plans and other options to help customers manage their bills, go to:

<http://www.coned.com/customercentral/managemybill.asp>.

Residential customers can also save money and cut heating costs with Con Edison Green Team rebates. The rebates encourage customers to make improvements such as replacing older equipment with efficient technology and sealing leaks in their home heating systems. For energy tips and information on Green Team programs, go to:

<http://coned.com/greenteam> or call 1-877-870-6118.

Hudson Guild Early Learning Program

Here's some important information for young children in our community. Pre-K is crucial to helping a child achieve the most he or she can in education and opportunity. I am working in Albany to make pre-K available to every child, with fair funding. But it is available to many children in our community thanks to the Early Learning Program at the Hudson Guild.

You can contact the Hudson Guild using the information below. You can also subscribe to the Hudson Guild newsletter by visiting www.hudsonguild.org.

Chelsea Locations:

Children's Center	Elliott Center
459 West 26th Street	441 West 26th Street
(212) 760-9830	(212) 760-9830

Clinton Location:

410 West 40th Street
(646) 649-2351

Lincoln Square Location:

250 West 65th Street
(212) 760-9830

Upcoming Public Events at FIT

The Fashion Institute of Technology hosts many excellent, free exhibits. Here are some of the upcoming events that will take place at FIT this winter. For more information, please go to:

<https://www.fitnyc.edu/13674.asp>.

- Artspeak 2013-14 Student Exhibition: Illuminating Process – Pomerantz Center Lobby, Seventh Avenue at 27th Street February 8 – March 10, 2014
- Beyond Rebellion: Fashioning the Biker Jacket – Gallery FIT, The Museum at FIT – March 4-April 5, 2014
- Trend-ology – Fashion and Textile History Gallery, The Museum at FIT – Through April 30

IRS Free File

IRS Free File is a service that can help you prepare your taxes for free, offering step-by-step instruction to prepare and "e-file" federal tax re-

turns online. The service is available to all taxpayers who made \$58,000 or less in 2013.

Go to www.IRS.gov/freofile and either choose the company that fits your needs or use the "Help me Find Free File Software" tool. The service is also available in Spanish.

Assembly Passes Early Voting Legislation

Voter turnout in New York is among the lowest rates in the nation, and the difficulty of the voting process is a major cause of this lack of civic participation. The Assembly passed legislation (A689-A) that would allow for early voting in New York, which is available in 32 other states and the District of Columbia. I urge you to contact Senate Majority Coalition Leaders Dean Skelos at Skelos@nyenate.gov and Jeffrey Klein at jdklein@senate.state.ny.us, and request that they bring this bill to the Senate floor for a vote.

Under the measure, early voting would begin 15 days prior to a general election and one week prior to a primary or special election. Early voting polls would be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. each weekday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends. Local boards of election would designate at least five early voting sites in each county (or borough for NYC). Results would not be released until the close of polls on Election Day. The measure also includes provisions to prevent fraud and double voting, which are felonies under New York State election law.

Assembly Passes Legislation to Allow Schools in NYC to Close for the Lunar New Year

Asian Americans represent the fastest growing community in New York City, and they comprise roughly one in six public school students in the City. It is important for the academic calendar to reflect the religious and cultural diversity among students and their families. Schools in areas with a large population of East Asian Americans experience widespread absences on the Lunar New Year, and those absences are marked on the students' permanent records.

The Assembly passed legislation (A.7756) that would allow New York City schools to close on the Lunar New Year and other days where a considerable proportion of students would not likely be in attendance because of a religious or cultural day of observance. It is impractical and wasteful of school resources for classes to be held on days where so many students will likely not attend.

I was proud to vote for this bill, and I urge you to contact Senate Majority Coalition Leaders Dean Skelos at Skelos@nyenate.gov and Jeffrey Klein at jdklein@senate.state.ny.us, and request that they bring this bill to the Senate floor for a vote.

Assembly Passes DREAM Act

The children of undocumented immigrants are currently denied access to a broad range of vital services and programs that would help them succeed and realize their dreams. The Assembly passed the New York State Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act (A2597-A), which would help alleviate the stark disadvantages experienced by these children.

In addition to creating a private scholarship fund (the DREAM fund), this legislation would also allow children of immigrants to apply for state scholarships and the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) to help them pay for their higher education. This bill requires undocumented immigrant students to satisfy certain conditions to be eligible for state tuition assistance programs and educational opportunity programs.

In a highly competitive global economy, we need to take every step in helping students be prepared to enter the workforce. These young people already attend public schools in New York, and it makes no sense for us to deny them the support they need to pursue higher education.

Assembly Passes "Briana's Law"

In August 2010, 11-year old Briana Ojeda suffered an asthma attack and tragically passed away. Briana's mother ran into a police officer as she was rushing her daughter to the hospital, but he said he was unable to perform life-saving CPR.

Police officers do an excellent job of keeping us safe, protecting us from harm, and saving lives. I firmly believe that these brave men and women are capable of learning and administering CPR in emergencies. According to the American Heart Association, effective bystander CPR provided immediately after a sudden cardiac arrest can double or triple a victim's chance of survival. As of 2013, however, only 32 percent of cardiac arrest victims get CPR from such a witness or onlooker.

The Assembly passed legislation (A4974) that would require every police officer in New York State to be retrained and tested in CPR every two years. Briana's family has strongly advocated, fought, and lobbied for this bill ever since their painful loss.

Do Not Call Registry

Signing up for the "Do Not Call" Registry will prohibit calls to you by telemarketers who do not have an existing relationship with you. I encourage you to sign up today if you haven't already done so.

Here are some tips to protect yourself from scammers:

- Identify the caller and his/her company. Ask for his/her address and phone number.
- Only give out personal information if you initiate the call to a reputable company.
- If you're interested in an offer, hang up and call the company back. Verify their legitimacy or do some research on the internet or by asking friends and relatives before you call back.

You can sign up for the Do Not Call registry at www.donotcall.gov or by calling 888-382-1222.

Free Notary Service

My community office at 242 West 27th Street offers free notary service on Tues. and Wed., 10am to 4pm. If you have any questions, feel free to call my staff there at 212-807-7900.

2014 Parking Calendars are Available

Plan ahead so you don't get a ticket. Learn what days parking meters and alternate side parking are suspended. Please call or email my office if you would like a hard copy mailed to you or a PDF sent by email.

Jewish Association Serving the Aging

JASA is an organization dedicated to sustaining and enriching the lives of the aging in New York City. If you are interested in becoming an advocate in your community, learning how to mobilize your neighbors, or navigating Medicare and Social Security, I encourage you to enroll in JASA's Institute for Senior Action. The class is held every Thursday from March 6th through May 15th (except April 17th) and runs from 10:00am to 2:00pm.

This 10-week education, leadership, and advocacy program teaches older adults ways of becoming engaged in civic affairs and social action. You will learn directly from heads of non-profit agencies, elected officials and community leaders. For more information on how to apply, please contact (212) 273-5282 or ifsa@jasa.org or visit JASA's website at www.jasa.org.