

THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

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President

Josh Pepper

Editor

Ray Schwartz (tappsch@nyc.rr.com)

District Leaders

Bob Botfeld
Cynthia Doty

State Committee

Lynn Thomas

OCTOBER 10, 2007

FEATURED SPEAKERS: Dr. Mary E. O'Brien, MD,
Physicians for a National Health Program

Steve Max, Club Member

DATE: Wednesday, October 10, 2007

TIME: 8:00 PM

PLACE: American Youth Hostel (HI-NY)
891 Amsterdam Avenue at 103rd Street

ROOM: Chapel

AGENDA

7:45 PM Sign-in
8 PM Call to Order

1. President's Report & Announcements
2. District Leaders' Reports
3. Steve Max, Club Member
4. Dr. Mary E. O'Brien, MD, Physicians for a National Health Program
5. Discussion of Presidential Candidates by Club Members
6. Presidential Straw Poll
7. New Business

8. Adjournment

CALENDAR

Mon., Oct 15, 7PM
Presidential Forum
PLACE: Symphony Space, 95th St. & Broadway

Wed., Oct. 24, 8 PM
Three Parks Board Meeting
Place: HINY 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Sat., Oct. 27, Noon – 2 pm
United for Peace & Justice Rally/March
Union Square, Details to come

Tues., Nov. 6, 2007 Election Day

Wed., Nov. 14, 8 pm
Three Parks Meeting, PLACE: HINY, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wed., Nov. 28, 8 PM
Three Parks Board Meeting
Place: HINY, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Sun., Dec. 2, 5 PM – 8 PM
Three Parks Holiday Party
Place: HINY, 891 Amsterdam Ave at 103rd St.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Josh Pepper

This will likely be my last column as President of this club. I have accepted a position with the Office of the Attorney General of New York State, and the job prohibits me from being an officer of a party organization such as Three Parks. Thus, I will reluctantly be resigning as president at the end of October. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as president, and I hope to continue to see you all at less political events.

At our last meeting, we heard from **Assembly-member Danny O'Donnell**, civil-rights litigator **Paul Sonn**, and **Lionelle Hamanaka** from Military Families Speak Out. This month's meeting will be about health care, and club member **Steve Max** will make a presentation about our current system and about the competing plans for universal health care in this country. Also, **Dr. Mary O'Brien** from Physicians for a National Health Program will talk about their plan for a single payer national health insurance.

Personally, I prefer a single-payer system. Any system that involves competing payers will encourage the insurance companies to do everything possible to avoid paying doctor bills, as they do now, and the result is huge waste as the payers impose unneeded costs on everyone else. With a single-payer system, the government payer has no such incentive. I also think co-payments are a necessary part of any such system to ensure that doctors do not have incentives to perform unnecessary tests or procedures. No matter what system of universal health care this country adopts, we will have to switch to single-payer eventually. It is inevitable. Unfortunately, the only presidential candidate who recognizes this is Dennis Kucinich.

Also, at our meeting on October 10, the club will hold a straw poll of the members' support for their respective candidates. Members will have the opportunity on that day to speak on behalf of their favored candidate. If you want to speak at that meeting on behalf of a candidate, please send me an e-mail at jpepper9@nyc.rr.com letting me know which candidate you support so I can be sure to call on you at the meeting. I encourage everyone to come to the meeting and speak on behalf of your favored candidate.

On October 15, at 7 pm at Symphony Space, Three Parks and the other west-side clubs are sponsoring a presidential forum. This should be a major event, possibly with media coverage, and I strongly encourage you all to attend.

ROLE OF COMMUNITY VOICES IN COMMUNITY PLANNING

By District Leader Cynthia Doty

When the City Council voted unanimously in favor of rezoning our area from 97th St. to 110th St., it was a victory for **grassroots community organizing**. Two and a half years ago Extell unveiled the drawings for its towers and immediately residents mobilized in outrage and demanded the government change the rules to protect our homes and our neighborhood's diversity. This organized mobilization persisted right up to the very last vote. Hundreds and hundreds of community members protested, rallied, wrote letters, collected petitions, attended meetings, and testified at hearings. They devoted countless hours of their **volunteer** time. The elected officials took notice of the huge numbers that turned out and responded by working hard to craft the new zoning map. Our Community Board also listened and stewarded the zoning through the ULURP process, forcefully expressing the community will. And even though the Jewish Home and Hospital circumvented the community review part of the process by ignoring community meetings and asking the electeds to carve their lots out of the map, the community stayed mobilized and forced them to negotiate and compromise. In the end, JHH had to address the community's needs and concerns. Ultimately they adjusted their plans.

This was good, responsible urban planning from the bottom up. This was neighbors coming together in community action to demand that government preserve and protect their neighborhood while allowing for responsible development for the future. This was the community enacting the true spirit of the City Charter.

Unfortunately, our bottom up, community-based planning process may be the exception and not the rule. Just to our north Community Board 9 and that local neighborhood are struggling to be heard as Columbia University tries to expand

into Harlem. During the summer CB9 voted unanimously in favor of their own planning blueprint for the area (a 197-A) and against Columbia's rezoning plan (a 197-C) unless 10 specific concerns were resolved, with hundreds of people testifying that Columbia's 197-C in its current form did not comply with the 197-A. CB9 worked for years to develop their 197-A plan, assessing the existing needs of the community and specifically articulating their vision for the future. They took the process very seriously and expected the resulting plan to be regarded as a responsible development plan that would truly enhance their current community. To them it was not just some "feel-good" academic exercise.

However, now it appears that all this community planning, testifying and voting may be ignored and Columbia's plan approved. Instead of making Columbia adapt its expansion plans to complement and comply with the community's vision, government officials seem to favor letting Columbia dominate the area with only minor promises of give-backs to the locals, many done as side-deals without community involvement.

The City Charter created a process whereby the community would play a major role in planning its neighborhoods. Our government should honor that process and respect the community voices. Real community planning builds real community development.

**An Invitation to the
Three Park Annual Holiday Party
Sunday, Dec. 2, 2007
5 PM – 8 PM**

Hostelling International, 891 Amsterdam Ave.
at 103rd. St., Chapel Room

Sign up to help with planning, set up and decorations,
food or clean up at the Oct. 10 meeting or contact
Lauren Williams at LaurenWilliams1@cs.com.

DISTRICT LEADER REPORT

By Bob Botfeld

It is done. We all did it. On Tuesday, September 25, the New York City Council unanimously passed Land Use 537 and 538, our Upper West Side 97th-110th Street zoning amendments to the New York City Zoning map. We have preserved

a large chunk of Manhattan as a very livable neighborhood for us and its future residents.

As our former district leader and Councilmember Phil Reed eloquently testified, it only took not two but twenty years to do. Three Parks was instrumental in fighting an initial up zoning in 1989. He also noted that a community's plan and wishes should not be held hostage every time an institution or business threatens to leave unless special accommodations are made for them. It is a time worn threat. In the end a reasonable compromise was reached with the Jewish Home and Hospital. Most of the block on 106th street will conform to the new zoning because the luxury housing portion of the development on 106th street will be kept to the height of the new 8A zoning or 120 feet. Only the new hospital building will be permitted the equivalent of only an additional three stories to a height of 150 feet. Importantly, the low rise character of 105th street will be maintained.

The negotiations were coordinated by Councilmember Melissa Mark-Viverito and included representatives from Community Board 7, Three Parks Independent Democrats, Manhattan Valley Preservation Coalition, Westsiders for Responsible Development, DEBNA, and the 105th Street HFDC.

Again, a final thanks to our Councilmembers Inez Dickens and Melissa Mark-Viverito for all their work and support on the zoning. It would not have happened without them.

**NEW YORK STATE PRESIDENTIAL
PRIMARIES**

The presidential primary in New York State will be on February 5, 2008. .Based upon my unscientific sampling of conversations with club members, my sense is that many of us are still undecided and that among those who already have a preference the support is varied.

Petitioning for the primary begins on October 30, 2007 and petitions must be filed by December 6, 2007. For those new members, it might be useful to know that during this petitioning period, the club role has generally been to support all our members' efforts to help whatever candidate is their choice. This enables all club members to work for their preferred candidate with the assis-

tance of the club. We will try to have the petitions for all the major candidates available for the November meeting. And of course, our famous buttons for sale already include buttons for all the major candidates and even the non-candidate, Al Gore.

REMARKS AT CITY COUNCIL MEETING

By Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito

The rezoning plan we are voting on today is a true victory for the communities of the Upper West Side and Manhattan Valley and the culmination of a two-year process. This community, in true partnership with all local elected officials, has engaged in a grassroots campaign to protect itself against aggressive overdevelopment that is running rampant throughout this city and threatens to displace long-term local residents. This process reflects community planning at its best and is one every person involved should be extremely proud of.

In particular, I am proud of the collaborative efforts of the Manhattan Valley Coalition, Community Board 7, and Jewish Home & Hospital. My office worked diligently to facilitate an ongoing dialogue between a valued community facility, JHH, and its Manhattan Valley neighbors to address a request made late in the process by Jewish Home to be exempt from the proposed rezoning thereby allowing their campus to remain under the old zoning. This request, obviously, was not well received. It was felt by many in the community the open and transparent process that had transpired during the past two years was being usurped and they sure let me, and everyone willing to listen, know it.

There were many obstacles to the Jewish Home's request but despite this initial resistance all parties--Community Board 7, the Manhattan Valley community and Jewish Home and Hospital--decided to sit at the table and begin to talk to see if a consensus could be reached. As a result of our joint efforts the rezoning we are voting on today will allow Jewish Home and Hospital's campus to remain under the old zoning guidelines. But, the community was not about to let them off the hook that easy. A memorandum of agreement was worked out by the local residents and the Jewish Home outlining a number of con-

cessions, community benefits if you will. These concessions will help to protect the surrounding neighborhood during major construction that will occur as the Jewish Home rebuilds its campus to provide not only CB 7 but New York City a state of the art facility to better care for our elders. This MOA is groundbreaking in that all parties have agreed to sign a contract that will be drafted by a neutral party and subject to binding arbitration.

This agreement has far more teeth than the standard community benefits agreement and hopefully will serve as a successful model of what can be achieved when all parties negotiate in good faith.

Furthermore, our collective efforts have also obtained a restrictive covenant to be filed against the deed limiting the height of both buildings on the campus (the parcel to be sold privately on the property as well as the nursing home) and restricting the use so that any future renovations and/or construction on the property will stay in context with the surrounding neighborhood thereby honoring and staying true to the spirit of the proposed rezoning.

Lastly, I would like to thank all those who contributed to this success. My colleague Inez Dickens who shares this rezoning with me, Land Use Chair Melinda Katz who really helped get us through the finish line and whose guidance helped me tremendously, Speaker Quinn—thank you. I would like to give a special thanks to my staff Ede Fox. Also, the land use staff Gail Benjamin, and Alonzo Carr. Ramon Martinez, thanks. And the most important thanks of all, the Upper West Side and Manhattan Valley community whose support was key to allowing the revised rezoning to occur. Shelly Fine, Chair of Community Board 7 who is here with us today despite a traffic accident that he suffered on the way to one of the negotiation meetings last week. Thank you for your leadership. We wish you well in your recovery. Thanks to my colleagues for your indulgence. This is truly a wonderful day for my district and I wanted to take a moment to share it with all of you.

Presidential Primary in NYS

On February 5th, 2008 NYS will hold its Primaries to choose candidates for US President and

delegates to the Democratic and Republican National Conventions. In the 15th Congressional District we will have 6 Delegates (3 Male and 3 Female) and 1 Alternate (Male). In the 8th District it will be the same, except the Alternate will be Female.

In Memoriam

By Judy Wood

It saddens me to write this obituary of James Anderson, a Three Parks member for many years. You may remember him as a very tall outspoken guy who asked piercing questions of our leading politicians when they appeared at our meetings, including Schumer, Spitzer and A. Cuomo. I met him at FIT from which he graduated and where he worked. He was a strong union worker, member of SEIU, and a man who cared about the issues of our day. I brought him to our club which he joined and attended until recently. He will be missed.

POLITICAL DATES TO REMEMBER

October 12, 2007

Last day to change enrollment for 2008 primaries.

November 6th, 2007

Election Day, Polls open 6AM to 9PM

October 30, 2007

Petitioning begins for NY Presidential Primary

December 3-6th, 2007

Filing of petitions for NY Presidential Primary

January 11th, 2008

Last day to Register to Vote in Presidential Primary

January 29th, 2008

Postmark date needed for Absentee Ballot Applications

February 4th, 2008

Last day to hand deliver Absentee Ballot Applications

February 4th, 2008

Postmark date for Absentee Ballots

February 5th, 2008

NY Presidential Primary, Polls open 6AM to 9PM

Call 1-866-VOTENYC or 1-212-VOTENYC to verify your voter registration, especially if you did not receive a confirmation card or your polling site information from the Board of Elections.

PRESIDENTIAL FORUM OCTOBER 15

Three Parks and the other west-side clubs are jointly sponsoring a presidential campaign forum on Monday, October 15, at 7 pm at Symphony Space, which is located at 95th and Broadway. All of the presidential campaigns have been invited to send speakers to answer all of your questions about the candidates. Everyone should come and represent Three Parks at this exciting event!

The 2007 Judicial Convention

By Alan Flacks

The 2007 Democratic Party's Judicial Nominating Convention for the First Judicial District (Manhattan) was predictable. In the last few years, there have been few floor fights at the convention for State Supreme Court Justice because the actual "vote" is done beforehand by telephone as candidates line up support, and those without enough delegate support concede and drop out--much as the Presidential primary elections determine the party's nominee well before the actual convention.

The Party's screening panel reported Cynthia Kern, Manuel Mendez, and Saliann Scarpulla (all currently Civil Court Judges) as the most highly qualified of eight applicants who sought the nomination for the one "open" seat this year (created by the mandatory retirement of Justice Silbermann), along with prior panel-approved candidates Lucy Billings, Paul Feinman, Judith Gische, and Shirley Kornreich (all acting Supreme Court Justices), who also sought the nomination. In addition, three incumbent Supreme Court Justices, Sheila Abdus Salaam, Fern Fisher, and Charles Ramos, whose terms were expiring, sought re-election.

By the night of the convention, most candidates knew that they had few, if any, votes, and did not actively seek the designation for the "open" seat. [Incumbents Abdus-Salaam, Fisher, and Ramos were readily re-designated without opposition.] However, a "dog and pony" show let every judge candidate be nominated and seconded for the

OCTOBER 27, 2007 ANTI-WAR DEMONSTRATION

United for Peace and Justice is organizing an anti-war demonstration on October 27 to take place just north of Union Square on Broadway.

The march will assemble at noon and begin at 1pm. Additional information is available at the United for Peace and Justice Website. Three Parks is planning to go to the demonstration as a group with our banner. Further information will be made available shortly.

ONLINE ACTIVISM

By Anna Spiro

While the Three Parks monthly meetings and daily perusal of *The New York Times* work relatively well in terms of keeping us up-to-date in terms of what's happening politically, I sometimes find that issues in which I might be interested aren't covered at all or are covered only after some crucial vote has been taken and it's too late to do anything about it. For this reason, I am on the e-lists of organizations such as *MoveOn.org* and *AlGore.com*, and often, but not always, I sign one or another or their petitions.

Even more sophomoric than the NYTimes ad which MoveOn ran was the reaction in Congress, where many members of the House and Senate, including our representative Congressman Rangel, voted to censure the organization for running the ad. (Just now, checking online very quickly, I found that only Wikipedia actually covered this story – however, no one at Mr. Rangel's office which I called in opposition to my Representative's action denied this.) Particularly interesting about the Wikipedia notice regarding the censuring resolution was the list of horrible, I would say libelous ads that had been taken out by dear Republican friends and totally escaped censure – and in some cases cost the Democrats Congressional seats.

I personally would like to see some sort of Three Parks or Progressive Democrats in NYC create an online blog. However, as this doesn't exist, I would encourage our members to check out both MoveOn.org and Algore.com and to consider signing the occasional petition which just might express your sentiments.

"Silbermann 'open' seat, and then give a brief speech, ending with a "I withdraw my candidacy this year, but hope to be before you again the next"; that is, all except for Paul Feinman and Lucy Billings. An anticipated contest with a roll-call vote was in the offing, but at the last minute, Lucy Billings conceded that she didn't have the majority of votes and withdrew leaving Paul Feinman as the candidate. According to Feinman's campaign manager, he had between 95 and 100 delegate votes, while Billings said that she had a solid 47 votes of the 128 delegates. [Abdus-Salaam, Fisher, and Ramos accepted the Republican line at that party's convention later, while Feinman did not seek it, saying "I am a Democrat."]

Your Three Parks delegates supported candidates as follows: Milivoy Samurovich and Theresa Canter were for Billings, Steve Straus supported Feinman, and Alan Flacks favored Saliann Scarpulla.

And in the Manhattan Civil Court races, as reported in the last newsletter, all was quiet in New York County, except in the East Side Ninth District. However, Andrea Masley is the Democratic party candidate. Mary Rosado's quest reached a dead-end on 14th August, 2007, when the NYC Board of Elections commissioners accepted the revised Manhattan Borough clerk's report which showed that Rosado had only 1,284 valid signatures of 6,724 submitted (with 1,500 required for the designation). Of the invalid signatures, 4,380 were "out-of-district." The Four Jerrys (Skurnik, Koenig, Goldfeder, and Nadler) have pointed out that this is a hard district in which to gather elector signatures primarily because of the difficulty of access to voters in doormen buildings.

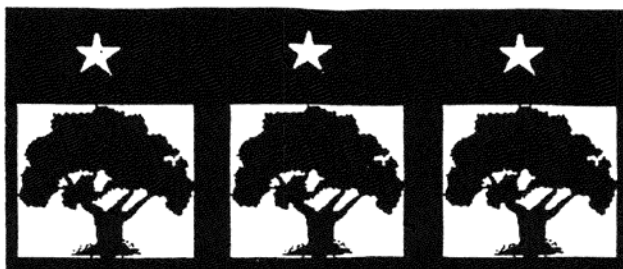
ART IN THE PARK AT STRAUS PARK

Sat., Oct, 13, 11AM – 5 PM
(Rain date 10/14)

106th Street & Broadway/ West End Ave.
All day festival of artists, music and food
Sponsored by the Friends of Straus Park

The Submissions Deadline for the Next Newsletter is October 31, 2007

Send submissions to tappsch@nyc.rr.com



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Cathedral Station P.O. Box 1316 • New York, NY 10025 (212) 866-6378

Please pay your 2007 dues by filling out the form below and bringing it to the next meeting or by mailing it with your check to:

Three Parks Independent Democrats
Cathedral Station P.O. Box 1316
New York, N.Y. 10025
Attn: Treasurer

2007 MEMBERSHIP FORM

New Member ___
Renewal ___

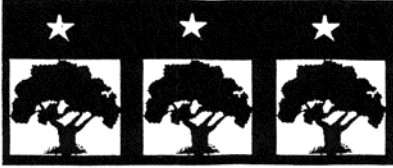
Membership Category -- Check One

Individual (\$20) _____
Family -- two adults in the same household (\$30) _____
Student/Senior Citizen/Low Income (\$8) _____
Sponsor (\$40) _____ Patron (\$100) _____

Name _____ Date _____
Address _____ Apt. # _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone (H) _____ (W) _____
Email _____

Check here if you prefer to receive the newsletter via email.

Please make out all checks to "Three Parks Independent Democrats - Dues 2007"



Three Parks Independent Democrats
Cathedral Station P.O. Box 1316
New York, NY 10025

NEXT MEETING

Wed. Oct., 10, 2007

**Health Care
Presidential Straw Poll**