

THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

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Bob Botfeld
Cynthia Doty

State Committee

Lynn Thomas
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OCTOBER 12, 2011

FEATURED TOPIC & SPEAKERS: SAVING THE HISTORIC UPPER WEST SIDE: Andrew Dolkart, Director, Columbia University Historic Preservation Program; Simeon Bankoff, Executive Director, Historic Districts Council; West End Preservation Society; Landmark West!

DATE: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12th

TIME: 8:00 PM

PLACE: The Youth Hostel
891 Amsterdam Avenue at 103rd Street

ROOM: Chapel/Ballroom

AGENDA

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

1. President's Report & Announcements
2. District Leaders' Reports
3. Saving the Historic Upper West Side

4. New Business
5. Adjournment

CALENDAR

Wednesday, October 26, 2011
Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wednesday, November 9, 2011
Three Parks Meeting, 8 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wednesday, November 16, 2011
Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

SUNDAY, December 4, 2011
Three Parks Holiday Party, 5:30 to 8:30 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

President's Column

By Daniele Gerard

Many thanks to last month's speakers, State Senator Bill Perkins, Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell, and Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito, for bringing us up to date on legislative activity over the past few months and for their help on the Three Parks campaign to Save Our Stores. I would also like to thank all of them for their patience in waiting to speak!

October's meeting will feature experts on saving the West Side's historic buildings from 89th Street to 107th Street. Andrew S. Dolkart, Director, Columbia University Historic Preservation Program, Simeon Bankoff, Executive Director, Historic Districts Council, and speakers from the West End Preservation Society and Landmark West! will describe how they are fighting against the increasing mallification of Manhattan. We are lucky to have them working to preserve the distinct historical heritage in this area.

In recent tabling activities, Three Parks has gathered over 1,000 letters to ban fracking that we will soon deliver to Governor Cuomo's staff (this is in addition to the 1,000 we delivered in 2010). We have given 1,000 petition signatures to Senator Schumer on preserving and strengthening Social Security and 1,000 letters to deny license extensions to Indian Point. Over the summer, Three Parks also got hundreds of signatures to save rent stabilization; we are still collecting hundreds more on the Save Our Stores initiative. The District Leaders and the Board of Directors would like to express our gratitude to our members, friends, and neighbors who helped gather the signatures and sign all these letters and petitions.

We can all be proud of our active and involved community!

District Leader Report

By Bob Botfeld

PROGRESS REPORT ON SAVE OUR NEIGHBORHOOD STORES: The proposed upper west side storefront street zoning plan

There has been good progress in the campaign to extend the proposed upper west side street frontage zoning so that the north-south commercial avenues in our Manhattan Valley neighborhood from West 96th Street to West 110th Street are also included in the plan.

Over 350 neighbors have offered to help. They are telling their neighbors, circulating petitions, and posting notices in their buildings. In addition, hundreds more have simply signed our petitions. At our club's September meeting, the Three Parks members overwhelmingly passed the resolution supporting the extension. Last week, the Broadway Democrats executive board voted to support the resolution and will introduce the resolution before the full club for a vote at their October meeting.

Most of the business owners or managers on Amsterdam Avenue have signed on to support the extension. Many store and restaurant proprietors have prominently posted our notices. Several of these businesses are also circulating our petitions and helping build support. In particular, the owners of Buster's Café, Mama's Pizzeria, Neighborhood, El Rey Del la Caridad, Champion Bicycles, Thai Market, and Silver Moon Bakery (on Broadway) have been especially helpful. Please consider patronizing these community minded businesses and thanking them for their help.

The elected officials have been unanimous and vocal in their support. Council members Melissa Mark-Viverito and Inez Dickens, State Senators Bill Perkins and Adriano Espaillat, and State Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell have all either written or called the Department of City Planning (DCP) and/or publicly voiced their support. Finally, Mel Wymore, Chair of Community Board 7, has been tireless and invaluable in getting the DCP to reconsider the original plan and to delay certification until the

area from 96th to 110th has been reevaluated for inclusion.

Meeting with Senator Schumer on Indian Point and Social Security

By Judy Wood

A coalition of members of Three Parks, Park River Independent Democrats, and the Frederic E. Samuel Community Democratic Club met with Senator Charles E. Schumer on Friday, September 9 to present our position requesting denial of license renewals to the Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant. Current licenses expire in 2013 and 2015.

We explained that Indian Point, with a capacity of over 2,000 megawatts, provides energy from only 550 of them to New York State; the rest is sold elsewhere. Therefore, New Yorkers bear the risk of this aging and dangerous plant while others get the benefit of nearly 75 percent of its power. Moreover, notwithstanding other figures circulating, New York and Westchester get approximately 12.5 percent of their power from Indian Point. (New York City is required by law to provide 80 percent of its power from within the five boroughs.) We also highlighted that Nuclear Regulatory Commission standards governing relicensing are practically non-existent; recent flooding, tornado and earthquake scares, especially as IP is located on an earthquake fault, have been too severe to ignore.

In terms of safety, the NRC, Entergy, and danger from spent fuel located on site, the Senator indicated support for our positions. The Senator asked if New York could be guaranteed energy from new power projects, existing transmission lines, or solar energy bills being proposed. He wanted to know that alternative power is realistically available, that there is an on-the-spot alternate plan. He said that the best thing we can do is to get Governor Cuomo to come up with a plan. He mentioned domestic solar and an existing wind project by the Iberdrola Company. After the meeting, we sent the Senator further information about replacement energy's being readily available.

We had an opportunity briefly to discuss Social Security. Steve Max presented the Senator with 1,000 signatures on our Three Parks petition; Schumer stated he agreed with all five points about not reducing benefits. We also asked Senator Schumer his view of President Obama's proposed extension and continuation of the Social Security payroll tax cut. Many of us are quite concerned because income lost to Social Security is to be repaid out of the federal budget. This means that for the first time, Social Security is contributing to the deficit and that in future years repayment hinges on the Democrats' at least retaining their strength in the Senate.

Senator Schumer told us that he would only support the tax cut measure if it provided that the money be repaid to Social Security automatically and daily. He added that the Republicans could not change the repayment procedure as long as the Democrats retained 41 Senate seats, enough to filibuster any change. We noted that President Roosevelt had not intended Social Security funding to be involved in any way with the Congressional budget process.

State Committee Report

By Daniel Marks Cohen, State Committee, 69th
AD

On Wednesday, September 21 I testified before the NYS Legislative Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment (also known as LATFOR), which is responsible for redrawing the district lines. The LATFOR panel is a bit of a sham, as the members are drawn from the Assembly and the State Senate, and each majority group draws the lines to protect incumbents. I supported an independent redistricting panel, and for a while between the governor's support and Ed Koch's NY Uprising group pressuring the legislature, it looked like an independent panel might come into being. Despite majorities in both houses supporting such a panel, and the governor endorsing it, it somehow never materialized. Faced with the status quo I decided that providing input into a flawed process is better than no input at all, so I testified before LATFOR, and my comments, edited for space and continuity, are reprinted below.

“My name is Daniel Marks Cohen, and I am the New York State Democratic Committeeman representing the 69th Assembly District. The part of the Upper West Side I live in – between 96th Street and 125th Street, is the poorest portion of the 69th Assembly District <<http://zipskinny.com/zipcompare.php>>, it is the least served in terms of services and transportation <<http://www.straphangers.org/pokeyaward/10/>>, and has more crime <http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/crime_prevention/crime_statistics.shtml>

I believe at least one reason for its consistent and uneven status is that fact that the 69th is cut up into multiple pieces – particularly the northern end of the district – including two Congressional districts: the 8th by Representative Jerry Nadler, and the 15th by Representative Charlie Rangel; three State Senate districts: Tom Duane of the 29th, Bill Perkins of the 30th, and Adriano Espaillat of the 31st; and four City Council districts: Gale Brewer of the 6th, Robert Jackson of the 7th, Melissa Mark-Viverito of the 8th, and Inez Dickens of the 9th. With 10 different elected officials representing one community at three different levels of government, it is no wonder that people get confused about whom to talk to about one issue or another. Looking more closely at each situation:

In Congress we are ably represented by Representatives Nadler and Rangel. I urge the panel to move the lines between the Rangel and Nadler districts north, so that the 69th AD is not cut in half between the two districts. My parents have lived at 99th Street and Riverside Drive for over 40 years, and just in the past two decades they have been represented by three different currently serving members of Congress due to the redrawing of the lines. This kind of willful disregard for natural neighborhoods and communities cannot lead to quality political leadership or consistent civic participation if there is no continuity from year to year.

In the State Senate it is challenging to combine districts to make them more compact while still making them numerically and ethnically balanced, but surely something can be done where portions of the Upper West Side are

represented by one State Senator who lives in Washington Heights, another who lives in Harlem while a third lives in Chelsea – three neighborhoods that are vastly different by any measure, and whose elected officials have appropriately different priorities in representing their majority neighborhood constituencies, leaving the Upper West Side without an appropriate champion for its needs. This is not to disparage in any way the current elected leadership, just recognition of the limits of human attention, resources, and time – and which no elected official, no matter how talented, can overcome. Furthermore on the West Side we are inheritors of a long skinny district – the 31st – currently represented by Mr. Espaillat. This district included two disparate neighborhoods – the Upper West Side and Washington Heights – forced together in an attempt to punish its predecessor, Eric Schneiderman by creating a district that would lead to a primary that might remove a thorn from the side of Albany power brokers. But, thankfully he won repeatedly and last year was elected to be the state’s Attorney General. While I am thrilled at Mr. Schneiderman’s elevation to higher office, I implore the Task Force not to leave the 31st unchanged, but to redraw it so it is either fully on the West Side, or fully in Washington Heights, rather than as it is now, stretched between the two.

Perhaps the most egregious district lines are the ones in the City Council, which I know this Task Force is not responsible for; but, nonetheless, this body can set an example, and if it begins to undo some of the messy work enacted over the past few cycles, it might inspire the Council to follow suit. Today you can stand on the corner of 96th Street and Broadway, and depending on which corner you stand on, you can be in three different districts. Surely one side of Broadway is not so different than the other that it requires the attention of two members of the city council, let alone three. Perhaps they could be drawn to include all of the West Side above 96th Street in one district, or even better, all of the West Side from 59th Street to 125th Street – similar to the outlines of the Community Board. I will close on this point – just shy of fifty years ago in 1963 the community board lines were drawn to map out constituencies,

neighborhoods, and communities with similar needs and demands
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/cau/downloads/pdf/community_board_basics.pdf> While the people within those lines have changed over time the lines themselves are still true. If the Task Force is looking for a guide to what districts should look like, I urge them to compare their lines to the lines of the community boards. The closer to those community board lines the election districts are drawn, the happier their constituents will likely be. Thank you for your time and consideration.”

Next West End Avenue Historic District Hearing Coming on October 25

By Cynthia Doty

With two hearings complete, we must begin to rally for the third and final of these three West End Avenue public hearings. On Tuesday, October 25, the LPC will hold a public hearing for the **Riverside - West End Historic District Extension II**, encompassing West 89th to 109th Streets, anchored by West End Avenue. Stay tuned for more information on this public hearing, as well as public information sessions in advance of this event. For details of the proposed district go to the West End Preservation Society's Web site at <westendpreservation.org>

The Judicial Convention

By Theresa Canter

The Judicial District Court Convention for the 1st JD was held on September 21 at the Harlem Hospital Center. The purpose of the convention is for the Judicial Delegates to nominate the candidates for the Office of Justice of the Supreme Court for the general election in November. The Three Parks Independent Democrats elected delegates were Alan Flacks, Theresa Canter, Milivoy Samurovich and Corine Petty.

There were three open positions, with a total of thirteen candidates, and two incumbents seeking re-election. Nine were "reported out" by the independent screening panels this year and four additional were eligible because they

were reported out of the screening panels in two of the last four consecutive years.

Going into the convention it became clear that Deborah Kaplan and Analisa Torres had the support for their nominations. For the third slot there was prior behind the scenes competition, but the Three Parks favored candidate, Ellen Gesmer, prevailed with the continued support from independent Judicial Delegates throughout the county. Additionally, the two incumbents, Justices Joan Madden and Laura Visitacion-Lewis, were nominated for re-election.

Next year there will be four open positions with potentially 17 candidates. Three Park's own favorite son, Anil Singh, reported out of the panel for a second time this year as "most highly qualified" and will be automatically eligible for consideration in 2012. We wish him well and we will again give him our support at next year's convention.

NEW YORK CITY LABOR CHORUS GALA 20th ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

Town Hall, Saturday, November 5 at 8:00 p.m.

With a membership drawn from some 20 different metro area labor unions, the chorus performs an international repertoire ranging from folk, gospel, jazz, and classical. We sing at union rallies and on picket lines, the United Nations, concert halls, and anti-war marches. We sing to commemorate events as varied as Pete Seeger's 90th birthday celebration at Madison Square Garden, Paul Robeson's centennial at Carnegie Hall, the 100th anniversary of the Triangle Fire at Cooper Union, and the 200th birthday of Abraham Lincoln at Riverside Church.

As Clyde Haberman said in the New York Times recently about the Labor Chorus, "if ever public service unions needed to have their voices heard, it is now, when they find themselves demonized...."

So come out and hear us sing loud and clear for labor. Tickets at \$25.00/\$15.00 can be purchased from Judy Wood, chorus member, and first V.P. of Three Parks, or at the chorus Web site, <NYCLC.org>

Help Decide How to Spend \$1 Million Dollars to Improve Our Community!

Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito has launched an exciting new initiative for District 8, called participatory budgeting, whereby residents will be able to directly determine how to spend \$1 million in capital funds. The process officially begins with a series of neighborhood assemblies, brainstorming sessions open to the public during which ideas for community projects will be generated. At these assemblies, local residents will also have the opportunity to sign up as budget delegates, who will help transform the ideas that emerge at the assemblies into concrete proposals for a public vote in March.

Please come to one or more of these events to ensure that your voice is heard! And help spread the word to all in our community. Additional background information on the entire participatory budgeting process is available at <www.mmviverito.com/pbnyc> Food provided at all assemblies. Additionally, free child care at the evening assemblies.

October 11 - 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Youth Hostel
891 Amsterdam Ave @ 104th Street
English with Spanish Translation

October 19 - 9:30 a.m. to noon

SENIOR ASSEMBLY - Union Settlement
237 E. 104th Street
English with Spanish Translation
Note: This assembly will be geared toward seniors.

October 20 - 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Children's Aid Society Frederick Douglass
Center
885 Columbus Ave @ 104th Street
English with Spanish Translation

Condolences

Three Parks Independent Democrats extends condolences to member Mary Geissman and her family on the passing of her mother.

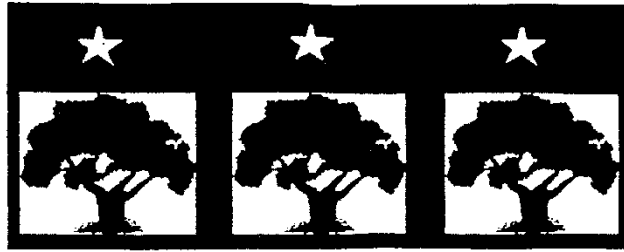
The New York Affordable Reliable Electricity Alliance aka "NY Area"

By Brenda Morgan

During the past few weeks I have received – as other members have – several very expensive mailings from "NY Area" that include a postpaid reply card "to ensure your voice is heard." The pre-checked YES states that "I recognize that New York needs a wide array of clean and affordable energy sources, including nuclear, wind, and solar power." However, the clear and evident focus is on nuclear power and specifically in support of Indian Point Plant.

The Web site is sophisticated and it is difficult to determine who or what is providing the substantial financing required for this campaign.

Once again we are reminded of the extraordinary need to continue our efforts to ensure our safety.



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Please pay your 2011 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*

2011 MEMBERSHIP FORM

New Member _____

Renewal _____

Membership Category -- Check One

Individual (\$25) _____

Family -- two adults in the same household (\$40) _____

Low Income (\$15) _____

Low Income Family (\$20) _____

Sponsor (\$50) _____ 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 pay your dues with a check or via PayPal--cash and money orders are far more difficult to process. Thanks in advance for your cooperation! Please make out all checks to "Three Parks Independent Democrats - Dues 2011"******

Three Parks Independent Democrats
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New York, N.Y. 10025

NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12

SAVING THE HISTORIC UPPER WEST SIDE

