

THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

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Bob Botfeld

Cynthia Doty

State Committee

Lynn Thomas

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CLUB MEETING, SEPTEMBER 9, 2015

Topic:

Reports and Q & A Session: Public Advocate Letitia James and Assemblyman Daniel J. O'Donnell

Speakers:

HON. LETITIA JAMES, Public Advocate for the City of New York

HON. DANIEL J. O'DONNELL, Assemblyman, District 69

DATE: Wednesday, September 9, 2015

TIME: 8:00 PM

PLACE: The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue at 103rd St.

ROOM: Soho Room (Lower Level)

AGENDA

7:45 PM Sign-in

8:00 PM Call to Order

1. District Leader Reports

2. Reports and Q & A Session:

Public Advocate Letitia James and

Assemblyman Daniel J. O'Donnell

3. Adjourn

CALENDAR

Wednesday, September 9, 2015, 8:00 pm

Three Parks Membership meeting

The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue

Thursday, September 10, 2015

Primary Day—*none for our area*

Thursday, September 24, 2015, 6:30 pm

NY County Democratic Committee

2015 Judicial Convention

Harlem Hospital, 506 Malcolm X Blvd.

Tuesday, September 29, 2015, 6:30 pm

NY County Democratic Committee

2015 County Committee Meeting

SVA Theater, 333 West 23 Street

Wednesday, September 30, 2015, 8:00 pm

Three Parks Board Meeting

The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue

Wednesday, October 14, 2015, 8:00 pm

Three Parks Membership meeting

The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue

Wednesday, October 28, 2015, 8:00 pm

Three Parks Board Meeting

The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue

Tuesday, November 3, 2015

Election Day

President's Report

By Lauren Williams

Our June meeting provided a fitting launch for summer as we endorsed our current District Leaders Cynthia Doty and Bob Botfeld for additional terms, announced plans for our annual Club picnic, and kicked off this year's petitioning season for positions that included County Committee, District Leader, Judicial Delegates, and Judge. We also had a "Town Meeting" of sorts as City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and Councilmember Helen Rosenthal brought us news from City Hall and our own City Council 6th District. Both generously engaged in a lengthy question and answer session with members and guests following their remarks. Erika Petersen and Josette Amato with the West End Preservation Society (WEPS) followed with updates on the WEPS proposals to the Landmarks Preservation Commission to protect buildings on West End Avenue and sought members' support for their efforts.

I extend special thanks to our speakers as well as to George Voorhis and Elizabeth Kellner for arranging the annual pizza party, Bob Botfeld for spearheading this year's locally-focused petitioning, and Theresa Canter for coordinating our wonderful summer picnic in Central Park. Kudos to all of the Club members who participated in our successful petitioning efforts and helped in making our picnic so enjoyable

As we resume our regular meeting schedule on Wednesday, September 9, we will welcome Public Advocate Letitia James and Assemblyman Daniel O'Donnell. This is an opportunity for us to learn more about the Public Advocate's office, which has a broad citywide focus but whose initiatives often impact City residents locally. Assemblyman O'Donnell will bring us a recap of recent Albany activities and a forecast of what is ahead in coming months.

While this year's elections are more local and party focused, it is clear that the 2016 campaign season is well underway. Three Parks members will have ample opportunities to be involved, and the Club will strive to inform and engage members and our Upper West Side community on issues and in candidates' campaigns. I look forward to seeing you

at our meetings and working with you around our neighborhood in the months ahead.

District Leader's Report

By Bob Botfeld

Welcome back. Locally it was a fairly uneventful political summer here in the 69th Assembly District. There were no challenges to either public or party candidates for office in the Three Parks area.

Therefore, there will be no primary election in our neighborhood district. The polls will be closed locally on September 10.

Nationally, the race for President is getting interesting. Club members are encouraged to get involved in supporting their favorite Democratic presidential candidate. In the last few Presidential election cycles Three Parks has opted for "captain's choice" during the primary campaign for President. Captain's choice enables the club to share information about all the candidates' local campaigns throughout the primary season and encourages club members to work with each other on any of the Democratic campaigns. I believe this works well for us.

For me this summer was not quiet locally. In May, the Board of Elections announced that they plan to close the Marseille LLC (230 West 103rd Street) poll site, one of our highest turnout poll sites. The BOE said that they were following a court ordered American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance survey that found the site did not meet ADA standards. The surveyor found two problems with the Marseille: lack of a handrail along a 25-foot hallway and a short ramp that had an incline of 11° vs. the 8° permitted by ADA standards.

The problem with this assessment is that the Marseille LLC is a very well-managed residence with many disabled and elderly residents. The residents use wheelchairs and walkers at this facility 24 hours every day. Without notifying the Marseille management, West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing, the BOE simply closed the poll site.

This BOE decision would force 100-200 residents of the Marseille to use their wheelchairs and walkers to

vote six blocks away, across two avenues. In addition, over 2,000 other voters from the currently assigned EDs at the Marseille, EDs 62, 63, & 65, which directly adjoin the Marseille block and are high turnout election districts, would not be able to vote and also have to vote blocks away. We would have a much lower turnout.

Over the past few months we have challenged the BOE to change their position and to contest the court order. Our elected officials, including Assemblymember O'Donnell, Councilmembers Levine and Rosenthal, Borough President Gale Brewer and Congressmember Jerrold Nadler, have joined together to request that the BOE re-open the Marseille poll site for November.

2015 Petitioning Report

By Bob Botfeld

Sign for me. Apparently it works. This year, the only names on the ballot were the Three Parks' candidates for District Leader, County Committee, Judicial Delegate, and a judge. There are no elected public officials, legislative or executive, running to headline to headline the petition. But guess what? Our neighbors were equally willing, if not more willing, to sign for our hardworking club members who every year make this neighborhood the friendly, lively political community that is known throughout New York City and beyond. Our neighbors do want to know who we are and who is collecting these signatures year after year.

Over fifty members and friends of Three Parks participated this year, collecting over 2,300 signatures. In the eastern part of our district bordering Central Park, we were led by Audrey Isaacs who gathered over 300 signatures. In the western part of our area we were again led by Mary Ann Marks who witnessed 132 signatures. Technical and petitioning software wizard, Alex Medwedew, this year tried his petitioning talents on the streets and got 102 of his neighbors to sign for himself and the Three Parks' slate. Another computer software professional and teacher, Jerry Cordova, convinced 99 of his neighbors to add their names in support. District Leaders Bob Botfeld and Cynthia Doty were next with 81 and 78 signatures,

respectively. Young Democrat but veteran Westsider, Ian Hochman-Reid, quickly gathered 75 signatures as did State Committeewoman Lynn Thomas.

Retired professor Jock Davenport stooped from his 6' 8" height to collect 60 signatures—a popular number: Abigail McGloster and Stephanie Tegnazian joined Jock at the five dozen mark. New board member Betsy Malcolm added 57; steady Bruce Markens mustered 51; followed by the collective at 45 including Joan Ogden, Rachel Smit, Marnie Hall, and newsletter editor Lorraine Zamora.

Welcome newcomer Rosalyn Shapiro and Isabel Calisi-Wagner each had 44. Perennial stalwart Mildred Speiser delivered 42 perfect valid signatures and former president Daniele Gerard found time from her anti-fracking duties to add 40 to the Three Parks total.

Marie Lunn, Chris Scott, Deborah Thomas, and Lucille Donte contributed strongly with thirty or more signatures each. New county committeemember Shelly Fine and the following Three Parks stalwarts collected twenty or more signatures: Gerald Shultz, Wendy Dannett, Merle McEldowney, Doris Schreiber, Antoinette Williams, Judy Wood, and Steve Max.

Rounding out the qualifying petitioners were these spirited contributors: Sam Bartos, Lynn Bender Max, Elizabeth Kellner, Irene Shrier, David Kaplan, Robert Bardin, Susan Dess, Herb Downer, Luis Perez, Wilhelmina Perry, Vernita Worrell, Milivoy Samurovich, Jacob Gross, Brenda Morgan, Robert Ginsberg, Mary Ann Thompson, Dan Cohen, Lauren Williams, and David Ginsberg.

A great job and congratulations and thanks to all!

Letter to Congressman Rangel

The following letter was recently sent from members of Three Parks.

Dear Congressman Rangel:

We know that you have studied the details of the Iran agreement and we have already sent you a letter outlining some of the reasons that we support its passage. However, the most compelling reason may be the simplest. You have pledged to support President

Obama and make his time in office a success. Now he needs your support. This will be a critical part of his legacy. Will it be a legacy of diplomatic success, or will it be a defeat at the hands of Republicans determined to undermine him at every move and the Democrats who allow that to happen?

Three Parks Independent Democrats has endorsed you for office for many years. Now the undersigned board members are hoping you will step forward to support our President and his diplomacy.

We have confidence that you will make the right decision.

Sincerely,

Bob Botfeld

Wendy Dannett

Cynthia Doty

Daniele Gerard

Erl Kimmich

Betsy Malcolm

Bruce Markens

Lynn Bender Max

Steve Max

Merle McEldowney

Lauren Williams

Judith Wood

Lorraine Zamora

The Iran Agreement

By Bruce Markens

After a long negotiation, President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry were able to reach an agreement with Iran that provides for the very real prospect that Iran will no longer represent a nuclear threat to other Middle East countries, including Israel. The deal guarantees a 96 percent reduction in Iran's supply of enriched uranium. Iran must also reduce its number of centrifuges by two-thirds. The agreement bans the designing and testing of warheads. With respect to compliance with these goals, the agreement provides for a strong inspection regime to ensure that Iran does not violate or cheat on the agreement's

terms. Finally, sanctions that have been in effect will only be lifted over time in return for Iran's verifiable compliance with the agreement.

Following the announcement of this agreement, there has been much debate about whether the House and Senate should support this deal. As things stand, two-thirds of both the House and the Senate must vote to disapprove of this agreement in order to negate it. While the membership of Three Parks has not taken a position on this issue, many members of the Board felt strongly about the need to support this agreement and a letter (which is reprinted below) was sent to Representatives Nadler and Rangel and Senators Schumer and Gillibrand asking them to support the agreement negotiated by Secretary Kerry and endorsed by President Obama. Thus far, Representative Nadler and Senator Gillibrand have come out in support of the Iran agreement, while Senator Schumer has voiced his opposition to it. Representative Rangel was undecided as of late August. You are urged to contact your representatives about this important issue and, if you agree with the Board members listed below, it is hoped that you will indicate your backing of President Obama and the Iran agreement.

The following letter was sent to Representatives Nadler and Rangel and to Senators Schumer and Gillibrand:

August 1, 2015

We the undersigned board members of Three Parks Independent Democrats urge you to vote for the Iran agreement. Not only do we need to support the President but this deal is critical to keeping Americans safe. Let's not let the same people who took us to war in Iraq now take us to war in Iran.

After all, what is the alternative to this deal? War. If this deal falls through, so will Russian, Chinese and European participation in the sanctions. U.S. sanctions alone will make little difference. Within a year Iran could easily have more than 25,000 centrifuges and be within weeks of having a nuclear weapon. Who will be safer? If the Iranians are sponsors of terrorism and we are not happy that they may have money to spend in their support, how much

more dangerous will they be as a nuclear power sponsoring terrorists?

While the deal is not perfect, what is the alternative? For sanctions to erode and Iran to continue full speed ahead on the road to becoming a nuclear power? That is why five former U.S. Ambassadors and most American Jews support the accord. They recognize that what is needed is results, not posturing.

As Nicholas Kristof says in his New York Times column of 7/30/15, this deal is not just about centrifuges but about the possibility that Iran will turn away from its failed experiment with extremism. Iran's young people want to reconnect with the world economy and its hard liners are aging. Who will be in charge in ten years? Could we be facing an entirely new relationship with Iran? Who knows? But let's pass this accord and walk down the path of diplomacy and engagement rather than pontificate as we watch Iran develop a nuclear weapon.

As Upper West Siders and long time supporters, we know you well and have confidence that you will make the right decision.

Sincerely,

A New Assault on NYC Landmarks

By Merle McEldowney

On Wednesday, September 9, there will be an important City Council hearing, beginning at 11:00 a.m., that you may wish to attend. At stake is the future of our city's landmarks.

A bill under consideration at that meeting seeks to change how all future landmarking designations will be made. In essence, the bill, if passed, would impose timelines to ensure that potential sites do not linger indefinitely on the Landmarks Preservation Commission calendar.

There is a big problem with this, namely that, if the LPC fails to take action on any particular candidate for landmarking, that site would be dropped from the calendar and could not be considered again for at least five years. In effect, this would represent a huge victory for all the interests that are opposed to

designation, amounting to a "pocket veto." In other words, under this bill, a potential site of historical, architectural, or cultural significance would have just one opportunity to qualify for designation. Failing to achieve that would remove the site for consideration by default and thereafter put it at the mercy of political and economic interests that view all attempts at landmarking as annoying obstacles to be fought and gotten around. Under this proposed bill, which is backed by the Real Estate Board of New York, if any proposed site does not achieve landmark status right away it would have to wait those five long years before it could again be eligible for landmarking. That would give anti-landmarking interests five years to do their worst. Their bulldozers would be waiting.

Some of our elected officials see the enormous potential for harm in all this. Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, for one, has proposed legislation to create timelines for LPC action. Both City Council members Helen Rosenthal and Mark Levine have indicated that they oppose the bill. Ms. Rosenthal has submitted a bill that would require Community Board and City Council notification before any significant proposed changes would have to be approved by the LPC. More specifically, the bill would cover any changes in a building's proposed footprint, any increase in height, and any significant change in exterior design elements or materials. Mark Levine has co-sponsored her bill.

Many buildings in our neighborhood are potential landmarks. Developers have already done significant damage to our neighborhood – remember those two monstrosities on Broadway – and the input of committed citizens is essential to protect our interests. Come to the City Hall meeting if you possibly can. Every voice counts.

An Election Perspective: It's Bernie, Baby!

By Wendy Dannett

Where in this election can we find sanity? Personally, I find the Republicans so upsetting, I can hardly listen to them. Matt Taibbi of Rolling Stone Magazine calls the GOP candidates on the road the town car and states that Donald Trump's behavior has forced the other

Republican candidates to get crazy or go home. That sounds about right. Whether it is women's issues or immigration—and we aren't even talking about wages or housing—the Republicans are frightening.

Although Hillary Clinton, the Democratic front-runner, should be able to beat the Republicans with ease, she is hounded by her email problem: she cannot put to rest accusations that she revealed classified material.

Then, there is a little fly buzzing around Hillary named Bernie, who is much further to the left and drawing huge crowds wherever he goes: crowds to the tune of 10,000. People all over the country are showing an interest. They feel he speaks to them. There are Bernie groups everywhere, including the Upper West Side. Bernie has signed a letter in Nation magazine saying he will not accept money from the fossil fuel industry. Hillary and the Republicans have not signed on.

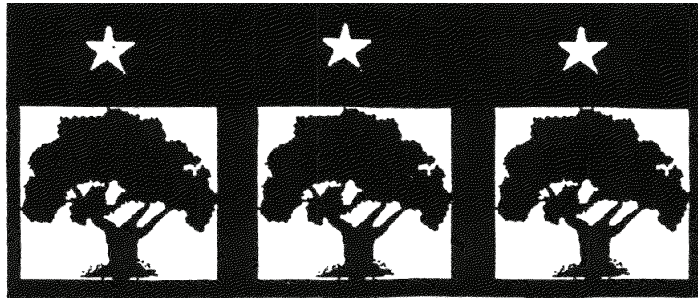
Even if he doesn't win, Bernie seems to be pushing Hillary to be more progressive. Bernie talks about taxing the rich, raising wages, expanding Social Security, moving away from bad trade agreements, moving away from a carbon-based energy, and much more. Hillary is now talking about some of these issues as well.

Of course, the night is still young, and other candidates, such as Joe Biden, may enter the race. That is another story.

**Many thanks to all club members,
electeds and guests who attended the
Three Parks picnic in July and made it
such a enjoyable get-together**



**Don't forget:
There will be no Primary Election
in the 69th Assembly District on Sept. 10**



Three Parks Independent Democrats

Cathedral Station P.O. Box 1316, New York, NY 10025, tel: 212-539-7602

Please pay your 2015 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

2015 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 solely by email.

Please pay your dues with a check or via PayPal—cash and money orders are far more difficult to process.
Please make out all checks to “Three Parks Independent Democrats—Dues 2015”

Thank you for your cooperation!

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

Next Meeting

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Reports and Q & A Session

Speakers: Public Advocate Letitia James and Assemblyman Daniel J. O'Donnell