

THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

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SEPTEMBER 14, 2011

FEATURED TOPICS & SPEAKERS: ALBANY UPDATE: State Senator Bill Perkins, State Senator Adriano Espaillat, and Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell—**SAVE OUR NEIGHBORHOOD STORES ZONING PROPOSAL**, the inside scoop on redistricting, the budget, marriage equality, , and more

DATE: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14th

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, including Proposed Save Our Neighborhood Stores Zoning Proposal
3. Albany Update
4. New Business
5. Adjournment

CALENDAR

Wednesday, September 21, 2011
Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wednesday, October 12, 2011
Three Parks Meeting, 8 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

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.

President's Column

By Daniele Gerard

Welcome back to all our members and friends! It's been a busy summer for all of us here at Three Parks; we've been tabling on fracking, Indian Point, and proposed zoning for the neighborhood. We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming meeting to update you in person.

Be sure to join us at the Hostel on Wednesday, September 14. Our State Senators Bill Perkins and Adriano Espaillat and Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell will fill us in on legislative activity over the past few months and going forward — redistricting, the budget, marriage equality, neighborhood rezoning proposals, and more.

We were fortunate to have Susan Lerner, Executive Director of Common Cause, New York, provide background information on redistricting at our June meeting. This month's meeting will provide the political scoop on this critical issue.

Remember that the 2012 elections are just around the corner. They will involve hard fought campaigns for the Presidency and Congress, as well as for control of the New York State Senate and Assembly. There's no time like the present to get involved, so tell your friends and neighbors to check out Three Parks in person and on the web this fall.

District Leader Report

By Bob Botfeld

A VERY GOOD IDEA BUT A VERY BAD PLAN

The proposed street frontage zoning for Amsterdam Avenue, Columbus Avenue, and Broadway: A new zoning plan that is harmful to the Manhattan Valley and the Three Parks neighborhood.

At the June 22, 2011 meeting of the Land Use committee of Community Board 7 (CB7), the Department of City Planning (DCP) proposed an innovative street frontage zoning plan to preserve the remaining small, neighborhood store, restaurant, and service retail character on the Upper West Side commercial avenues — Broadway, Amsterdam Avenue, and Columbus Avenue. On Amsterdam Avenue and Columbus Avenue, the key provisions of the proposed zoning would:

- limit the street frontage of any new store (except grocery stores) to 40 feet;
- limit any new bank street frontage to 25 feet; and

- limit any new residential apartment building lobby to 15 feet.

It would be an excellent plan except that the Department of City Planning proposes to zone only the neighborhoods from 72nd Street to 96th Street — leaving our Manhattan Valley local stores and businesses from 96th to 110th Streets not only exposed and unprotected but our Manhattan Valley neighborhood would then be the only remaining prime West Side location for the big drug stores, chain stores, and banks.

As stated in the DCP presentation the purpose of the proposed zoning is to:

- Preserve the small store and active retail character where it exists;
- Support neighborhood business needs;
- Encourage diverse retail and service opportunities for residents;
- Promote active streetscape and attractive environment for pedestrians; and
- Balance needs of shoppers, residents, visitors, and businesses.

Worthy goals, so why is Manhattan Valley left out of the plan?

The representatives from the DCP commented that the area above 96th was “still developing” and “not mature.” The DCP representatives said that the implementation of the plan would have to be delayed a few weeks for the DCP to survey and document the blocks from 96th to 110th Streets. The representative from the DCP suggested that the area could be zoned later — in a separate zoning initiative.

In response, Richard Asche, co-chair of the CB7 Land Use committee noted that the collection of small retail stores, restaurants and service businesses on Amsterdam Avenue area north of 96th Street contain precisely the character that the proposed zoning was created to protect. He recommended that the start of the zoning review process be delayed the few weeks until the Manhattan Valley Amsterdam Avenue area was surveyed and documented. These comments were seconded by the representative from the Columbus-Amsterdam Business Improvement District and others as well as me. I stated that to wait for a second zoning for our few blocks would be “closing the gate after the horse had left the barn.”

The problem is that once the banks, drug stores, and chains are restricted from the area below 96th Street as the proposed zoning intends, these businesses would then quickly target our neighborhood as the only remaining available location. Besides, it is unreasonable to think that a second zoning process, the lengthy Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) process, would be undertaken for an area less than 15 percent of the initial targeted area. On average ULURP usually takes six to twenty-four months or more to accomplish after the proposed zoning area is documented for certification. Under ULURP a proposed zoning plan must be approved by the local community board, the borough

president, the city planning department, and then passed as a bill by the city council in both committee and by the entire council. In addition, unless the DCP itself promotes a zoning plan, it costs tens of thousands of dollars of private money if fees to initiate.

At the September 14 Three Parks Independent Democrats club meeting there will be a discussion and vote on a resolution about the proposed zoning. On the following pages of this newsletter is the resolution for the club membership. The resolution lists the most obvious objections to the proposed zoning.

Resolution to Include Amsterdam Avenue from 96th Street to 110th Street and Columbus Avenue from 105th to 109th in the Proposed Upper West Side Street Frontage Zoning

WHEREAS, the proposed Amsterdam Avenue and Columbus Avenue street rezoning is a good idea for the area from 96th Street to 110th Street for all the same reasons that justify the street rezoning from 72nd Street to 96th Street.

WHEREAS, over the past five years Amsterdam Avenue from 96th to 110th Streets has begun to thrive with new, interesting, quality stores, shops, and restaurants. The area would be seriously harmed and deadened by the displacement of these local businesses by a few large stores.

WHEREAS, inclusion of the restriction for new store width to 40 feet for the area from 96th to 110th Streets would recognize that the CB7 community in the northern part of CB7 should have its character protected too and not be suburban "malled" such as already has occurred along Columbus Avenue from 97th to 110th Streets.

WHEREAS, rezoning Amsterdam Avenue and Columbus Avenue south of 96th Street would force the chain stores, banks, and drug stores to locate on Amsterdam above 96th Street as their only alternative on the Upper West Side. There would be additional incentive to displace the current viable strip of small, local retail stores, service businesses, and restaurants.

WHEREAS, if the proposed street zoning is a pilot in response to neighborhoods already overwhelmed by banks, pharmacies, large chain stores, etc. then we have a chance to rezone before the bad event, i.e. "close the gate before the horse has left the barn" and to actually plan/preserve a thriving, developing new area.

WHEREAS, inclusion of the avenues from 96th to 110th Streets is only a 20 percent increase for the proposed area.

WHEREAS, if small stores and services businesses are displaced from Broadway and Amsterdam, they have fewer options to remain in the neighborhood north of 96th Street than south of 96th Street because there are fewer side street business sites available.

WHEREAS, the current local store owners from 96th to 110th Streets are a group of unusually responsible businessmen that have developed a community-minded culture – cultivated by our excellent Columbus-Amsterdam BID. More than 75 percent of these business owners regularly post community notices in their stores – an extraordinary high participation rate. A number of them have participated in the Sweat Shop Free program.

WHEREAS, the area above 96th Street between Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues is a very mixed area both ethnically and in income. It is neighborhood institutions, businesses, and the people who care about this neighborhood that help keep it knit together, viable, and safe. Local stores are a vital part of this fabric.

(Continued on next Page)

The membership of Three Parks Independent Democrats, hereby resolves to demand the inclusion of Amsterdam Avenue from 96th Street to 110th Street and Columbus Avenue from 105th to 109th in the proposed Upper West Side zoning that would:

- limit the street frontage of any new store to 40 feet (grocery stores are exempt);
- limit any new bank street frontage to 25 feet;
- limit any new residential apartment building lobby to 15 feet.

And What About Those Jobs?

By Steve Max

Republican presidential hopefuls roundly criticized Obama's vacation saying he should have been back in the White House creating jobs. The President replied not to worry, he would create a whole batch of jobs when he got home, or right after Labor Day at the latest. Meanwhile, candidates Romney and Perry are personally claiming credit for having created every job in their respective states with their own hands. It would seem from this that creating jobs is more a matter of will than anything else.

A very different note was sounded by Bill Gross, the manager of the world's largest bond fund (PIMCO) and a Republican billionaire. He told *The New York Times* (8/22/11) that "Capitalism in its raw form can't pull us out of this hole." He suggested a direct government jobs program, saying "Putting a shovel in the hands of somebody can be productive." Economist Nouriel Roubini came closer to the heart of the problem, commenting (8/17/11),

"So Karl Marx, it seems, was partly right in arguing that globalization, financial intermediation run amok, and redistribution of income and wealth from labor to capital could lead capitalism to self-destruct." Roubini, who has worked at the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Federal Reserve as well as a senior advisor at the Treasury, ought to know a thing or two about capitalism.

The job shortage is particularly acute as vast improvements in technology and agriculture have made it unnecessary for every working age adult on the planet to put in a forty-hour week. Everyone's material needs can easily be met with a far smaller expenditure of labor time, yet the system offers no alternative to working full time other than enduring poverty. The International Labor Organization (of the United Nations) estimated world unemployment to be 212 million in 2009, with half of it in the most economically developed countries. The ILO said, "Furthermore, more than 1.5 billion workers are in "vulnerable" employment situations, or slightly over half

of the world's labor force." (Vulnerable means involuntary part-time workers and occasional workers.)
<<http://www.worldacademy.org/forum/worlds-unemployed-tops-200-million-ilo>>

Some of the problem is cyclical and can be expected to improve, but part is structural and will not end with the recession. The ILO estimates that in 2011, it will take the creation of 22 million jobs worldwide to get world employment back to the 2007 level. Recessions come and go, but the jobs crisis is permanent and will only get worse as technology continues to evolve. Here we see the fatal flaw of capitalism: abundance leads to poverty.

A progressive economic program requires not only getting out of the current debate over whether the U.S. needs more or less government spending, but also talking about new ways to organize the economy around a smaller work force with people staying in school longer, retiring earlier and working a shorter day. We also need the economic equivalent of World War II that ended the Great Depression. This can be found in rebuilding the entire American infrastructure to eliminate the use of fossil fuels. Imagine the jobs created by just insulating every building and installing an electric car charging station in every parking space in America — and that is just for starters. But who will pay for it? Well, if capitalism works the way its proponents claim it does, this massive changeover would not cost money, it will make money. Lots of it. Think of the great age of railroads or the coming of the automobile. Henry Ford did not go broke building cars for every American family; he got rich doing it. Not that there was not a role for government. Government builds the roads, every single mile of them. In the past, government made it possible for new technology to be applied for the public's benefit while rewarding innovators. We should certainly be able to do this today.

Condolences

Three Parks Independent Democrats extends condolences to the family of member Iretta Owens whose death followed a long illness and to members Ernestine Gallagher on the loss of her two sisters and to Steve Strauss on the passing of his father.

2011 Petitioning Report

By Bob Botfeld

With no major candidates on the ballot, Three Parks' members again demonstrated that they know how to meet and greet their neighbors and work together to qualify our county committee members and district leaders. With over 60 members and friends participating in the petitioning process, we collected over 2,100 signatures and qualified nearly every election district in our part.

We were led by our traditional phenom Mary Ann Marks who scooped 221 signatures. District leader Bob Botfeld was next with 123 signatures followed by State Committeewoman Lynn Thomas (95). Steve Max demonstrated that one can teach us about Social Security and hydrofracking, keep the club records, maintain our Web site, and with one hand collect 87 signatures in a few days. Alan Flacks kept his hold on the 44th ED with 86 perfect signatures working together with Stephanie Tegnazian who collected another 47.

New petition star Conchita Vega joined Rosetta Williams in the 40th ED and collected 72 signatures. Masterly club organizer Lynn Bender Max added 64 signatures to the club total. Next was District Leader Cynthia Doty with 63. Cynthia (and Lynn Thomas) took on the tough job of helping qualify our most difficult election districts.

Judy Wood somehow collected 59 signatures even though we thought she was in Wellfleet. Barbara Lee took in 53 signatures from her former ED while also signing up, along with Bruce Markens (45 signatures), many of our neighborhood stores for the Sweatshop Free Pledge. DJ and impresario, Reuben Perez aka Reuben Rios, took time off from performing at neighborhood fairs to collect 43 signatures. State Committeeman Dan Cohen got engaged and collected 40 signatures. Michael Gaye and Brian Jordan also added 40 signatures to the club total.

These stalwarts collected 30 or more signatures: Marnie Hall, Milivoy I. Samurovich, Jane Wisdom, Renna Draynel, Abigail McGloster, Janet M. Harvilchuck, Elena F. Picinich, Corine Pettey, Carol Reisner, Jacob M. Gross, Mildred E. Speiser, Marilyn L. Spruill, Judith E. Steinhart, and Vernita Worrel.

Adding to the totals were these Three Parkers with over 20 signatures each: Alexander E. Medwedew, Daniele Gerard, Joan Ogden, Deborah Thomas, Mediha Kosovrasti, Thomas J. Goggin, Mary Givens, Noah T. Lichtman, Nathan Riley, Chaumtoli Huq, Haydee Rosario,

Judith Medina, Martin J. Morand, Catherine R. Unsino, George Voorhis, Rosetta Williams, Ken Tulloch, Judith Ackerman, Wendy Dannett, Wilhelmina Perry, Vicki Slate, Bill Reilly, and Ellen Flax.

Rounding out the qualifying petitioners were these spirited contributors: Vincent P. Brancato, Isabel Caputo, Louisa Gilbert, Marie Lunn, Julia Soledipsa, David C. Kaplan, Earl Kimmich, Rose Podrasky, Alex Tisch, Susan E. Wilson, Arlene S. Geiger, Brenda D. Morgan, Robert M. Ginsberg, Michael Katz, Susan Andrews, John F. Davenport, and David Ginsberg.

A great job and congratulations to all!

NYC County Democratic Party Events

SEPTEMBER 22: NY County Judicial Convention, 6.00 – 8.00 PM, Harlem Hospital, 506 Lenox Ave.

SEPTEMBER 26: NY County Committee Meeting, 6.00 – 8.00 PM, SVA Theater, 260 West 23rd St.

State Committee Report

By Daniel Marks Cohen, State Committee, 69th AD

Welcome back. It has been a year since I was elected State Committeeman, and I wanted to give a brief report looking back and forward to the year to come.

It has been a tumultuous summer – both good (I got engaged to be married to a wonderful woman, Dr. Jill Drossman) and frustrating (about everything coming out of Washington these days). I am particularly disappointed in President Obama, who I feel totally caved to the Republicans on the debt ceiling. I wish he had followed former President Clinton's advice and invoked the 14th Amendment and gone ahead and raised it on his own rather than "kicking the can" to the Congressional super committee that will likely create another month of drama that we do not need. Where is the jobs bill we DO need?

The question of who would be the next State Committee Chairman was up in the air for a while, with rumors about his being replaced almost immediately after last November's elections; but it appears that Governor Cuomo has settled on keeping Jay Jacobs in the job. This is enough on this subject unless there is a major change.

The Reform Caucus of the State Committee met several times this year and submitted two resolutions at the Committee's spring meeting (printed in previous Three Parks' newsletters) – one addressed ethics and the other gas fracking. Both resolutions were defeated after floor fights, but at least the Governor clearly saw we were

paying attention. The ethics law signed by the Governor is relatively weak, but it is better than nothing. It will have to be strengthened (probably when there is a particularly egregious ethics violation in Albany, which considering the state's capital, is only a matter of time). On the fracking issue the Governor's position remains a disappointment. Cuomo is set to let the moratorium expire, which is unacceptable; and energy companies are pushing for renewed drilling rights. New Jersey, hardly a paragon of environmentalism, has banned fracking, and so should New York. We must carry this battle forward in the fall.

Over the summer I continued to call attention to stopping gas fracking; and, particularly in light of the tsunami disaster in Japan, I joined in pushing for closure of the nuclear power plant at Indian Point. On this latter issue, Cuomo appears to support closing the plant, but he is using his support for the closure as justification for support of gas fracking. We cannot poison our water to save ourselves from radiation exposure. We need other alternatives. The *NY Times* suggested in June that almost two-thirds of NYC's buildings could host photovoltaic cells – generating 15 percent of the energy from the sun that the city needs annually. According to the Pratt Center for Community Development, the city is particularly friendly to solar energy systems, with property tax break laws that enable property owners to sell back excess energy to the power company. Total government financial incentives cover as much as 62 percent of the cost, if not more. We should certainly push for this to be mandatory in all new construction and figure out ways to retrofit existing buildings.

Going forward I want to reiterate that redistricting is upon us, and I urge folks in the 69th AD to pay close attention. We currently are split between TWO Congressional districts, THREE State Senate districts, and FOUR Council districts – the more concentrated we are in fewer districts, the more impact we can have on the political process. As hearings are scheduled I will have more information about public comments and avenues for registering your views on the district lines. Redistricting happens only every ten years, so keep an eye out.

Just Wondering By Daniele Gerard

Kudos are due the Governor and the Mayor for helping parts of New York State avoid even worse effects from Tropical Storm Irene; untold sums were spent to minimize property damage and loss of life. I cannot help wondering, however, if they concentrated so heavily on protecting their constituents from a natural disaster they

could not control, why they do not concentrate as much on protecting us from technological disasters they could control that put millions of lives and livelihoods at risk – fracking and Indian Point.

By banning fracking and calling forcefully for the denial of license extensions to Indian Point, the Governor and the Mayor could protect our water, environment, health, safety, and economic and financial well-being for far longer into the future than the few days they did so for Irene.

The Three Parks Picnic By Theresa Canter

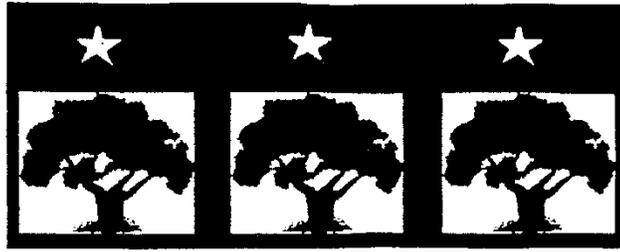
The Three Parks annual picnic was once again a great success! Although thunderstorms were forecast, the skies cleared and made way for a lovely evening at the Pool/Pond in Central Park. We had a great turnout, over 100 folks throughout the evening, with lots of good food – complete with fried chicken, potato salad, and, of course, watermelon, deviled eggs, and all the other requirements for a proper picnic. In addition to our club members and neighborhood friends, we were joined by many judicial candidates and our State Senator, Adriano Espaillat.

As always, it takes a whole lot of Three Parkers to plan and pull off a successful picnic. Many thanks to all the members who brought food to share and those who volunteered to coordinate, set up, and clean up the event – including Bob Botfeld, Jock Davenport, Cynthia Doty, Elizabeth Kellner, Erl Kimmich, Ken Laufer, Marie Lunn, Bruce Markens, Merle McEldowney, Mary Ann Marks, Clara Taylor, Deborah Thomas, Ken Tulloch, and others who pitched in as the picnic came to a close. Also, many thanks to Alan Cary who sang and played the banjo for the crowd, Ray Schwartz who hosted the postcard mailing, and Lynn and Steve Max who provided mailing labels and e-mail blasts!

News from Melissa Mark-Viverito, Council Member, District 8

West Side Constituent Intake Hours Resume — Constituent Intake Hours for residents of the Manhattan Valley/Upper West Side part of District 8 are now being held in a new location -- the Children's Aid Society's Frederick Douglass Center, 885 Columbus Avenue @ 104th St. – every other Monday from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. Upcoming dates are Monday, September 12 and Monday, September 26.

If you cannot make it to the Center during these times, call the District Office (212- 828-9800) or visit the office at 105 East 116th St. any time during Constituent Walk-In Days (Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.).



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

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"******

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Cathedral Station P.O. Box 1316
New York, N.Y. 10025

NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

ALBANY UPDATE