There are rumors about the HOD reopening in the very near future. However, no firm information is coming from the Department of Corrections or the Borough President’s office.

With the City’s current fiscal crises looming, many Boerum Hillers think that the estimated $440 million for the expansion could be better used for schools or other infrastructure.

In late June, a press conference was held to bring attention to the ill conceived expansion plan.

Local City Council member, David Yassky, Comptroller William Thompson, Jr., State Senators Marty Connor and Velmanette Montgomery and State Assembly member, Joan Millman joined with the Stakeholders’ Group and the newly formed STOP BHOD group in calling for a halt to the expansion plan and further suggesting that the building be sold for development. As Joan Millman said, “Sell the cells!”

The Stakeholders’ Group includes 53 Boerum Place Condominiums, Atlantic Avenue Betterment Association, Atlantic Avenue Local Development Corp, Boerum Hill Association, Cobble Hill Association and the State Street Houses Association.

The spokesperson for the STOP BHOD group was former Giuliani deputy mayor, Randy Mastro. Mr. Mastro’s law firm, Gibson Dunn & Crutcher, vowed to a legal fight to prevent the building from re-opening.

All parties agreed that the city needed to make more effort to solicit community input about the site and that a jail was not the best use of precious space in a flourishing residential area. They pointed out the lack of studies to ascertain the effect the jail would have in such a vital economic area - let alone double its size without conducting appropriate, and legally mandated, studies. In addition, many elected officials lamented the misuse of the reported $440 million dollars needed to fund the expansion plan.

In October, STOP BHOD and the Stakeholder’s Group joined forces at the Atlantic Antic to inform the public and take signatures of those opposed to the re-opening.

The city has hired an architect to design the new building, a process that will take 18 months or more to complete. Rumors abound that the old building could re-open as soon as December even though the window replacement which was scheduled to be done during the renovation was never completed.

Expect to hear more about this battle in the local papers and for more information as well as continuing updates go to www.brooklynjail.org and www.STOPBHOD.org.
Dear Neighbors,

In our previous BHA Newsletter I wrote to you about the formation of Friends of Douglass/Greene Park, Inc. Our mission is to work with the surrounding communities and organizations to revitalize Thomas Greene Park and to support ecological, recreational, educational and economic uses that increase the park’s attractiveness as a destination while respecting the character of the surrounding areas. We have made progress since then:

- We received awards for the park renovation totaling $900,000 from Borough President Markowitz and Councilmen David Yassky and Bill deBlasio - it’s a start!
- We held a “Sunset Swim” event for the opening of the DD Pool in June.
- We held a “Listening Session” facilitated by the Parks Dept. last month - to hear what the neighborhood kids

To keep the momentum going, we will be writing grants to bring even more exciting events to the park. If you have interest in this revitalized park - please contact us! Please check out our website:

www.friendsofdouglassgreenepark.org

Sue Wolfe

Happy Holidays from the Times Square Post Office by Howard Kolins

Boerum Hill resident, Wanda Fleck, continues to be our liaison with the Times Plaza Post Office. Numerous complaints deal almost unanimously with long lines and slow service. Wanda recently met with the new manager, Ms. Pasley, who said, “Customer satisfaction is my No. 1 priority.”

During the upcoming holiday season there will be staff members in the lobby, helping customers and speeding things up. Stamps can be ordered through the website: www.usps.com. Mail early.

Support Your Police Department by Leslie Lewis

We all know that crime is down over the levels we experienced a decade ago. Did you know the NYPD force at one time was 42,000 officers, but that now the NYPD force is approximately 34,000? The NYPD continues to seek ways to increase their efficiency. How can you help.

The NYPD has a training program in place called the Block Watcher Program. Each police Precinct can train neighborhood people to become Block Watchers who are given numbered ID cards. When calling 911 the Block Watcher gives the operator their Block Watcher number which identifies the Precinct they live in. This 911 call is instantly legitimized because it is initiated by this trained person.

This program aids the NYPD in creating a more efficient deployment of police officers. Once, about 50% of all 911 calls were unfounded. (Unfounded means that no crime is evident when the police arrive). Police response to unfounded calls often took manpower away from locations where police were actually needed.

Boerum Hill Association
Annual Pot Luck Holiday Party
December 6th at 6:00 PM
BELARUSAN CHURCH
At the corner of
Atlantic Ave. and Bond St.

Bring a ready to serve dish; no heating required
Add to the amazing buffet of appetizers, salads, main dishes (pre-carved meats and vegetarian), desserts and beverages.

RSVP to Howard Kolins, hkolins@aol.com or 718-625-4073

Everyone is Invited!
The hideously blank MTA bunker on Smith Street has been put up for sale. Residents on Wyckoff Street and other Boerum Hillers would like to see tangible improvements to this blank corner on our vibrant thoroughfare.

The Wyckoff St. Community Action Committee (the “WCAC”) recently submitted petitions with over 200 signatures opposing any vertical growth at the property. The WCAC strongly opposes any development height that is higher than the building’s current height which conforms to the traditional three story buildings that are typical of the properties along Smith Street. The WCAC is committed to preserving the street’s low-rise, village-like density.

Further, the WCAC opposes any national fast food chain as a tenant at the property. These businesses produce foot traffic, odors and signage that are undesirable.

The WCAC requests that the MTA put in place a site disposition process that requires an external aesthetics review of the development project. Such process would require a review of the development’s drawings by the Boerum Hill Association prior to closing, including but not limited to site configuration, materials to be used and the placement of windows, doors and terraces.

The WCAC requests that the MTA provide the Boerum Hill Association with the name, contact information and proposal of the purchaser/developer when the MTA and the purchaser enter into a Contract of Sale for the Property.

Unfortunately, to date the MTA has only said it will follow the proper procedures regarding the sale of the building. All residents of Boerum Hill have a continuing interest in this corner and all of Smith Street.

Visit us on the Web
www.boerumhillbrooklyn.org

Constantly updated with news, stories and blog posts on Boerum Hill, Atlantic Yards, And the House of Detention. See our calendar of neighborhood events and submit your own.

Important Contact Numbers
84th Police Precinct, Community Affairs: 718-875-6850
City Council Member, David Yassky 718-875-5200
State Senator, Velmanette Montgomery, 718-643-6140
Assemblywoman, Joan Millman, 718-246-4889
Congressman Ed Towns, 718-855-8018

84th Police Community Council Meeting
Tuesday, November 18th in Dumbo
Power House Books, 37 Main Street
(between Front and Water Streets)
Meet your Police Captain

A special thank you to State Assemblywoman Joan Millman for her support and guidance, and to the State of New York for the financial support that made this newsletter possible.

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Improving Pacific Street Parks by Howard Kolins

Boerum Hill is very short on precious green and recreational spaces. Board Member Chuck Wells who lives near PS 38, met on November 12th with PTA President Candace Forbes, Principal Yolanda Ramirez, Monica Padilla (Enrichment Coordinator), Vincent Wright, the interim head of school maintenance staff, and Mary Alice Lee and Julieth Rivera of the Trust for Public Land, to create a plan to support the school yard while continuing to offer after-hours access to the neighborhood.

It won't be easy. The school yard is heavily used on evenings and weekends by families from across Boerum Hill (and beyond), but PS 38 does not receive any additional funds for extra maintenance or repairs necessary to keep the playground open after-hours. And even though PS 38 recognizes the community's need for a local playground, the school's first priority is to keep its playground clean and safe for its students. The Trust for Public Land may be able to help secure additional funding, but more community support is going to be necessary to keep PS 38 playground a popular place to play.

If you're a motivated Boerum Hiller who wants to help forge closer ties between the community, PTA and the school, please contact Chuck at brooklyncbuck@gmail.com.

JOIN US TODAY!!
BECOME A MEMBER FOR 2009
Complete the Membership form, Get involved in Boerum Hill living.