

# Boerum Hill Bulletin

THE BOERUM HILL ASSOCIATION IS A VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION OF RESIDENTS OF BOERUM HILL. WE SEEK TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE UNIQUE QUALITIES OF OUR NEIGHBORHOOD THROUGH ADVOCACY, EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY BUILDING. VISIT US ON THE WEB AT [WWW.BOERUMHILLASSOCIATION.ORG](http://WWW.BOERUMHILLASSOCIATION.ORG)

**MEMBERS OF THE BOARD:**

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- Trudy Katzer
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- Steve Neiman
- Stephen Radacinski
- Melissa Telzer
- (\*non-board member)

Board meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month from September through June at 7:00pm in the Hopkins Center.

## PS 38 LAUNCHES LIBRARY

In December the new PS 38 PTA President, Chris Brown, approached the BHA board on behalf of the school’s library committee.

They had a dormant library that was filled with old printers and junk. Some committed parents wanted to turn the room into a warm, charming and active place for students to lounge with a book. Parents were willing to clean and paint but the committee needed funds to buy area rugs, curtains, bean bag chairs, lamps and most importantly, a scanner and the service needed to catalogue books. City funds were promised but had not yet arrived so the planned September opening was put off.

At that meeting, the BHA board unanimously approved a budget of \$3500 for the needed purchases. Everyone expressed their excitement over the potential of this project.

The Board was impressed by Chris Brown’s dedication and drive. Board Members Leah Barrett and Trudy Katzer worked with the Library Committee and PS 38 Parents Susan Homer and Corinthia Carter. A carpet was donated and another purchased at a discount from Atlantic Avenue’s Better Carpet Warehouse. Thanks to Wayne and Ed for their community spirit and generosity!

On Tuesday, March 12th the Library celebrated its opening. Take a look at the results! We hope that there will be many happy hours spent in this wonderful reading room. Bravo to all the parents involved.



*An amazing transformation from drab to fab! A parent made the curtains from Ikea fabric.*



*A happy reader enjoys her book in a comfy chair.*

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Hoyt Street Association Plant Sale**

**Saturday, April 27th  
Sunday, April 28th**

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

According to all the real estate press we've become the most desirable and expensive place to live in Brooklyn. That's great but are we a victim of our own success? Lately it feels like we're under attack by development.

Both the Church of the Redeemer on Fourth Avenue and Pacific Street and the Pacific Branch Library just across Fourth Avenue are threatened with destruction. Of course, both locations are zoned for much taller buildings.

How much should we sacrifice the old for the new? The Brooklyn Public Library and the Episcopal Diocese want to use the sale proceeds to fund their ongoing work.

Proceeds from the sale of the land that the library sits on will go toward building the interior of the new library planned next to BAM. The Episcopal Diocese would use funds from a new building to further its mission in our area.

Both projects may be worthy of consideration but the

community should have a voice. Yet both fell like a done deal with lip service given to other ideas.

When you add demise of the Long Island College Hospital to this list, you wonder where it will stop and if it really is progress.

Many Brooklynites are trying to save LICH. We're working with the Park Slope Civic Council to see if the library can receive the land mark status that was requested several years ago. The Church is a heavier lift since it allegedly needs a lot of work to stabilize the neglected building and no takers have appeared on the horizon.

I ask that you get involved in preserving our history and working to keep Boerum Hill as a great place to live and work.

In community,

Howard Kolins, BHA President



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**TREE REQUIREMENTS**

- To pick up a free tree, you must agree:
  - To plant in one of the five boroughs.
  - To keep trees properly watered and maintained.
  - **Not** to plant along streets, in containers, terraces, balconies or on roofs.

# FREE TREES

Pick up your **FREE TREE**

**Saturday, May 4**

10:00 am – 12:00 pm // Sixteen Sycamores Park

352 Schermerhorn St., Boerum Hill, Brooklyn, NY 11217

Learn more or reserve your **FREE TREE** online at [www.nyrp.org/BrooklynTrees](http://www.nyrp.org/BrooklynTrees)  
Registration closed? A limited quantity will be available on a first come, first served basis.

**DATE & TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE.**

**Check [www.nyrp.org/milliontreesnyc](http://www.nyrp.org/milliontreesnyc) before attending a tree giveaway.**

[www.nyrp.org/BrooklynTrees](http://www.nyrp.org/BrooklynTrees)

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## 16 SYCAMORES PLAYGROUND IS OPEN

The newly renovated playground is open! Features include: new playground equipment, sprinklers and swings. Nearby the handball court we have new adult exercise equipment. The bathrooms are fully restored.



We are planning another Movie Night in June to celebrate. Let us know if you have ideas for programming the park space.

Many thanks to Marty Markowitz and the Parks Department.

Make sure to drop by and enjoy!

## A THANK YOU TO HELOISE

A little history...did you know that back in 2002 about 20 members of Engine 226 on State Street joined the Association in support of Heloise Gruneberg. Although we didn't muster enough votes for re-election, we were able to show our support for a wonderful woman. Your members should be reminded or told for the first time perhaps of the compassion Heloise showed to the firefighters of Engine 226 following the tragic events of September 11th. There were so many ways in which she assisted us but let me give you one brief story...following 9/11 Heloise rallied approximately 60 odd families to cook and bring dinner to the station. While the firehouse was initially reluctant to accept the help, it became a source of strength for us and really bonded us to the community. I can still see the children of these generous families climbing on the fire engine helping us to forget even for a brief moment what was going on about us. To this day she is Engine 226's biggest advocate and dearest friend. By remembering past deeds hopefully your members will be inspired to help keep Boerum Hill the unique neighborhood it is!

Warm regards,  
Lt Pete Culkin  
Assigned to E226 1993-2003

## ATLANTIC YARDS

*On February 27th, long time resident Terry Urban spoke at the SEIS scoping hearing. Almost everyone who spoke said that 25 years was too long for the completion of the project. I asked Terry if we could print her remarks as they intelligently and eloquently represent the opinions of many of have tried to bring sense to this development. HK*

The 2009 Modified General Project Plan you approved for the Atlantic Yards Project gave Forest City Ratner certain modifications that solely benefited the developer's financial bottom line, notwithstanding their blighting effects on the very community this project was purported to enhance. Justification for the ESDC's approval was supported by reliance upon intentionally misleading information, repeated by Forest City Ratner in sworn testimony before the Court charged with hearing this community's challenge to the legality of your approval of this Project.

We are now asking for that same ESD, who partnered Forest City Ratner in representation before that Court, to demonstrate renewed integrity and take an honest hard look at the impacts of this Project.

In particular, the East Pacific Block Association, and the Council of Brooklyn Neighborhoods, join the many voices raised here in demanding that the ESD add to it's Scope of Work for the Draft SEIS an extensive, thorough analysis of Alternative development plans for Phase II. We believe any serious analysis of Alternatives will reveal viable opportunities to mitigate the many impacts and reverse the delay of benefits that your 2009 modification, allowing the possibility of a 25-year build-out, will force upon us.

Far from being so-called NIMBYs, members of this community proved they favor responsible development. We researched, prepared and provided to the public and the ESDC, years ago, an entirely workable Alternate blueprint, called the "Unity Plan". This plan, and others like it if proffered, should be part of the analysis of Alternatives. In the "Unity Plan", Phase II is split into separate parcels, encouraging a variety of developers to bid on developing them simultaneously. Simultaneous development brings all the promised benefits to fruition in the soonest possible time, while minimizing the community upheaval caused by a massive construction project. The environmental impacts and multiple community benefits of such a plan should be compared to the impacts and delay of public benefits that up-to-25 years of a sole developer's stranglehold and Superblock vision promises.

Simply the possibility of construction lasting to 2035 is a far greater blight to our neighborhood than the blight you argued was present at the time the ESDC originally earmarked these 22 acres of prime real estate for a sole developer in a virtual no-bid deal.

Unacceptable impacts, that could have been avoided, are already apparent. Shamefully, due to your 2009 approval, the platform over the LIRR can be postponed 25 years too, and that was your original and major claim of 'blight' and 'under-use' of land, integral to the State's use of Eminent Domain. Elimination of that 'blight' should have been the first milestone you demanded Forest City Ratner produce, if there was any serious intention to oversee the delivery of public benefits. Not surprisingly, Forest City Ratner has no date planned for providing that platform, either for itself or another developer to 'use' as promoted.

People want and need affordable housing, right now. That's true. And if the ESDC demanded that platform first, we could already have affordable housing on top of it, but the ESDC joined Forest City Ratner in pressing for the Arena first, with no housing, and only 100 permanent jobs. Who is the ESDC kidding? - Poor people and homeless people, that's who and that's shameful.

Forest City Ratner has a proven history of re-negotiating supposedly firm contracts and you have supported them in this, we believe, to the detriment of the public interest. Consequently, there is every reason to trust the current allowance of 25 years will be fully utilized to Forest City Ratner's profitable advantage, and further re-negotiations are certainly possible.

We join other community voices in demanding that the public benefits ESD used as a basis for the extraordinary taking of private property for private profit through the use of Eminent Domain, and the public benefits supposed to be achieved through the awarding of millions of dollars in Federal, State, City and other public allowances and subsidies promised to Forest City Ratner, be delivered to us at least according to the original timeline. It is a no-brainer that the original commitment should be kept by building Phase II as quickly as multiple developers could do it.

Forest City Ratner should not be allowed to delay the benefits that were used as the basis for their getting this entire parcel in the first place. Delivery on their, and your, promises should

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**Growing a better Boerum Hill**

## ATLANTIC YARDS (CON'T)

not be held hostage to this developer's bottom line; it is under their complete control and is obliged to benefit their stockholders first, not the public.

So far, Phase One's jobs have not met expected benefits; they've not only re-negotiated the timeline, they've re-negotiated the trades to allow cheaper building methods; they've been sued by their own CBA for not providing jobs. By their own count, Barclays Center has only provided this community 100 permanent full-time jobs in exchange for the millions of subsidy dollars spent on it, not to forget the green cards they sold in China based on providing jobs. True to their bottom-line myopia, the rest of the Barclays jobs, even Union ones, are part-time, and without health care, sick pay, or other employee benefits. Those jobs are needed, but so are the benefits that should accompany them.

So far, Phase One's public benefit value, in exchange for taking private property and public subsidies, is egregiously inadequate.

We demand fair jobs and fair housing.

The corporate 'them' is doing great, but Phase Two must turn out better for the public 'us'. There is a chance here to correct some of that inequity. The Alternatives this community offers deserves not only respectful analysis, it deserves to be implemented. The communities surrounding this Project deserve to have the public benefits you promised as soon as possible, rather than the delay and future blight you have, by your agreement, allowed to accrue for an unconscionable possibility of 25 years.

You now have another opportunity to do your work with integrity. We will carefully study the results.

Therese Urban  
East Pacific Block Association, and Council of Brooklyn  
Neighborhoods

### JOIN THE BHA

Help us advocate for Boerum Hill by becoming a member. Join us on the web at [www.boerumhillassociation.org](http://www.boerumhillassociation.org)