

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. Go to www.boerumhillassociation.org

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD:

- Howard Kolins, President
- Dwight Smith, Vice President
- Rose Weber, Treasurer *
- Leah Barrett
- Jonathan Brecht
- Michael Cosaboom
- Marilyn Donahue-Schiller
- Cheryl Gelbs
- Leslie Lewis
- Josh Manson
- Hannah Mason
- Sidney Meyer
- Steve Neiman
- Stephen Radacinski
- Anthony Rock
- (*non-board member)

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

OVER DEVELOPED?

Development in our area may finally have hit our last raw nerve - controversy literally surrounds us.

Take your pick. Do you want to Save the View at Brooklyn Bridge Park Pier 1 or stop the towers at Pier 6? What to do with the Fortis development at the former LICH site? Would you like a new library in Brooklyn Heights in return for another tower on the site with affordable housing built elsewhere? Would you up-zone some areas to encourage senior housing without knowing the affect on some streets?

Lately Brooklynites are saying, "Hell no!"

At Brooklyn Bridge Park, a group called "Save The View Now," www.savetheviewnow.org, says the Pier 1, "Pierhouse," development encroaches almost 20 feet inside the protected Scenic View Plane District. (see photo below). They want the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation to make Toll Brothers and Starwood Hotels reduce the height of the penthouse. State Sen. Daniel Squadron and Councilmember Stephen Levin have lent their voices to this fight.



Save The View Now, led by Heights resident Steven Guterman, unsuccessfully sued the park for allowing "the obliteration" of the views of the Brooklyn Bridge from the Brooklyn Heights Promenade "despite assurances made to

the public in 2005 to protect them." The group plans to revisit the lawsuit.

Meanwhile at Pier 6, many current residents concerned about population density and school over-crowding also question Brooklyn Bridge Park's financials.

(continued on page 2)

**Annual
Pot Luck
Holiday Party**
Saturday, Dec 5th
6:00 pm
Belarusian Church
Atlantic and Bond

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On Halloween night I took my 20-year old son for walk to check out the action. Right away he exclaimed, "Where was all this when I was little?"

Back then we would drive to Windsor Terrace to visit friends who lived amid much greater activity than we had here. Well, no more commuting!

The streets were alive with trick-or-treaters between Hoyt and Bond Streets. Grilled hot



dogs were given out on Pacific Street, Dean Street was closed to traffic so cartoons could be shown in the middle of the street and Bergen Street was as lively as ever. Excited kids were everywhere you looked.

Jack-o-lanterns, wacky decorations and lots of candy, cookies and cider could be had for the taking. Neighbors were on every stoop. It was a great night in Boerum Hill - take a bow everyone.

Please join us for the Annual Pot Luck Holiday Party on December 5th. Bring the kids, bring the neighbors.! Let's make it another great evening.

In community – Howard Kolins, BHA President



OVER DEVELOPED? (CONTINUED)

The park says it needs the revenue from the two residential towers planned for Pier 6 to protect 10,000 wooden piles before they deteriorate. The towers, which are being developed by RAL Development Services and Oliver's Realty Group, are 30 and 15 stories and collectively consist of 340 apartments including some affordable units. (See below).

City Public Advocate Letitia James asked the Empire State Development Corporation to block construction saying, "there is no need for immediate development" at the site as Brooklyn Bridge Park currently has a \$47



million budget surplus from earlier housing development and is not expected to go in the red until 2029, according to the New York Post.

While former Mayor Michael Bloomberg had promised neighborhood groups that housing at Pier 6 would only be built as a last resort, the de Blasio administration has pushed the project as a way to reach the mayor's affordable housing goals. James' endorsement

means she is siding with local elected officials representing neighborhoods surrounding the park in opposition to the mayor and his plans for the area.

Opponents have argued that funds from the towers were not necessary to support the park, which is financed by revenues from residential developments. With all these new residents, where will parents send their children to school? School overcrowding and the lack of new school construction are recurring topics.

(continued on next page)

OUR SUPPORTERS

SUPER HEROES

Barrett Design and Development, LLC
Kim Soule, James Crow & Sue Wolfe, *The Corcoran Group*

HEROES

Terry Naini, *TOWN Residential*
Jim Kerby, *Prudential Douglas Elliman*

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61 Local
Steve Radacinski
Trezza Management
Hope Veterinary Clinic
The Sterling School
Lone Star Construction

MORE FRIENDS

Exit 9
Gumbo
Sterling Place

Sottocasa
Sahadi's
Sterling Wines
The Invisible Dog

OVER DEVELOPED? (CONTINUED)

Nearby, the Fortis development at the former LICH site is another pot boiling over. Cobble Hill residents are being asked to choose between an “as-of-right” plan that allows very tall buildings close to low-rise brownstones with only market-rate housing and space for community facility uses, such as student housing OR the “ULURP” (Urban Land Use Review Procedure) rezoning plan that includes a design more in context with the neighborhood, affordable and senior housing, expanded park space, a new public school and retail along Atlantic Avenue. Although larger, the development is attempting to move the bulk away from the brownstones.



As-of-right plan with towers (left to right) of 16 floors, 28 floors, 35 floors and 14 floors.



ULURP plan with towers (left to right) of 37 floors, 28 floors, 14 floors and 20 floors.

OVER DEVELOPED? (CONTINUED)

In Brooklyn Heights, the Brooklyn Public Library would sell the existing Brooklyn Heights Branch to the developer Hudson Companies, which will demolish the existing building and replace it with a projected 36 story residential (139 condos) and commercial building with a new library at the street and lower level. The plan would generate cash for much-needed repairs at library branches in other neighborhoods.

Hudson will also build affordable housing at a different site in Clinton Hill. Those two buildings, which would rise at three adjacent sites at 907-915 Atlantic Avenue and 1043 Fulton Street, would collectively bring 114 affordable-priced apartments to Clinton Hill.

Opponents have complained the plan privatizes public space and would shrink the library's size.



“We know that this proposal represents true market value because it was the result of one of the most competitive bidding processes ever run by the City, beating out 13 other bids. We are getting a brand-new, state-of-the-art library for Brooklyn Heights, \$52 million for repairs at libraries across Brooklyn and 114 units of affordable housing,” said spokeswoman Madeline Kaye.

Community Board 2 voted in favor of the plan and the City Planning Commission has also approved the deal.

And the City has new ideas for overall development.

The NYC Planning office has developed two plans, “Mandatory Inclusionary Housing” and “Zoning for Quality and Affordability,” that are currently in the review process.

The Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) plan seeks to address the lack of affordable housing city-wide and the expected increase in NYC’s population predicted to add 600,000 residents by 2040.

Step one, called Housing New York, seeks to preserve 200,000 units of low to middle income housing over the next decade.

The key element in MIH is a new proposal which would require permanently affordable housing in new construction whereby 25-30% must be affordable.

Under this proposal, two bedroom apartments would rent for \$775 monthly if family income is \$31k (40% of AMI) and scale up to \$2350 if the family income is \$93k (120% of AMI). Other levels are based on 60%/80%/100% of AMI (average mean income). *(continued on page 6)*

B E C O M E A M E M B E R O F T H E B O E R U M H I L L A S S O C I A T I O N

Name(s) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Your contact info will never be shared or sold, and you may opt out of any communications at any time.

Yearly Membership (open to all residents of Boerum Hill) **\$10 – NEW MEMBERS ONLY**

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 – Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 – Individual Senior/Student/Low-income |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40 – Family | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 – Family* Senior/Student/Low-income |

Business Supporters (listed on BHA website, newsletters, and other publications)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$125 – Business Donor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 – Business Sponsor |
|---|---|

Contributions (Not a resident or business owner? Or checked a box above but still want to do more? Contributions of any size are always welcome and help support the important work of the BHA)

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> + \$100 “Good Neighbor | <input type="checkbox"/> + \$250 “Neighborhood Hero!” | <input type="checkbox"/> + \$_____ Other |
|---|---|--|

The BHA membership year is from January 1 to December 31. Members in good standing as of June 1 may vote in the June board election. All others, including business supporters, may not vote but are welcome at all BHA events and activities.

* Family memberships (2+ adults in the same household), are entitled to two votes. Individual members receive one vote.

Contribute Your Talent and Energy

Join your neighbors who volunteer to work on BHA activities and community priorities. Identify your areas of interest.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Atlantic Yards | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations and Communication (neighborhood calendar, block associations, press releases, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Block Captain (help distribute BHA notices on your block) | <input type="checkbox"/> Parks and Playgrounds (improving Douglass/Greene Park) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boerum Hill History | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of Life (public safety, sanitation, recycling, noise) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Events (meetings, holiday party, house tour) | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology (website, email, online tools) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greening & Neighborhood Beautification | <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic and Transportation (transit, parking, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use (development, zoning, building noise) | <input type="checkbox"/> Tutoring (homework help to neighborhood youth) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land marking | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership (recruitment, member services) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter | |

Make your check payable to the **Boerum Hill Association**.

Mail this form and the check to the:

Boerum Hill Association, P.O. Box 020583, Brooklyn, NY 11202

OVER DEVELOPED? (CONTINUED)

The Zoning for Quality and Affordability has two goals: affordability and quality. The zoning seeks to create more affordable housing for a broad range of New Yorkers and to encourage better buildings that are more attractive and livable.

The proposal encourages creation of senior housing and care facilities thereby allowing seniors to remain in the city. Additional height would be allowable in a contextual zone if senior housing is created. In medium and high density areas *one or two additional stories* would be allowed. The example in their presentation shows this in the R7A zone which includes parts of Atlantic Avenue, Third Avenue and Fourth Avenue in Boerum Hill. *One additional story* might also apply on Smith Street, Court Street and some other streets on the western side of Boerum Hill.

Much of the proposal encourages better ground floor retail and improved residential design with visual variety. Flat building fronts can be seen along Fourth Avenue with residential space on the ground level. By allowing an additional 5 feet at street level, this proposal encourages ground floor retail or taller residential floors with stoops. Setbacks, bay windows and courtyards are also encouraged under this proposal. This additional 5 feet would be allowed in almost all of Boerum Hill for new construction and *possibly* for existing homes.

City Planning suggests that this would encourage designs that are better integrated with the surroundings in the low rise neighborhoods. For taller buildings, bulk could be shifted to create more interesting designs without the blank side walls often seen along Fourth Avenue.

The BHA Board wrote to CB2 against approval of this plan because we thought it would encourage more out-of-scale development along Atlantic Avenue which is already undergoing unsatisfying changes.

The proposal says it has “no provisions that encourage tear-downs” but it doesn’t prevent them. The proposal does nothing to *compel* developers to design more pleasing, integrated buildings in return for the extra height. Nothing included in the proposal protects backyards and green space invaded by rear extensions.

We felt there was nothing positive in this proposal for Boerum Hill and much that could be harmful.

Take all these projects together, along with the tremendous increase of downtown residents, and the opposition is not surprising.

Many long-time residents in brownstone Brooklyn were residents of the Upper West Side who moved here to escape the high rise developments there. The Brooklyn “*vide*” included light, air and small town feel. Our local businesses were often created by residents who opened their own small shops in food and fashion. Writers and visual artists resided here. Creativity and passion for living were the hallmarks of our lifestyle. The increase in commercial rents has created challenges for these businesses.

Opportunities still abound but the environment seems more difficult. The BHA would like to see more creativity in any zoning proposal. We need something that encourages small entrepreneurs and independent businesses; current businesses need protection from chains.

The BHA will also be taking a look at extending our land mark district as one way to make sure to preserve more of what makes us special. We would like to hear from you on all these topics.

REMEMBERING BETTE STOLTZ

Long time resident Claire Angelica wrote this remembrance.

I'm absolutely heartbroken by news of the death of Bette Stoltz. I want to share my recollections of her and her accomplishments in the neighborhood.



I met Bette when she started the Smith Street Development Corporation, which then morphed into the South Brooklyn Local Development Corporation. She had what seemed to be an impossible vision – to revitalize Smith Street. This was an era when the term LDC needed explanation: local businesses would pay higher taxes to get beautified, cleaner, and safer streets.

Smith Street was then a scary place. It was dark. Walking home those 4 blocks from LDC meetings near Baltic Street was dicey. But that all changed.

Bette obtained grants to improve stores and help businesses. She encouraged shops to put up attractive awnings and install more the costly open gates instead of solid ones. She enticed the Ponce de Leon Bank to open a branch at the corner of Wyckoff and convinced Rite Aid to locate at intersection of Smith and Warren. This was all happening when most businesses tried to avoid Brooklyn, let alone, to come to Smith Street.

Structurally, Smith Street was collapsing into the subway tunnel, making it look like a third world country. To rebuild meant Bette had to sell the idea to merchants because the project could mean years of disruption. Ultimately, under her leadership, the street was rebuilt and sidewalks repaved.

With so many empty stores, Bette opened a thrift shop, Treasures, to help women and young people obtain business skills and earn money. She encouraged a mentoring program for students where they could “shadow” a volunteer professional. She helped fund and bring a full fledged Culinary Arts Curriculum with facilities to the High School for International Studies.

Bette called Smith Street “The Little Street that Could” with its choo-choo train logo. She was the face the June’s Sunday Funday street fair, July’s Bastille Day celebration and October’s Soup Festival.

Bette seemed to accomplish the impossible, inspiring others to come along for the ride, always the mediator when contrary ideas and opinions stood in the way, always optimistic and positive.

We’ll all miss her. I know I do.



Boerum Hill Association
P.O. Box 020583
Brooklyn, NY 11202-0583
www.boerumhillassociation.org

Growing a better Boerum Hill

NEW IN THE NABE

Grandma's House, 364 Atlantic Avenue

Once the location of Downtown Atlantic this homey, family restaurant has finally opened its doors relocating to Boerum Hill after the destruction of their South Street Seaport location by Superstorm Sandy.

Look for the picket fences outside and inside take in the many clever touches of Americana. Breakfast is served all day long, the 8-ounce hamburgers are called "Hambiggers" and the Original Grandma's Baby Back Sweet Ribs come coated in caramelized sugar. The motto of the eatery is "Food That Hugs You" and everything is USA made.

Try a milkshake, an egg cream or a Manhattan Special along with a nice slice of pie. A great place for families! Welcome to Boerum Hill! Hours are Sunday–Thursday 9am to 10pm. Friday to 11pm.

GENERAL MEETING

**Thursday, January 21st
Belarusian Church
Atlantic & Bond**

SAVE THE DATE

Topics to come

JOIN THE BHA

Help us advocate for Boerum Hill by becoming a member. Join us on the web at www.boerumhillassociation.org