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LOCAL CLASSIFIEDS
PAGE 11

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Your Neighborhood - Your News®

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Pier 6 tower plans unveiled

BY NOAH HUROWITZ

Brooklyn Bridge Park honchos last Wednesday unveiled designs for the two luxury apartment towers they plan to erect at Pier 6.

Park bigwigs anointed Ral Development Services — the developer behind the condominiums in the neighboring One Brooklyn Bridge Park building — and Oliver's Realty Group, a newcomer to Brooklyn, as their chosen co-developers for the project.

Here is what you can expect to see looming behind the park's beach volleyball courts if the plan gets the green light:

- A taller 29-story tower housing around 192 market-rate units and a parking garage.

- A shorter 14-story tower con-

Continued on page 10



Puppy dog eyes

Rescue City co-founder Aidan Masona helped save this puppy and several others from alleged abuse. For the story, **see page 3.**

Photo by Steve Solomonson

BOOZING INDUSTRY

Distillery tasting room hits S'Park

BY ERIC FAYNBERG

If you build it, they will come.

And the chemists and engineers of Industry City Distillery have built it. They built the still and the fermentation tanks used to create Industry Standard vodka. And now the vodka virtuosos have built a tasting room in the corner of their sixth floor distillery in Sunset Park, which is already getting buzz from local drinkers.

"Our neighborhood was lacking a place to go and have a drink after work," said co-owner Ronak

Parikh. "Our space is well suited to receive people."

The gritty, industrial tasting room has enormous windows with views of the Manhattan skyline and the Statue of Liberty. And while most tasting rooms only offer shots of the distillery's beverage, Industry City serves nine different cocktails made with its signature beet sugar vodka.

The drinks also highlight the company's latest product, "Technical Reserve," an extremely high-proof spirit (95.6% alcohol by vol-

Continued on page 8

Costume invasion

BY JOSEPH ALTOBELLI

And so it begins...

The invasion long dreaded by denizens of the People's Playground has finally come to pass, as costumed characters driven out of Times Square by a police crackdown have descended onto the Coney Island Boardwalk.

People dressed as children's favorite characters — from SpongeBob to Iron Man to Olaf from "Frozen" — have begun to congregate along the waterfront to pose for pictures with kids — and then demand cash from the parents.

Locals are not at all
Continued on page 10



Joey Amanda

SKY'S THE LIMIT: Rising Bedford-Stuyvesant rapper Skyzoo is thrilled for a set at the Brooklyn Hip-Hop Festival.

Boro rapper comes home

BY NOAH HUROWITZ

There is no place like home.

The 11th Annual Brooklyn Hip-Hop Festival next week will feature performances from big names like Common and Mobb Deep. But for rapper Skyzoo, the excitement is not who he

performs with, but who he will be performing for. The native Brooklynite and Bedford-Stuyvesant lifer says that although he is a veteran of tours abroad, he wants nothing more than to rap to his hometown.

"I headline in Europe and Africa like clockwork

every year, but this is the crib, this is the back yard," Skyzoo said. "I've performed as a guest on other people but I still wanted that 20 or 30 minutes to kill for the crib."

Skyzoo, whose new studio album came out on
Continued on page 8

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DAYS TO COME: A rendering shows the view of the planned open space between Carlton and Vanderbilt avenues planned for the Pacific Park development. VUW Studio

Pacific parkland

Atlantic Yards green space unveiled

BY NOAH HUROWITZ

A public promenade at the center of the Pacific Park mega-development in Prospect Heights will feature a dog run, a basketball court, a bocce court, and areas for tots to play, according to a new master plan released by developers.

A Forest City Ratner Companies honcho praised the plan and said the park would be a boon to surrounding neighborhoods as well as the future residents of the towers.

“Pacific Park, the name-sake of our entire 22-acre development in the heart of Brooklyn, will make this pocket of the borough more livable for residents of many different Brooklyn neighborhoods,” said MaryAnne Gilmartin, the president and chief executive officer of Forest City Ratner. “There will no longer be a dearth of green space in the heart of Brooklyn; instead, there will be sprawling lawns, shaded benches and valued neighborhood amenities across eight acres of

public open space that will reknit these communities together.”

Released last Wednesday, the new plans detail an eight-acre open space at the heart of the project formerly known as Atlantic Yards, a feature the state demanded in its final environmental impact statement regarding the massive undertaking by Forest City and Greenland, a Chinese government-owned majority partner in the 16-tower mega-project.

According to the plans, the park will included lush, tree-lined pathways, lawns, and gardens.

A neighbor of the development who has been involved in many of the negotiations between community members and developers was cautiously hopeful after seeing a presentation on the new plan.

“Going forward I’m most interested in seeing how well the open space at Atlantic Yards can integrate with the rest of the community,” said Gib Veconi, a member of the activist

group BrooklynSpeaks, which works to keep Forest City accountable to neighbors. “The vision is a nice vision, and hopefully it will be fulfilled in a way that the project originally intended, which was to integrate and link with the surrounding neighborhoods.”

The first phase of the park, a grass corridor running through the center of the block between Vanderbilt and Carlton avenues, is expected to be unveiled next summer in conjunction with the towers at 535 Carlton Ave. and 550 Vanderbilt Ave., according to a spokeswoman.

Those buildings, for which work is already underway, will accommodate 298 units and 278 units respectively, with all of the apartments in the Carlton Avenue tower slated for below-market rates.

Developers expect to complete the park by 2025, according to a spokeswoman for the public relations firm BerlinRosen, which represents Forest City.

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Slave to history

Army won't change 'racist' street name despite pleas from black leaders

BY MAX JAEGER

Apparently, a road by any other name would spell defeat.

The U.S. Army has no plans to change a street named for a Confederate general stationed at Ft. Hamilton Army Base — despite pleas from black church leaders who say the name is racist.

Members of Rev. Al Sharpton's National Action Network rallied in front of the 190-year-old Bay Ridge base on June 25 to denounce General Lee Avenue — named for Gen. Robert E. Lee — and call for a less racially charged moniker following the shooting death of nine black South Carolina churchgoers — including a state senator — allegedly by a white gunman who posted photos of the Confederate flag to social media. The activists said newly minted congressman Rep. Dan Donovan (R-Bay Ridge) could use his position to urge the Department of Defense to rename the road, but they say he isn't taking Sharpton's calls.

"The silence is deafening, but it's not surprising — this is the same individual who did not think Eric Garner deserved justice," said National Action Network Brooklyn chapter president Kirsten John Foy, referring to the grand jury empaneled by then-Staten Island district attorney Donovan that chose not to indict white police officer Daniel Pantaleo in the homicide of a black man who died while being arrested for selling loose cigarettes.

Donovan's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Lee was a decorated soldier in the U.S. Army who was stationed at Ft. Hamilton for five years before turning down command of the Union Army at the outbreak of the Civil War in favor of leading Confederate troops in his home state of Virginia. That choice supersedes any good he may have done prior to the Civil



Photo by Georgine Benvenuto

CALL TO ACTION: National Action Network Brooklyn chapter president Kirsten John Foy says Confederate general Robert E. Lee was a traitor to his country and a Fort Hamilton street named after him — General Lee Avenue — is racist and has to go. Lee (right) was stationed at the Bay Ridge U.S. Army base as a captain from 1842 to 1847.



Associated Press

War, according to Foy.

"All that service went out the window when he decided to engage in treason," Foy said.

The battle is personal for Sharpton's daughters, who grew up under the shadow of the street sign.

"My sister and I had to go through here every day to visit our mother serving as a sergeant in the U.S. Army," said Dominique Sharpton, who said she was born in the now-closed Victory Memorial Hospital and graduated from Poly Prep in Dyker Heights. "What kind of message is a sign like this giving to our youth?"

The demand for the name change comes as part of a national sea of change in attitudes towards symbols of the Confederate States of America in the wake of the Charleston shooting. National chain stores such as Walmart and Target have yanked products featuring the Confederate battle flag from their shelves, and online sellers including eBay and Brooklyn's own Etsy have banned rebel swag from their sites.

But the Army has no

plans to alter streets or bases named for Confederate soldiers, according to a statement.

Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-Fort Greene) is also calling on the fort to nix Lee Avenue.

"Brooklyn is one of the most diverse counties in America, with sizable communities of color," Jeffries said. "There is no good reason for a street to be named after an individual who led the Confederate Army in the fight to keep slavery and racial subjugation alive in America. It is my hope that we will do the right thing and find an appropriate local hero for whom the street can be renamed."

Other federal politicians have not made their opinions clear. The National Action Network has not reached out to New York's U.S. senators or Mayor DeBlasio about the street, Foy said.

There are 5,000 Civil War veterans interred at nearby Green-Wood Cemetery — including 74 Confederate soldiers and two Confederate generals, according to cemetery historian Jeff Richman.



PICKS OF THE LITTER: The folks from Rescue City and the Oceanside Animal Clinic show off the rescued pups.
Photo by Steve Solomonson

Group saves pooches from allegedly abusive owner

BY ERIC FAYNBERG

They say cats have nine lives, but nine puppies in Gravesend could have lost the only lives they have if not for some generous animal rescuers from the neighborhood.

Members of Rescue City, a recently organized animal rescue organization, paid \$1,800 out of pocket to buy the dogs from an Avenue X resident they allege was neglecting and abusing the animals. They then spent thousands more for veterinary care for the pups, which were extremely malnourished, suffering from parasites and ringworm. At least one had been burned with a cigarette.

One of Rescue City's co-founders said he paid the hefty price because he couldn't stand to see the dogs mistreated.

"I was very concerned for the dogs," said Dmitry Perelshtein, a veterinary technician at Oceanside Animal Clinic. "I just wanted to get them out of those conditions."

When Perelshtein took the puppies to the Kings Highway clinic where he works, some were so skinny that their rib cages were visible. Two of the pups are still in critical condition, but all nine are improving every day thanks to the clinic's care.

"None of them are 100



PUPPY LOVE: Valentina Anurova gets a kiss from a rescued pooch.
Photo by Steve Solomonson

percent, but they're coming along," Perelshtein said. "Hopefully, we'll be able to find them good homes once they're healthy."

The clinic gave Perelshtein a discount on the care the nine recovered puppies received, but it will still cost him approximately \$7,000.

Rescue City first learned of the puppies' plight thanks to Facebook posts and phone calls from other local animal activists. A group had gathered at the home of the dogs' owner, with one woman

allegedly having a physical altercation with the owner's wife.

Perelshtein asked the owner if he could see the dogs, and when the owner let him in, the vet tech was so shocked by the puppies' condition that he immediately negotiated a price to take the puppies away.

The initial asking price was \$1,000 a dog, Perelshtein said, but he managed to bargain the owner down to just \$200 per pup.

"I think he's running a puppy mill, an illegal pet store, out of his house," said Perelshtein. "He's just trying to make a quick buck on these poor dogs."

The alleged puppy-mill operator had several other dogs on the premises that were also in poor condition, and Perelshtein implored him to bring them to Oceanside, promising that the clinic would give him a discount just to help the other dogs.

The remaining dogs were brought for an examination, but even with a discount the owner allegedly balked at the price of care and left without allowing the dogs to receive treatment.

Perelshtein said he has notified the NYPD's animal cruelty unit and it is investigating with the

Continued on page 8

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HOOP THEMES: The court at the Nets' practice facility will feature the same herringbone design as the court at Barclays Center. Brooklyn Nets

New nest for Nets

Team previews delayed Sunset Park facility

BY ERIC FAYNBERG

Better late than never.

The Nets will finally be practicing in Brooklyn come February 2016, once the club's state-of-the-art facility in Sunset Park is completed. The team gave an early tour on June 23 of the unfinished Hospital for Special Surgery Training Center, which was originally scheduled to open this year, in time for the 2015-16 season.

"It gives me a new sense of appreciation for getting Barclays Center done on time," said Irina Pavlova, president of Onexim Sports and Entertainment, the company through which Russian billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov owns the team. "There were so many little things that delayed the project. It wasn't one big event. Permits took longer, access took longer."

The \$45-million facility will cover the eighth floor and rooftop of an abandoned, century-old warehouse on 39th Street between First and Second avenues in Industry City. The plans include two full-size basketball courts with televisions and dry-erase boards for coaching purposes.

Nets front-office staff, coaches and players will enjoy luxurious amenities including a weight room,

a hydro-therapy area, an 18-seat multimedia theater, a player lounge complete with kitchen, billiards, and ping pong tables, and a roof-top area with stunning panoramic views of the Manhattan skyline. The space will also include offices and workout rooms reserved for the coaches and for Billy King, the team's general manager.

The new facility will certainly be an upgrade. Since moving to Brooklyn in 2012, the team has continued practicing and operating out of its old facility in East Rutherford, N.J. But even that site was a step up for the team — before moving into the East Rutherford facility, the Nets actually practiced at a truck stop in North Bergen, N.J.

Head coach Lionel Hollins said that he hopes the swanky Sunset Park practice center will help the Nets attract free agents.

"You try to show guys the city, the arena, and a facility like this enhances that," Hollins said. "We practiced at four or five facilities in one city when I played."

Pavlova said that the Nets looked at more than 50 potential locations, but settled on the Industry City site because of its proximity to airports and Barclays



TOUR GUIDE: Nets Director of Operations Tony Brasile breaks down what the team's practice facility will include.

Photo by Georgine Benvenuto

Center, but she also cited a desire to get in on the ground floor of the revitalization of the Sunset Park and Gowanus areas. The team plans to host community events, local business-development functions, youth basketball clinics, and job fairs and internships for neighborhood residents.

Allowing local college and high school teams to use the facilities is also a possibility, she said.

"We plan to be here for a long time," said Pavlova. "We want to help revitalize this neighborhood."

FLEECE OF MIND

Lawman: Brooklyn 'psychic' man scammed Iowans by mail

BY MAX JAEGER

He should have seen this coming.

A Brooklyn man running a psychic scam has bilked elderly Mid-Westerners out of thousands of dollars, according to officials in Iowa. That state's top legal eagle says that Joseph Meisels of Borough Park has been sending ridiculous mailers to Iowans promising to rid them of their bad luck with his psychic powers — for a price.

"These mailings were outrageous and outlandish in their deceptive claims and promises from supposed clairvoyants, astrologers, and even extraterrestrials," Attorney General Tom Miller said. "Sadly, these predatory mailings found their way to the mailboxes of many elderly Iowans, bilking one



MISTAKEN IDENTITY: A phony mailer identifies this man as Professor Magnum Demorarth — but it's actually former Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke.

United States Federal Reserve

77-year-old Iowa woman out of more than \$1,500 in 2014 alone."

And outlandish they were, based on a copy of the mailer Meisels allegedly circulated.

"Even someone whose luck fields are as jammed and rusty as yours, with the knowledge I possess, with the psychic technology at my disposal, I can revive even the luck-dead and perpetual inheritors of misfortune," the seven-page mailer states. "There is no choice but to unleash the greatest super weapon in my psychic arsenal on your behalf."

But first he needs \$50.

The scam letter also included a testimonial from one Prof. Magnum Demorarth alongside a photo of the supposed professor — except the photo is actually the first result when you Google Bernanke's name.

So far, 78 Rust Belt rubes have sent Meisels a combined \$13,740, according to a press

release from Miller's office. An Iowa court is ordering him to repay the money and cough up a \$20,000 fine.

On average, the pigeons mailed Meisels \$176 — but taking the bait exposed the marks to more scams, according to the Iowa attorney general.

"If an older Iowan sends money in response to a fraudulent mailing, he or she may be targeted by a host of other scammers — developing into a feeding frenzy that can bleed the victim's bank account," a press release states.

Meisels maintains the headquarters of his International Astrological Foundation on 18th Avenue, according to the Iowa attorney general's office. But the people who picked up the phone and answered the door at the two locations said he wasn't there.



THE MOTHERSHIP: The headquarters of the International Astrology Foundation is a nondescript office on 18th Avenue. The man who answered the door declined to give his name and said that Joseph Meisels was not in and would not be back that day.

Community News Group / Max Jaeger

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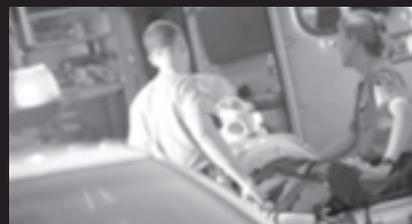


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THE DAILY GRIND: Mrs Lovett (Hannah Scott) and Sweeney Todd (Adam LeBow) stand before the meat grinder in the Piper Theatre's production at the Old Stone House stage.

Singers with chops

Piper Theatre serves up bloody 'Sweeney Todd'

BY ALLEGRA HOBBS

Call him the demon barber of Third Street.

The Piper Theatre Company opens its 10th season at the Old Stone House in Park Slope on July 2 with an enticingly stripped-down production of "Sweeney Todd," the infamous Sondheim musical about a murderous barber and his mistress serving up hot slices of revenge in Victorian London. The artists behind the gorgeous gore-fest say it is to die for.

"It's a beast of a show," said Hannah Scott, who plays cannibal cook Mrs. Lovett. "It's musically complicated but written in a way that the characters are a hundred percent rounded and thought through."

The outdoor space in Washington Park has become a welcoming hub for free theater during the company's time performing there, says the show's artistic director.

"When I first got to Piper, the space was a parking lot," said Michael Buffer, who has been with the company for eight years. "Now it's this enormous beautiful field that's really a community hot spot."

Audience members tend to arrive early with blankets and picnic baskets so they can claim a spot on the grass from which to enjoy the raw, open air productions. The Old Stone House theater has no curtain or backstage to hide actors between scenes, and Scott

said being exposed to the audience and the elements makes the performance even more thrilling.

"There's a vulnerability to it because you're never out of sight," she said. "It's exciting— maybe it will rain, or maybe the wind will come up."

The Piper production uses minimal staging and props, aside from an enormous, abstract piece of industrial meat-chopping machinery that embodies what audience want from the sinister musical, said Buffer.

"I think they're really coming for the blood," he said. "They want to see the cuts, the drops, the body disappear. It's kind of a cathartic revenge story, as

gory and consumptive and straight-faced as it is about it. People — not to be too trite about it — they eat it up."

The audience can also gorge on the show's concession stand, which will serve meat pies made specially for the production. Buffer said several bakeries declined their request for Sweeney-themed goods, but patisserie Sweet Pistachio was up for the rather morbid challenge.

"Sweeney Todd" at the Old Stone House in Washington Park [336 Third Street between Fourth and Fifth Avenues, www.theoldstonehouse.org, (718) 768-3195]. July 2-3, 9-11, and 16-18 at 8 pm. Free (donations welcome).

Book reveals G'Point's past

BY TRUPTI RAMI

Some hidden history is coming out.

A long-time Greenpoint resident and blogger reveals stories from the neighborhood's forgotten past in his new book, which he will read from at Word Bookstore on July 9.

Greenpoint today is very different from the quiet, blue-collar place it used to be, said Geoffrey Cobb, the author of "Greenpoint Brooklyn's Forgotten Past." At one time, he said, Greenpoint was one of the most industrialized places in the world.

"Greenpoint has totally changed," said Cobb. "It used to be a sleepy working class place with little nightlife. Now the bars and restaurants are truly amazing."

While writing the book, Cobb discovered that in 1872 the neighborhood had its own national championship baseball team, the Eckfords, and that one of the team's members made it into the Baseball Hall of Fame. He also learned about a local Irish terrorist cell that tried to bomb London, and that a candidate in the 1916 Presidential election, Charles Evans Hughes, hailed from Greenpoint.

Cobb, who leads walking tours of the neighborhood, has lived in Greenpoint for more than 20 years. He also teaches history at a local high school and runs the popular Historic Greenpoint blog. Cobb said that his love for the neighborhood and its residents inspired the



GREENPOINT OF VIEW: Author Geoffrey Cobb reveals neighborhood stories in "Greenpoint Brooklyn's Forgotten Past."

Photo by Stefano Giovannini

book. Cobb said what he loves most is "its people who are unpretentious, hardworking, solid, no-nonsense Brooklynites."

At Word, Cobb will share some stories from the book, including ones about Aaron Burr's visits to Greenpoint to court a local girl despite being engaged to another woman, the oil industry's destruction of the Newtown Creek, and some tales about Greenpoint's movie star Mae West. Cobb says that he wants these stories to give fuller picture of the neighborhood.

"I believe that Greenpoint's story has never been fully or properly told," Cobb wrote on his blog. "What I tried to do is to create a history that went beyond a superficial description of events. I wanted to capture the reality of people's lives at certain moments in local history."

"Greenpoint Brooklyn's Forgotten Past" with at Word [126 Franklin St. at Milton Street in Greenpoint, (718) 383-0096, www.wordbrooklyn.com]. July 9 at 7 pm. Free.



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DISTILLERY

Continued from page 1

ume) designed for quick flavor infusions, which the owners have used to make bitters and limoncello for their cocktails. Distillery co-owner Dave Kyrjeko designed the equipment which produced the reserve, and he also created the cocktail menu.

One first-time customer was impressed by Kyrjeko's cocktail concoctions.

"Fresh ingredients and a great knowledge of pairing them with the alcohol," said Kensington resident Brian Oestreich, who was tasting the mojito-like Dr. Ellison (\$10), a refreshing mix of Industry Standard vodka, freshly pressed cucumber juice, mint leaves, and bitters. "I think it's as good a cocktail as you'll find in Brooklyn."

Of course, the location and the recipes wouldn't be worth much without a good product. The owners believe that their vodka stands out from other distillers because of their backgrounds in science and technology.

"A lot of distilleries will engage in commercial alcohol,



MIXING BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE: Industry City Distillery co-owner Dave Kyrjeko engineers a refreshing summer cocktail. Photo by Steve Solomonson

mix it with water, slap a label on it and call it vodka," Parikh said. "There are guys here with chemical engineering backgrounds. Not only do we ferment here, we actually breed our own yeast here."

The distillery is legally allowed to operate the tasting room as long as it serves food, which in this case is Latin-inspired snacks from Julio's Famous Foods. The tasting

room is also required to serve locally produced alcohol made with local ingredients, but Parikh said the distillers do not see that as a limitation.

"We celebrate that fact," said Parikh. "We curate a truly local menu."

And locals seem to agree with that approach.

"We like supporting a local business," said Stacey Ward, a Bay Ridge resident who works nearby.

HIP-HOP

Continued from page 1

June 23, grew up in Bedford-Stuyvesant during the worst of the crack epidemic. But that was also a golden era of hip-hop, and he came from the same streets that launched the likes of Notorious B.I.G. and Jay-Z. For a young rapper, a better pedigree is hard to find.

"Brooklyn is looked at as having the best of the best," said Skyzoo. "It's kind of in the culture, it's embedded in your body."

His new album "Music For My Friends," deals with the crossroads at which Skyzoo and his friends found themselves as teens on the streets of Bedford-Stuyvesant, when they would sit on stoops

and cast envious looks at the big shots rolling by in fancy cars. Some of his friends tried to achieve success by rapping or going to law school, while others began selling drugs and became ensnared in violence.

"You would see the guy in the Jeep Wrangler or the Benz and you'd start to inquire, 'How do I get that?'" he said. "That's where things went in separate directions for people."

The borough may have changed since he started rapping, but Skyzoo said he is still excited about the hip-hop scene in Brooklyn. The borough is teeming with long-time emcees like himself and his friend and frequent collaborator Torae, as well young stars like Joey Bada\$\$, whose Pro-Era crew has rocketed to national attention in the last

several years.

Skyzoo said he and other Brooklyn artists are working hard to keep old-school Brooklyn alive while also leaving their own legacies.

"There's a lot of different sounds from a lot of different people, but I think everyone shares kind of the same aesthetic," he said. "I'm just about how we handle ourselves as Brooklyn artists. If you're really into the art, you gotta make it stick, and all of us have to keep that in mind."

Skyzoo at the Brooklyn Hip-Hop Festival Finale Concert (50 Kent Ave. between N. 11th and N. 12th streets in Williamsburg, www.bkhiphopfestival.com). July 11, 2 pm. \$60.

Other Brooklyn Hip-Hop Festival events begin July 8 at various locations.

PUPPIES

Continued from page 3

help of the American So-

ciety for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

The dogs' owner could not be reached for comment.

Anyone interested in adopting the rescued pups can contact Rescue City through its website: rescuecity.nyc.org.

Nursing home is same old story

Proposed eight-story Hook old-folks home raises height, traffic concerns

BY MAX JAEGER

An eight-story, 200-bed old-folks home planned for Red Hook will bring traffic troubles to the neighborhood's semi-industrial main drag Van Brunt Street and dwarf nearby homes in an area where buildings are no taller than four stories, says a local official.

"How would traffic work on Van Brunt once you put in a building with 200 employees and 200 beds?" said Community Board 6 district manager Craig Hammerman. "And the height is something that would be out of context with the neighborhood."

Fort Greene's Oxford Nursing Home is seeking the city's blessing to erect the outside building on Conover Street, between King and Sullivan streets, so it can relocate its current facility to new digs.

The home says it isn't budging on the height, because the coastal neighborhood's high water table means it can't build underground and it needs room for all its residents. But it is adding dozens of new parking spots and is willing to work with locals to reduce the negative impact of additional cars, a representative said.

"There's really very little option — we can't build down into the cellar," Oxford Nursing Home administrator Norman Motechin said. "Even for 200 residents that's pretty much the minimum. We are bringing at least 50 parking spots — whatever else we can do we'll try to do."

The home is also downsizing from 235 beds at its



GOING UP: A new nursing home proposed for Conover Street in Red Hook will look close to this rendering — except builders are elevating the first floor, per flood-zone building code. Some locals say the structure will be too tall to fit into the surrounding neighborhood.

Oxford Nursing Home

current location on S. Oxford Street to 200 in Red Hook, he said. Administrators plan to lower the facil-

ity's head count by cutting off admissions for a period before the move and letting nature take its course.

Hammerman said he thinks the nursing home is sincere in its desire to compromise with its future neighbors. The group presented plans to the Community Board 6 land use committee on June 25 — well before it was required to under the city's land use review process, and he credited the early bird special as a show of good faith on the developer's part.

"We give the applicant a lot of credit for coming to us early before the application is certified for review," said Community Board 6 district manager Craig Hammerman. "Here they came to us before certification so that the community could suggest changes."

Ultimately, the facility doesn't need the community board's okay to get the land rezoned, but the board

can submit recommendations to the city, which the City Planning Commission may take into consideration in its final decision.

The new nursing home would sit in a flood zone but meet the latest flood codes, including required ground-floor elevation and rooftop mechanical equipment, Motechin said.

Hammerman said he hopes the new flood-resistant facility — like the Hurricane Sandy-scoffing Ikea — could serve as a resource in future emergencies.

Bingo, Motechin said.

"At our current facility, we accepted numerous residents that were affected by Sandy," he said. "We can do that in the future."

But he noted the Department of Health ultimately determines when nursing homes need to be evacuated.

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TOWERS

Continued from page 1

taining 30 market-rate units, 117 below-market-rate units for “moderate- and middle-income households,” a 75-seat pre-school, ground-floor retail space, and something called “a community facility space.”

The buildings are two of seven high-rises that park administrators say are needed to help pay for the maintenance of the sprawling waterfront green space, though local activists claim the other five towers will be lucrative enough to cover the costs now that property values in the area have skyrocketed alongside the developments and have been fighting to quash the project.

“It is a tragic mistake to wall off the park entrance and the Brooklyn waterfront with condos, especially now that the park’s real estate windfall provides better options,” said Henry Richmond, director of park activism group People for Green Space Foundation.

The announcement comes a month after the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation, the semi-private body charged with administering the park, settled a legal battle with anti-develop-

ment activists that had stalled the project for 10 months. As part of the settlement, the park agreed to give the public notice before its board members meet to approve the developer and designs — hence last week’s reveal — and to get the state’s okay on its latest plans.

That approval process is still ongoing, and could cause more delays for the project. The Empire State Development Corporation — the quasi-governmental state body that oversees development in the park — has to approve several recent changes to the park’s original plan for the site, including the addition of the below-market-rate housing and looser restrictions over how many units the developers can place in either building.

Opponents of the towers have been using the meetings to push the state to do a new study on how the new development will impact the surrounding community, according to the Brooklyn Daily Eagle. The state did its most recent study a decade ago, and the park commissioned its own review a year ago, but opponents say the reports don’t take into consideration how the towers — and the influx of new residents they will bring — will impact local schools.

COSTUMES

Continued from page 1

happy to see the photo phenomenon metastasize from the crossroads of the world to Sodom on the Sea.

“I think they should stay away from here,” said Fernando Delvalle, a weekly visitor to the Boardwalk. “Leave that in Times Square.”

Another Coney Island regular said the invasion would destroy the distinct local scene.

“I don’t like Times Square,” said Joe Hunt. “Coney Island is the farthest thing from Times Square.”

Some local restaurateurs and shop owners agree that the sudden appearance this season of the costumed cohort bodes ill for the Boardwalk.

“I think overall it’s bad for business,” said Michael Sarrel, a manager at famed Coney Island eatery Ruby’s.

Sarrel said he has already seen some of the



NO JOKE: The Joker, Iron Man, and the Mask are just a few of the costumed characters that have been popping up on the Coney Island Boardwalk.

Photo by Joseph Altobelli

tactics that prompted the police to run them out of Manhattan for harassing tourists who refused to hand over “tips” after snapping a pic.

“People are intimidated having them here, begging for tips,” Sarrel said. “Sometimes they get aggressive.”

It is illegal to demand money for taking a picture of someone in a public place, and after signs to that effect were posted prominently around Times Square, some costumed char-

acters have sought greener pastures — and less-savvy tourists.

“They’re preying on people’s ignorance,” said Hunt.

Louis John, Tom’s Coney Island’s manager, doesn’t think these new panhandlers will affect his business, but said he understands

the complaints.

“There’s so many people [in Coney Island] that I don’t think it matters,” he said. “But, they make people feel a little uncomfortable, they make you feel like you have to [tip.]”

Some visitors weren’t worried about aggressive panhandling as much as they were annoyed at the low-quality, knockoff costumes.

“I don’t come to the Boardwalk to hang out with inaccurate versions of characters,”

said Alex Thiel as she relaxed on the Boardwalk. “I don’t think Coney Island, being what it is, needs it,” she said.

Her friend Lauren Mark agreed, saying that the People’s Playground already has enough of its own distinctive attractions.

“I think [Coney Island] should just keep it to the classic freak show,” she said. “Those were the people you came here to see if you are coming to see characters.”

The Alliance for Coney Island said it is still looking into the matter and talking to the appropriate agencies, but added that it will strive to keep Coney Island a pleasurable spot for people to visit.

“The Alliance will continue to dedicate efforts to ensure that the district’s quality programming is preserved for the enjoyment of its visitors and residents,” said Johanna Zaki, executive director of the Alliance.

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