



## Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick

### Community Updates

- January 2016 -

#### **CLOSING THE LLC LOOPHOLE**

I was proud to join with my colleagues in a letter to the Governor requesting that he include closing the LLC Loophole in his Executive and final Budget. This would ensure a more transparent and democratic process in campaign finance moving forward. In the letter, we expressed the need to prevent large, and often anonymous, contributions by limited liability companies that circumvent the law by donating as if the company were an individual contributor.

This is a huge concern due to the 1996 Board of Elections decision that granted limited liability companies the right to be treated as individuals. I am proud to work with my colleagues in an effort to create greater transparency in government, restore faith in the democratic process, and work to create a greater playing field. And, most recently, I was happy to hear Governor Cuomo say he would pass a bill closing the LLC in his State of the State address.

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#### **OPPOSING CITY INITIATIVES TO DESTROY OPEN SPACE**

I recently wrote a letter to Mayor de Blasio regarding New York City Housing Preservation and Development's (HPD) stated interest of transforming a downtown open-space known as Elizabeth Street Garden into an affordable housing development. HPD failed to work with community members or Community Board 2 before deciding to take this land, and had never asked for help in identifying potential alternative sites for affordable housing. It is disappointing that residents are asked to choose between affordable housing and public open-space, both of which are essential for peace-of-mind and quality of life in our increasingly congested city.

Elizabeth Street Garden is a community-driven, volunteer run green space. It is a haven in our park-starved community. Affordable housing is desperately needed and efforts to develop affordable apartments are critical, but bypassing community input and taking away

beloved community space is unconscionable. Furthermore, the community identified another location on Hudson Street where housing could be built as a way to work with the Administration to achieve both goals of affordable housing and public open space. But rather than evaluate using the newly identified space instead of Elizabeth Street Garden, the proposal is now to build on both sites.

I hope that the New York City Department Housing Preservation and Development and Mayor de Blasio will choose to work with Community Board 2, and listen to their proposed alternatives for housing possibilities in their community that don't destroy precious green space.

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#### **CELEBRATING A NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

I was pleased to learn that Lower Manhattan is getting a new 476 seat elementary school at the site of the Syms Clothing store located at 42 Trinity Place. While the building is in another Assembly District, it is likely that some of my constituents will benefit from having a new school and desperately needed school seats in the area. It was the community, parents and activists and CB 1 that rallied around the call for the creation of this school, and their work and advocacy should be applauded.

Although this is good news, it points to the fact that the current formula for determining the need for school seats is woefully inadequate, and must be addressed so that the need for more school seats can keep pace with rapid development growth in Lower Manhattan.

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#### **APPOINTMENT TO THE ANTI-POVERTY WORK GROUP**

I am pleased to have been selected by Speaker Heastie to participate in the Assembly Majority Anti-Poverty Work Group. The Anti-Poverty Work Group is made up of members from varying committees and with specific expertise who will focus on lifting New Yorkers out of poverty. This is a real opportunity to focus on the obstacles confronting poor New Yorkers and provide solutions to assist them in moving themselves and their families out of poverty.

Almost 1.4 million people in New York are living in extreme poverty. This includes unacceptably high numbers of children, women, elderly and minorities. The group will undertake an evaluation of the drastic increase of New Yorkers living in poverty and identify solutions to combat it.

America's dramatic economic success in the second-half of the 20th century can be traced directly to the GI-bill which expanded access to higher education. We have long known that the avenue out of poverty passes through institutions of higher learning. I am pleased to be

working with my colleagues to ensure access for all New Yorkers as we work toward eradicating poverty throughout New York.

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#### **ADVOCATING FOR CHANGES TO SCRIE**

Earlier this month, I wrote a letter to Mayor de Blasio about the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE). Under the last Administration, this program was moved from the Department for the Aging (DFTA) to the impersonal administration of the Department of Finance (DOF). This move may have made sense from a simplistic bureaucratic point of view, but on an effective human level, the SCRIE program has suffered and is more appropriately housed within the Department for the Aging.

I thanked the Mayor for his laudable goal of increasing affordable housing and housing security for older adults and explained that the success of SCRIE is a huge factor in the success of this goal. While it was the previous Administration's choice to make the move, under the operation of the DOF, seniors are increasingly having a hard time enrolling in and renewing SCRIE benefits. My office is regularly contacted by seniors who need assistance that the DOF is unable to provide. Additionally, the re-enrollment process is burdensome and as a result, many seniors are losing benefits to which they are entitled. I continue to work with these seniors to restore their benefits, but asked the Mayor to address the issue systemically.

I will also work with my colleagues to try to make changes to the program overview on the State level, but I hope that the Mayor will also make administrative changes on the City level.

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#### **ADVOCATING FOR VISUALLY APPEALING INFRASTRUCTURE**

Earlier this month, I wrote to the MTA regarding the ventilation fan plant at Mulry Square which is now nearing completion. While I am pleased to see the plant is nearly complete and sidewalks are now clear of construction, I am concerned that final state of the fan plant does not fit with architectural significance of the surrounding community. This facility sits at the corner intersection of Greenwich Avenue, 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and West 11<sup>th</sup> Street, directly across from the newly constructed St. Vincent's Park and along a very busy thoroughfare. The lack of a public art component, or community driven aesthetic feature, causes the large concrete structure to stand out and run counter to the neighborhood context and historic district. The brick faux-cade which fronts part of the concrete structure is built to mimic window casings and intended to be similar to the overall streetscape. However, the large open spaces that form the "windows" reveal a rough and noticeably perforated concrete wall. This industrial look is unacceptable in Greenwich Village and detracts from the artistic community energy embodied in our neighborhood.

I encouraged the newly appointed President, Veronique Hakim, to integrate public art into the structure, in addition to the "Tiles for America" previously proposed to be included in the design. Hopefully residents will be able to view an aesthetically pleasing infrastructure improvement at this busy intersection within a historic district.

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### **PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT**

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) is tasked with reviewing applications for new development within Hudson River Park including the proposed creation of Pier 55. NYSDEC will review the potential impact of the proposal and ultimately, to decide if it will grant permits for the construction. During public comments this month, I submitted my concerns regarding this application.

The proposal currently under review by NYSDEC would construct a new pier, Pier 55, in undeveloped water which is home to sensitive fish and wildlife habitats. This project would have massive implications for the environment as well as the surrounding community. The Hudson River Park Trust relied on an Environmental Assessment from 1998 as the justification that there would be no impact from this construction. That is unacceptable. I urged NYSDEC to mandate a full Federal Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prior to consideration of any new permits, and at the very least, require a new State EIS.

While HRPT markets Pier 55 as a "replacement pier" this is misleading and inaccurate. The proposed Pier 55 is a completely new development project, not a simple replacement of what was Pier 54. While State Legislation allows for a change in the footprint of Pier 54, this legislation was never intended to create a pier rising 60-feet in the air, changing forever the view corridor in that section of the park. Pier 55 would be larger than what was Pier 54 and the negative impacts of new construction would be significant.

While the State EIS is already out of date, it is also increasingly out of line the realities of the park which is actually being dramatically developed. I have advocated for a full Federal EIS to be conducted since this project was announced, and I urged NYSDEC to require a full Federal EIS for the entirety of the Hudson River Park as it clearly deserves. At the very least, in view of the dramatic changes since the last State EIS, NYSDEC should require a new full State EIS be conducted.

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### **CALLING FOR BETTER SAFETY PROCEDURES AT BPC**

I wrote a letter to the Battery Park City Authority president to express concerns over the violent incident that occurred at Battery Park City on December 19. The attack is troubling, and the allegations regarding Allied Barton, the security company on duty at the time, are even more disturbing. The incident is one of many community issues stemming from the recent abrupt decisions by the Board of Battery Park City Authority. Moving forward, I have

called for a meeting to discuss some of these concerns over the contract with the private security company, and the need to re-evaluate safety procedures and protocol at Battery Park City, to ensure public safety.

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#### **MOVING AWAY FROM COMMON CORE**

This month, I wrote a letter to Governor Andrew Cuomo thanking him for his bold policy shift away from relying heavily on common core tests scores to evaluate teacher's performance and effectiveness. There have long been concerns over high-stakes testing and the overreliance on these for student and teacher evaluation.

I especially want to thank the Governor for highlighting the need to adjust tests for English Language Learners, scaling back on using student test scores to determine a teacher's effectiveness, highlighting the need for exam flexibility for students with disabilities and giving local school districts more control over educating their students. The governor's decision was the result of recommendations issued by a task force Governor Cuomo convened to study Common Core.

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#### **DEMANDING MORE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP ON BPCA**

I reached out to Governor Andrew Cuomo to request that he appoint more community members to the Battery Park City Authority Board. The call is the result of the community's request for more community representation on the Board in hopes of better representing the community's needs. Recently, the Board made a number of decisions that did not involve community input or transparency.

Many of the decisions implemented by the Board came as a complete shock to residents including the recent hiring of a private security company to patrol Battery Park City. The poor communication from the Board to the community must be remedied. I highlighted this decision, and many others, in the letter to the Governor and requested he consider the importance of local community participation and appoint BPC residents to the board.

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#### **ADVOCATING FOR INCREASED RELIABILITY OF THE R LINE**

There has long been concern regarding the state of the R Line and reliability on this train that serves many communities, frequently as the only transit option. Following the recent improvement of the Montague Tunnel that was repaired after damage from Super Storm Sandy, I joined with several other colleagues in calling for the MTA to do a full line study of the R train. It is well known to riders, elected officials, and analysts that ridership is up across the board on New York City Subways. Calls for improvements, reliability and basic amenities are heard from every corner of the City.

Full line reviews have, in the past, been conducted in a slow timeline as was seen with the A/C Full Line Review which took nearly 18 months. This long process is arduous for commuters who must wait an inordinate amount of time for information about service assessments. I hope the MTA will see that a review of the R Line is completed quickly so that improvements can be made more quickly.

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#### **INPUT FOR COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING**

The Church of St. Luke in the Fields in the West Village is exploring ways to serve the neighborhood and is interested in the insights and ideas of the wider community as to current and future needs. Please consider participating in their online survey by Friday, February 26 to share your thoughts and opinions. [You can take the survey at this link.](#)

If you have any questions, please email [survey@stlukeinthefields.org](mailto:survey@stlukeinthefields.org) or Amina Syedullah [asyedullah@stlukeinthefields.org](mailto:asyedullah@stlukeinthefields.org)

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#### **PUBLIC FUNDING FOR NON-PROFITS**

On occasion, there is State money allocated through grants to non-profits. Many non-profits are not applying for these funds due to lack of notice or enough time to complete the application. If you are a non-profit, and wish to consider applying for State funds at any point, it is best to submit an online profile now, before you compete for State contracts. This will enable you to make adjustments and answer concerns prior to entering a competitive bid process. Once registered with the Gateway, not-for-profits can fill out an online Prequalification Application. The process is simple. The Application requests an upload of basic organizational documents and asks straightforward questions about a not-for-profit's capacity and integrity. Not-for-profits can secure their application materials in the Document Vault where they will be accessible to all State agencies, thereby reducing redundancy and conserving resources. Most importantly, not-for-profits will only have to prequalify once every three years, with responsibility to keep their information current throughout the three year period.

To pre-qualify, visit: <https://www.grantsreform.ny.gov/>

