



FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

HISTORIC FORT GREENE BROOKLYN NOVEMBER 2006

The Fort Greene Association is devoted to historic preservation, neighborhood and park enhancement, as well as cultural, economic, and housing advancement. To find out more, become a member, or to volunteer, visit our website www.HistoricFortGreene.org

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The Greene Grape is proud to underwrite this issue of the FGA Newsletter.

NEXT MEETING:
MONDAY NOV 20
7:30PM
Light refreshments
at 7.00PM

TOPICS:

Development:

What's going on and what can Fort Greene expect?

Hakeem Jeffries, NY State Assembly 57th District takes your questions

LOCATION:

The Lafayette Ave Presbyterian Church
85 S. Oxford Street

All are welcome to attend, homeowners and renters alike.

Thank You For Running

To each and every candidate who ran for office in the recent primaries and general election: our thanks.

You put yourself out there and subjected yourself, your history and your opinions to incredible scrutiny. While keeping your "day jobs" you pursued another one in which you had to ask each and every voter for the privilege to serve. It was a process where you had to give up your evenings and weekends to be everywhere – and to be "on" 24/7. Plus, so many of you ran tireless campaigns where you had to become experts on so many issues in such a short amount of time. This raises the question for the rest of us: How often do we leave our jobs at the end of the day and have to wonder how our performance will play in the local press?

So thank you all for caring enough to serve. And to the winners, there is much work to do... and we look forward to collaborating with you all on the issues that are top of mind to the people of Fort Greene.

Phillip Kellogg
FGA Chair

Park Fundraiser

The Fort Greene Park Conservancy held its first Wine Tasting fundraiser on Thursday, September 28, 2006 at the Brooklyn War Memorial in Cadman Plaza. The event was billed as "Do Good by Drinking Well".

More than 150 people participated in the successful event. 100 wines from around the world poured and over \$15,000 was raised for the good work of the Conservancy in its mission to restore and raise awareness of the importance of Historic Fort Greene Park.

DK Holland, Robert Cooper, Norman Ryan, and Conservancy Exec Director Charles Jarden toast a good cause



Photo: FGA

First 2006 Fort Greene Association Grants Announced

The Fort Greene Association is thrilled to announce the first of many grants that it hopes to make over the next 18 months.

BROOKLYN PIT BULLS

This Pop Warner Football League team, with players drawn mainly from the Fort Greene neighborhood, spanning ages 7 through 15, plays in Fort Greene at Commodore Barry Park as well as making 5 road trips to Connecticut. The FGA is proud to kick-off its relationship with the team by funding transportation for one away game this season at a cost of \$475.

The Pit Bulls played their last home games in October, so you will have to wait till next year to see these dedicated kids play.

BOO! HALLOWEEN IN FORT GREENE PARK

Once again, the Fort Greene Park Conservancy presented Halloween in Fort Greene Park. The Fort Greene Association is pleased to have helped underwrite the cost of this festive day with a grant of \$500. It is a great event, with children from all sides of Fort Greene Park attending and participating in the activities, including pony rides, sack races, face painting and the pumpkin patch – with free pumpkins for all.

TRASH CANS AS ART

Local kids from the Community Roots School and PS46 will join this public art and environmental education project in Fort Greene Park. There will be 'Natural Classroom' lessons, led by Urban Park Rangers, exploring the native fauna and flora of the park. The project will culminate with the transfer of students' park-inspired designs onto steel trash drums to be placed around Fort Greene Park. The Fort Greene Association grant: \$1344.

GRANT APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED

Thanks to tremendous volunteer effort and generous contributions from our members and sponsors, the money raised by the Fort Greene Association is headed right back into the community. The board of the FGA has established a program of grants, donations and awards and is now accepting applications from community groups and organizations looking for help on projects and initiatives that benefit the Fort Greene Community.

As guidance, keep in mind that neither Bill Gates nor Warren Buffett are members of the FGA, so the size of the grants is more likely to be in the range of hundreds of dollars, not thousands. The committee is looking to help a wide range of people and projects and needs your help to spread the word about this program.

The application is simple to fill out, a one-page document. If you know of a worthy project or organization, request an application by sending an e-mail to: theFGA@HistoricFortGreene.org

Mary Priebe, Chair of the FGA Grants Committee, presenting a check to Lloyd Rodriguez, Director of the Brooklyn Pit Bulls



Photo: FGA

Rat Prevention

After the tremendous turnout for the Rat discussion at the last FGA general meeting, we provide you a list of Rat Prevention tips, courtesy of the Brooklyn Heights Association and their "Rat Problem Committee", who told us in a note: "rodent infestations have become endemic to brownstone Brooklyn, leaving no neighborhood untouched and we are constantly after our own residents to contain their garbage better, clean out harborage conditions (e.g. closets under stoops, overgrown ground cover in front gardens etc.) and to promptly hire licensed exterminators." The time to act is before the signs of an infestation appear. Good sanitation and rat-proofing can go a long way in prevention.

Once you see evidence of rats, act quickly to control them before their numbers get too high.

Think geographically, working in a radius from where rats have been sighted.

Best approach is Integrated Pest Management, using poisons as only one of many tools, including elimination of food and water sources, good sanitation, proper storage of trash, rat-proof construction, snap traps, glue traps, preventing access to buildings.

Consult websites and do not hesitate to hire professional exterminators.

Bait stations are enclosures used by professionals; they protect the bait from weather and restrict accessibility to rodents, providing a safeguard for people, pets, and other animals.

Once rats have invaded your garden or landscaping, unless your house is truly rodent proof, it is only a matter of time before they will come indoors.

Prevent access to buildings by making sure doors, windows and screens fit tightly and sealing all openings in foundations. Don't leave cellar doors or ground level doors open; check dryer vents.

Call 311 to report rat infestations. You can also file a rodent complaint on line at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/pest/pest2.html>.

Although we cannot eliminate rats, with aggressive action, their numbers can be reduced to an acceptably low number.

Bike Lane Update

The installation of bike lanes linking Prospect Heights and Pratt to Manhattan via Fort Greene has been delayed until spring. We will keep you updated.

Thanks to all the block associations and Council Member James for writing letters in support of this project.

Atlantic Yards: "Am I Being Misled?"

From an e-mail sent to the FGA: "...I thought that the decision for Atlantic Yards to build was over. Are you saying that a continued fight at this point can prevent Bruce Ratner from proceeding with the construction even though he has gotten approval from the Mayor and Governor Pataki? I understand the reduction in the construction, but that is telling me that the development will continue ---- only not as much as originally planned. Am I being misled?"

Don't be fooled, it is not a "done deal". But this exactly is what the "powers that be" want you to believe. There is still a long road to follow, with some hurdles. As it stands, the Brooklyn Atlantic Yards (BAY) project is still just a proposal. Although the 22-acre project encompassing Atlantic Avenue to Dean Street, and Flatbush to Vanderbilt Avenues got a nod from Mayor Bloomberg, New York City has no authority over its approval. By way of behind the scenes dealings, New York City allowed the project to circumvent its own more stringent review procedure (ULURP) for New York State's less rigorous approval process.

It may also help that the developer, Bruce Ratner of Forest City Ratner (FCR), happens to be a former law-school colleague of Governor Pataki, and is a well-connected acquaintance of others in governmental hierarchy, while looking for an easy way to building this monumental 16-building project.

Though the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) has obviously been trying to hasten approval, it had been expected that the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) would not be released until late October or early November. On releasing the FEIS, the ESDC Board then votes to approve, which is expected to be a rubberstamp. This includes approval of eminent domain.

The Public Authorities Control Board (PACB), composed of Assembly Speaker Silver, Senate Majority Leader Bruno and the Governor, then vote on the project, the last step in the State's review and approval process. As all this is going on, it is anticipated that lawsuits from the public will take place, particularly in challenging the use of eminent domain to accommodate a 20,000-seat arena.

No one has any doubt that something will be built at that location, including the FGA, which welcomes responsible development with a transparent public review process. However, so many of us are concerned about the lack of genuinely affordable housing within the project and the effects of its mammoth scale and density: the toll on the existing over-taxed infrastructure, additional traffic, diminished air quality, and the imminent danger to the character of our neighborhoods.

In the meantime, although it has no official authority in this matter, the NYC Planning Commission approved the project with minor recommendations, including scaling back the enormous project by a mere eight percent. FCR agrees to institute those suggestions, which coincidentally bring the project back to the size when originally proposed three years ago. This is well-suited to FCR's on-going public relations campaign, to give the appearance of responding to community concerns and at the same time making for an impression of a "done deal".

To keep up with the status quo of the project, some suggested websites include www.dddb.net, www.nolandgrab.org, or www.atlanticyardsreport.blogspot.com amongst others.

Evelyn Ortner: A Brooklyn Icon is Gone Ruth Goldstein

Evelyn Ortner, pioneer brownstoner, preservationist, community activist, Brooklyn chauvinist, consummate hostess, and good friend of Fort Greene, died on October 19. She was in her meticulously restored, jewel-like home on Berkeley Place with Everett, her husband and partner.

Because of the negative image of older urban neighborhoods, the Ortners had difficulty securing a mortgage and insurance coverage when buying their home in the early 60's. They fought back, organizing the Brownstone Revival Committee; thirteen Back to the City Conferences and for many years an annual Brooklyn Brownstone Conference. They founded Preservation Volunteers and did hands-on research toward securing landmarks designation for their neighborhood, Park Slope.

But it is as a friend, and a friend of Fort Greene, that I will remember Evelyn. In the early 70's our neighborhood was experiencing very hard times. A particularly disheartening issue was Fort Greene's application for landmarks designation. The Landmarks Commission did not perceive Fort Greene as a viable community. The Ortners did; they included us in everything: the Brownstoner Conferences, a Back to the City conference, and to help us gain media notice, arranged for our designation report to receive the prominent Victorian Society of America's "Award of Excellence". Always prescient, Evelyn recognized the threat of the proposed development at the Atlantic Yards and lent her efforts, name, credibility and considerable prestige to the fight.

Evelyn: smart, charming, warm, caring, and such a loyal friend, you are very much missed. And to Everett, we extend our sincerest sympathy.

Evelyn Ortner



Don't feed the rats:
The #1 thing we learned that you can do right now: trash cans with tight fitting lids.

Holiday Party, Save the Date: December 1, 2006, the first Friday in December. Mark your calendar and get ready for the FGA's annual Holiday Party. It's a pot luck, so bring your favorite dish. Please RSVP or for more information call Roslyn at 718-788-8200 x11.

Safety at Night Make sure the lights on the front of your home or apartment building are working. It makes for a much safer walk home.

Landmarks Commission Rejects Condo/Church Plans

On September 6, the board of the Fort Greene Association reviewed plans for The Carlton Mews (first described in the March 2006 FGA Newsletter); a townhouse-style condominium development which involves new construction on 4 empty lots and the adaptive reuse of 233 Carlton Avenue (an historic townhouse) and two existing historic church structures on Adelphi Street. Located in the heart of the Historic District between DeKalb and Willoughby Avenues, the plans included: historically compatible design elements of the new townhouse facades, plans for the exterior restoration of the churches, landscape design of the inner mews and details concerning required parking.

The overall design was well received by the FGA Board as contextually appropriate and compatible with the surrounding neighborhood – a welcome relief from the onslaught of high-rise development that threatens the character of our neighborhood. The FGA voted its approval expressing mostly minor concerns on details of the plan, plus one more significant reservation about placement of a driveway for parking.

LANDMARK'S COMMISSIONERS: "BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD"

In September, the FGA testified in favor of the project at a hearing of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission. Council Member James and Community Board 2 also sent letters of support. However, the Landmarks Commission was not as supportive.

While stating that this was a project with potential, the commissioners voiced concerns on a range of issues from bulk to preservation of stained-glass windows; from the design of the facades to the layout of the mews. Most significant was the Commission's desire for a waiver of the City's parking requirement. That waiver, if granted, would have a significant impact on the overall design of the project.

Comments made by the LPC were thoughtful, reflected various areas of expertise and we think will ultimately contribute to making this proposal even better. Revised plans will need to go before the Landmarks Commission for further comments and/or approvals. We will keep you posted.

DOT: Good Luck Crossing Flatbush – Find a Buddy!

Over the summer, the FGA embarked on a campaign to improve safety on Fort Greene's congested streets. Over 500 letters were sent to the DOT and the Mayor, requesting that the city take action to resolve the dangerous situations at the intersections on Fulton & Lafayette, and Flatbush & Fourth. The FGA included recommendations for both intersections as better options than the status quo.

On October 20, the FGA received a letter from DOT regarding the intersection of Flatbush and Fourth Avenues. As anyone knows, crossing Flatbush can be very hazardous, as vehicles turning from Fourth to Flatbush accelerate into the crosswalk.

According to Commissioner

Palmieri, "sufficient numbers of pedestrians make this crossing during peak periods to compel motorists to yield to those crossing in both eastbound and westbound directions." In other words, it appears that the DOT is recommending that pedestrians not cross Flatbush alone because cars are less likely to mow down groups.

The FGA does not find "status quo" an acceptable solution to the dangers posed by crossing Flatbush Avenue. The FGA has submitted a very simple recommendation to provide pedestrians a clear path when crossing Flatbush, but the DOT remains steadfast.

Despite hundreds of letters of protest, the DOT has yet to address concerns raised about the intersection of Fulton and Lafayette, where pedestrians are put at risk because of the missing crosswalk at Fort Greene Place, and because of the light pattern crossing Fulton. The new left-turn arrow on Fulton has helped marginally, but the intersection remains chaotic.

We will be working to improve the situation for pedestrians at both intersections, and hope to take our case to Community Board Two before the end of the year. We have also started discussions with Councilmember Tish James, and will keep the community advised of our progress.

Crossing Flatbush Solo, dangerous indeed



Photo: FGA

Holiday Shopping

Fulton Area Business Association starts the holiday season on Saturday, November 18 at 9am with a welcome to the Fort Greene/Clinton Hill communities. Come out and see the unique products and services the FAB businesses offer and share some treats and entertainment with the local business owners. They are here to serve you and there is no need to shop elsewhere (as many of you found out during the transit strike last winter). So check out the stores with the gift-wrapped doors starting Saturday, November 18.

Visit Myrtle Avenue for your holiday shopping needs on Thursday Late Shopping Nights during the month of December. Kicking off on Thursday, November 30th, participating stores will be open until 9 PM on Thursdays to allow for all of us who work too much to still find the time to buy gifts in the neighborhood for our loved ones. Participating stores include Frosted Moon Emporium (154 Vanderbilt), Karen's Body Beautiful (436 Myrtle), Sarafina Gallery (411 Myrtle), Head Over Heels (366 Myrtle), Kiini Ibura Jewelry (388 Myrtle), and Trés Élégante (386 Myrtle).

FGA Election Slate

Elections of the FGA Executive Board will take place on Monday, November 20, 2006, 7:30pm at 85 South Oxford St. between Lafayette and Fulton. Only those Fort Greene Association members in "good-standing" are eligible to vote.

To be a member in "good standing", you need to be current in the payment of your dues, or you have signed-in at two FGA meetings in the past year. To determine your membership status, or to bring your dues up-to-date, contact Susan Butler at 718-624-7744 or via e-mail at: sabjeb@aol.com

The proposed slate of volunteers for a two-year term is listed below. Additional nominations may be made at this meeting.

CHAIR: Phillip Kellogg

VICE CHAIR: Fredrik Anderson

TREASURER: Joan Bassin

RECORDING. SECRETARY:

Fred Lasker

CORRESPONDING. SECRETARY:

Susan Butler:

MEMBERS (7): Eva Daniels, Naomi Dickerson, Ruth Learnard Goldstein, dorris gaines golomb, Joseph Gutleber, Allen Hobbs, and Roslyn Huebener.

ALTERNATES (5): Ed Hospedale, Selma Jackson, Mary Priebe, Tom Wentworth, and one open seat.

Member Dues are due. Letters have been sent asking you to update your membership, please respond right away. After all, more members means more clout with elected officials and city agencies on behalf of neighborhood concerns and quality-of-life issues.

The FGA is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization. Thank you to all of you who keep your membership up-to-date. To join, visit HistoricFortGreene.org

Underwrite an issue of the FGA Newsletter. Next availability: November 2007. For details, call 718-875-1855.



FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION

HISTORIC FORT GREENE BROOKLYN

Next FGA Meeting: Monday November 20, 7:30pm

85 South Oxford Street, between Lafayette & Fulton

**FULTON
ASHLAND
FLATBUSH
LAFAYETTE
ST.FELIX
MYRTLE**

Development going up on the streets of Fort Greene.

What's going on and what can Fort Greene expect? Hear from NY City official Joe Chan, dubbed by the press as "Development Czar" of Downtown Brooklyn.

PLUS: SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER

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**New Scenes
and
Current
Events**

MULLANE'S BAR & GRILL, 71 Lafayette @ South Elliott, 718 797-7606. Open 7 days- lunch, dinner-11:30-11; Fri-Sat 12am. Brunch 'til 10. Food & Drink - wide choice. Owners Dave and Deidra Finnegan have created a handsome spot, with sensibilities attuned to the neighborhood. Dave, raised amidst Irish Georgian architecture, has retained the old cornice and installed vintage chandeliers. Stop by, have a look & a taste, wish them well!

SMOKE JOINT, Barbecue, South Elliott @ Lafayette, 718 797-1011. Owners Ben Grossman and Craig Samuel. By the time the newsletter has gone to press, this new "real New York BBQ joint" will be serving dinner Tue-Sun, and will soon start lunch service and delivery.

67BURGER, 67 Lafayette @ South Elliott, opening as we write. Focus - what else? - burgers in many versions from ham to veg. Wine & beer, salads, sides. Contemporary, easy ambience. See for yourself. Good luck to them!

CHEZ LOLA, 387 Myrtle @ Clermont, 718 858-1484. A bold bistro serving fine food, wine & cocktails from the old and new world. High ceilings, spacious garden - she's Oskar's little sister. Lunch & Dinner. Here's to another member of this gustatory family!

KINARA II, 368 Myrtle @ Adelphi, 718 237-4008/9. Scrumptious Indian food. Lunch & Dinner. Owner Mohammed Noor, Best of luck!

STUART & WRIGHT, 85 Lafayette @ South Portland, 718 797-0011. Tues-Sun 12-8, closed Mon. Clothing shop. Interior cool, crisp, stylish as are many of the designs they show. Owners Alec Stuart and Celeste Wright, complimenting their new surroundings, have kept the decades-old Eiffel Tower sign. Much success to them!

NIGHT OF THE COOKERS, 767 Fulton @ South Oxford, 718 797-1197. Way to go Phil Myers! The new awnings are great and a handsome addition to the neighborhood.

CREWSTOWN REALTY, 759 Fulton @ South Portland, 718 643-8100. Open 7 days-10:30-7:30. Sales/Rentals/Management. Owner Anthony T. Crews. Best wishes!

HOLIDAY PARTY, Save the Date: December 1, 2006, the first Friday in December. Mark your calendar and get ready for the FGA's annual Holiday Party. It's a pot luck, so bring your favorite dish. Please RSVP or for more information call Roslyn at 718-788-8200 x11.

Our business neighbors, in addition to creating a more attractive and hospitable atmosphere in our neighborhood, are vital to the good financial health of our community – a most essential part of the fabric here. Patronize them as often as you can in all seasons and please welcome these new entrepreneurs now -- if only with a hello and a handshake.

A Poem *Eve Havlicek*

Many things cheered me up as I was recently walking home from the subway.

I saw a group of teenagers walking together and sharing like good friends.

I received a greeting from someone I didn't know. Was it a new neighbor or a long time resident?

A newly planted tree pit joined those we planted in the spring.

Low and behold, the lamp posts had been stripped of old notices and freshly painted.

It seemed less litter rested on the pavement.

As I arrived home, I enlisted my sons to do something about a badly scarred Landmarks Sign. They left it spotless. It wasn't hard and it didn't take long.

Ultimately, our quality of life rests mostly on what we, as individuals, do.

The Greene Grape is proud to underwrite this issue of the FGA Newsletter